

# **Mailboxes and Newspaper Delivery Boxes Along County Roads**

Most rural mailboxes are located immediately adjacent to the road to allow for efficient delivery of mail. Placement adjacent to a road, however, can be a hazard to the motoring public. Accordingly, the Huntington County Board of Commissioners and Huntington County Highway Department have adopted standards for the placement and replacement of mailboxes and newspaper delivery boxes along county roads.

It is the intent of these standards to require safe but accessible mailboxes be placed within road right-of-ways. These standards conform to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Postal Service and are based on "A Guide for Erecting Mailboxes on Highways" published by the American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials 1994 to allow for efficient snow clearance and maintenance of the right-of-way.

A person may install and maintain a mailbox within the county highway right-of-way adjacent to or near the person's residence provided that the mailbox complies with all requirements established. The term "mailbox" means any device used to receive mail, newspapers, packages, or similar items and the term includes any structure used to support the mailbox.

No mailbox or newspaper delivery box (hereafter referred to as mailbox) will be allowed to exist within the County's rights-of-way if it interferes with the traveling public or the function, maintenance, or operation of the county roadway system. A mailbox installation that does not conform to the provisions of this regulation is prohibited.

## **Location**

The roadside face of the box shall be offset the following distances:

- Paved road - the width of the shoulder plus one foot. In cases where there is no shoulder it is to be three feet from the paved portion.
- Gravel road – three feet from the edge of the traveled portion of the roadway.
- Curbed street - one foot from the face of the curb.

The mailbox must have no portion of the mailbox extending over the traveled portion of the road or outside of the edge of the shoulder.

Where a mailbox is located at an intersecting road it shall be placed a minimum of 100 feet beyond the center of the intersecting road in the direction of the delivery route. This distance should be increased to 200 feet when the average daily traffic on the intersecting road exceeds 400 vehicles per day.

Where a mailbox is installed in the vicinity of an existing guardrail, whenever practical, it shall be placed behind the guardrail.

## **Structure**

Mailboxes shall be constructed from sheet metal, plastic, or similar weight materials and shall not exceed 11 lbs.

No more than two mailboxes shall be mounted on a support structure unless the support structure and mailbox arrangement have been shown to be safe by crash testing, approved by the U. S. Department of Transportation. Newspaper boxes may be mounted below the mailbox on the side of the mailbox support.

Multiple mailbox installations must meet the same criteria as do single mailbox installations. This requirement precludes the use of a heavy horizontal support member. It is recommended that mailbox supports be separated a distance at least equal to three-fourths of their heights and preferably their full heights above ground. It is also preferred that multiple mailbox installations be located outside the highway clear zone, if feasible, such as on a service road or minor intersecting road.

A single 4 inch by 4 inch square or 4 inch diameter wooden post, or a metal post with a strength no greater than a 2 inch diameter standard steel pipe and embedded no more than 24 inches into the ground will be acceptable as a mailbox support. A metal post shall not be fitted with an anchor plate, but may have an anti-twist device that extends no more than 10 inches below the ground surface. Larger wooden posts may be used provided the posts have drilled holes and the support design has been shown to be safe by crash testing, approved by the U. S. Department of Transportation.

All mailbox posts shall be designed to break away or break off from the ground upon impact with a vehicle.

The placement of heavy or large objects as standards or bases is not permitted. Mailboxes shall not be encased in steel, rock, concrete or brick structures, not place upon or attached to any other ornamental structures including pieces or parts of farm equipment, tractors, vehicles, wagons, trailers, implements, milk cans, buckets, drums, wheels or similar materials likely to result in vehicle damage, passenger injury or death as a result of being struck due to its design or construction.

The post-to-box attachment details should be of sufficient strength to prevent the box from separating from the post top if the installation is struck by a vehicle.

Exceptions to the above listed supports shall not be used unless previously approved in writing by the Huntington County Highway Department

A mailbox installation that conforms to the above criteria will be considered acceptable unless in the judgment of the Huntington County Highway Department, the installation interferes with the safety of the traveling public or the function, maintenance, or operation of the highway system. A mailbox installation that does not conform to these standards is considered an unauthorized encroachment.

## **Replacement of Mailboxes**

In the event of damage due to snow removal of a non-conforming mailbox installation, no replacement will be made and the property owner will be responsible for the repair or replacement of that mailbox installation. The County will not replace mailboxes damaged along County roads where the County has determined that:

- a) The mailbox was not of standard design or not placed in conformance with these standards even though it may have been damaged by County equipment;
- b) The mailbox, post, and installation were not in good condition and repair; and
- c) Evidence indicates that the weight or force of plowed snow resulted in the damage to the mailbox and/or post.

In the event there is damage to any mailbox which conforms to the standards above as a result of and caused by the snow removal activities conducted by the County, the County will replace mailboxes damaged only along County roads where it has been determined that:

- a) Physical damage, which can be proven and documented by the resident, was caused by actual County equipment contact;
- b) The mailbox is of standard design and placed in conformance with these standards and
- c) The existing installation, mailbox, and mailbox post were in good condition and repair.
- d) The owner of a damaged mailbox must provide the damaged mailbox at the time of the incident
- e) The replacement mailboxes and/or posts will be installed according to the requirements set forth below in structures.

Special decorative mailboxes and/or posts will not be provided.

## **Removal of Non-Conforming or Unsafe Mailboxes**

Any mailbox that is in violation of these regulations shall be immediately removed by the owner upon notification by the Huntington County Highway Department. If the owner has not removed the mailbox, the owner will be issued an Encroachment Removal Order by the Huntington County Highway Department, whereupon the owner will be granted 30 (thirty) days to remove the unacceptable mailbox. Thereafter, the mailbox will be removed by the Huntington County Highway Department at the owner's expense.