

Mission Point Lighthouse Keeper Program

The Mission Point Lighthouse is located on the Old Mission Peninsula, just 18 miles north of Traverse City, Michigan. The lighthouse is owned by Peninsula Township and managed by the Parks Board. As a keeper, you'll stay in the living quarters of the lighthouse. Inside you'll find a fully equipped modern kitchen, a comfortable living room area, bedroom, and a bath. During your stay, you'll be responsible for greeting visitors and providing historical information about the lighthouse. You'll also spend time helping with general maintenance and other miscellaneous duties. Complete training is provided. Keepers are required to pay \$150 per week, which goes toward the upkeep of the Lighthouse, utilities, etc.

Start Date: May 1, 2009 – October 31, 2009 (keepers must commit by the week)

Position Type: Volunteer

Contact: Sonja Richards, MPL Manager
P.O. Box 98
Old Mission, MI 49673
Phone/Fax: 231-645-0759
Email: missionpointlighthouse@charter.net

Suitability: Adults, Seniors (one couple)

Difficulty: Not difficult

Responsibilities:

Keepers greet visitors and conduct interpretive guided tours of the tower; provide on-site presence to prevent vandalism of historic structures; perform routine grounds maintenance; perform light housekeeping including sweeping, washing windows, etc.; assist Historic Structures Preservation maintenance workers with planned maintenance projects; maintain visitation records; and monitor visitor activities for infractions of park regulations.

Living Quarters:

The living quarters of the lighthouse are well equipped with dishes, cooking utensils, appliances (coffee maker, toaster, microwave, etc.) even an ironing board and iron. Keepers provide their own bed sheets, pillows, blankets, towels and wash clothes. The quarters are heated, but not air-conditioned. Maximum occupancy of the living quarters is two people. We are not able to accommodate overnight guests.

Rules and Regulations:

The Mission Point Lighthouse is a state and national historic site. No smoking, alcoholic beverages or pets are permitted in or on the premises. Keepers are expected to be neat, well groomed and appropriately attired when on duty. Everyone must present themselves in the professional manner befitting hosts at a historic site.

Vehicle Access to the Lighthouse:

One parking space is available in the designated lighthouse parking area. Any camping or use of motor homes is not permitted. Guests are to park in the regular township park parking lot and walk to the lighthouse.

Application Procedures and Interviews

A form is enclosed for your convenience. Applicants must complete, sign and return the attached application form. The following items are also required:

1. A letter explaining why you want to be a Keeper.
2. A brief resume including your employment history and other experience.
3. Three personal letters of recommendation.
4. A copy of your driver's license.
5. Telephone interview.

Keeper's Experience

There are few lighthouses that have Keeper programs and that offer the participants an opportunity to live in an historic lighthouse. Working as a Keeper is a very rewarding learning experience. Keepers can thoroughly enjoy the time they spend here making new friends, learning new things, and having lots of fun with the experience of "Keeping a Lighthouse". The view, the sunsets from the tower and the atmosphere are unforgettable, as well as the hiking trails and the many attractions of the region. The greatest benefit of working at the Mission Point Lighthouse is the satisfaction of knowing that one's efforts have contributed to the restoration and preservation of an irreplaceable part of Michigan's history.

Mission Point Lighthouse

Lighthouse Keeper Volunteer Application

1. Name(s):

2. Mailing Address:

3. City:

State:

Zip:

4. Telephone Number:

5. Email:

6. What qualifications/skills/experience/education do you have that you would use in your volunteer work? (check all that apply)

- Carpentry
- Collections Management
- Clerical
- Computers
- Drafting/Graphics
- Education
- Exhibits
- Grant Writing
- Hand Power Tools
- Landscaping
- Marketing
- Museum Collections Management
- Other Trade Skills
- Photography
- Public Speaking
- Publicity
- Teaching
- Working with People
- Writing/Editing
- Other:

7. Have you volunteered before? If yes, briefly describe you volunteer experience.

A phone interview is required. You will be notified if you are selected for an interview.

Please check:

- I (we) have visited the Mission Point Lighthouse (Date of most recent visit: _____).
- I (we) have not been to the Mission Point Lighthouse.

Application Procedure

Please supply the following with your application.

