



US Brig NIAGARA Sailing Program

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PRELIMINARY INFORMATION for Brig *Niagara* Students

Please read this information carefully. Once you arrive at the ship, an intensive orientation schedule will limit your free time, so begin your preparations well in advance and submit your paperwork in accordance with the schedule below. If you have any questions or concerns, contact Joseph Lengieza, Director of Marine Operations, by email at marineops@flagshipniagara.org or by phone at (814) 452-2744, x214. Please keep us informed of any changes prior to the start of your program, including changes in phone number or address.

I. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

Once you have carefully reviewed and completed these forms, send them, along with your initial \$300 deposit, to:

Flagship Niagara League, Inc
150 E. Front Street, Suite 100
Erie, PA 16507
Attn: Joseph Lengieza, Director of Marine Operations

Forms to Review	Schedule for Returning Forms
Application	Complete and submit application as soon as possible. Include the non-refundable \$300 deposit.
Student Contract	Submit along with the application.
Medical Record and Insurance Verification	Submit <u>no later</u> than a month prior to your arrival onboard.
Medical and International Travel Authorization Forms for Minors	If the applicant is under age 18, submit these along with the medical record.
Request for Background Check	If the applicant is over age 18, request a background check <u>within a week</u> of submitting the application.

Properly completed application forms, the initial \$300 deposit, and payment of tuition and fees according to the payment schedule are required to secure and maintain your reserved space onboard.

Student Contract. This very important legal document includes information about risk, required consent, and a waiver of liability. Read it carefully, sign it (if you are under 18, your parent/guardian must also sign), and submit it with the Enrollment Application. Keep a copy for your records.

Background and Criminal History Check. We are committed to providing a safe environment for everyone who sails on *Niagara*. If you are 18 years of age or older, you must request a background and criminal record check with our security firm, Asurint Inc. Using this firm allows us to better protect your identity by ensuring that your social security information is not on file in our offices. To request a background check, go to <https://flagshipniagara.asurint.com> and enter the code *StandardPkg*. The secure website will prompt you to answer questions about your personal history, which will be used to confirm that you have not been convicted of any crimes.

Medical Record. You must obtain a physical examination by a licensed physician or physician's assistant in order to complete the Medical Record form. Once you submit the form, our reviewing physician will determine if you are cleared to sail on *Niagara*. Please note that **you must be cleared by both your physician and our reviewing physician** to participate in our sailing programs. Make sure to sign the form before submitting it. If you are under 18, your parent/guardian must also sign.

All medical issues must be brought to our attention. Be sure the information provided on your Medical Record is current and complete. Without proper information and authorization, a medical officer or doctor may be unable to render vital treatment ashore or at sea. If you require regular medication, bring an adequate supply and store it with the medical officer. There is **not** a physician onboard *Niagara*, but we do have access via satellite telephone to an emergency medical physician on shore who can offer advice.

Insurance Verification. The Flagship Niagara League does not carry medical insurance for students and accepts no liability for medical costs. You **must** have coverage for sickness, accident and hospitalization on shore as well as at sea. Because the United States and Canadian border crosses most of the Great Lakes, it is imperative that your coverage extends to Canada, unless sailing exclusively in Lake Michigan. Before boarding the ship, notify us about any changes to your health insurance or medical condition, including any new medications not mentioned on your Medical Record.

Passports and Travel in Canada. You need to **mail us a copy of your passport**. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately, as it takes 4-6 weeks to process. When *Niagara* sails on Lakes Erie, Ontario, Huron, or Superior, the captain may decide to stop or seek safe harbor in a Canadian port, irrespective of the ship's schedule. Therefore, passports are required on almost all voyages.

If you are not a US Citizen, contact us before submitting your application. Due to Canadian laws, *Niagara* may be prohibited from carrying non-US/Canadian citizens into or out of Canada. If approved to sail, non-US/Canadian citizens or resident aliens may require a B2 Tourist Visa.

