



Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum Keeper Handbook 2025

P.O. Box 43 • 15500 N. Lighthouse Pt. Rd. • Northport, Michigan 49670
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MISSION STATEMENT:

The purpose of the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum is to provide educational opportunities that enhance the understanding of the area's maritime heritage. Towards this goal it must effectively restore and maintain the cultural landscape for the benefit of the community.

INTRODUCTION:

The Grand Traverse Light Station stood vacant after closing in 1972. By 1985 a local group had organized and formed the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum (GTLM) with the goal of preserving the historic buildings and creating an interesting and educational "living museum" for the public to enjoy.

Since the lighthouse opened to the public on Memorial Day, 1987, thousands of people have visited and climbed the tower for a spectacular view of Lake Michigan and Manitou Passage. The Fog Signal Building has also been restored and houses some new exhibits, as well as a restored foghorn.

The historic site and buildings are leased from the State of Michigan by the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit. We are solely funded by donations from our supporters, lighthouse admissions fee and proceeds from the gift shop.

As a keeper, you join many other individuals whose commitment and dedication over the years has contributed to the upkeep and restoration of our lighthouse. You make it possible for many others to visit this historical site. You represent the lighthouse every minute of your stay here. We couldn't do it without you. Thank you for keeping the light shining.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:

Main Season: (Apr-Oct)

Keepers work for a period of one week. The cost is \$200 per week/per person. Membership is not required, but we do encourage you to support the GTLM with annual membership. All keepers arrive on Thursday afternoon/evening. Each Keeper gets one day off a week, either Monday or Tuesday. Keepers depart by 10 am on Thursday morning.

The lighthouse and gift shop are open daily to the public during the following advertised times. Times are subject to change without notice.

10 am to 4 p.m.

April, May, Labor Day through October

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Memorial Day through Labor Day

Off Season: (Nov-March)

Keepers work for a 3-day period, arriving on Thursday by 4 pm. Workdays are Friday, Saturday and Sunday (10 am to 3 pm), with departure on Monday by 10 am. The cost is \$100 per person. Keepers may extend their off- season program for \$25 per person/per day. Extended days can be used for a day off and/or projects.

If you plan to arrive after 4 pm, you will be provided with the code for the keeper apartment door to get in. There are no arrivals on Friday morning. Your orientation will be at 9:30 am on Friday morning. If you are going to be late, please let us know (231) 386-7195. You may pull your vehicle up to the lighthouse parking lot for unloading. Once unloaded move your vehicle back to the parking lot in a space marked Lighthouse Staff. No vehicles may be left up by the lighthouse overnight for any reason.

Thursday move-out time is 10:00 a.m. You may pull your vehicle into the lighthouse parking lot for loading. Make sure you have removed all personal and food items and completed your morning duties (flags, dehumidifiers, etc.) Also make sure your bedding and any used dish towels have been washed and dried. Please put them back on the beds or kitchen.

LIVING QUARTERS:

You will find the living quarters to be cozy and comfortable during your stay. The keepers share the kitchen facilities, the living room and the upstairs bathroom. The staff shares the upstairs bathroom. There are two bedrooms, one upstairs and one downstairs. Both have twin beds.

The living quarters are comfortably furnished, and the kitchen is well equipped with a stove, refrigerator, microwave, toaster, coffee maker, dishes, utensils, pots and pans. We provide household items such as bathroom tissue and cleaning supplies. Let us know if you are running short of any item.

We supply laundry supplies for the washer and dryer in the basement. Bring your own food and personal toiletries and pillows. We supply clean mattress pads, towels and bedding. Keepers are required to leave the apartment clean upon departure. A specific cleaning list will be provided.

Keepers are expected to follow GTLM policies and procedures set forth by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director.

SCOPE OF KEEPER DUTIES:

The GTLM keepers have three primary areas of duty. They include the lighthouse admissions desk, fog signal building and building/grounds maintenance. Everyone reports to and works under the guidance of the Executive Director. Listed below is the scope of duties for each position. Keepers will rotate between **all** positions throughout the week. You will oversee the museum admissions and the fog signal building during **all** opening hours. Daily cleaning of all public areas is necessary, including sweeping, vacuuming, insect removal, and window washing as needed. Do not touch the artifacts without training. There are two-way radios for keepers to use. These are located at the admissions desk and gift shop. The radios keep you connected should you need assistance, breaks, or have questions.

Admissions Desk

Keepers provide an enjoyable, knowledgeable and hospitable environment for visitors entering the lighthouse museum. Collecting the admission fee, helping children with the GTLM Treasure Hunt and daily cleaning procedures will be necessary. Emphasize safety precautions, especially how to safely climb the steps. Four people are allowed in the tower at one time.

Fog Signal Building

Keepers greet visitors to the Fog Signal Building, collect the admission tickets and provide a short, guided tour of the shipwreck exhibit. In addition, we will train you to demonstrate the ROV (remote operated vehicle) and provide information about the shipwreck expeditions past and present. All historical information will be provided prior to your tour of duty.

Building and Grounds Maintenance

Keepers will be responsible for building and grounds maintenance throughout the day. This may include painting, sweeping down buildings, changing light bulbs, building or fixing displays, carpentry, etc. Certain restrictions apply due to our status as a historic site, so please talk to the Executive Director to see what projects are available.

LIGHTHOUSE RESTORATION:

The museum 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 Board of Directors.

