

Fare collection at the ferry terminal resumes May 5 – no-cash policy in effect

- Punch card sales available immediately by mail – expiration date is waived for all punch cards purchased by mail now through May 20 (more information can be found in the FAQs)
- Peak fares in effect starting May 20; the start of the peak sailing schedule is delayed due to COVID-19

In response to COVID-19, the Guemes Island Ferry system took early precautions, like temporarily suspending fare collection, to protect our workers and ferry community. We believe this has helped keep our community and workers safe and allowed us to stay in operation on our full sailing schedule.

When we resume fare collection on May 5, we’re making a couple of changes to the way we sell tickets to prioritize health and safety. We do not currently offer electronic ticketing options; however, we are working on implementing that by the end of the year.

Beginning May 5, only punch cards and credit or debit cards will be accepted methods of payment; the ferry system will not be accepting cash. We want to make sure you understand these changes. This may be a long notification, but we want to make sure we address any questions and concerns you might have.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- 1) Why are you starting to collect fares again on May 5?
 - We need to be able to continue to operate the ferry during this crisis, which could last for several more months. A month ago, we took some early precautions based on unknowns about the virus. Now, we need to be fiscally practical. While we cannot financially continue to operate the ferry for free for months on end, we can change some of our policies. This will protect our workers and ferry community while ensuring we generate the revenue we need to keep the system working.
- 2) Why have you implemented a no-cash policy?
 - Physical distance is critical to preventing the spread of the virus. The exchange of cash and change is a potential transmission point. We don’t know where cash has been before it arrives at the terminal. It could have traces of the virus that could put our pursers and customers at risk.
- 3) How can I buy a ferry ticket?
 - For drive-on customers, ferry tickets for single rides are available for purchase at the window of your vehicle. We ask that you only roll your window down enough to insert your credit/debit card into our machine. For walk-on customers, we ask that all single-ride walk-on tickets be purchased outside on the patio for the safety of our Pursers. Only credit/debit cards will be accepted for payment.
- 4) I understand I can only pay by credit or debit card (if I am not using a punch card). What credit cards do you accept?
 - We accept all major credit cards except American Express.
- 5) What punch cards are available and how much do they cost?
 - Punch cards offer a significant discount, especially during the peak season and are a safe and convenient way to pay ferry fares. You can help us protect our crew and the ferry community by purchasing and using punch cards.
 - See the table below for pricing and savings. Please note the 10-trip punch card can now be purchased, at the non-peak season rate, and used any time including during the peak season.

Punch Card Category	Punch card price	Punch card expiration date	Punch card price/trip	Peak fare – Starts May 20 (without punch card)
20-trip vehicle & driver ⁽¹⁾	\$ 196.00	120 days from purchase ⁽²⁾	\$ 9.80	\$ 15.00
20-trip vehicle & senior/disabled driver ⁽¹⁾	\$ 156.00	120 days from purchase ⁽²⁾	\$ 7.80	\$ 12.00
10-trip vehicle & driver ⁽¹⁾	\$ 120.00	No expiration	\$ 12.00	\$ 15.00
10-trip vehicle & senior/disabled driver ⁽¹⁾	\$ 100.00	No expiration	\$ 10.00	\$ 12.00
25-trip adult passenger ⁽¹⁾	\$ 77.00	1 year from date of purchase ⁽²⁾	\$ 3.08	\$ 5.00
25-trip senior/youth/disabled passenger ⁽¹⁾	\$ 46.00	1 year from date of purchase ⁽²⁾	\$ 1.84	\$ 3.00

⁽¹⁾ Can be purchased and used any time during the peak or non-peak season until expiration

⁽²⁾ Expiration date is waived if purchased by mail between now and May 20, 2020 (includes orders placed by mail, email or phone)

6) How can I buy a punch card?

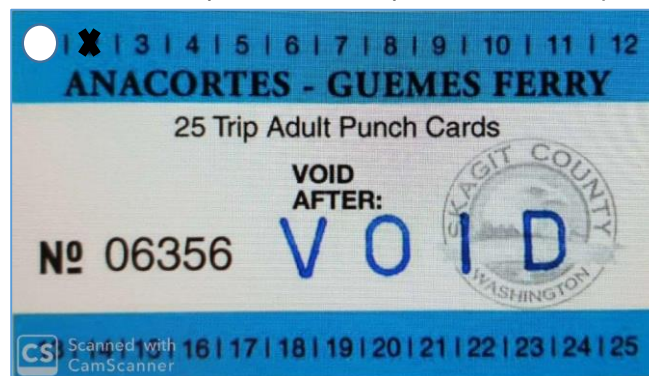
- The expiration date will be waived for any punch cards purchased through the mail (including orders placed by mail, email or phone) between now and May 20. Expiration dates will apply to the punch cards purchased in the ferry office.
- **In-person:** Punch cards can be purchased at the ferry terminal ticket office in the lobby starting May 5. There is no limit to the number of punch cards that can be purchased at one time; however, there is a no return/no refund policy on the sale of all punch cards.
- **By mail, email or phone:** skagitcounty.net/Departments/publicworksferry/tickets.htm.
- Punch cards by mail has been available for some time through our accounting office, but we've updated our [online order form](#) to make this process easier. We encourage folks to use this system during the COVID-19 pandemic as it eliminates contact with a Purser.
 - **To place an order by email:** Email the completed [Punch Card Order Form](#) to ferrypunchcards@co.skagit.wa.us. Our accounting office will contact you within 24 business hours of receipt of the email for payment information. Please do not email credit card information. Your punch card will be mailed to you within 5-7 business days of receipt of your order.
 - **To place an order by phone:** Call Christine Lyons at (360) 416-1419; be ready with your credit card information and what punch cards you would like to order. Your punch card will be mailed to you within 5-7 business days.
 - **To place an order by mail:** Mail in the [Punch Card Order Form](#) with a check or money order to: Skagit County, ATTN: Ferry Punch Cards, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA 98273. Your punch card will be mailed to you within 5-7 business days of receipt of your order.
- Punch cards are currently not sold online because Skagit County does not yet offer online/electronic ticketing/payment solutions.

7) What if I purchased a punch card prior to the suspension of fare collection? Will you extend the expiration date because I couldn't use it?

- Previously purchased vehicle punch cards marked with an expiration date of March 23-July 22, 2020 will be offered a two-month extension of expiration. Because walk-on punch cards are good for one year, we did not think there was a need to extend the expiration date on those.

8) Can I validate my own punch card to avoid contact with the Purser?

- Yes; during the COVID-19 pandemic, you can, **as long as the Purser sees you do it**. You must provide your own equipment, and allowable methods for validating your own punch card are as follows:
 - Use your own hole puncher to punch a trip number as shown; or
 - Use a black sharpie or standard pen to "x" out a trip number as shown; or



- If you do not have the means to validate your own punch card, hold your punch card out at arm's length for the Purser to punch while maintaining social distancing.

9) Is there anything else I need to know about paying by credit/debit card?

- We have asked our Purses not to handle customers' credit cards.
- We are temporarily waiving signatures on all transactions, and you can opt out of a receipt.
- If you are walking on, we ask that you maintain social distancing during transactions.
- We disinfect credit card processing & equipment in between each run.