

2026 FPPL Docent Guide



Friends of Pemaquid Point Lighthouse

<https://www.pemaquidpointlight.org/>

**A Chapter of the
American Lighthouse Foundation
<https://lighthousefoundation.org/>**

Friends of Pemaquid Point Lighthouse

PO Box 367

Damariscotta, ME 04543-0367

Tower Phone 677-3266

**Lighthouse Park
Fishermen's Museum: 677-2494
Entrance Gate: 677-2492**

Friends of Pemaquid Point Lighthouse Executive Board:

Dom Pucci, Chairman
207-677-2279 (H)
847-370-0967 (M)

Docent Scheduling and Recruiting:

Adair Heyl, Director of Docents
207-644-8163 (H)
757-537-4395 (M)

Store:

Steve Whitfield, Store Director
207-242-6609 (M)

Finances:

Bruce Bykowski, Treasurer
804-844-1126 (M)

Internet Presence and Media:

Sue Bergherr, Internet Director
405-209-0351 (M)

Our social media accounts:

INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/pemaquidpointlighthouse/>

WEBSITE: www.pemaquidpointlight.org

DOCENT NEWS: <https://www.pemaquidpointlight.org/docent-news/>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/pemaquidpointlighthouse>

General Docent Notes:

- For those of you sharing shifts, you and your share teammates should establish a firm schedule of your individual dates and share this with Adair at the beginning of the season and whenever it's been updated, so her published schedule has all the current information.
- Please be prompt for your scheduled shift, dressed in clean and neat clothing, including your FPPL Polo Shirt when it's warm enough. No beach coverups, cut off shorts, flip flops, *etc.* We want to present a professional image to our guests.
- Call Adair Heyl if you are ill so she can find a replacement ASAP.
- Your key responsibilities are below, along with a goal of keeping the line moving and sharing interesting information about our and other lighthouses in area.
 - Instruct guests on our safety rules
 - Emphasize to not touch the lens
 - Ask for \$1 per person minimum suggested donation
 - Give brief PPL history as guests wait to climb the tower
- No guest pets of any sort are allowed in the lantern room; service animals can enter the vestibule, but cannot climb the tower. Docents may not bring pets with them during their shift.

Opening the Lighthouse for the Day

- 1) Unlock the door; store the lock in the left cabinet drawer under the window.
- 2) Turn on the covered light switch to the left of the door as you enter the tower.
- 3) Open the entry room window and insert the screen or post to hold it open.
- 4) Check if the fan in the window at the base of the stairwell is running. It's on a timer set to run during our normal hours.
- 5) Lantern Room Fan turns ON/OFF when you turn ON/OFF the light switch.
- 6) If appropriate, open the Lantern Room Scuttle Door.
- 7) Place signs on the building, fence, and the gate:
 - a) **Rules** sign goes on the fixed front fence with a rope.
 - b) **Historic Registry** sign hangs on the front outside wall of the tower on the nail to the left of the door as you face the door to enter the tower.
 - c) **OPEN** sign hangs on gate.
- 8) Secure fence and door open with the looped rope.
- 9) Make sure the container for money is on the counter to the left of the tower stairwell door with \$25 one dollar bills left from the day before.
- 10) Tidy the area, and sweep, if necessary.
- 11) Tell guests that we request a minimum \$1 donation per person to climb the tower to cover our expenses, and emphasize the lack of any financial support from Bristol Township.
- 12) Purchases & Tower Entrance donations are made in cash or checks made to "Friends of Pemaquid Point Lighthouse". If necessary, make change from the cash container. The Seagull Shop has an ATM where guests can get cash.
- 13) Hold or wear the clicker (on the lanyard) so you remember to count each guest that climbs the tower.
- 14) There is a landline phone in the tower by the window. In case of an emergency, dial 911 for Bristol Fire and Rescue.

