

MASONS ISLAND

Community Guidelines & Resource Guide

This document is published by the Masons Island Property Owners Association to promote and enhance the welfare of property owners within the Masons Island Fire district.

Published December 2025

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Masons Island Entities

Masons Island Fire District (MIFD)

...is a municipal taxing district in Stonington, Connecticut, and covers the southern portion of Masons Island that is congruent with the **Masons Island Property Owners Association (MIPOA)**. Enders Island is also within the District. MIFD is primarily responsible for the delivery of fire & emergency medical services for its residents, and in partnership with MIPOA, manages the private roads, stormwater drainage systems and recreational areas within the District. The District includes roads, rights of way, parks, beaches, hiking trails and other facilities that are maintained and conserved by MIFD and MIPOA for the exclusive use of MIFD residents and their guests.

As a legal municipal taxing district, membership in MIFD is not voluntary, taxes are levied against all real property owners based on a mil rate established each year, which entitles these property owners to vote in our public meetings, in addition to any resident who is registered to vote in the Town of Stonington that resides in the District. Bylaws and other documents at **www.mifd.info**

Masons Island Property Owners Association (MIPOA)

...is incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut and is a voluntary membership organization of property owners within the Masons Island Fire District (MIFD). MIPOA owns the roads, rights-of-way, and various island amenities. It insures these properties and coordinates their maintenance in conjunction with The Masons Island Fire District (MIFD). MIPOA also creates, promotes and oversees Community Guidelines which are developed to help maintain the unique character of Masons Island. Bylaws and other info at **www.mipoa.info**

Masons Island Company (MICO)

In 1853 Gurdon Spicer Allyn started kettle processing of menhaden fish on the beach at what is now the end of Allyn's Alley. Four years later with a patent for fish processing he incorporated as the G.S. Allyn & Company and built a fishworks on the present site of the Masons Island Yacht Club. Then in 1913 the Masons Island Company, Inc. was founded by his descendants to develop residential land purchased from John and Andrew Mason. Over the years additional tracts of land were purchased from the Masons and the Society of St. Edmund. Infrastructure of roads, utilities, docks and beaches was implemented and improved. Land and pier of the old fishworks were donated to the Masons Island Yacht Club when it was established in 1928. The roads were sold to MIPOA in 2007 and the last building lot within MIFD was sold in 2025. The Company presently owns the Ice Pond and docks and beaches at Allyn's Alley, East Forest Road and Plover Lane and continues as a family owned and managed business. The Company's website is at www.micorealestate.com For historical information on the Company and Masons Island go to <https://mystichistory.org/digital-publications/> author James H. Allyn

The Masons Island Yacht Club (MIYC)

...was formed in 1927 on a parcel of land donated by the Masons Island Company at the southeastern point of Masons Island. It is a private membership organization that allows property owners within the District, and certain others to apply for Active membership. Thirty Associate memberships are available to individuals and families that do not own property within the District. Non-voting Summer Privilege memberships are available to former Active members and their children, or to individuals that rent a home within the District. For more information on MIYC, please go to www.masonsIslandyachtclub.org.

Community Guidelines

Property owners within the Masons Island Fire District have a longstanding history of adherence to “community guidelines” developed by property owners with the goal of preserving the special environment of life on the island. We are residents of the Town of Stonington and subject to town zoning, regulations and ordinance but we also have private roads and various common amenities, and many of our deeds have longstanding clauses and restrictions designed to maintain that special environment. These guidelines exist to enhance the continued beauty and distinctiveness of this unique island community.

The success of these guidelines is dependent upon a “good neighbor” attitude and behavior that demonstrates a mutual sense of certain shared community values. If you have thoughts on any aspect of these guidelines, please feel free to share them with MIPOA, they are created and maintained by you, the property owners, to enhance your experience living here.

Property Maintenance

MIPOA’s Property Maintenance Committee uses these guidelines to encourage District property owners to maintain the appearance of their houses and grounds to a standard appropriate for the area. It also facilitates dialogues between property owners and conducts other activities to help accomplish its goals. Property owners who believe they have a grievance are expected to address their issues directly with their neighbors as the first step which is the best route to problem resolution. If this approach fails to produce acceptable results, MIPOA, upon request, stands ready to help mediate.

