



Ferry Overhaul and Repair Schedule Fact Sheet

Ferry Information Hotline: 410-543-2765

Hours of Operation: 7:00am – 5:30pm daily; closed Christmas Day

The Wicomico County Department of Public Works operates and maintains Whitehaven Ferry and Upper Ferry. These ferries, combined, make approximately 200,000 trips per year transporting passengers and their vehicles. Wicomico County has been providing ferry service operations free of charge since its inception.

Historical Background

Wicomico has been in the ferry business for centuries. The Whitehaven Ferry has existed for centuries, long before Wicomico County was established. The current Whitehaven Ferry was built in 1986 and travels 820 feet per trip from Wicomico into Somerset County. Upper Ferry has been in service since it was built in the 1960s and travels 465 feet per trip. Both are referred to as *cable* ferries because they are propelled along and steered by cables attached to each shore.

Project Scope

Historically, maintenance alternated between the ferries every two years. However, due to recession-related budget cuts no maintenance had been performed on either ferry for the last three years. During that time, the ferries experienced more frequent mechanical breakdowns. Fortunately, the FY2012 budget included much needed maintenance funding for both ferries.

Ferry overhaul and repair generally requires a 90-day maintenance turnaround. The following is the FY2012 repair schedule:

- Whitehaven Ferry:
 - Out of service start date: December 13, 2011
 - Expected in-service date: March 13, 2012
 - Actual in-service date: February 22, 2012 – three weeks earlier than anticipated.



- Upper Ferry:
 - Out of service start date: February 21, 2012
 - Expected in-service date: May 21, 2012
 - Actual in-service date: June 20, 2012

The Ferry Information Hotline (410-543-2765) was created to provide vessel status updates and anticipated service impacts due to maintenance and/or weather related issues.

Reasons for Ferry Closures

Ferry closings can be the result of infrastructure issues that include:

- Damaged cables
- Leaks
- Mechanical breakdowns
- Electrical breakdowns
- Coast Guard inspections
- Boating accidents
- Road closures

Environmental issues, such as those listed below, can also impact ferry operations:

- Extreme tides
- Excessive winds
- Limited/low visibility due to dense fog, darkness
- Floating debris
- Freezing temperatures

Ferry Maintenance

Ferry maintenance is scheduled biannually. The following Ferry Overhaul and Repair Service checklist outlines the work performed each time the ferry is placed out-of-service for scheduled maintenance:

- Replace engine and transmission
- Replace hydraulic pump and all hydraulic lines with premium hose
- Inspect all stainless steel tubing, replace as necessary
- Inspect bottom for cracks, thin spots, leaks etc.
- Sandblast vessel, prime, and paint

- Replace safety arms and new safety arm cylinders



- Replace ramp cylinders
 - Replace control valve assembly in pilot house
 - Replace roof mounted air conditioner
 - Replace pilot house heater assembly
 - Replace fairleads
 - Redesign propeller shaft strut assembly in such a way as to protect and retain cutlass bearing
 - Install new muffler assembly and exhaust pipe
 - Fabricate and install new safety arm brackets
 - Re-weld ramp cable uprights
 - Repair cracks on fiberglass door on pilot house
 - Apply non-slip coating on deck of vessel
 - Install new engine and throttle controls and cables
 - Mount all remote grease fittings on the deck side of vessel for ease of maintenance
 - Replace ramp cable sheaves (bearing supported if possible)
 - All access covers on deck to be replaced with (1) turn commercial hatches
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Wicomico County Ferry Facts

- The ferries travel by cables connected from dock-to-dock
- The ferries are transported by tugboat for maintenance because they do not have steering capabilities
- Ferry maintenance is performed by Yacht Maintenance in Cambridge, MD – the company that built the current Whitehaven Ferry
- The U.S. Coast Guard sets the passenger limit for both ferries – currently 6 passengers at a time
- The ferries are subject to random inspections by the U.S. Coast Guard
- The weight limit on each ferry is 10,000 lbs
- The Upper Ferry was lengthened during its last overhaul. It can now accommodate up to 3 average sized vehicles. However, it is still subject to transporting a maximum of 6 passengers at a time
- Somerset County shares 50% of the maintenance cost for Whitehaven Ferry
- Ramp/dock repairs are scheduled to coincide with the ferry maintenance schedule to meet safety requirements and lessen service interruptions