II. ARRIVING AND DEPARTING

Travel Arrangements. The Erie Maritime Museum is located at 150 East Front Street, Suite 100, Erie, PA 16507. Students may bring their vehicles to the Erie Maritime Museum and park for free. We are happy to make arrangements to drive you from the Greyhound Station, Amtrak Station, or Erie International Airport (ERI) to the Maritime Museum. Tickets for travel to and from the ship should be secured after your application is accepted and you are cleared by our reviewing physician.

Joining the Ship. You should plan to join the ship at the designated time and date, although if you need to arrive the evening prior, arrangements can be made. Shortly after your arrival you will participate in Vessel Familiarization Training, and will then be given a sea-bag, hammock, and berthing assignment. You will **not** be allowed to sign aboard unless you have passed the physical examination, paid your tuition, and submitted all required forms.

All students are expected to live onboard the ship unless excused to stay ashore by the Captain. At least one crewmember will be on duty aboard the ship at all times to watch over the ship, the crew, and the students.

Meals. While in Erie, meals will be prepared and served from the kitchen and dining room in the Maritime Museum. While sailing, meals will be prepared in the ship's galley. The cost of food is included in the cost of the program.

Laundry. A washing machine and dryer are available in the Erie Maritime Museum basement and can be used at no charge. We send out laundry at least once every 10-14 days while voyaging. Make sure to pack according to our recommended Packing List.

Pets. Please note that no pets are allowed.

Leaving the Ship. Before leaving the ship, you must transfer your belongings from the ship's sea-bag into your own bags. Use your time in port responsibly to ensure that you have time to stow your hammock and sea-bag properly for the next arriving student.

III. DURING YOUR SAIL

Itinerary and Port Calls. The precise itinerary and intermediate ports of your voyage may depend upon weather conditions, vessel maintenance or repair needs, the unpredictable timing of educational projects, etc. The ship normally meets scheduled arrival and departure times, but be prepared for the possibility of delays or changes.

On average, the ship spends two to four days in port during each scheduled port visit. While ashore, you are a guest in the community. Use common sense: be polite, respect local laws and customs, and behave appropriately. Please try to keep your family informed of your activities and whereabouts.

Academic Credit. Students participate in a sail training program which is designed to marry with any academic curriculum offered by our partner institutions. Both sail training and academic components are taught as the ship's schedule permits; see the *Niagara Crew Handbook* (<https://brigniaraga.wordpress.com/reference-library/>) for daily watch schedule details. Arrangements for credit vary by program, and are the responsibility of the student. The Flagship Niagara League does not provide transcripts, but can provide a Certificate of Seetime upon request.

Library, Computers, and Personal Electronic Devices. The Erie Maritime Museum has WiFi, and we can make arrangements for out-of-town students to use the public library next door to the museum. There is very limited capacity for charging personal electronic devices onboard. In general, these devices should be left at home or used only while on shore.

Physical Conditioning and Diet. We encourage you to get in shape before joining the ship. You will enjoy the voyage more and be a healthier, more effective participant. You will also be less subject to stress and injury. Please note that you may not bring food or cook individual meals aboard ship. We sometimes use canned and processed foods. Consult your doctor for further advice. If you have dietary restrictions, make sure to inform us.

Money. Most students bring extra cash to make small purchases in port, experience local cuisine, etc. The ship cannot cash checks, but money may be deposited with the Captain in the ship's safe.

Mail. Ideally, you should make arrangements so that you do not need to receive mail while onboard *Niagara*. Otherwise, correspondence and packages may be sent to:

Attn: “Your Name- Student”
U.S. Brig *Niagara*
150 East Front Street, Suite 100
Erie, PA 16507

Contacting the Ship. While sailing, the ship maintains a daily email or satellite telephone communication schedule with the Flagship Niagara League office. Routine messages will not be transmitted, but urgent messages may be passed to students through the Director of Marine Operations, Joseph Lengieza, at 814-452-2744, x214. Messages are typically delivered to the ship within 24 hours, or, for messages delivered over the weekend, by mid-day on Monday.

