

Placement of Rural Mailboxes

A Guide to Ordinance Section 8.02(6)

Updated: 5/3/2021

Town of Middleton

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Right of Way

Rural mailboxes are prohibited on the right-of-way of all highways within the Town of Middleton except as hereinafter provided:

Construction

Mailboxes are approved only if they are of a construction/design approved by the United States Postal Service or previously approved by the Postmaster.

Newspaper Tubes

Newspaper tubes are permitted only if provided by the newspaper or of a construction or design that will not present a hazard to the public use of the right-of-way. Where the newspaper tube used has not been provided by the newspaper, the Building Inspector or Town designee shall have the exclusive authority to approve the tube. If the Building Inspector or Town designee refuses to approve the newspaper tube, it must be removed.

Nameplate

A nameplate bearing the name and address numbers of the mailbox owner shall be permitted on each box.

Support of Mailbox

The support for the mailbox and newspaper tube shall adhere to the standards governing construction of mailbox supports as established by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and shall not constitute a hazard to the public use of the right-of-way. Plastic posts are prohibited. **[The mailbox and base should be strong enough to withstand flying snow and slush from traffic and snowplows.]**

Positioning relative to Roadway

Mailbox and newspaper tubes must be located on the side of the road required by the United States Postal Service and, where practicable, to the left side of the driveway determined by facing the lot from the road. The door to the mailbox or protruding end of the newspaper tube should be at least 1 ½ feet from the paved portion of the road.

Snow Removal

The owner of each mailbox and/or newspaper tube or, in the case of clustered mailbox units, the homeowners' association of the subdivision for which the clustered mailbox unit is provided, shall, within 24 hours after the end of each snowfall, remove all snow and ice which has fallen or accumulated in front of said mailbox and/or said newspaper tube and shall **remove the snow for a distance of 15 feet to each side of said mailbox** and/or newspaper tube.

Decoration/Landscaping

No other object of any kind shall be attached to the mailbox, newspaper tube or their supports. No other objects, including, but not limited to, landscaping boulders or fences may be placed on the right-of-way.

Disclaimer

This Section is not intended to and shall not be construed to create any affirmative duty on the part of the Town of Middleton to locate and remove obstructing mailboxes. Town of Middleton is not responsible for communicating changes to United States Postal Service design or standard changes.

Note: Copies of excerpts from the United States Postal Service and the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation are provided for your information on the following pages of this document.

How to Install a Mailbox

 usps.com/manage/mailboxes.htm

Mailbox Installation

How to Set Up & Mount a Mailbox

Follow U.S. Postal Service® guidelines for installing and placing a new mailbox at your home. Get tips on the best materials to use to set up a curbside mailbox and how to keep it in good condition. Make sure that your mail carrier always has a clear path to your mailbox whether it's by the street or mounted on your house.



Curbside Mailboxes

Mailbox Size & Construction Standards

A mailbox with the Postmaster General's (PMG) seal of approval meets USPS size and construction standards. If you build your own mailbox or buy a custom-made one, it must meet the PMG standards. Show your local postmaster your mailbox plans or your custom-made box for approval.

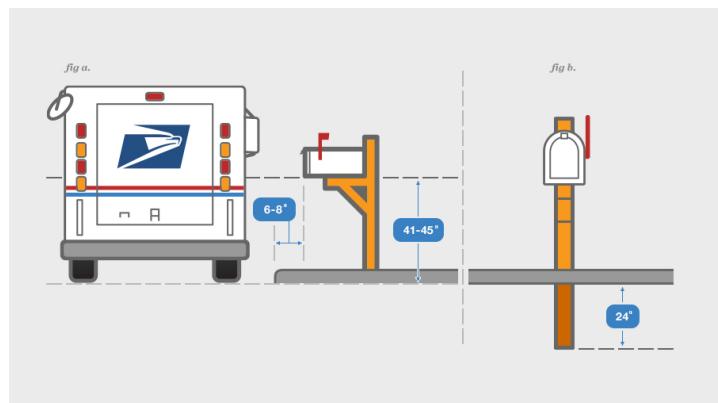
To get drawings and measurements for building your own mailbox, write to [US Postal Service Engineering](#).

