



City of Auburn, Maine



Public Works Department

296 Gracelawn Road | Auburn, Maine 04210

www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6670

A NATIONALLY-ACCREDITED PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY

CITY OF AUBURN MAILBOX POLICY

Purpose

During snowplowing operations, City of Auburn plows may damage or destroy privately-owned mailboxes located in the street right-of-way. While there is no legal requirement for the City to replace these boxes (the State of Maine and many municipalities do not), it has been the long-standing practice of the City to do so.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the circumstances under which the City will replace private mailboxes or reimburse owners who wish to purchase more expensive replacements than the City will provide.

Eligibility for Reimbursement

In order to be eligible for replacement or reimbursement, the following conditions must be met:

1. The damaged mailbox and/or post must meet the requirements of the United States Postal Service regarding construction and location.

Mailbox design and installation standards are available from several sources, and mailbox owners are expected to consult this information prior to undertaking any mailbox installation/replacement. The following standards have nation-wide relevance and were developed in cooperation with one another:

The United States Postal Service (USPS) Mailbox Guidelines

The USPS defines the standards for mailbox construction, as well as the placement tolerance that must be met to accommodate postal operations. Specifics may be obtained from your local post office or online at:

<https://www.usps.com/manage/know-mailbox-guidelines.htm>.

If the mailbox is to be installed in an area with sidewalks, it is important to recognize that the sidewalks must continue to comply with ADA requirements:

American Disabilities Act (ADA)

The most current version of the ADA Standards for Accessible Design set forth the minimum requirements to ensure facilities are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/2010ADASTandards.htm#c4>

2. The damage must of have been caused by *direct contact with City equipment*. The City will not repair or replace mailboxes or posts damaged solely by snow thrown by plowing or removal equipment.
3. The property owner must notify the City within a reasonable amount of time from when the damage occurred for it to be repaired or replaced.

Policy

If a mailbox and/or its support post is damaged or destroyed by City equipment engaged in snow plowing or snow removal operations, the City will offer the owner of the property the choice of one of the following:

1. The City will furnish and install a standard replacement post and/or mailbox.
2. The City will reimburse the owner in an amount equal to the cost of the standard post and/or mailbox offered by the City.