1. A letter explaining why you want to be a Lighthouse Keeper.
2. A brief resume including your employment history and other experience.
3. Three personal letters of recommendation.
4. A copy of your driver's license.
5. On-site interview.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understood this entire application, including the explanation of the Keepers' responsibilities and guidelines. I understand that I am required to pay for my stay in full prior to arrival, and that if I should cancel without notice of at least two weeks, this money is non-refundable. I understand that there is no compensation for this position and also fully understand that, if accepted, I am agreeing to work at the lighthouse on the days and dates assigned to me. I understand that some aspects of the responsibilities, particularly the providing of tower tours, require vigorous health and ability to deal with the public and handle unexpected emergencies. I further understand that duties include performing routine cleaning and maintenance. I agree to a personal interview, to attend the required orientation session and to work all hours assigned to me if I am selected to be a resident Lighthouse Keeper.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Application MUST be signed.

Please mail to:

Sonja Richards
Mission Point Lighthouse Manager
P.O. Box 98
Old Mission, MI 49673
Phone/Fax: 231-645-0759

Email: missionpointlighthouse@charter.net

Mission Point Lighthouse Keeper's Handbook 2009

HISTORY INTRODUCTION:

As you walk along the boardwalk in front of the Lighthouse, you will notice the shallow waters and a reef extending out from the shore. In the 1860's a large ship sank on this reef and because of this wreck, Congress appropriated \$6,000 for a lighthouse to be constructed at the tip of the Old Mission Peninsula. However, with the onset of the Civil War, the establishment of a light station was not a priority. It wasn't until 1870 that the Light Station was completed. The first Keeper was Jerome Pratt who kept careful records of the weather and number of ships passing by.

The decline of sailing ships in favor of steamers can be seen by a few of Pratt's records: "In October of 1870 there were 69 ships, 53 of which were schooners and 16 steamers. In 1875 there were 101 steamers and 75 sailing vessels."

The next Keeper was Capt. John Lane and his wife Sarah. They began their twenty-four year tenure in 1881. Capt. John passed away on December 12, 1906 and Sarah became Acting Keeper and the only female Keeper in the history of Mission Point Lighthouse. She held this post until March 3, 1907 at which time James Davenport took over as Keeper. Over the next twenty-five years two other Keepers would also take the helm: William F. Green and Emil C. Johnson.

The lighthouse was decommissioned in 1933 when the old kerosene lamp was replaced by an automatic light placed on a steel tower on the shore. Later the light was mounted on an offshore buoy. Originally the lighthouse consisted of six rooms on the ground floor and a bedroom and supply room on the second floor. Above this was a room in the tower just ample enough for the light mechanism. The tower for the light was, at first, too low and sometime later, it was heightened and enlarged. At first whale oil was used to light the 5th order Fresnel lens that refracted and magnified its modest light source into an intense beam that could be seen up to 12 miles away.

The lighthouse and adjacent grounds have been owned by the Township since 1948. Since then able caretakers have lived in the lighthouse and during ensuing years, extensive remodeling has been done. The Lighthouse is on the National and State Historic Register.

Volunteer Keepers make it possible for many others to enjoy a visit to this historical site. This commitment is critical to continuing the restoration and preservation of Mission Point Lighthouse. Thank you for helping to keep the light shining.

SCOPE OF DUTIES:

The Keepers have several areas of duty. They include the tours of the tower landing and building/grounds maintenance. Everyone reports to and works under the guidance of the Peninsula Park Board.

The Tower

Keepers will emphasize safety precautions for the visitors as they proceed up into the tower. Keepers will also regulate the number of people in the tower at one time. Daily cleaning of the tower is necessary, including washing the windows, wiping down the railings and sweeping of the tower steps.

Building/Grounds Maintenance

Keepers will be responsible for building and grounds maintenance throughout the day. This may include painting, sweeping down buildings, mowing lawn, trimming grass, changing light bulbs, building or fixing displays, carpentry, etc. A list will be provided by the Peninsula Parks Board.

LIVING QUARTERS:

You will find the living quarters to be cozy and comfortable during your stay. They include the kitchen, living room, bedroom and bathroom.

