



News Release

For Immediate Release

The Government of Canada announces new measures for ferries and commercial passenger vessels capable of carrying more than 12 passengers

April 5, 2020 Ottawa Transport Canada

Ensuring the safety and security of Canadians is the Government of Canada's top priority. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, Transport Canada is working with the Public Health Agency of Canada, other levels of government, transportation industry stakeholders, and Indigenous peoples to help limit the spread of COVID-19.

The Minister of Transport, the Honourable Marc Garneau, today announced new measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission on commercial passenger vessels and ferries.

As of April 6, the new measures with mandatory requirements:

- Prohibit all commercial marine vessels with a capacity of more than 12 passengers from engaging in non-essential activities, such as tourism or recreation.
 - These measures will remain in place until at least June 30.

- Prevent any Canadian cruise ship from mooring, navigating, or transiting in Canadian Arctic waters (including Nunatsiavut, Nunavik and the Labrador Coast).
 - Should any foreign passenger vessel seek to enter Arctic waters, they would need to give the Minister of Transport 60 days' notice and be subject to any conditions the Minister determines necessary to ensure the protection of marine personnel and local communities.
 - These measures will remain in place until October 31, 2020.

- Require ferries and essential passenger vessel operators to:
 - Immediately reduce by 50% the maximum number of passengers that may be carried on board (conduct half-load voyages) to support the two-metre physical distancing rule; or
 - Implement alternative practices to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 (consistent with Public Health Agency of Canada guidelines) among passengers on board their vessels, such as keeping people in their vehicles, when feasible or enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures.

In addition to these measures, Transport Canada is issuing guidelines to ferry operators respecting health screening for all passengers before boarding to better protect their employees and passengers. These guidelines are based on advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The new measures preventing vessel activity do not apply to:

- essential passenger vessels such as ferries, water taxis, and medical-use vessels;
- cargo vessels, barges, work boats, fishing vessels and other commercial vessels who operate to support resupply operations and the movement of goods through Canada's supply chain;
- Canadian commercial passenger vessels, without passengers, moving for repairs or repositioning;
- Canadian commercial passenger vessels that are not in service; and
- pleasure craft (e.g. non-commercial vessels).



Quotes

“The safety and security of the travelling public and Canada’s transportation network are my top priorities. These new measures will help reduce the spread of COVID-19, while continuing to support the continued movement of goods through the supply chain, and ensuring Canadians can access their homes, jobs, and essential services in a safe manner.”

*Minister of Transport
The Honourable Marc Garneau*

Quick Facts

- These measures follow an announcement made on March 13, 2020, to defer the start of the cruise ship season in Canada until July 1, 2020, at the earliest and apply to cruise ships capable of carrying 500 or more passengers, including crew members.
- These measures apply to all of Canada’s coastal and inland waters, including the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes, and Canada’s Arctic waters. Examples of inland waters include lakes, rivers, and inlets.
- Enforcement action for failing to abide by these new measures could include administrative monetary penalties of up to \$5,000 per day for an individual and \$25,000 per day for a vessel or corporation, as well as criminal sanctions, which include up to \$1 million in fines and/or up to 18 months' imprisonment.

Related links:

- [Backgrounder: COVID-19 safety requirements for passenger vessels and ferry operators](#)
- [COVID-19: Guidance material for passenger vessel and ferry operators](#)
- [Interim Order Respecting Passenger Vessel Restrictions due to the Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Measures to Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19 on Passenger Vessels and Ferries – Ship Safety Bulletin, No.: 10/2020 published on April 5, 2020](#)
- [Regulations Maintaining the Safety of Persons in Ports and the Seaway](#)
- [Government of Canada announces intention to defer the start of cruise ship season in Canada as COVID-19 response measure](#)
- [COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Canada’s response](#)

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Contacts

Livia Belcea
Press Secretary
Office of the Honourable Marc Garneau
Minister of Transport, Ottawa
613-991-0700
Livia-Marina.belcea@tc.gc.ca

Media Relations
Transport Canada, Ottawa
613-993-0055
media@tc.gc.ca



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