



Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse Social Story Guide



Hello!

We are so excited that you will be visiting us soon! We hope you will find this **Social Story Guide** helpful before and during your visit. This guide can be helpful in planning visits for anyone who would like to know what to expect. This preview of your visit may help you to picture what it will be like to visit and choose what you would like to experience. If you would like a map of the exhibits, you can find one in the Fog Signal Building when you arrive or at our website at mackinacparks.com.

Old Mackinac Point Visitor Information

I can bring drinks and snacks. There may also be water and some snacks available in the museum store inside the Fog Signal Building. There are restrooms in the park next to the lighthouse.

I will not throw or kick gravel, sticks, or anything else while I am visiting the lighthouse. If I need to run around, there is a big park outside the lighthouse.

Sometimes the fog whistle will make a loud noise. It only lasts a few seconds and will be over quickly.

The temperature can change fast at the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. Most days it is useful to bring a jacket just in case I might need one.

I'm going to visit the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. It is a museum inside a lighthouse built over 100 years ago, so some of the buildings are very old. I can see the lighthouse, the shoreline, and the Mackinac Bridge from the parking lot. The bridge is almost 5 miles long and connects the upper and lower peninsulas of Michigan. Sometimes cars and trucks driving on the bridge can be very noisy, even at the lighthouse.



There is a big grassy park with lots of trees around the lighthouse. There are many paths to walk through the park and along the beach. It is ok to walk along the beach, but swimming in the water here can be dangerous and is not recommended.



When I get to the lighthouse, I will first go into the Fog Signal Building. It is made of bricks and has a tall chimney. I may need to buy a ticket at the admissions desk. I can get a map that will have the locations of bathrooms, exhibits and other interesting things to see. The map has a schedule that will tell me when programs, tours and demonstrations will be taking place.



The Fog Signal Building is small and can get crowded and noisy. Sometimes there are many people talking at once, and there is usually music playing on a radio. There is a machine in a closet that makes noise after the fog whistle is used.



If I want to climb the lighthouse tower, I learn about the rules for this tour in the Fog Signal Building. The museum employee working at the admissions desk will make sure I can safely climb the tower. I need to be at least four feet tall and be wearing shoes to go on the tour. I might not be able to go on the tour, but that's ok- there are many other things to do at the lighthouse, including two different videos to watch about going up the tower.



Once I leave the Fog Signal Building, I am on a sidewalk leading to the lighthouse keepers' quarters and tower. It is a short walk to the lighthouse, but there are benches along the sidewalk if I want to sit down to rest or just look at the outside of the lighthouse.



The outside of the lighthouse is made of yellow brick, and it has a bright red roof. Some people say the lighthouse looks like a castle. There is a tall, round tower with a lot of windows and a black roof at the top. This is where the light used to be.



To go inside the lighthouse, I walk up a ramp on the front porch and go through a green screen door.



On my way to the lighthouse keepers' quarters, I might meet a museum interpreter dressed in a lighthouse keeper's uniform or other historical clothing. They are there to answer my questions, help me find my way around the lighthouse, and lead tours. If I need help with something, I can ask the interpreter.



Inside the lighthouse keepers' quarters, there are several rooms to explore. One of the first rooms I see is set up to look like the parlor, or living room. This room is decorated the way it may have looked just over 100 years ago. A recording of old music is playing in this room.



If I walk past the parlor and turn left, I can see two other rooms, the dining room and the kitchen. Both are also decorated the way they may have looked over 100 years ago, when the Marshall family lived here.



I can walk down a hallway to get a closer look at the dining room and kitchen.



To see more of the lighthouse keepers' quarters, I turn around once I get to the kitchen and go back the same way.



Outside the parlor there is a staircase going up to the second floor. I can go up the stairs to see more exhibits. If I don't want to go upstairs, there is a video about the second floor I can watch later as I explore the rest of the first floor.



At the top of the stairs there are three rooms. I can look at two bedrooms decorated the way they may have looked over 100 years ago.



I can go into the third room, the Marshall Gallery. There are big pictures on the walls describing the family who lived at the lighthouse. I can also look out the windows to see the shoreline and the Mackinac Bridge.



I go back down the stairs to keep exploring the lighthouse keepers' quarters.



At the bottom of the stairs I turn left. There is another door across from the parlor, and I go into that room.



This room is pink, and has a display with a lighthouse lens in the middle. The lens display shows how a lighthouse works, but the light can be very bright if I stand in certain spots while looking at it. If the light hurts my eyes, I just need to move a little to the right or left.



The are other displays in the room with the lens. I can look at them before moving on to the next room.



To explore more of the lighthouse, I go through another door and turn left. The section of the building has exhibits about the science of light and sound.



There is another lighthouse lens here. This lens is lit up and spinning. If the bright light hurts my eyes, I can look at the many other exhibits in this room.



There is a screen with short movies about the second floor and the lighthouse tower. If I want to watch them, I push a button to start and listen to the movie using a telephone. I put the telephone back on its hook when I am finished.