1. Noise

- Loud, disturbing and excessive noise is not allowed before 6:00 a.m. and after 10:00 p.m. on Monday through Saturday and before 8:00 a.m. and after 10:00 p.m. on Sunday.
- Construction and renovation projects are limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (town of Stonington ordinance).
- Use of power lawn mowers, leaf blowers, chain saws and similar equipment are to be limited to the hours between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. If possible, please limit noise on Sundays. *Note: residents and landscapers are strongly encouraged to use electric power tools wherever possible to minimize noise.*
- Jet Skis and Personal Watercraft can be very noisy. While we appreciate the diversity and endless fun on the water, excessive noise is something that remains a distraction from our tranquil environment. Limited use of jet skis near our shores

would be greatly appreciated.

2. **Property appearance.** Reasonable property appearance, landscaping maintenance and neatness of grounds are to be sustained. Raked leaves should be kept from blowing onto neighbor's property.
3. **Signage.** All exterior signage, including but not limited to realtors' "open house" and "for sale" signs, workmen's signs (builders, renovators, painters, roofers, etc.) and political advertising.....is prohibited.
4. **Landscaping**
 - Regular trimming to maintain neighbor views is strongly encouraged. Property owners are reminded that as neighbors' views become obscured, enjoyment of their properties may diminish and property values may be adversely affected.
 - Landscaping that minimizes grass and stresses the creative use of attractive native species is far friendlier to the environment. It provides important habitat and requires fewer chemicals to maintain. For more information on this type of landscaping contact _____.
 - Minimize chemical use. Effective January 1, 2013, Connecticut Senate bill, SB440 addresses the application of fertilizers containing phosphorus on established lawns. Property owners are strongly encouraged to make every effort to minimize use of chemicals on their lawns, trees, yard plantings and gardens. Most pesticides are harmful to the environment, and chemical fertilizer run-offs accelerate the growth of undesirable algae in the Ice Pond and the Sound.
 - Any landscaping along MIPOA roads and rights of way on MIPOA land must be approved by the Facilities Committee.
5. **Garage Sales,** Estate Sales, Tag Sales and similar sales are prohibited
6. **Storage.** Boats over 20 feet in length, house trailers, recreation vehicles, tractors and backhoes, farm equipment, business vehicles and inoperable autos are not to be stored on properties. If boats of less than 20 feet in length are stored outside, the Board recommends they be stored off the road and out of sight from neighbors to the extent possible and that their covers be of dark green or brown (not bright blue or white).

Kayaks and other watercraft left at the Skiff Lane dock area should be marked with a resident's name and phone number. Storage is meant for the summer season (May thru October), and craft should be removed during winter months.

PODS, Dumpsters and Other Storage Containers on Properties

While we understand the need for PODs (Portable On Demand Storage), Dumpsters, or other Storage Containers on properties during building and renovations, property owners are asked to minimize their use and inform MIPOA's Property Maintenance Committee of the

approximate duration for such equipment. This addresses the concerns neighbors have expressed about the process and timeline of removal.

7. **Lighting.** “Dark sky compliant” lighting is strongly encouraged. This refers to outdoor lighting designed to minimize light pollution — the brightening of the night sky caused by artificial light. The goal is to protect views of the stars, reduce glare, and avoid disrupting wildlife or neighbors. Key features include:
 - Fully shielded fixtures: Light source shines *only downward*, not sideways or upward.
 - Appropriate brightness: Lights are no brighter than needed for safety and function.
 - Warm color temperature: Bulbs typically under 3000K to reduce blue light
 - Automatic controls: Timers, motion sensors, dimmers to reduce unnecessary lighting
8. **Property Rentals.** All property rentals are the responsibility of each individual property owner. It is important for landlords to provide a copy of this document to renters (regardless of length of stay) so that occupants understand some of the unique aspects of the community.
9. **Dogs.** Per State law dogs are required to be licensed and on leash when off the owner’s property. Please clean up after your dog. Complaints about roaming/barking dogs should be made to the Stonington Dog Warden or the Stonington Police Animal Control Center.

