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Mechanical problems sideline Steamship Authority boat Tuesday



THE BOSTON GLOBE, FILE

Mechanical problems on the Katama vessel (left) forced the Steamship Authority to cancel a series of trips between Martha's Vineyard and Falmouth on Tuesday, Oct. 16, 2018.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

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Mechanical problems have, yet again, sidelined a Steamship Authority ferry, forcing the agency to cancel a series of scheduled trips between Martha's Vineyard and Falmouth Tuesday.

All trips scheduled for Tuesday aboard the Katama vessel were cancelled, the agency announced in emails to customers and on its website Tuesday morning.

The agency said customers with reservations would be contacted for rebooking, while service for standby passengers trying to leave the island was temporarily suspended, “but should reopen later tonight.”

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The authority said passengers should check its website for updates or call for more information.

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The announcements did not specify what the mechanical issues were.

The authority's fleet has been plagued by mechanical breakdowns this year — including during [portions](#) of its busy [summer season](#) — triggering [unprecedented](#) numbers of cancellations and, in some cases, [stranding passengers at sea](#).

The agency [blamed](#) some of the problems on an outside contractor, accusing the company of doing shoddy upgrade work to its boats, which the contractor [denied](#).

The lack of reliable service has angered tourists and islanders alike, prompting the agency to hire outside consultants to [review](#) its operations.

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Other [headaches](#) also harmed the agency's reputation, including in early July when one of its shuttle buses was destroyed after it [caught fire](#) in a parking lot and damaged other nearby vehicles.

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