

Lighthouses (Slide 1 - Title Slide)

Purpose of Lighthouses (Slide 2)

Lighthouses are navigational tools for ships. Lighthouses play an important role in navigation and communication. Regarding communication, lighthouses are needed for ships to communicate with each other. Horns and bells act as fog signals to warn ships in the area. The lighthouses are painted differently based on their backgrounds (light or dark) to be identified by ships. They have different rates of flashes of lights to distinguish them from other lighthouses. Today, radio signals are used to communicate with ships and lighthouses are run and monitored remotely or by machines, contrary to the past when they were attended by lighthouse keepers.

Regarding navigation, the lighthouses have lights that are projected outward into the sea to guide ships and help them navigate the vast waters. When there is fog, the light illuminates the water so that barriers like rocks are more distinguished and stand out in the deep, dark waters. The higher the lighthouse is above sea level, the farther the light will be seen. So, some lighthouses are built to be short to help local ships navigate. Others are built taller to assist ships that are farther away in navigation.

History of Lighthouses Pt.1 (Slide 3)

The oldest lighthouse in the world is the Pharos of Alexandria, which was built from 280 to 247 BCE in Pharos, Alexandria, Egypt. It is about 400 feet. In 1303 A.D, it was destroyed by an earthquake and some ruins remain. Later, in 1480, the Sultan of Egypt at the time built a fort on the land at the location of the lighthouse with the fallen stone and remains that were left.

Although the Pharos of Alexandria was the first lighthouse built, the Tower of Hercules is the oldest lighthouse still standing, at 187 ft. It was built in the 2nd century CE (101 AD – 200 AD) in A Coruña, Galicia, Spain.

In 1719, the first fog signal in colonial America was used at Boston Harbor.

History of Lighthouses Pt. 2 (Slide 4)

In 1789, the United States Lighthouse Establishment was formed and it is run by the Treasury Department. Because this occurred on August 7th, National Lighthouse Day is on that day every year. This law also gave the federal government responsibility over the lighthouses in the US.

Fog bells were first used in the US in 1820.

And in 1968, the Lighthouse Automation and Modernization Program, aka LAMP, was started by the Coast Guard. In 2000, the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act was passed to support lighthouses and to recognize their importance to the maritime industry. This act also allowed organizations, like MMNCNY, to preserve historic lighthouses.

Slide 5 - Sources

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