Dogs are not allowed on the grounds of the Mason’s Island Yacht Club. No dogs are allowed on “Secret Beach” at the end of Skiff Lane beach between May 1 and the day after Labor Day between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Roads and Traffic / Traffic Control

- THE SPEED LIMIT ON ALL ROADS WITHIN THE DISTRICT IS 20 MPH. However, the nature of some of the Island’s roads frequently requires slower speeds.
- No unregistered motor vehicles of any type may be operated on roads within the District. Only persons with a valid operator’s license may drive on the roads.
- Overnight parking on roads is prohibited including the pavement and unpaved shoulder on either side.
- Although the roads are private, all Town of Stonington and State of Connecticut motor vehicle laws and regulations apply and are enforced. MIFD is authorized by state law to hire police officers but has not done so. The Town of Stonington Police patrol the District.
- There are no sidewalks on the Island. For safety, pedestrians are required by state law to walk facing oncoming traffic. Bicycles are required to go with traffic. Please wear reflective material and carry flashlights after dark.

Traffic Control Booth (Guard House)

The TCB and nearby roadway is owned by the Masons Island Company. MIFD hires and manages Traffic Control Officers, who are stationed at the guardhouse during the summer, as well as at other

times throughout the year. The Officer's primary duty is to control traffic entering the District and limit traffic to authorized persons. The Traffic Control officer is not a police officer and does not have the power of arrest. Any infractions of the law should be reported directly to the Stonington Police, not to the Traffic Control Officer.

- All residents should display a Mason's Island decal on the driver's side windshield
- Decals may be obtained from MIFD's Traffic Control Representative. The application can be downloaded from the MIFD website.
- Anyone without a Mason's Island decal on their vehicle is required to give their name and destination to the Traffic Control Officer

The guardhouse has two cameras and a license plate reader that provide a record of vehicles coming and going on to Mason's Island. In the unlikely event of an incident, this record will be made available to law enforcement. Notices of special interest, for example Mason's Island Yacht Club events or information on missing animals, may be posted with approval from The Masons Island Company. Once their purpose has been served, all notices should be promptly removed by the individual who posted them. All notices on MICO property require MICO approval.

Roads Maintenance.

With minor exceptions, all roads and rights of way within the District are the property of the Mason's Island Property Owners Association. It is important to note these are NOT Stonington roads and their upkeep and maintenance is paid for by property owners through taxes levied by the Masons Island Fire District. The MIPOA/MIFD Facilities Committee oversees the maintenance of all roads and rights of way per the MIFD-voter approved annual budget. The Committee is also responsible for the installation of road signs, painted lines and speed bumps, and for reviewing construction plans that may impact roads and rights of way.

Golf Carts, Club Cars, and other vehicles.

Golf carts and similar vehicles are unregistered vehicles and are allowed to be operated within Mason's Island Fire District since our roads have speed limits of 20 mph or below. Consistent with state law, the minimum requirements for operation are:

- The operator MUST carry his or her valid Connecticut motor vehicle operator's license while operating such a vehicle. No children or unauthorized operator is permitted to drive vehicles within the Masons Island Fire District.
- Each vehicle shall be equipped with an operable horn.
- Each vehicle shall be equipped with a flag that is positioned to assist operators of motor vehicles in observing the location and operation of such vehicles.
- Operation is limited to daylight hours only.
- No authorization shall be granted for operation on any street or highway where the posted speed limit is more than 20 miles per hour.

Any person who operates a vehicle in violation of these requirements, or the violation of any insurance requirement, or any other conditions or limitations outlined above shall be asked to no longer operate the vehicle.

"Motor Driven Cycles" (i.e. scooters and mopeds) with engine capacities less than 50 cubic centimeters with seat height of at least 26 inches are not required to be registered. They should be driven solely by someone holding a valid driver's license. Pocket or Rocket Bikes are NOT allowed on Mason's Island roads since they are considered too small to be driven safely. ATVs, 3- wheeled vehicles and Go Carts are NOT allowed on Mason's Island roads.