Emergency Contact. The following numbers are to be used only by the immediate family of students onboard, and only in emergency situations. If there is a serious emergency, call the captain who is *not* currently sailing on the ship. He can call the ship directly via satellite telephone.

- Captain William Sabatini’s mobile telephone: (508) 930-9519
- Senior Captain Walter Rybka’s mobile telephone: (717) 574-8278

IV. Packing Guidelines

Weather Expectations. Generally, the Southern Lakes (the southern 2/3 of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, and all of Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair, and Lake Ontario) will be warmer than the Northern Lakes (Lake Superior and northern 1/3 of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron).

Temperatures can get as low as 30-40°F at night, and as high as 85-95°F during the day. Since the lakes heat more slowly than the land, you can expect a 1-2 month lag in the weather; in other words, if you are sailing in June, pack as if it were still April or May.

What to Pack. Space aboard is limited. EVERYTHING you bring, with the exception of foul weather gear, must fit in your seabag. Pack in crushable luggage such as a duffel bag or backpack. Do not bring roll-aboard or hard suitcases.

The key to clothing on the ship is layering. Clothes that can be worn over or under other layers will serve you well. For outer layers, synthetic fibers such as polar fleece, polyesters and nylons that dry quickly are better than heavy cotton. Make sure that whatever you bring is comfortable and easy to move in. Your clothes will be put to hard use, and things will get torn, stained, etc. Nevertheless, you will change your clothes much less frequently than you do on land; a pair of shorts might last seven days at on ship. Change your underwear and socks daily.

If you wear contact lenses, bring your glasses as well, and don’t forget saline and cleaning solution.

You may bring a laptop to the ship for academic use, at your own risk. Be advised, however, that the ship can be a harsh environment for sensitive electronics.

DO NOT BRING food, liquor, or SCUBA gear.

REQUIRED. Waterproof foul weather gear, passport (on most routes), light jacket, towel, sheets and sleeping bag or blankets (you will be provided with a hammock), small camping or travel pillow, sunblock, toiletries, notebook/pen/pencil

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. Use the following list to guide your packing decisions. For voyages in the Southern Lakes, bring more warm-weather clothes: shorts, cotton socks, short-sleeved shirts. For voyages in the Northern Lakes, bring more cold-weather clothes: long pants, heavier socks, long-sleeved shirts.

Underwear	15 pairs
Shoes (non-skid/rubber-soled)	2 pairs – one pair of sandals with heel strap (no flip-flops) and one pair of sneakers or boots
Sunglasses	2 pairs
Hat	2 – one warm wool/fleece and one broad-brimmed
Sheath knife or pocket knife	A straight blade sheath knife, not more than 5” long, is best. The ship’s store usually has knives available for sale.
Gloves/Mittens	1 pair
Shore clothes for port stops	1 outfit (at least)
Swimsuit	1 swimsuit
Pants	3-4 pairs total, including one pair khaki and one pair wool/synthetic blend. Quick-dry or cotton is best.
Shorts	4-5 pairs total, including one pair khaki. Quick-dry or cotton is best.
Shirts	4-5 long sleeve and 10-15 short sleeve
Socks	10-14 pairs – some wool/ Polypropylene and some cotton
Sweater/Fleece	1-2 wool or polar fleece. Cotton not recommended
Long underwear	1-2 pairs

Optional. Marlinespike, writing material, reading material, camera, small daypack for port stops, small musical instruments, Ziploc bags for use as waterproof packaging, insect repellent, thumb drive to copy digital pictures or personal files from the ship’s computers, flashlight with red lens cap.

If you have any questions, please contact Joseph Lengieza, Director of Marine Operations, at (814) 452 – 2744 extension 214, or at marineops@flagshipniagara.org.