

## **OWEN SOUND TRANSPORTATION COMPANY and PELEE ISLAND FERRY SERVICE COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS V4 (MAY 18, 2021)**

### **What is OSTC's plan to mitigate the spread of COVID-19?**

OSTC's goal is to promote a safe and healthy environment for its passengers and employees while continuing to provide effective, efficient and safe transportation of persons and vehicles. We will continue to work with health professionals and adjust our operational policies and procedures, as required.

### **Have passenger numbers been limited on the ferries?**

In accordance with the Interim Order issued by the Federal Minister of Transport in April 2020, OSTC has reduced the number of passengers per trip to less than 50% of capacity to ensure physical distancing between passengers, and passengers and crew:

#### Pelee Island Ferries:

##### *MV Pelee Islander*

Walk-on limit of 12 passengers (in lounge) + 8 passengers (on outer deck if weather permits). Total passenger count (walk-on and drive on) may not exceed 100.

##### *MV Pelee Islander II*

Under cargo only operations: 0 passengers. Vessel is restricted to essential commercial traffic only with a maximum of 12 vehicle drivers.

Under passenger & vehicle operations: **up to 100 passengers** (interior capacity) + **up to 25 on outer decks**, weather permitting. Total passenger numbers may be decreased without notice in response to current pandemic conditions.

#### Manitoulin Island Ferry:

##### *MS Chi-Cheemaun*

150 - 300 passengers, dependent on weather. Passenger numbers may be increased or decreased depending on current pandemic conditions. Passenger numbers will NOT exceed 300 (50% of certified capacity).

### **Are reservations required?**

Yes, **ALL vehicles and ALL passengers (with vehicles or walk-on)** are required to make a reservation to ensure the passenger capacity limits required for physical distancing are not exceeded, and to ensure passengers are made aware in advance of the health screening requirements.

Customer contact information is collected at time of making reservation and will be retained for the purpose of COVID-19 contact tracing should it be required.

Stand-by vehicles and/or passengers without reservations will not be accepted.

### **Will Passengers be screened?**

On arrival at our terminals, passengers will be asked a series of questions to determine their suitability to travel on the ferries. There are no exceptions.

<https://www.ontarioferries.com/agyhekre/2021/05/Custom-Screening.pdf>

### **Will passengers who are presenting with cold/flu symptoms be allowed to travel?**

Any passenger showing potential signs of COVID-19 (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or sore throat), or refusing to answer the screening questions will be denied passage.

### **What will happen if someone present symptoms during a crossing?**

Passengers who arrive at our terminals are being asked a series of questions to determine their suitability to travel. If a customer begins exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 during a crossing, they are asked to advise a crew member so that we may take appropriate precautions to protect the health and safety of the customer, other passengers and employees.

### **Will OSTC permit passengers to stay in their vehicles during the crossing as part of physical distancing?**

#### Manitoulin Island Ferry Service:

- *MS Chi-Cheemaun*: Due to the design of the vessel and the nature of the ferry crossing, there are safety challenges related to allowing passengers to remain in their vehicles during the two-hour crossing that cannot be overcome. **Passengers are not permitted to remain in their vehicles during the crossing.**

#### Pelee Island Ferry Service:

- *MV Pelee Islander*: Passengers are required to remain inside their vehicles. There is an allowance for up to 20 walk-on passengers, weather depending.
- *MV Pelee Islander II*: Due to the design of the vessel, there are challenges related to allowing passengers to remain in their vehicles during the crossing that cannot be overcome. **Passengers are not permitted to remain in their vehicles during the crossing.**

### **Will I be permitted to walk around the vessel during the crossing?**

*MV Pelee Islander*: passengers may not walk around the vessel if being transported inside their vehicle. Due to the limited lounge space, all passengers will be required to stay in their assigned isolation areas during the entire crossing and maintain a physical distance of 2m apart from other passengers and crew.

*MV Pelee Islander II*: Passengers may walk around the vessel at the Captain's discretion. Announcements will be made throughout the crossing. Passengers are required to maintain a physical distance of 2m apart from other passengers and crew members. Travel companions from the same vehicle are required to remain together.

*MS Chi-Cheemaun*: Passengers may walk around the vessel at the Captain's discretion. Announcements will be made throughout the crossing. Passengers are required to maintain a physical distance of 2m apart

from other passengers and crew members. Travel companions from the same vehicle are required to remain together.

We ask for your cooperation as we work to provide a healthy and safe environment for all passengers and employees.

### **Do OSTC and PITS ferry passengers need to take any extra precautions?**

Yes. Passengers are required to wear a facemask while on OSTC and PITS ferries, while inside any of the ferry terminal buildings, and while in line waiting to board the ferry (foot passengers).

