



Mechanical problems force cancellation of two Steamship Authority ferry trips



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

The Steamship Authority ferry from Woods Hole to Martha's Vineyard.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

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The beleaguered Steamship Authority canceled a pair of ferry trips between Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod on Friday after mechanical problems sidelined one of its boats, according to an alert posted on the agency's [website](#).

The alert said a breaker connected to a rudder tripped Friday morning while the vessel was en route from Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard to Woods Hole in Falmouth. That breaker was quickly reset, and the 9:30 a.m. trip finished on schedule and "without incident," the alert said.

The boat was taken out of service so staff and Coast Guard officials could inspect and test it, prompting the authority to scrap two scheduled trips: a 10:45 a.m. journey from Woods Hole to Vineyard Haven and a 12 p.m. ride in the opposite direction, the alert said.

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The agency said the boat returned to service beginning with its 1:15 p.m. scheduled trip from Woods Hole to Vineyard Haven.

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“We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused,” the agency said.

The quasipublic authority, which ferries 3 million passengers annually to and from Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket has been under fire from state lawmakers and island residents after an [unprecedented slew of cancellations](#) in recent weeks caused by boats breaking down.

The issues Friday affected a vessel called the Island Home, one of three Steamship boats that has [experienced breakdowns](#) of late after undergoing upgrades at Rhode Island-based contractor Senesco Marine.

The Steamship Authority has cast blame on Senesco for many of the recent failures and has said it will demand money from the company for shoddy work. Senesco has not commented publicly.

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The authority paid Senesco \$18 million to overhaul one of the three boats. That vessel, called the Martha's Vineyard, has experienced numerous and repeated problems, including on Wednesday when its [elevator malfunctioned](#), briefly trapping seven passengers.

Not all of the recent problems have been blamed on Senesco. The head of the Steamship Authority, general manager Robert B. Davis, has acknowledged that his agency has also been at fault for some shortcomings. The authority's governing board has directed the agency to [hire consultants](#) to conduct a review.

Friday's cancellations came ahead of what's [forecast](#) to be a sunny, warm weekend.

Danny McDonald of Globe Staff contributed to this report. Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](#).

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