Construction and Architectural Review

Building and construction within the Masons Island Fire District (MIFD) must conform to the zoning, permitting and building guidelines of the Town of Stonington. Also property deeds should be carefully reviewed as certain clauses and restrictions are different from the town.

In addition, since Masons Island roads are privately owned, and things like stormwater treatment, landscaping and excavation can directly impact these roads, plans and documents need to be reviewed by the MIFD/MIPOA facilities committee. For detailed information on building and construction visit www.mipoa.info

Resource Guide

Fire Protection

MIFD has a contract with a local fire district for fire protection (currently it is Mystic Fire Department). The fire station is within a short distance of Mason's Island and is fully equipped. Beginning in 2016, Connecticut Water undertook a program to upgrade the water mains on Mason's Island to eight-inch mains. The new mains carry sufficient water pressure to service fire hydrants. Now that the project is completed, all of the homes within the Mason's Island Fire District are within 1000 feet of a hydrant. The annual cost for the hydrants is included in the MIFD budget. The cost of fire protection is one of the largest expenditures in the MIFD budget.

Trash, Recycling and Compost

- **Trash collection is every Tuesday and Recyclables are collected every other Tuesday**
- Rubbish and non-recyclables, exclusive of household hazardous waste, must be placed in Yellow Town of Stonington Plastic Bags, which can be purchased at local supermarkets and other stores. Bins for trash and recycling are provided by the town.
- Yellow Bags and recycling collected at each house. The Town Requires that residents separate recyclables from trash. The Town currently used single stream recycling.
- Please place trash for collection on the side of the road, clean of the pavement. Residents are asked to promptly put away all trash and recycling containers.
- A private company contracted by the Town of Stonington handles rubbish collection. To report problems or questions contact Town Solid Waste and Recycling Dept (link) or call 860-535-5099 The Stonington Transfer Station accepts yellow bags and all other refuse, including furniture, mattresses, appliances, TVs, computer monitors, leaves, yard waste and other items for recycling. Reusable items such as household furnishings, books, and other products can be

dropped off at the Reusable Shed at the Transfer Station. For current fees and hours of operation, refer to the Transfer Station page of the Town of Stonington website.

- Organic waste composting. The town has a relationship with Black Earth Composting. For a monthly fee you can have organic waste picked up weekly or bi-weekly. Bins and bags are provided. Pickup is on Mondays. The material is used to create compost, and program participants can receive compost. Full details of this program are at <https://www.stonington-ct.gov/home/news/new-curb-side-composting-service>. For residents that wish to divert food waste from their trash, but do not wish to pay for a weekly curbside subscription service, the Transfer Station will host collection carts that can be used at no charge.

Refer to the Town of Stonington website (link:) for information on:

- Recycling guidelines
- Household Hazardous Waste identification along with the locations and dates of Household Hazardous Waste collection events
- Phone numbers - Solid Waste Department 860-535-5099, Transfer Station 860-535-5088

Recreation

MIFD property owners have common access to certain recreation areas and amenity property such as the Ice Pond and the non-developed Nature Conservancy land in the center of the island. Park and recreation areas are either the property of MIPOA or The Masons Island Company. In addition to the defined areas, there is a five-foot wide footpath right of way around the shores of the Ice Pond and across private properties for the use of property owners. MIFD maintains this path. Skating on the pond is at the risk of the individual, parent or guardian.

NOTE: The small pond on the south side of the causeway south of the Ice Pond is owned by adjoining property owners and does not have a right of way around it.

In 1995 the Masons Island Company and The Nature Conservancy of Connecticut, entered into a conservation easement which prohibits development on a 46.5 acre tract of land abutting the east side of the Great Salt Marsh, including 17.5 acres of marsh land. In 2024 most of that tract was purchased by MIPOA, and the conservation easement remains in place. Residents are permitted to walk along trails and paths on this land and to enjoy the beauty of the woods and marsh.

