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BC FERRIES REMINDS ALL BOATERS TO SHARE THE WATER SAFELY

VICTORIA – BC Ferries is reminding boaters that as summer approaches, the company ramps up its service, so mariners will see more ferries, more frequently, on many of its routes.

“We have some of the most beautiful waters in the world for boating right here in B.C. and we want to ensure everyone shares the ocean in a safe manner,” said Captain Jamie Marshall, BC Ferries’ Vice President of Fleet Operations. “Boaters should keep in mind that ferries are not as maneuverable as small crafts and they can take at least two and a half ship-lengths to crash-stop.”

Mariners transiting waters in the immediate area of BC Ferries terminals should use caution and ensure that they do not impede ferries approaching or departing berths. In addition, boaters should exercise caution and ensure that they do not impede ferries in narrow channels such as Active Pass.

With approximately 500 sailings per day and a fleet of 34 vessels covering the entire coast of British Columbia, BC Ferries crews are often able to respond to an emergency at sea when requested by the Canadian Coast Guard. Under the Canada Shipping Act, all vessel operators must render assistance to other boaters in danger without posing serious danger to their own craft and the persons on board.

“Our crews are highly trained and conduct a variety of drills such as fire, evacuation and man-overboard scenarios on a regular basis,” said Marshall. “We respond to approximately 24 marine emergencies per year and generally these types of incidents increase in the summer months when more pleasure boaters take to the water.”

BC Ferries operates a cable ferry, the Baynes Sound Connector, between Buckley Bay on Vancouver Island and Denman Island, so the company wants to ensure that all marine traffic transiting the area be familiar with the Ferry Cable Regulations. Boaters transiting Baynes Sound cannot cross in front of or behind the cable ferry while it is in transit. Red and green lights are in place at both the Buckley Bay and Denman West terminals. When the Baynes Sound Connector is in transit, solid red lights mean no vessels shall cross either astern or ahead of the cable ferry. When the lights are solid green, it’s clear to transit.

BC Ferries ships standby on VHF marine radio channel 16 (calling channel) and the appropriate VHF vessel traffic channel for their area; these channels are: for Victoria, VHF 11; Traffic for Vancouver Harbour and Howe Sound, VHF 12; and Traffic for the former Comox Area of Responsibility, VHF 71.

Information regarding BC Ferries schedules is available at bcferries.com. For more safe boating tips, visit <http://www.tc.gc.ca/media/documents/marinesafety/TP-511e.pdf>

BC Ferries wishes all mariners a safe boating season.

Under contract to the Province of British Columbia, BC Ferries is the service provider responsible for the delivery of safe, efficient and dependable ferry service along coastal British Columbia.

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