WHAT'S HERE AND WHAT TO BRING:

The living quarters are comfortably furnished and the kitchen is well equipped with a stove, refrigerator, microwave, grill, waffle maker, toaster, coffee maker, dishes, utensils, pots and pans, plus an iron & ironing board. Caretakers provide all their own food, soap, shampoo and other household items such as paper towels, bathroom tissue, napkins and cleaning supplies. You will also need to bring bed sheets, blankets, pillows, towels and washcloths.

LIGHTHOUSE RESTORATION:

The Parks Board has ongoing restoration projects in accordance with the Secretary of Interiors' Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. No alterations to the facility, temporary or permanent, are permitted without prior written approval of the Parks Board.

GENERAL INTERIOR MAINTENANCE & APPEARANCE:

Please keep the display areas and living quarters as neat and clean as possible during your stay.

GENERAL EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE & APPEARANCE:

One of your duties is to keep the exterior of the light station clean and attractive. Keepers are asked to remove the trash from the site daily. Dispose of all trash in the trashcan.

Keepers are also asked to keep the sand/dirt swept from walks, porches and steps. This is necessary to maintain the appearance of the facility and to insure the safety of all.

Because the light station is a registered historic site, the use of campers and tents is not permitted. Keepers' vehicles must be parked in the designated lighthouse parking area. You are limited to one vehicle on the site.

Please do not leave personal items such as beach towels, chairs, shoes, rafts and grills on the porches and sidewalks or in other outdoor areas of the light station. There is a gas grill on site for caretaker usage. We want to ensure that our visitors have a clean, uncluttered view of the lighthouse in their photographs.

LIGHTHOUSE SECURITY:

All exterior doors must remain locked at all times. The only exterior door of the lighthouse that is ever left unlocked is the tower entrance during the hours the tower is open to the public. Upon arrival each Keeper will be issued one set of keys to the living quarters. Everyone should be in possession of his or her keys at all times to avoid being locked out of the lighthouse. The Park Board cannot be responsible for items that may be lost or stolen.

THE COLLECTIONS:

The collections of the Mission Point Lighthouse are defined as all accessioned historical materials. Through these collections the Peninsula Township preserves and interprets the Mission Point Lighthouse property and its significance to the economic and social development of the Old Mission Peninsula.

IMAGE AND IDENTIFICATION:

Keepers should always strive to provide visitors to the lighthouse with a positive experience similar to what they would find at other historical sites open to the public. Clothing may be casual and comfortable, but suitable for greeting visitors. Shorts and T-shirts are appropriate, but the following items are not:

- Tank tops
- Any clothing with holes
- Bathing suits
- Bare feet or flip-flops

Everyone will be given nametags to wear which identify them as caretakers. Please wear the nametag at all times when you are on duty.

GENERAL CONDUCT OF KEEPERS:

NO smoking is permitted inside the buildings. Smoking outside must be done well away from all buildings and all waste materials must be picked up and disposed of properly.

NO alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises, either inside or outside the lighthouse.

NO pets are permitted inside the lighthouse, except service animals.

TELEPHONE USE:

A telephone is provided in the Keeper's residence. Those who need to make long-distance calls are asked to charge them to their personal phone cards or reverse the charges as the Lighthouse does not have long distance service. You may bring your cell phone, but the reception is not always the best at this location.

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Keepers who receive inquiries from the press or other media about the Mission Point Lighthouse or its programs should refer the inquiries to the Park Board or Manager.

GUESTS:

The Park Board understands that friends and relatives are very interested in this unique experience and may want to visit you while you are here. Because Keepers are very busy during the hours the lighthouse is open, the Board has established some guidelines for guests:

1. There is no room for overnight guests.
2. Friends and relatives who visit during your stay are directed to park their vehicles in the regular parking area.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Fire/Police (emergency) 911

Lighthouse Phone 231-223-7324

ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT POLICY:

In order to assist all Keepers to handle emergencies properly, Emergency Handbooks (red notebooks) are available containing information on the following:

Animals in buildings

Bomb threats

Weather

Emergency evacuation procedures

Fire

Medical Problems

Power failure

Visitor problems

Thefts

Tornadoes

Water Damage

All of these will be discussed in-depth during the orientation process the day you arrive.