Closing the Tower for the Day

- 1) At closing time, bring in all non-fixed signs from the fence and gate, plus the historic marker on the tower, and place them in the entry room against the wall.
- 2) Usher the line of last visitors for the day inside the fenced area.
- 3) Close the fence and the door when the line decreases.
- 4) Close and latch the outside fence gate when all visitors have left.
- 5) Sweep and tidy the area. Empty the trash can into the garbage can at the entrance to the walkway of the Fisherman's Museum.
- 6) Remove the screen insert or post and close and **LOCK** the entry room window.
- 7) Place the donations into an envelope located in the cabinet below the money box. Leave 25, one-dollar bills in the cash box. Fill out the daily donation form, logging your name and the morning docent, the date, and the **number of guests for day**. Place this in the envelope with the cash. You do not have to count the money.
- 8) **TURN OFF** the lights and fan in window as base of stairwell. **Make sure the foyer window is locked!**
- 9) Padlock the door (lock should have been placed in the drawer to the left of the window in the foyer when the tower was opened for the first shift). Give it a tug to make sure it is secure.
- 10) Leave the envelope with donations in Dom Pucci's red cooler beside his garage at 126 Drebelbis Point Road in New Harbor.

Lighthouse Safety Rules

- Make sure the visitors are wearing safe shoes for the climb. Stable footwear is a must. Flip flop wearers or women with open back shoes may have difficulty on the ladder, warn them to be careful. No high heels are allowed.
- Check the children's height with a measuring stick to make sure they are 46". This is an insurance mandate. Don't let parents argue with you about how their kids are such agile climbers; **NO means NO**.
- No more than 5 adults can fit comfortably in the lantern room at one time, but family groups of 6 are allowed, if there are children.
- This lighthouse is not handicapped accessible. Guests who are not fully ambulatory and cannot climb the stairs under their own are not allowed.
- All people must come down the stairwell before the next group may climb. There are 30 spiral stairs, a platform, and 7 steps on a ladder attached to the tower wall to climb through a hatch door into the lantern room.
- Tell climbers to face the ladder as they ascend and descend. The railing should always be on the climber's left, descender's right.
- No babies or children in arms or carriers may climb the tower with adults.
- No pets may climb or are allowed in the lantern room, but service animals may be allowed into the vestibule. No Docents' pets in the Tower or Vestibule.
- The narrow hatch at the top of the ladder will limit large people from access. In the foyer there is a yellow painted area designating the size of the opening into the lantern room. Let visitors decide whether they will fit through the opening; if they want to try, let them.
- No one is allowed on the catwalk outside the lantern room, including docents.
- On hot days, let guests know the temperature in the lantern room; thermometer is on upper left of threshold wall leading from the vestibule into the tower.

Lighthouse Safety Rules (cont'd)

- Children under 16 must be with an adult and under control. The docent is always in charge: If a child is throwing a tantrum, don't let them climb.
- Both hands must be free of bags for climbing the ladder. No large backpacks, tripods, or gear that might scratch or break the lens are allowed. Offer to keep their gear on the counter behind you where it is safe while they climb; they will abide by this rule.
- No beverages or food is allowed with climbers; offer to keep on the counter until they return. They need hands for climbing.
- Anyone visibly intoxicated is not allowed.
- There is a first aid kit in the cabinet under the money container.
- There is a telephone on the cabinet by the window for local calls. To reach Bristol Fire and Rescue, dial 911. They respond within minutes.
- In the case of inclement weather, a docent may decide not to open (or to close, mid-shift). Once the metal stairwell gets wet, it is too slippery for guests to climb safely. The tower must be closed in the case of lightning or thunder. If the morning docent decides to close mid-shift, the docent should call the afternoon docent as well as Dom or Adair to report the closure. In some instances, the tower may be closed for the morning shift but still open for the afternoon shift if the ground dries enough for safe climbing.
- If nature calls, there is a sign in the lighthouse on the cabinet that states the lighthouse is closed for a brief period. Tape the sign outside the door and lock it. Guests must wait until you return to enter the lobby.
- Dom has added a Styrofoam pink pool noodle beside the door to keep more than one group of 5 from entering the lighthouse at one time. He reports that fire code says that we only can have 11 in the lighthouse: 5 in the lantern room, 5 in the lobby, plus a docent. We allow a family of 6 to climb if 2 or 3 are children, so decide what is safe and practical. It is the docent's call, so use your judgement.