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 GTLM trash cans by the shed. 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 ensure the safety of all.

The use of campers and tents is permitted in the campground only. Keeper vehicles must be parked in spaces designated Lighthouse Staff keeper, or couple is limited to one vehicle on the site at any time.

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 lighthouse. We want to ensure that our visitors have a clean, uncluttered view of the lighthouse in their photographs.

LIGHTHOUSE SECURITY:

All exterior doors must always remain locked. The only exterior door of the lighthouse that is ever left unlocked is the museum entrance during the hours the museum is open to the public. You will be expected to work & be on site during the hours the lighthouse and gift shop is open. **PLEASE NOTE: OPERATING TIMES MAY CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.**

Even though there are closets in the living quarters that can be locked, as can the upstairs bedroom door, we recommend that you do not bring any unnecessary valuable items. The GTLM is not responsible for items that may be lost or stolen.

THE COLLECTIONS:

The collections of the GTLM are defined as all accessioned historical materials. Through these collections GTLM preserves and interprets the Grand Traverse Lighthouse property and its significance to the economic and social development of the Leelanau Peninsula. The collection documents home life, work life and community life since the lighthouse was commissioned in 1852, with special attention given to “life of a lighthouse keeper and his family”. The Museum Committee is responsible for all aspects of the historical collections. **Please do not move or handle any artifacts without the permission of the Executive Director.**

IMAGE AND IDENTIFICATION

Keepers should always strive to provide visitors to the lighthouse with a positive experience like 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 and bare feet.

Everyone will be given name tags to wear which identify them as keepers. Please always wear your name tag when you are on duty. Keepers are encouraged, but not required, to wear the Grand Traverse Lighthouse attire that you can purchase at a significant discount.

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 open flames of any kind are allowed inside the historic buildings.
- NO alcoholic beverages are allowed in the Lighthouse.
- NO pets are permitted inside the historic buildings, except seeing eye dogs and therapy pets.

TELEPHONE USE:

Keepers are welcome to use the telephone for local calls. Those who need to make **long distance calls are asked to charge them to their personal phone cards** or reverse the charges. Please do not accept collect calls except in an emergency. The number at the **museum (includes offices) and keeper quarters is (231) 386-7195, and the gift shop (231) 386-9145.** You may bring your cell phone, but the reception is not reliable at this location.

LEELANAU STATE PARK REGULATIONS:

The only access to the Lighthouse is through the Leelanau State Park. You will be given a GTLM park pass upon arrival. This pass allows you free access to the Park only during your Keeper stay. All other vehicles must pay a daily or yearly fee to enter. Make sure you stop at the ranger station, tell them who you are, and let them direct you. You are only allowed to pull up to the lighthouse to load and unload your vehicle. At the end of your tour of duty, the parking pass must be returned to a staff member. **Cars may not be parked near the lighthouse overnight for any reason. They must be parked in the designated parking spaces marked "staff parking".**

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Keepers who receive inquiries from the press or other media about the GTLM or its programs should refer the inquiries to the Executive Director.

GIFT SHOP DISCOUNTS:

GTLM keepers are you entitled to a 20% discount on purchases made in the gift shop only during the week of your stay, except for those items on sale. The discount applies to purchases made for your personal use and may not be extended to friends or relatives who may visit during your stay.

STORM/EMERGENCY POLICY:

Responsibility for closing the facilities remains with the Executive Director. When the facilities are open to the public during storms or other community emergencies, Keepers will be expected to be at their positions. A weather radio is located at the admissions desk. Please keep this radio on to be aware of alerts and warnings.

GUESTS:

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

- Keepers will be living in the north apartment. We do not allow for unauthorized overnight guests.
- Friends and relatives who visit during your stay are directed to park their vehicles in the State Park parking area. All visitors must pay the State Park Vehicle entry fee.
- Friends and relatives are not permitted to help in the fog signal building, at the admissions desk, or in the tower. They are asked not to visit with the Keepers while on duty. **Keepers are asked to entertain their guests after the lighthouse closes at 5:00 P.M. (4:00 P.M. in May and after Labor Day).**

DAYS OFF:

Keepers are scheduled for one day off a week. The executive director will let you know which day works best for all involved. It is important for all to take advantage of this break. Staff can direct you to local areas of interest, restaurants, shops and activities. **Days off are scheduled for Monday or Tuesday. Everyone is required to be onsite on Wednesday and stay through Thursday morning to handle the stations and clean the keeper apartment before departure. If you need to leave early, please make arrangements with the Executive Director prior to your visit. Keepers who leave early without approval will not be allowed to participate in the program in the future.**

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Fire/Police (emergency) 911

Stef Staley, Executive Director 231-499-1787 (cell)

State Park Ranger Station (DNR) 231-386-5422

Lighthouse Office/Keeper Residence Phone 231-386-7195

Gift Shop Phone 231-386-9145

ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT POLICY:

To assist all keepers to handle emergencies properly, Emergency Handbooks (red notebooks) are located in the admissions area, gift shop, keeper's living quarters and Executive Director's office. You were also sent a copy with your orientation packet.

Animals in buildings

Weather

Fire

Power failure

Thefts

Water Damage

Bomb threats

Emergency evacuation procedures

Medical Problems

Visitor problems

Tornadoes

Most medical problems should be handled by the DNR staff which have been trained in First Aid procedures.