

# CHARACTERISTICS

All lighthouses have a light which shines out to sea at night. In the 1850s a special lens called a Fresnel Lens was developed which enabled the light to shine 20 miles out to sea. This made it easier for mariners to see where the lighthouse was but not which lighthouse the light came from. The design of this special lens also allowed for a different period of darkness ("eclipse") and light which produced a unique flash pattern for each lighthouse. This is called its Characteristic and allowed mariners to identify the lighthouse. They have to look at a light list or chart that tells what lighthouse flashes that particular pattern and what color the light is as well. They are then able to determine their location. Lighthouse characteristics are regulated by the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities in Paris, France, to which the majority of maritime nations belong.



	Flashes	Time lapse	Eclipse time lapse
Cape Canaveral	2	5 seconds	15 seconds
Ponce Inlet	6	13 seconds	17 seconds
St. Augustine	1	1 second	29 seconds
Sanibel Island	2	2.5 seconds	7.5 seconds

# DAYMARKS

To help mariners determine their location in the daytime, the United States Lighthouse Board issued an order in 1873 requiring each lighthouse to be painted in different colors and/or designs. This is known as the lighthouse's Daymark. The color of each lighthouse was registered with the Lighthouse Board so that no two lighthouses would have the same design.