Volunteer Guidelines

- Please be prompt for your scheduled time at the lighthouse. Allow ample time to get through the line at the gatehouse (no passing on the right or going in the exit side).
- Give a short history briefing for those waiting to climb.
- Make sure the visitors are wearing safe shoes for the climb.
- Check the children's height of 46" with the stick. This is an insurance mandate.
- Remind visitors NOT TO TOUCH THE LENS!
- No more than 5 people, 6 in family groups, in the lantern room at one time.
- All people must come down before the next group can climb.
- There are 30 spiral stairs, a platform and 7 steps on a ladder through a hatch door.
- Face the ladder as you go up and come down.
- Handle is always on the left.
- Count visitors with the clicker and at the end of the day enter the total on the Daily Donation form.
- Remind visitors that their donations are our only source of income.
 - The Park Entrance Fee goes into the Bristol Town Parks & Rec account. They do not give us any financial support.
- The lighthouse belongs to the US Coast Guard, but is leased to the American Lighthouse Foundation and maintained by our chapter, Friends of Pemaquid Point Lighthouse

Lighthouse Safety Rules for Visitors

- DO NOT TOUCH the Fresnel lens in the lantern room, it's irreplaceable!
- Children must be 46 inches tall to climb the ladder at the top.
- No babies in arms or carriers or pets.
- No more than 5 people (6 in a family group) in the lantern room at once.
- The lighthouse is not handicapped accessible. You must be fully ambulatory to climb it.
- The narrow hatch at the top of the ladder will limit large people from access. If you're concerned, ask your Docent.
- Stable footwear is a must. Warn flip/flop wearers to be careful. No high heels!
- No one is allowed on the catwalk outside the lantern room.
- Children under 16 must be with an adult and under control.
- Both hands must be free of bags for climbing the ladder.
- No large backpacks, tripods or gear that might scratch the lens.
- Anyone visibly intoxicated will be asked to leave.
- There are 30 spiral stairs and 7 steps up a ladder. If you have doubts, don't go up.
- Face the ladder as you ascend and descent; there is a handle on the left.
- When you leave the lantern room, please turn so your back faces the hatch opening and hold the handle on your left, going down the ladder facing it. You may turn around on the platform and go down the spiral staircase forward. Please watch where you are placing your feet at all times.

Topics for Visitors

- DO NOT TOUCH the Fresnel lens in the lantern room. The oil left behind will cause that part of the glass prism to expand and contract at a different rate than the surrounding glass, which will cause it to crack.
- This is the lighthouse depicted on the state of Maine's quarter, with the three masted schooner the Victory Chimes. We have the original die from the US Mint displayed in the shadow box on the wall. In the lantern room upstairs, you will see the original fourth order Fresnel lens placed here in 1857.
- This is a working lighthouse with a flashing 6 second white light. A photo-voltaic cell turns the light on at night and off at daylight. The tower is built on a 40-foot cliff and the tower is 39 feet tall, making the light 79 feet above mean high water. The new LED light can be seen 14 miles out to sea on a clear night.
- This tower is owned by the Coast Guard and leased to the American Lighthouse Foundation. It is managed by our chapter, Friends of Pemaquid Point Lighthouse, a volunteer group. Our only funding is from your donations and donated grants. We have lighthouse maps and passports, along with other gifts available for purchase.
- In 1934 this was the first lighthouse in Maine that was automated when the kerosene-burning lamp was converted to an automated acetylene gas apparatus.