

Backgrounder Changes to commercial reservation system

For immediate release

June 15, 2010

The effective date for all changes, with the exception of the waitlist, is Monday, June 21.

Online access to commercial reservations

Online commercial reservations will be available effective June 21. Commercial customers will be provided access to the online system via a secure login. The new online reservation system will enable carriers to make bookings for any crossing in the published sailing schedule. This system will show commercial carriers sailing times on their preferred date, as well sailings preceding and following this date, and will indicate the availability of space on those crossings.

Further upgrades to this system are ongoing. The priority for the next number of weeks is to create the ability to change and cancel bookings, and work is ongoing to provide this as soon as possible.

User profiles have been set up for many commercial customers, and the details of this will be sent to each carrier via email over the next few days. Profiles have been built for all commercial customers who have an invoice account with Marine Atlantic and for most if not all other customers who have made multiple trips with on the service in 2009 or 2010. The remaining customers are being contacted to determine if they wish to have a user profile.

Cancellation times

Effective June 21, a commercial customer wishing to cancel or change a booking, without incurring a fee, must do so at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled departure. The current cancellation time is 12 hours prior to schedule departure.

Example: Under the current rule, a booking for the 10:30 pm sailing must be made by 10:30 am that day. When a cancellation is made at 10:30 am, there is very limited ability to make and use a booking for the next morning, unless a commercial customer is already in the terminal area since they have to be checked in no later than 8:30 pm. By moving to 24 hours, a commercial carrier can make a booking, pick up a load, and get to the terminal in time to make the crossing.

Changes to booking and check-in times

Check-in times for commercial units will change to the following, effective June 21.

- Live tractor trailer units must be checked in and on the dock ready to load no later than two hours prior to scheduled departure. (originally 3 hours)
- Drop trailers must be checked in and on the dock ready to load no later than four hours prior to scheduled departure. Drop trailers may arrive between four hours and three hours and pay a late arrival fee of \$100. (previously five hours)
- Dangerous goods must be booked at least 36 hours in advance of scheduled departure. These units must be checked in and on the dock ready to load no later than six hours prior to departure. (originally 48 hours)
- Oversized units must be booked at least 36 hours in advance of scheduled departure. These units must be checked in and on the dock ready to load no later than six hours prior to departure. (originally 48 hours)
- Units carrying livestock must be booked at least 36 hours in advance of scheduled departure. These units must be checked in and on the dock ready to load no later than two hours prior to departure. (originally 48 hours)

NEW Waitlist process

A computerized waitlist application for commercial reservations is under development and is expected to be in place in early July 2010.

Facts and figures on commercial reservations

- The commercial reservations system was established in consultation with stakeholders representing a wide range of commercial carriers and their customers. Associations participating in the development process included the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association, the Independent Truckers Association, Newfoundland Carriers, the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, the Seafood Producers Association, and the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association.
- Marine Atlantic carried a record number of AEUs (auto equivalent units) in 2009-2010, and is on track to exceed that this year.
- Deck space is allocated to the three different business segments (private passenger vehicles, tractor trailers and drop trailers) based on historical data, traffic projections, and changes in demand. Space is assigned and each type of traffic draws from its own inventory.
- As of May 31, 2010, Marine Atlantic had secured 29,335 commercial bookings from March 15 through December 31, 2010.
- **From April 1 (two weeks into commercial reservations) through June 6, tractor trailer traffic transported by Marine Atlantic increased by more than 1,000 units (almost 11%) over the same period in 2009.**
- **Across all traffic from April 1 through June 6, an additional 5,046 AEUs were transported compared to 2009, an increase of 5.3%.**

Ongoing consultation and feedback had prompted several changes to the system before this review. Changes already implemented include:

- Check-in times for drop trailers were previously reduced to five hours ahead of sailing time instead of six hours.
- Drop trailers are permitted to enter the terminal property three sailings ahead of their reserved crossing rather than two hours.
- Livestock needs to be at the dock two hours ahead of sailing rather than six hours.
- Units arriving after the cut off time of two hours before sailing no longer forfeit their reservation but rather they will be rebooked to the next available sailing and charged the late fee (no shows still forfeit the reservation).

The option to purchase a ticket at the terminal has not changed under commercial reservations. When a carrier arrives at the ticket booth, subject to availability they can make a reservation for the next available sailing. Bookings may be made up to the cut off time for the sailing.

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