Want to buy a mailbox big enough for packages? See [Next Generation Mailboxes](#).

Where to Place the Mailbox

Here are some helpful guidelines to follow when placing your mailbox:

- Position your mailbox 41" to 45" from the road surface to the bottom of the mailbox or point of mail entry.
- Place your mailbox 6" to 8" back from the curb. If you do not have a raised curb, contact your local postmaster for guidance.
- Put your house or apartment number on the mailbox.
- If your mailbox is on a different street from your house or apartment, put your full street address on the box.



Installing the Mailbox Post

The best mailbox supports are stable but bend or fall away if a car hits them. The Federal Highway Administration recommends:

- A 4" x 4" wooden support or a 2"-diameter standard steel or aluminum pipe.
- Avoid unyielding and potentially dangerous supports, like heavy metal pipes, concrete posts, and farm equipment (e.g., milk cans filled with concrete).
- Bury your post no more than 24" deep.

Door Slots & Wall Mailboxes

Approved Door Slots

Some homes and apartments have a slot in the door for receiving mail instead of a mailbox. The standards for an approved door slot are:

- The opening must be at least 1 1/2" x 7".

- The bottom of the slot must be at least 30" above floor.
- Horizontal slots must have a flap hinged at the top.
- Vertical slots must be hinged on the opposite side from the door's hinges.

For greater privacy, you can also install a mail slot hood on the inside of your door to prevent someone from seeing into your home. The standards for door slot hoods are:

- The hood should not project more than 2 1/16" beyond the inside of the door.
- On a horizontal slot, the hood should not extend below the bottom of the outside plate.
- On a vertical slot, the hood should not extend beyond the side of the outside plate on same side as the door's hinges.

Wall-Mounted Mailboxes

- To replace your curbside mailbox with a wall-mounted mailbox, you must get your local postmaster's permission.
- Choose from a variety of mailbox sizes and styles; mounted mailboxes are not required to have a PMG seal of approval.
- Get a wall mailbox that can hold a normal day's mail volume, including letter-sized envelopes, postcards, and catalogs.*
- Place the mailbox near the main entrance so your mail carrier can easily see it.

*Note: Wall-mounted mailboxes may only be used for items with postage. Newspapers may not be placed in the mailbox.

Maintenance

Mailboxes take a beating from the weather, so we recommend an annual mailbox checkup to avoid damage to your mail or difficulty identifying your address.

- Tighten loose hinges on the door
- Take care of rusty or loose parts
- Replace missing or faded house numbers
- Keep the path to your mailbox clear

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Department of Transportation

wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/real-estate/roadsides/encroachments.aspx

Property owners that fail to remove encroachments in a timely manner when directed by WisDOT may be subject to penalties pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 86.04, s. 86.021, and s. 86.022, and may be liable for treble (triple) damages pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 86.02. In addition, a person injured by an illegal encroachment in a highway accident may have a claim for damages against the person held accountable for the encroachment.

Mailboxes

Mailboxes and newspaper tubes along with their supports are encroachments that are typically allowed in the right-of-way. Since their general location is adjacent to the shoulder or curb, it is highly likely that vehicles will strike them. Therefore, they must be built to break away or yield if struck to protect the safety of the motoring public. Highway authorities follow similar guidelines when constructing road signs. For example, holes are commonly drilled through 4" x 6" wood posts near their base so they will break at the hole in the event of a crash.

Examples of hazardous mailboxes:



Examples of good installations:



Mailboxes constructed or protected with materials such as bricks, milk canisters filled with concrete and/or rocks, large timbers, or utility poles create a hazard. Property owners may receive a letter from WisDOT to remove the hazardous mailbox and replace it with an acceptable installation. See [Mailbox Safety](#) to learn about safe mailbox construction. If these standards are violated, property owners may be liable for injuries caused by the improperly constructed mailbox and/or support(s).

Mailbox Safety link:

https://epd.wisc.edu/tic/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/12/Bltn_014_Mailbox_Safety.pdf