

Shoddy Welds Keep Tusty Laid Up Until August 20

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Jay Barrett and Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The return of the Alaska State Ferry Tustumena, which has been in a Seward dry dock since November, has been pushed back for a third time. The Alaska Marine Highway System announced on Wednesday that faulty welds will mean the Tusty won't be sailing until near the end of August. Hundreds of passengers already booked on late summer sailings are affected.

The problem this time is shoddy work, as reportedly 80 percent of the welds made while working on the ship at the Seward Ships Drydock did not pass certification.

"The Coast Guard was inspecting some repairs to the Tustumena that were done by the Seward Ships Dry Dock, and it was revealed that the repairs did not meet U.S. Coast Guard certification for safety requirements," said Ferry system Spokesman Jeremy Woodrow. "More work will have to be done to the ship to make sure it's brought up to the certification standards of the U.S. Coast Guard."

The Tustumena entered a federal capital improvement project at the Seward Ship's Drydock in November. It was originally scheduled to return to service in April, but unexpected steel work postponed sailing until July 23. It will now not enter the water until August 20th.