

THE ROLE OF LIGHTSTATION SERVICES

There is a wide appreciation for the many services provided at Lightstations. It is the ability of the Lightkeepers to adapt to the changing (sometimes by the hour) requirements of their work that makes the variety of services possible, but the effectiveness of the services is co-related to the fact they are performed from platforms where infrastructure is in place, where the geographic position has 'history' (for understanding of implications current conditions, for long term weather data collection, and for other scientific studies), and where the location is strategic (visual expanse, and landfall or traffic correction).

Prioritizing as conditions warrant, lightkeepers can synchronously perform such duties as: monitor VHF radio frequencies, keep an eye out for changing weather conditions, visually ensure a vessels or air traffic make it safely through treacherous territory, and perform maintenance tasks. At any given time they are available to assist any government operation. The variety of responsibilities ensures a broad awareness of surroundings, an immensely valuable asset which helps to assist a variety of government department programs.

At present Staffed Lightstations are active participants in:

- Search and Rescue (Lt Stns assist in searches, provide pumps, perform first aid, stand by or escort, offer sanctuary, act as staging grounds for medevacs and for large scale rescue efforts, provide refueling area for search helicopters, provide local knowledge, material assets and personnel to Rescue Coordination Centre)
- Environment Canada (Lt Stns provide weather collections which are broadcast to mariners and aviators and are used to assist EC forecasters, collect data for climate record ...exceeding 50 years, provide protection for equipment)
- Marine Communications and Traffic Services (Lt Stns relay weak radio signals or distress calls from radio 'blind spots', monitor VHF radio for MCTS when repeaters are down, and collect information to find overdue vessels)
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans (relay announcements, assist with monitoring of fishing fleets)
- RCMP - 'Coast Watch' Program (Lt Stns report suspicious vessels or traffic, assist prevention of infractions by providing federal 'presence', act as staging grounds for RCMP operations Lightkeepers protect public assets.
- Environmental Response and Pollution Control (spotting and amelioration of spills – staging ground for large scale response)
- Natural Resources Data Collection and warning systems (protect and at times reset equipment for tsunami, seismic, and GPS plate shift monitoring)

- Scientific Research (Institute of Ocean Sciences and University studies including sea water temperatures and salinity – at some stations these have been taken daily since 1936, studies regarding salmon migrations, sea mammal movements, bird populations, etc.)

- Parks Canada (assist with first aid and medevacs, posting notices and warnings including tsunami alerts, tracking recreational users)