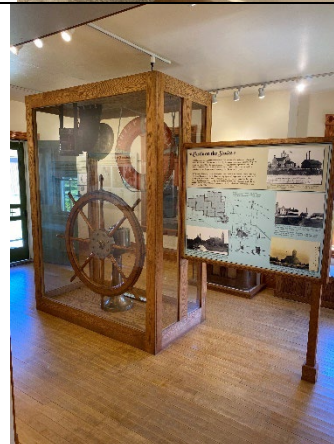
There are many other exhibits in this room. Most have buttons to push to make displays light up, move around, or make noise to help explain how light and sounds work. I make sure to let other people have a turn using these exhibits.



One exhibit has a metal hand that vibrates and makes noise if I get close to it. I don't have to touch the hand if I don't want to, and the noise will turn off automatically after a few seconds.



There are more exhibits about the lighthouse and lighthouse keepers in the next room. I can walk around and explore these displays.



If I am going on a tour of the lighthouse tower, the museum interpreter will find me a few minutes before the tour starts. We will gather in the service room at the base of the tower.



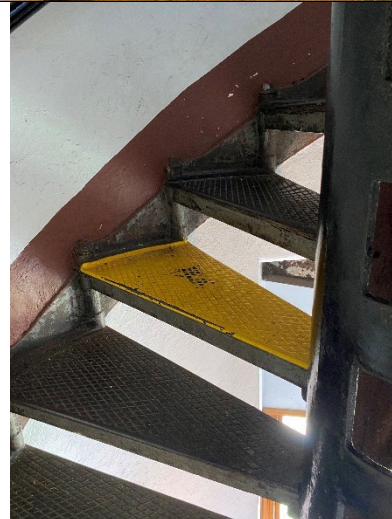
The museum interpreter will go over some safety rules before we go up the tower. I will listen carefully to these rules and instructions.



We start the tower tour by climbing a spiral staircase. There are 51 steps to the top. I will use the handrail while climbing.



Near the top of the stairs there is a step that is painted yellow. When I get to the yellow step I duck so I don't hit my head on a piece of metal above the stairs.



After I get under the low spot, I can stand up straight again. My tour group is now in the watch room. I can take a break here and catch my breath as the museum interpreter tells me about how the lighthouse works.



The watch room can get very crowded with other people. If I get too uncomfortable, I can ask to go back down the stairs to the exhibits.



The next part of the tour goes up a ladder into the lantern room. I listen to the museum interpreter for instructions about how to climb the ladder, and wait my turn to go up. At the top of the ladder I will need to climb through a small hole. If I don't want to climb the ladder, I can ask to stay in the watch room.



I use both hands to grab the ladder railings, and use my feet to climb one step at a time until I get to the lantern room.



Once I am in the lantern room, I move away from the ladder to make room for other people. I look out the big windows at the lake and the bridge. The museum interpreter will point out interesting things to see and tell me about how the lighthouse worked.



If it is sunny outside, the lantern room can be very warm. The tour will only stay there for a few minutes.



Once the interpreter is done talking, they will tell me how to go back down the ladder to the watch room. They will go first, and I will watch them as an example. I will follow their instructions when it is my turn to climb down the ladder.



The interpreter leads the way back down the tower. To start going down the stairs, I sit down on a step to duck under the low spot. I use the handrail as I go down the rest of the steps.



Once I get to the bottom of the tower, my tour is over. I can now explore the rest of the lighthouse grounds!



I go outside and see two more buildings behind the lighthouse, near the parking lot.



The small brown and white building is the Barn. There are displays for me to look at inside.



There are also two movies playing in the Barn. One is about shipwrecks, and the other is a tour of the lighthouse tower. Both movies last about 15 minutes. If I want to watch them, I sit quietly on the benches.



Once I am done visiting the Barn, I walk on a sidewalk to the bigger brown building. This is the Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Museum.



The shipwreck museum is cool and dark inside, so it can be a nice place to relax for a few minutes. There is a recording of wind and wave sounds playing in the museum. There are many things to see inside the shipwreck museum, including artifacts recovered from shipwrecks and large models of ships. Once I am done looking around I can go back outside.



At certain times of day, there are demonstrations of the fog whistle. The museum interpreter will let me know when the demonstration is going to start. If I want to watch, I will go to the lawn outside the Fog Signal Building. The whistle can be loud, so if I don't want to hear it I can stay inside the lighthouse keepers' quarters or the shipwreck museum.



I listen to the museum interpreter explain how the fog whistle works and how it was used. When it is time to sound the whistle, the interpreter will tell me to cover my ears. The whistle will blow three times. It will be loud, but will only last a few seconds. I can ask the interpreter questions after the demonstration is over.



Once I have explored all of the lighthouse buildings and exhibits and am ready to do something else, I exit by going back through the Fog Signal Building.



Thank you so much for visiting Old Mackinac Point! We hope you enjoyed your visit and can come to see us again.