Docks and waterfront

Certain docks and waterfront areas within the District are the property of the Masons Island Company. Most property owners have the right to use such docks, in some cases pursuant to certain fees and regulations set by MICO. There is also access to the water at the end of many MIPOA roads that lead to the water's edge.

MICO docks are located off the east end of Allyn's Alley, at the foot of Plover lane, at the end of *East Forest Road, and at the bulkhead on Great Salt Marsh. MICO permits residents to dock small boats and rents outhaul space to residents on a seasonal basis. It is the responsibility of the boat owner to provide and properly maintain appropriate dock lines, outhauls,

blocks and ladders. Residents interested in dock space at those locations should contact The Masons Island Company. Small boats, dinghies and kayaks may be stored at Allyn's Alley beach upon application to the Company for a permit.

**By agreement between The Company and the East Forest Road families; the families pay annual expenses related to the docks; the families have exclusive use of the outfalls on the dock.*

There is no fee for kayak and small craft storage on MIPOA land off of Skiff Road and at the end of Seagull Lane. Swimming beaches are not to be used for boat storage. Storage or placement of boats on marsh areas is prohibited by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

There are official mooring areas off the east and southwest sides of the Island as shown on U.S. Coastal Charts. In 1995, a comprehensive harbor management plan was approved by the voters of the Town of Stonington which, among other things, sets specifications for moorings and ground tackle and grants authority to the Harbor Master to (1) assign mooring locations, (2) issue mooring permits, (3) collect an annual fee per mooring and (4) remove illegally placed moorings. It is the responsibility of boat owners to frequently check their ground tackle and mooring pennants for chafe and wear. Please note that the waters of the Town of Stonington, including the Mystic River, are a "no discharge" area. Application for a Mooring Permit is made to the Masons Island Harbor Master.

<https://www.micorealestate.com/mooringsanddockage>

Waters around Mason's Island

Slow/no wake regulations were passed by the Connecticut State Legislature for the Mystic River in 2012. The slow/no wake zone with its 6 MPH restriction consists of two specific areas. Area 1 is located between the entrance to the Mystic Harbor and Red Navigation Buoy No.22. The entrance to Mystic Harbor is defined in detail in the Connecticut Boater's Guide as a line beginning at the southernmost tip of Mouse Island along the north shore of Ram Island to the southernmost tip of Mason Point. Area 2 extends from Red Navigation Buoy "26" northward to Green Navigation Buoy "53". These areas will be marked with floating signs provided by the DEEP. The area between Navigational Buoy "22" to Navigational Buoy "26" maintains the original no wake designation with speed restrictions within the proximity of other boats and docks. The intention is to allow the performance trial runs for engine maintenance. The harbor master and local police will still enforce issues of safety and damaging wakes in this area.

The Connecticut Boater's Guide published each year by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is a digest of boating laws and regulations: Part One – Mandatory Boating Education and Certification; Part Two – Registration; Part Three- Safety Equipment Information; Part Four – Boating and Environment Awareness; Part Five – Boating Regulations; Part Six – Boat Launch Information & Digest of Local Regulations; Part Seven – Rules of the Road and Navigation; Part Eight – Safety Information. For more information contact the Mystic River Harbor Master or the Mason's Island Harbor Master.

Wildlife

Wildlife sightings are common on the island including deer, coyote, fox, raccoon, skunk, bobcat and more. State Law prohibits the discharge of firearms within 500 feet of a dwelling or place of public gathering. This applies to the water as well as the land. The discharge of firearms, setting of traps, or any use of a bow and arrow in MIFD is prohibited.

Raccoons, skunks and other nocturnal animals may be rabid. The appearance of these animals in daylight is a likely sign of rabies, and the Police should be called immediately. Animal bites, when the skin is broken, should be referred to the Stonington Health Officer or a physician.

Tick Control Program

Like many coastal communities, Masons Island has been a prime habitat for deer ticks, the carriers of debilitating and deadly diseases such as Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, and babesiosis. The Mason's Island Fire District (MIFD) Board of Directors has been very proactive in tackling this problem and has developed a Tick Control Program designed to help protect our residents from tick borne illnesses to the extent possible. The Program encourages universal tick control by providing residents with tick control options with an eye towards effectiveness, affordability and the environment.

