Mailbox Installation Guidelines

In 1997, Wisconsin recorded 1,344 crashes resulting directly from impact with hazardous mailbox installations. Of these vehicle crashes: 359 resulted in injury, nine in death and 976 resulted in property damage. Improper support systems, such as milk cans or barrels filled with concrete, were most significant in crashes that resulted in injury. Improper placement was most significant in non-injury crashes.

Weak attachments between box and post are another hazard. These permit the box to penetrate the vehicle’s passenger compartment. Multiple mailboxes on a single support, too large a support, or placed too close together can also be hazards.

Three regulatory groups have special needs when mailboxes are installed:

- **U.S. Postal Service**, specifies acceptable types of boxes, placement height and site.
- **County Highway Department**, may have specification for successfully reducing mailbox damage resulting from snow plow damage.
- **WisDot - Department of Transportation Districts**, provides guidelines for safe installation of mailbox support systems to avoid unnecessary injury or damage to the driving public.

We know all of these specifications can be very confusing to you who are just trying to get your mail delivered in a timely manner. This guideline will attempt to give you the minimum standards you must comply with to continue mail delivery and to not endanger the driving public. If your needs are more complicated than installing the basic one or two mailbox unit, please contact one of the above agencies for additional information.

**U.S. Postal Service**: When you first install a mailbox, you must contact your local postal provider who explains where your box must be placed to comply with their normal delivery route. You must use a U.S. Postal Service approved mailbox. The mailbox must be placed 42 to 48 inches above ground level. Additional information may be obtained from your local Post Office.

**County Highway Department**: In Wisconsin, state highway snow removal operations can conflict with mailbox installations. Some County Highway Departments have developed a standard for mailbox installations which has been successful in reducing mailbox damage. They recommend placing the box on a 24-inch minimum arm, at a minimum height of 46 inches. The front of the box should be aligned with the outside edge of the shoulder. (See illustration next page.)
Recommended Mailbox Installations

To avoid damage to your mailbox and also allow the snowplows to remove the snow from under your mailbox, the following dimensions are recommended:

Placing mailboxes a short distance away from driveways and intersections helps to avoid vision-restricting snowbanks and also damage to your mailbox. The box and base should be strong enough to withstand flying snow and slush from traffic and snowplows.

For additional information regarding snow removal and your mailbox, contact your County Highway Department.

*WisDot - Department of Transportation Districts:* WisDOT maintains mailbox support and mounting installation standards to ensure the public safe use of state highways and the highway right-of-way. Once you have obtained a mailbox approved by the U.S. Postal Service and obtained information as to where your mail will be delivered, install the box on a support that meets the following Wisconsin State standards for safe installation:

1. **Support.** The support should be a wood post, steel pipe, or steel channel installed no more than 24 inches into the ground and extending to a vertical height such that the bottom of the mailbox is a minimum of 42 inches but not to exceed a maximum of 48 inches above the ground surface. Following are appropriate support dimensions:
   - Square wood post - 4 x 4 inch, nominal
   - Round wood post - 4 inch
   - Steel pipe - 1 ½ diameter
   - Steel Channel - 2 pounds per foot

   Dimensions exceeding these should be deemed unacceptable and in violation of the ordinance.

   The support **should not** be set in concrete, **nor** is a base plate acceptable.

2. **Attachment.** The box-to-post attachment should be sufficient to prevent the separation of the box from the support post when struck.

3. **Multiple Mailboxes.** No more than two mailboxes should be mounted on one support post. For a multiple installation, support
posts must be spaced a minimum longitudinal distance apart which is equal to three-quarters of the height of the posts in the installation. Thus, for example, in an installation where posts are four feet above ground, they should be spaced three feet apart.

4. **Location:** Mailboxes must be located on the right side of the road. (The left side is permissible on one-way roads or streets.) They should be located on the far side of driveways. The face of the mailbox must not extend over the edge of the traveled way or of a paved shoulder.

5. Installations should avoid blind spots or poor sight distance locations.

Following are examples of safely installed mail boxes.

![Figure 1: Spacing for multiple post installations](image1)

![Figure 2: Suggested multiple box support system](image2)

![Figure 3: Example of a steel pipe cantilever mailbox support](image3)
Figure 4: Example of a wood cantilever mailbox support