

Cruise ship that was damaged in storm turns around again

February 29 2016



A Saturday, Feb. 27, 2016 photo provided by John Turell shows the television screen in a stateroom aboard the Anthem of the Seas cruise ship, where cruise director Abe Hughes and Captain Anders Ingobrigtsen explain to passengers that the cruise was being cut two days short because of a storm developing off Cape Hatteras. The ship is returning to its home port in Bayonne, N.J., after a squall and a norovirus outbreak threatened its current voyage. The ship is the same cruise ship that was battered by a major storm earlier this month. (AP Photo/John Turell) .

A cruise ship that was battered by a major Atlantic storm earlier this month was headed back to its home port Sunday as another squall and a norovirus outbreak threatened its current voyage.

Royal Caribbean tweeted on Saturday that the Anthem of the Seas ship will return to the port of Bayonne, New Jersey, "immediately to avoid a severe storm and provide guests with a comfortable journey back home."

"On a recent sailing, Anthem of the Seas experienced bad weather that was much worse than forecast; therefore, we want to be extra cautious about our (guests') safety and comfort when it comes to weather in the area." Cynthia Martinez, a spokeswoman for the Miami-based cruise line, told WNBC-TV in New York City. "That is why we have decided to head back to Cape Liberty immediately so that we can stay a safe distance from the storm."

John Turell, an executive with The Associated Press who is aboard the ship with his wife, said in an email that the ship's captain and its cruise director have made announcements about the norovirus. However, it's not clear how many people have been affected by the illness.

"Sanitation levels on the ship have been boosted," said Turell, the AP's regional television executive for the Northeast. "(Ship) workers are scurrying around like ants, scrubbing down handrails, tables and any other surfaces that can be washed."

He noted that life aboard the ship "appears quite normal" other than the very visible increased sanitation efforts.

Turell said passengers were told Saturday night that the cruise was being cut two days short because of a storm developing off Cape Hatteras. As a result, planned stops in Barbados and St. Kitts were being skipped and the ship was expected to arrive at its home port on Wednesday morning.

The voyage's premature end comes just weeks after the Anthem of the Seas made headlines for another stormy incident.

The ship was damaged a day after it set sail on Feb. 6 when it encountered 30-foot waves and hurricane force winds, and its 4,500 passengers hunkered down for hours.

One passenger's lawsuit claims that people had to hold onto their beds to keep from falling and injuring themselves.

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