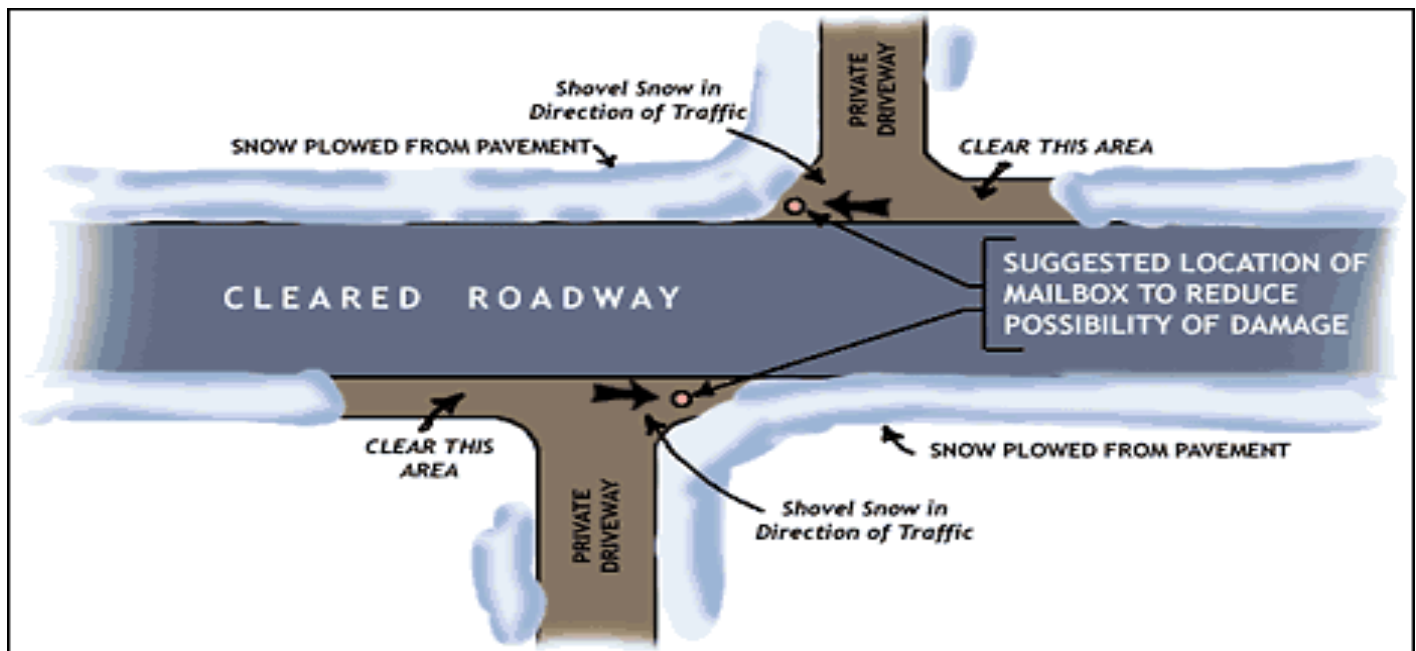
Public Works Responsibilities

1. Annually, the Director of Public Works shall establish the dollar amount of reimbursement to be provided in accordance with this policy. This amount shall be based on the actual cost to the City of a standard post and/or mailbox.
2. The Public Works Department shall install a new box and/or post for those residents requesting this option. When this work cannot be performed for any reason, including frozen ground, the Department shall either make temporary repairs or provide a temporary mailbox installation sufficient to allow the postal service to resume mail delivery.
3. The Department shall periodically review this policy and, when necessary, recommend changes or revisions.

Reimbursement amount is \$40.00

Auburn Public Works has developed this policy to promote compliance with these national standards and to help further clarify the expectations and responsibilities of mailbox owners. Such compliance helps us ensure that we continue to provide safe, efficient and accessible roadways for all. The following pages further specify the details associated with mailbox height, location, offset, and post type to minimize the potential hazards and conflicts associated with mailbox installations and to reduce the opportunities for damage to mailboxes.

Suggested Snow Removal



Mailbox Support Design:

In most cases, it is best to use an extended arm type of post with a free-swinging suspended mailbox. This allows snowplows to sweep near or under boxes without damage to supports and provides easy access to the boxes by carrier and customers. The picture at right shows a free-swinging suspended mailbox.



Offset:

Mailboxes should be set back from the edge of the shoulder – regardless of whether the shoulder is gravel or paved. In other words, the face of the mailbox should be at least **one foot (1')** **back from the edge of the normally plowed surface** of the highway or the face of curb. Greater offset distances are encouraged whenever possible to allow the mail carrier to get further out of traffic and to further minimize potential damage to your mailbox. The picture at left shows a mailbox with a reasonable offset.

Mailboxes in sidewalk areas should leave at least 36" behind the back of the box or post whichever is located the furthest from the road.



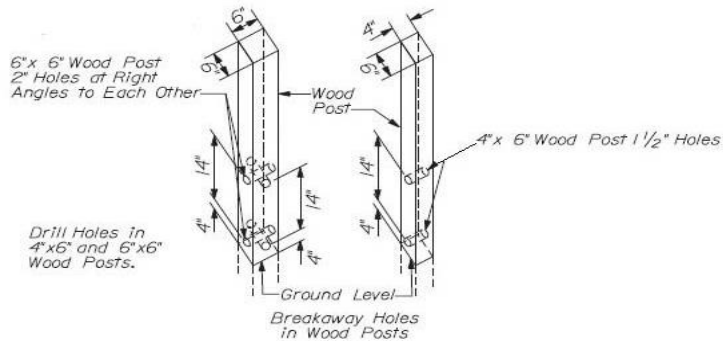
Height:

According to USPS standards, a mailbox must be installed with the bottom of the mailbox located between 41" and 45" high above the surface of the highway shoulder. Auburn Public Works recommends that this height be closer to the 45" measurement to minimize conflict with the height of the plow truck wing when snow is being pushed back during, or between, winter storms. The picture at left further clarifies the height considerations.



Post Size, Type and Embedment:

Mailbox posts must be sturdy enough to hold up the mailbox in all types of weather conditions, however they cannot be so rugged that they present a hazard to vehicles that inadvertently leave the road. If a mailbox support is struck by a vehicle, it must easily break away. Therefore, the following types of posts are deemed acceptable:



4" x 4" wooden posts embedded **2 feet** into the ground. Larger wooden posts (4" x 6" or 6" x 6") may be used only if the post is drilled through with an appropriate spade bit to create a shear plane. The diagram at left indicates the necessary holes and spacing.

1" to 2" round diameter steel or aluminum pipe or standard U-channel post embedded 2 feet into the ground.

Unacceptable mailbox supports include anything that is filled with concrete, masonry and stone structures, heavy steel structures, and most objects that were intended for other uses (e.g. antique plows, I-beams, and various other household tools and objects).

NOTICE: Mailboxes, attachments or support systems not consistent with this policy are considered "Deadly Fixed Objects" (DFO) and are in violation of 23 MRSA §1401-A. As such, when these installations are recognized by City of Auburn, the owner will be informed of the hazard and immediate removal will be requested. If the property owner does not comply with this request, City of Auburn may elect to remove the installation and seek reimbursement from the property owner for all costs incurred.