



CTC Frequently Asked Questions

August 9, 2020

In advance of our annual meeting, CTC has compiled this list of FAQ. We hope this information is useful to the community.

1. When will CTC resume its normal schedule?

CTC's passenger count is down about 70% from 2019 and through June our net operating LOSS is approximately \$300,000 greater than the same period in 2019. This sharp drop in ridership, and the resulting significant loss of ticket revenue along with limited crew availability, has forced CTC to reduce its schedule. This limited schedule allows CTC to operate daily with a single ferry crew.

Coast Guard regulations require a passenger vessel operating more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period to have a second crew. By starting with the 6:30 AM trip and finishing with the 6:30 PM trip, our vessel exceeds this 12-hour limitation every day. However, the Coast Guard allowed an exception to this 12-hour rule when we informed it that the crew would get a break of several hours midday (between the noon and 3:45 boats).

Additional daytime changes in the schedule may be required if CTC resumes the 7:05 AM and 3:05 PM school boats in September. CTC will keep our riders apprised of any future changes.

CTC currently has no plans of resuming evening boat trips due to the single crew 12-hour workday – but we are regularly evaluating the situation.

2. Why can't CTC run two buses from the Route One lot?

With only a handful of exceptions, a single bus has accommodated passengers waiting at Route One since passenger limits were implemented in June. Because ridership is unpredictable and has been low during June and July (peak travel periods), paying for an extra bus on standby would cost CTC over \$200 per day. CTC is working hard to reduce costs wherever possible and we ask our passengers for their patience.

3. Why can't more passengers travel on the Independence?

Because of the need for social distancing to protect our passengers and crew, a maximum of 32 people can be accommodated on the main and upper decks. The ability for us to transport passengers on the upper deck without a second deckhand – which



allowed us to raise maximum passenger count from 20 to 32 — was negotiated with the U.S. Coast Guard. Since implemented, this passenger limit has rarely been exceeded.

4. Could you explain the decisions related to COVID transport from Chebeague?

CTC's highest priority is the safety of our passengers and crew. The risk of exposure to crew and passengers if a suspected COVID patient were transported in a rescue call was deemed real, based on the best medical guidance we were able to obtain at the time. CTC was initially informed by the Chebeague Island Fire/Rescue Department that it planned to use the Long Island rescue boat for all COVID rescues. We believed that this was the safest option for our passengers and crew and this opinion was seconded by the U.S. Coast Guard. Once we were notified that the Chebeague Island Fire/Rescue Department wanted to continue to use CTC as a transport for **ALL** rescues, we worked literally 7 days a week for 5 or 6 weeks to find solutions to a number of issues that would enable us to safely provide this vital service to the people of Chebeague.

The major obstacle involved CTC's insurance carrier, which initially rejected any plan that allowed a suspected COVID patient to travel on the ferry. CTC faced the possibility of loss of insurance, meaning the company would be forced to shut down entirely. (There are only about a dozen insurance companies nationwide that provide marine insurance. To change insurance companies was not a viable option since most were already excluding COVID from their coverage.) CTC retained maritime attorneys who worked with our insurance company, our insurance agency, and State officials to resolve the impasse.

Ultimately, negotiations to craft a policy that satisfied our insurers, the Town of Chebeague and our board of directors, and still provided ample protections for everyone, resulted in a joint transport policy between Chebeague Fire/Rescue and CTC.

We certainly regret that these events caused concern and confusion to island residents. We are working with the Town to improve our communication on rescue protocols and other important issues affecting our community.

5. If the ferry is full, will a second trip be made?

Yes, with the exception of the 4 PM boat from Cousins. There simply is not enough time between the 4 PM and the 4:45 PM trips to make the second trip for passengers left from the 4 PM on Cousins Island.

6. If the bus is full, will the ferry wait for a second bus trip, or return for a second trip?

This situation is handled on a case by case basis. If the bus can return to the Route One lot and pick up the remaining passengers quickly, the boat may wait. If not, the boat



will return for the remaining passengers. Each time this happens, the bus driver and the captain are in communication to determine the best way to handle the situation.

7. Why are trips now being cancelled for low tides? How does this impact rescues?

Shallow water at the Stone Wharf poses a safety issue for our operations. This increasingly has become a matter of critical importance. (The Independence and the Islander have almost identical drafts and often operate with only inches of water, which poses a significant risk of hitting bottom.)

Coast Guard regulations require our captains to report all groundings and, under certain circumstances that might trigger a full-blown accident investigation, taking the ferry out of service for the duration of the investigation. A grounding during an emergency rescue could result in life-threatening delays.

Because of worries about hitting bottom (or becoming entangled with underwater debris in the shallows), we have decided we must cancel trips on extreme low tides.

Beginning in August, we have modified our published “Crew Assistance Schedule” to include these trip cancellations, which can be readily predicted based on tide charts. This information is available on the News and Info page of CTC website chebeaguetrans.com and in the monthly Island Calendar.

The Town of Chebeague is notified of ferry unavailability in advance so that Fire/Rescue has adequate time to arrange for coverage for the brief periods the ferry cannot safely operate.