

## Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS)

### Contact Information

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### Service Summary

Service area: Rockland to Vinalhaven, North Haven, & Matinicus  
Bass Harbor to Swan's Island & Frenchboro  
Lincolntonville to Islesboro

Type of service: Ferry boat service

### MSFS Summary of Service

MSFS provides year-round, passenger and vehicle ferry service to islands in the mid-coast region of Maine which are open to the public. Six islands are served from three mainland terminals in Rockland, Bass Harbor, and Lincolntonville. The routes are:

- Rockland to Vinalhaven. Two ferryboats, the "Captain Charles Philbrook" and "Captain Frank E. Thompson" provide service along this route which is 15 miles and takes one hour and 15 minutes. One ferry departs from Vinalhaven at 7 am, and the other departs the terminal in Rockland at the same time. A total of 4 ½ round trips are made each day, with the final ferry leaving each destination at 4:30 p.m. Service runs every day but Christmas, with a reduced schedule on Thanksgiving.
- Rockland to North Haven. Service between Rockland and North Haven is provided by the ferryboat "Captain Neal Burgess". The crossing distance is 12.5 miles and takes one hour and ten minutes. The route originates on the island of North Haven and two round trips are made each day beginning at 7:30 am and ending at 5:15 pm. Service runs every day except Christmas and New Year's Day, and there is a reduced schedule on Thanksgiving.
- Rockland to Matinicus. Service to Matinicus is at least once per month, with up to four trips per month during the summer months. The crossing distance is 23 miles and takes two hours and 15 minutes. Service is by reservation and the schedule is subject to change without notice. Passengers are advised to confirm their reservation the day before the scheduled trip. Schedules may be affected by tides.

- Bass Harbor to Swan’s Island. The “Captain Henry Lee” provides service between Bass Harbor, located in the town of Tremont, to Swan’s Island. There are different summer, fall, and winter schedules. The crossing is six miles long and takes 40 minutes.
- Bass Harbor to Frenchboro. The “Captain Henry Lee” provides service between Bass Harbor to the island of Frenchboro. The crossing distance is just over eight miles and takes 50 minutes. Service runs on a limited schedule on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, and seasonally on Fridays.
- Lincolnville to Islesboro. Service between Lincolnville and Islesboro is provided by the vessel “Margaret Chase Smith”. The crossing is three miles and takes 20 minutes. Service begins at 7:30 from Islesboro and departs Lincolnville for the return at 8 am. The scheduled departures continue at one-hour intervals from each terminal through 5 pm, with a break from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Service is daily with limited schedules on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day.

## Summary of Service Changes

The last run of the day to and from Vinalhaven was rescheduled from 1630 to 1530 in November due to safety/visibility concerns. This reduction will be in effect until March 1, 2019 at which time the full schedule will revert to summer hours. Other ferry schedules may change periodically. Customers should check with the MSFS before planning any trip.

## Summary of Accomplishments

1. **Rate Structure Implementation.** During 2018, a new flat rate structure was developed and implemented. All tickets are sold at mainland terminals only and must be round-trip. Round-trip, walk-on passenger tickets are no longer origin/destination based, meaning both portions of a round-trip ticket may be used in any combination effectively for one passenger to take two (2) one-way rides on any route served by the Maine State Ferry Service.
2. **Rockland Terminal Parking Improvements.** Improvements were made during the fall of 2018 to the parking lot at the Rockland Ferry Terminal. The improvements resulted in 12 additional parking spaces, improved safety and traffic flow, and updated drainage.
3. **Rockland DASH.** Beginning in May of 2018, the terminal in Rockland was included as a stop for the new flex-route bus service in Rockland, the Rockland DASH. Bus service runs north and south each, every hour from 8 am to noon, and 1 to 5 pm.

## Current Projects

1. **New Ferry.** The Richard G. Spear is currently under construction at Washburn & Doughty and will replace the M/V Philbrook in December of 2019.
2. **Preventive Maintenance System.** MSFS will select a vendor and product in 2019 to move the current whiteboard system to a vastly improved information system based on tablets and technology (\$150,000 budgeted).

## Fares

Adult Round-Trip Passenger	\$11.00
Child Round-Trip Passenger (11 & under)	\$ 5.50
Adult Bike Round-Trip	\$20.00
Child Bike Round-Trip	\$10.00
Vehicle, Less than 20 ft, Round-Trip (includes ticket for driver)	\$30.00
Truck One-Way per foot	\$ 2.50/foot
Truck Round-Trip per foot	\$ 2.50/foot
Reservations	\$15.00

## Future Priorities

1. **Ferry Pen Improvements.** Improving the ferry pen in Bass Harbor, Swan’s Island, Frenchboro, Islesboro, Lincolnville, Vinalhaven, and North Haven to accommodate the new ferries and to upgrade infrastructure for the next 25 years.
2. **New Ferry #2** will go out to bid in September of 2019. This ferry will replace the M/V Henry Lee on Swan’s Island
3. **New Ferry #3** to go out to bid in September of 2022. This ferry will replace the M/V Burgess on North Haven.
4. **Crew Quarter expansions** for Vinalhaven, Swan’s Island, and North Haven to accommodate the larger crew on the new boats.
5. **Electronic and On-line Ticketing System.** Options are being explored for modernizing the payment system. MSFS will benefit from the past experience and thorough research being conducted by Casco Bay Island Transit District.

## Plans and Studies

- Engineering and Design for the Margaret Chase Smith.
- Vinalhaven Risk Assessment. The risk assessment was done due to safety concerns raised by the captains who operate ferries on the Vinalhaven run. The result of the risk assessment was a recommendation to reduce service so that operations occurred during daylight hours.

## Ridership

Ridership has been fairly consistent over the past 4 years.

MSFS Fixed Route Trips				
	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
General Public	490,000	490,502	484,631	499,725

## Coordination/Outreach

- **Advisory Board.** Board members come from island and mainland towns served by the MSFS. Meetings are bi-monthly and offer an opportunity for public input on ferry operations.
- **Intercity Bus Connections.** The Rockland Terminal is a stop for Concord Coach Lines, providing access south to Portland/Boston or north to Bangor once per day.
- **Local Bus Connections.** The Rockland Terminal is a stop for the flex-route bus service providing local bus transportation from Pen Bay Medical Center to Walmart in Thomaston several times a day, Monday through Friday.
- **Local Bus Connections.** The Islesboro Terminal is a stop for the flex-route bus service from Islesboro to Belfast once per day, Monday through Friday.

## Major Challenges

Major challenges include:

- Limited parking at the Rockland Ferry Terminal
- Finding adequate funding for operations and vessel replacement
- Finding personnel for the MSFS with the aging population in Maine