OSTC requires all passengers excluding children under the age of two, and people who are unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition who are not permitted to remain inside their vehicle during the crossing to wear facemasks when travelling on the vessels. Passengers claiming medical exemptions are required to produce the approved exemption document. [https://www.ontarioferries.com/agyhekre/2021/05/September-9-Public-Notice\\_mask-exemptions1.pdf](https://www.ontarioferries.com/agyhekre/2021/05/September-9-Public-Notice_mask-exemptions1.pdf)

Passengers are also asked to follow the directions of our staff, remain 2m away from the next individual, practice self-isolation while on board the vessels, and wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer as recommended by Public Health.

### **Will OSTC or PITS supply passengers with a facemask?**

Passengers are responsible for supplying their own facemask. OSTC will not be supplying these items to passengers. A limited number of cloth non-medical grade facemasks will be available for purchase at the time of ticket purchase should a passenger require one. Please advise the reservation agent of this requirement at time of making reservation.

### **Will passengers be denied travel if they do not have a facemask?**

OSTC and PITS are unable to ensure that passengers will be able to maintain a physical distance of 2m at all times and therefore requires all passengers to bring and wear a face covering while on board the vessels (passengers inside vehicles on MV Pelee Islander excepted only when vehicle windows remain closed). Passengers without a face covering traveling on a vessel where a face covering is required will be denied boarding.

### **Why aren't all crew members wearing face masks or coverings?**

Operational safety is paramount in the determination of when crew members will or will not wear face coverings or masks.

Crew members working inside the ships where passengers are located are wearing masks/face coverings and practicing physical distancing.

Crew members working on outer decks or when engaged in vessel operations where clear voice communication is required to ensure operational safety, may not be wearing masks. Those crew members are practicing physical distancing as much as is safely possible given the requirements of their work and are performing these functions in passenger-restricted areas.

Examples of where/when crew members may not be wearing masks include vehicle deck loading and unloading, winch station operation, and any work in areas where passengers are not located and where physical distancing between crew members is possible.

**Will passengers be able to bring their animals on the ship?**

For the duration of COVID-19 while there are no food or beverage services on board the ship, pets may accompany their owners inside the vessel.

Physical distancing rules apply to the animals too. That means that passengers may bring their dog or service animal on board the vessel but must maintain physical distancing between their animal and other people and animals. All dogs and service animals must remain on a leash, and in their owner’s control at all times.

If your animal is not housetrained, or may become seasick, we ask that you and your animal remain on the exterior deck. Passengers are responsible for cleaning up any unforeseen animal bowel, urination or vomiting accidents and will be provided cleaning materials to do so as required.

**Will food and beverage services be offered on the vessel?**

OSTC has made a number of operational and business changes in response to COVID-19, in line with the Ontario Emergency Management Act and the closures and guided re-openings of “non-essential” businesses which includes retail, and food services that are unable to offer a take-out (take home) service. Passengers are advised that restaurant services, bar service and retail shops on the ferries will not be open while restrictions are still in place.

**May I bring my own food?**

Passengers may not bring food or beverages other than a personal bottle of water on board the vessel at this time. Passengers with health requirements or small children who need to bring snacks should advise the reservation agent at the time of making their booking.

**Is drinking water available?**

Water fountains have been decommissioned. Passengers may bring their own bottle of water on board. Crew will not handle any passenger supplied water bottle. If a passenger requests a drink of water, crew will provide water in a disposable cup.

**Will wheelchair assistance be available?**

We are unable to provide wheelchair assistance at terminals or on board ferries. If you require a wheelchair, please request one at the terminal. We ask that you travel with your own wheelchair assistant if required.

**How are you managing physical distancing in elevators?**

Manitoulin Island Ferry:

**MS Chi-Cheemaun:** Exterior Dock elevators should be used for all elevator passengers except vehicle drivers requiring elevator service. Physical distancing is not possible in the ship's interior elevator. Ship elevator use is therefore limited to only 5 passengers per departure due to the time it takes to elevate passengers, one person at a time (with a crew member elevator attendant). This is provided on a, first-come, first-served needs basis and MUST be declared at the time of making a reservation.

Passengers who still wish to take the ferry and who are not able to be accommodated for elevator service, and who are still able to climb some stairs may request being parked on a fixed mezzanine ramp (passenger vehicles only) which reduces the number of stairs by one half.

#### Pelee Island Ferries:

**MV Pelee Islander:** Not applicable. The MV Pelee Islander does not have an elevator.

**MV Pelee Islander 2:** Please exercise physical distancing in the elevator at ALL times. Physical distancing capacity is 2 persons per lift. Persons who do not need elevator service are asked to not use the elevator.

#### **What advice do you have for passengers?**

OSTC continues to take advice from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Ontario Public Health authorities. The best advice currently from health care professionals for all persons on or off the ferries is to:

- Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly (for at least 20 seconds or more) and often or use hand sanitizer where soap and water is not available.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue. Dispose of the tissue immediately and wash or sanitize your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick to avoid the spread of illness.
- Practice physical distancing (always stay at least 2m apart from all other persons).
- Wear a non-medical grade face covering where physical distancing may be difficult, and as is required while on our designated ferries.

These changes allow crew to effectively establish isolation areas on the vessel and promote physical distancing between passengers, and between passengers and crew as recommended by health professionals.