

WAC 468-300-080 Fuel surcharge. (1) In order to manage the financial risk associated with fuel price volatility, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Washington state transportation commission to implement a fuel surcharge as an added component to the regular posted fares for passage on vessels operated by Washington state ferries (WSF) to mitigate the financial impacts associated with unexpected increases in fuel prices which exceed those incorporated in WSF's fuel budget. The total ferry fare charged will consist of the base fare plus an automatic, incremental, additional surcharge as calculated according to the formula set forth in this rule.

(2) The method for calculating the fuel surcharge amount shall be as follows:

(a) Determine excess fuel costs for the current quarter by subtracting budgeted fuel costs from actual fuel costs for the quarter. For the purposes of this rule, quarters shall be consistent with the state fiscal year definition of quarters.

(b) To minimize lags in the application of this rule, the quarter will be closed one month prior to the actual end of the quarter, and an estimate of actual costs will be prepared to account for the third month and any lags in accounting for actual purchases.

(c) The estimate of costs for the missing month shall be developed as follows:

(i) Estimated fuel costs for the third month of the quarter will be based on the Oil Price Information Service (OPIS) daily contract average rack prices for ultra low-sulfur dyed diesel fuel for the first fifteen days of the missing month as reported by the Washington state department of general administration's office of state procurement for Tacoma and Anacortes fuel price data as of the cutoff date.

(ii) Applicable taxes and fees are added to the Anacortes and Tacoma rack prices to derive total estimated cost per gallon for purchases at Anacortes and Tacoma on the missing days.

(iii) Total price per gallon is multiplied by budgeted gallons of fuel for the missing month in the quarter, where gallons are split into estimated purchases at Anacortes and Tacoma prices based on the year-to-date shares of gallons purchased at Tacoma and Anacortes rack prices.

(d) Net excess fuel costs for the quarter shall be determined on the basis of the current estimate of the excess fuel costs for the quarter plus an accounting for the following:

(i) Any necessary reconciliation from the previous quarter's estimate of actual costs once full accounting of actual costs is complete.

(ii) Any necessary adjustments to ensure actual costs reflect budget assumptions regarding the appropriate share of biodiesel fuel or total diesel gallons to be purchased. Where actual gallons purchased or share of biodiesel vary from the assumptions used to develop the budget, the actual costs shall be reduced by the amount that these variations may have increased costs beyond the amounts assumed in the budget appropriation.

(iii) Subtracting any fuel surcharge revenues collected in the current quarter.

(iv) Adding net excess fuel costs from the previous quarter.

(e) Calculate an excess fuel cost percentage by dividing adjusted excess fuel costs by the current quarter's budgeted fuel costs.

(f) A fuel surcharge amount is then calculated as follows:

(i) Multiply the excess fuel cost percentage by the share of budgeted fuel costs to total operating costs for the current biennium

(defined as the specific fuel appropriation divided by the total appropriation made to "Program X - Marine" as provided in the current transportation budget and supporting financial plan); then

(ii) Divide the result by the farebox recovery rate for the current biennium (defined as the fare revenue target divided by total appropriation to "Program X - Marine" as provided in the current transportation budget and supporting financial plan).

(3) A fuel surcharge shall be determined based on the calculation of the surcharge amount (as defined in subsection (2)(f) of this section) and applied to applicable fares as follows:

(a) If the surcharge amount is less than 2.5%, then a fuel surcharge shall not be applied.

(b) If the surcharge amount is equal to or greater than 2.5%, then the surcharge shall be determined as follows:

(i) Surcharge amount is equal to or greater than 2.5% and less than 5% then the surcharge shall be 2.5% of the applicable fare.

(ii) Surcharge amount is equal to or greater than 5% and less than 7.5% then the surcharge shall be 5% of the applicable fare.

(iii) Surcharge amount is equal to or greater than 7.5% and less than 10% then the surcharge shall be 7.5% of the applicable fare.

(iv) Surcharge amount is 10% or greater, the surcharge shall be 10% of the applicable fare.

(c) The surcharge shall be applied to all fares, with resulting fares rounded to the nearest nickel.

(4) WSF shall estimate the need for a fuel surcharge on a quarterly basis, based upon the formula prescribed in this rule, and if a surcharge is to be added or modified, then the department shall:

(a) Notify ORCA partners and customers of the pending surcharge changes at least thirty days prior to implementation of said changes.

(b) Make all surcharge changes effective on the first of the month.

(5) Excess fuel costs shall be reset to zero at the beginning of the biennium.

(6) The amount of any fuel surcharge shall be shown separately on customer receipts.

(7) WSF shall provide an annual report to the legislature, OFM, and the Washington state transportation commission summarizing its fuel cost mitigation activities, including how the department has managed its costs as well as the application, performance and impact of fuel surcharges pursuant to this authority.

(8) To facilitate understanding on the part of WSF customers and to ensure a transparent process, an explanation of how the surcharge is applied, including a summary of the actual calculation of the surcharge percentage, shall be described on the WSF website.

(9) This rule goes into effect on October 1, 2011.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 47.56.030 and 47.60.315. WSR 13-18-019, § 468-300-080, filed 8/26/13, effective 9/26/13; WSR 11-18-034, § 468-300-080, filed 8/30/11, effective 10/1/11 and 5/1/12.]