

# Cyberattack shuts down Washington transportation website, bringing confusion, disruptions

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Key parts of the Washington State Department of Transportation's website have been down since Tuesday following what officials

described Thursday as a cyber security incident aimed at disrupting the flow of travel information posted online.

While the department's basic website and app are still accessible, most real-time information is not. As a result, the outage has caused major disruptions for anyone trying to track the chronically late ferries or navigate mountain passes as winter approaches. Statewide traffic cameras were restored Thursday morning, but the state's travel map, [mobile app](#), [ferry](#) vessel watch and online freight permits remain out of service.

The source and nature of the attack are under investigation, but so far, only internally. WSDOT spokesperson Barbara LaBoe said the incident has not been turned over to [law enforcement](#), but may be in the future. The IT team at WSDOT will complete its investigation before passing on what they've learned, LaBoe said.

"We will work closely with law enforcement when and if needed," she said.

LaBoe decline to provide more specifics, including when the website's technical difficulties were determined to be a security incident and when law enforcement might be notified, citing the ongoing investigation.

"We're working in close coordination with our federal partners," LaBoe said. "We can't go into details because the incident is under investigation."

Jaime Smith, spokesperson for Gov. Jay Inslee, said WSDOT has kept executive staff apprised of the situation. Inslee is currently in Australia on a trade mission.

WSDOT spokesperson Kris Abrudan said there's no indication the attack

has spread to other parts of the department's systems and appears to be affecting just the outward-facing website.

"We know this disruption is frustrating; our staff relies on the same disrupted tools and systems in their own travels," said Abrudan.

The lack of a website is particularly inconvenient for ferry travelers. Boats have been chronically off-schedule in recent years and it's become common practice to track their location on the state's app or website.

For many living on the Kitsap Peninsula or Salish Sea islands, the pre-set schedules have nearly lost meaning; without live tracking, the hobbled system is in the dark. Ferry crews Wednesday night posted a handwritten sign on a cone in the Bainbridge ferry terminal, telling passengers the boats were late and "off schedule" and to "watch for them," meaning look out toward the Sound to find the location of boats.

Passengers desperate for the live location of the ferries can use the Marine Traffic website, where the boats can found by their individual names.

The ferries' schedules are still accessible, providing riders with a loose idea of departure times. WSDOT is still sending email updates for late-arriving ferries, although the webpage to sign up is also down.

Meantime, WSDOT is providing updates on traffic, ferries and the state of its website on its [social media platforms](#), and traffic cameras are working again on the app.

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