In 2021, at the Annual Meeting of the Mason's Island Fire District, residents approved a mil rate that included tick control "lot perimeter" treatment for all single-family residence properties. The program's cost is included in everyone's MIFD property taxes.

All MIFD homeowners can pick from 1 of the 3 options below regarding treatment of their lot's perimeter:

- Option 1: Treat with a spray made from a natural-based cedar oil-like product.
- Option 2: Treat with a granular product (Talstar) containing the insecticide "bifenthrin".
- Option 3: Request no treatment of any kind of my lot perimeter.

Because deer can serve as the ideal large hosts for ticks, MIFD also deploys 4 "Four Poster" deer feeding stations within the Fire District that were approved by the CT DEEP to help treat the deer on the island with an insecticide product designed for deer. To eat the corn at the deer feeder stations, the deer must put their heads through 2 paint rollers that contain the insecticide. More information on the Deer Feeders can be found on the MIFD website and also at the following web link:
<https://www.deerfriendly.com/lyme-disease/4-poster-system-for-tick-control>

We continue to research the entire issue of Tick Control with the goal of developing an effective community-wide program. Additional information on the MIFD Tick Control Program can be found at www.mifd.info under the Lyme Disease Prevention link. The website is updated annually in May.

As Mason's Island residents, you are encouraged to actively participate in the MIFD Tick Control Program as well as take personal precautions to protect yourself and your family as well as your pets from all tick-borne illnesses. Good tick management techniques include:

- Wearing protective clothing, and showering after working outside.
- Treating pets with tick control products.
- Checking yourselves, your children and your pets frequently for ticks and tick bites.
- Eliminating tick habitats from your properties by removing leaves, brush and debris.
- Keeping areas under bird feeders clean.

Emergency Preparedness

- In an emergency, **always call 911**. Plan ahead by creating an emergency kit that contains essentials for you and your family. Keep it in a safe place at home or take it with you if you

have to leave your home.

- Stay informed: The Town of Stonington MOBILE PHONE APP is a valuable asset for Emergency Preparedness and additional town information. This APP will send you real-time alerts in the event of a storm or any other town concerns. To find the app, search Town of Stonington CT on the Google Play or Apple App store.
- The Town of Stonington ALERTS is another avenue to receive all of the information above via email and/or text. Visit Stonington-ct.gov to sign up.
- EVERSOURCE ALERTS: 1-800-286-2000. You can sign up with Eversource to receive outage alerts. If you experience an outage, please call them and report it.
- If you see a downed wire or pole... call 911. Do not approach or touch.
- Filling out the SPECIAL NEEDS EMERGENCY REGISTRY FORM lets police, fire and other first responders in your community better prepare for and respond to your needs in an emergency situation. Visit town of Stonington website under Emergency Management.
- Ledge Light Health District emergency preparation: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
- Town of Stonington Facebook Page
- United States Government suggestions for readiness: www.ready.gov
- **Masons Island Emergency Response Group.** In the UNLIKELY event that the Town Emergency Resources would be unable to reach us via the causeway, we have created an emergency response group, ready to help IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY. Information on this program has been sent electronically to all MIFD residents. You can view specifics of this plan in the documents page of www.mipoa.info If you have questions please contact MIFD.

St. Edmund's Retreat (www.endersisland.com)

St. Edmunds's Retreat is located on Enders Island which is connected to Mason's Island by a short causeway south of MIYC. Activities at Enders Island include Sunday Mass, a residential post-treatment recovery program, weekly 12-step meetings, retreats and other events. Visitors to Ender's Island can use the right-of-way along Chippechaug, East Forest, and Yacht Club Roads for travel only to and from Ender's Island.

Enders Island is not open to the general public for public passive recreation or as a public park. St. Edmunds retreat welcomes religious worshippers, registered program participants and those seeking a religious, spiritual experience only.

Residents of Mason's Island are invited to enjoy the grounds. Property owners and their visitors are reminded to obey all speed limits and stop signs, keep dogs on a leash and out of plantings and gardens.