

Vessel Issues:

Problem: Work on the waterfront, including marine construction, heavy lifting of containers at the Port of Seattle and cruise ships being bunkered (fueled) in the harbor, all require slow downs by ferries so ferry wakes do not cause equipment or environmental damage.

Solution: As part of the marine community, WSF is required to follow regulations and safe practices. Therefore, WSF must look outside of these operational issues to resolve on-time performance issues.

Problem: Heavy traffic is a combination of overloading situations which occur on both sides of the water. During much of the year, overloads only occur during the commute hours in one direction—the schedule is designed for this type of travel. When overloads occur in both directions, coupled with infrequent users unfamiliar with ferry facilities and loading practices, additional dwell time occurs which can cause late sailings.

Solution: WSF is making every effort to remedy these issues by adding additional staffing where needed to expedite offloading and loading.

Q: So why can't you change the schedule?

A: We certainly can change the schedule but that decision has an impact on our customers as it would mean cutting a roundtrip. Changing the schedule may need to happen long term but we would work closely with the community before any schedule change occurred.

**Washington State Ferries
apologizes for the
inconvenience that late boats
may cause our customers.
Please work with us to find
a solution.**

Ways you can help us be on time:

- Walk-on customers need to offload quickly so we can sweep the vessel and begin loading as soon as possible.
- Drivers need to return to their vehicles early so we can offload quickly.
- Remember that keys locked in a vehicle and dead batteries can delay sailings.
- Share with us any ideas you may have to help keep the vessels on time. We value your input. You can email us at WSF@wsdot.wa.gov or call 1-888-808-7977.

What we can do:

- We can do a better job of informing you when the vessels are running late and why, both online and at the terminals and on the vessel. We will work with our staff to ensure that this happens.

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Why are
the
boats
late?

Explanations for late
ferries to and from
Bainbridge Island.



Washington State
Department of Transportation

Nothing is more frustrating to a ferry user who is dependent upon WSF to provide on-time, scheduled service than a disrupted schedule that causes delay after delay in their commute.

And then receiving an email alert blaming the lateness on heavy traffic does nothing to alleviate the frustration.

So why is the boat late and why can't the ferry system do something about it?

There aren't any simple answers but Washington State Ferries is making every effort to remedy any operational issues which may contribute to late boats on the Bainbridge route.



Offloading in Seattle:

Problem: The dwell time, the time a vessel spends in the dock, is exceedingly long in Seattle during the summer, especially if the Mariners are in town. Offloading to the North can increase the dwell time. WSF does not have the ability to control the north exit light which means traffic cannot offload quickly. Add to this, vehicles in the intersection of Marion and Alaskan Way blocking egress, and increased pedestrian traffic crossing at the gate, and additional delays can occur.

Solution: WSF will be utilizing both North and South offloading options whenever practical to improve this situation.

Offloading in Bainbridge:

Problem: While the dwell time in Bainbridge is not as significant as in Seattle, we do have problems. The traffic light at Winslow Way slows offloading by approximately eight minutes. Without a light to regulate pedestrian flow, pedestrians crossing to or from the Eagle Harbor entrance or the Waterfront Trail contribute to the offloading problem.

Solution: Thursdays and Fridays seem to be the most problematic so WSF has requested a longer traffic light sequence on these days to help with offloading. Long term, Washington State Ferries is working with the City, the Washington State Patrol, the Traffic Safety Council and Kitsap Transit to find a solution for what is a dangerous area.



Last Minute Arrivals:

Problem: At both terminals, pedestrians and vehicles arrive seconds before the vessel is scheduled to depart, in hopes the vessel crew will hold in so they can board. It takes roughly two minutes to prepare the vessel for departure so late arrivals can cause the vessel to delay departure.

Solution: Several years ago, Washington State Ferries introduced the "two-minute" rule, which required the crew to cut off loading two minutes before the scheduled departure. Late arrivals were left at the dock. Washington State Ferries will reinstitute this policy on July 10 to assist us in our efforts to remain as close as possible to the written schedule.