

Loading cut-offs on ferries

At a recent (September 15, 2008) meeting of the Gabriola Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC), the Chairman of the FAC no less, recounted an incident where he had been ticketed and allowed into the terminal on the Nanaimo side. He was nevertheless, along with two other vehicles, not allowed to board even though there was space on the vessel. The explanation given by the BC Ferries spokesperson was that this was done to allow the vessel to attempt to make up for lost time.

My observation is that when the vessel is busy loading, vehicles are going aboard at an average rate of one every 5 to 8 seconds. The extra delay incurred by allowing all vehicles in the terminal to board would therefore have been in this case not more than about 30 seconds.

If everyone on that ferry to Gabriola had been given the option of sailing promptly or waiting 30 seconds so that fellow Gabriolans who were fully prepared to board could avoid a one hour wait in the terminal, what do you think their choice would have been?

The FAC let this nonsense pass without comment. Instead of honestly acknowledging that in this instance, the policy didn't make a lot of sense, the BC Ferries spokesperson went on to say safety would have been compromised by allowing the extra vehicles on (how? they were parked in their lane), and that the ferry would have been stuck there until full if more vehicles had been arriving (none were) .

I must be so comforting for BC Ferries employees that senior management does all the thinking for them.

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