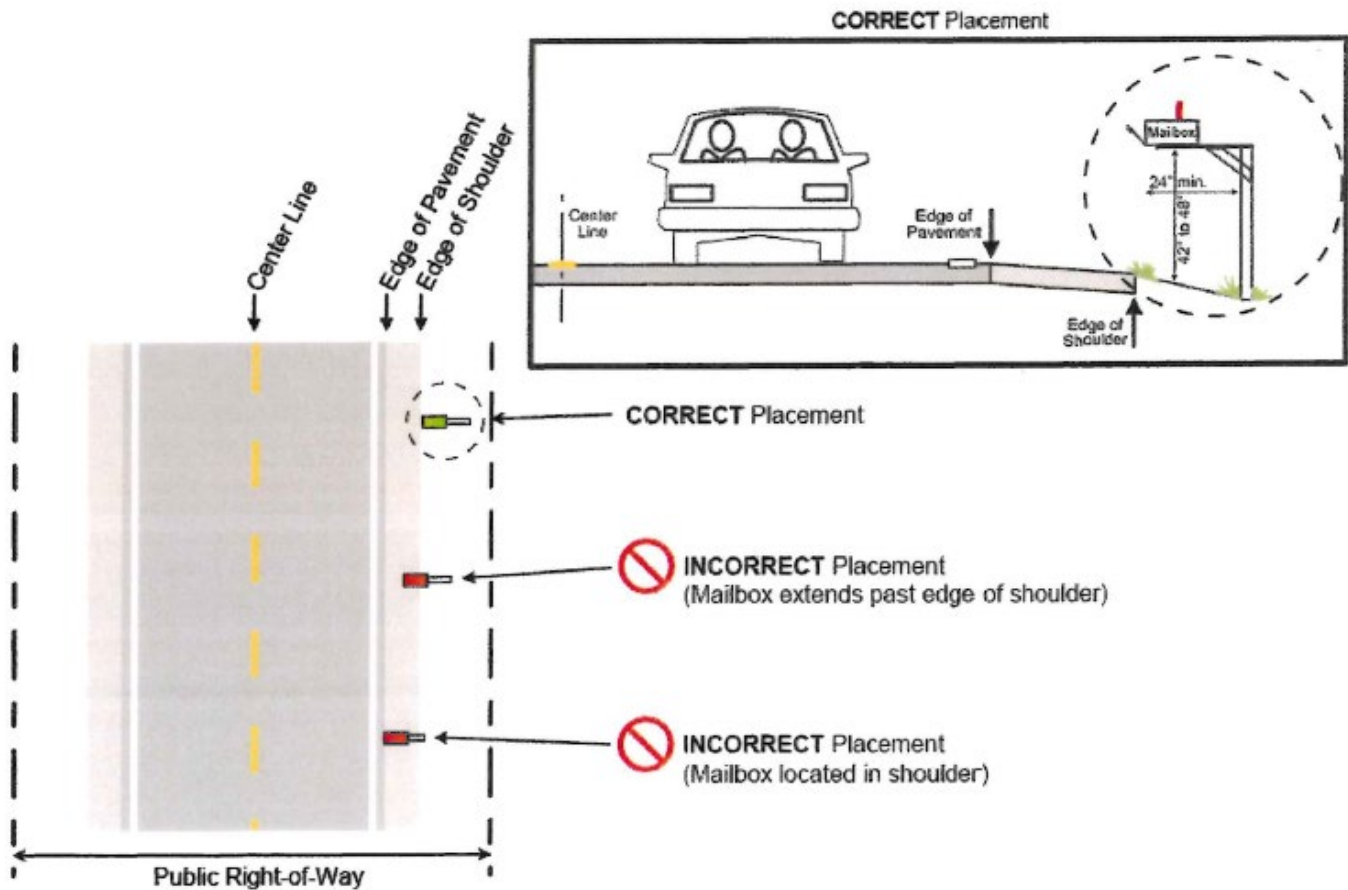


**A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE JACKSON COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT TO HELP KEEP YOUR WINTER LESS STRESSFUL**

**Jackson County Mailbox Replacement Policy**

Mailboxes shall not be allowed closer to traffic than the shoulder line (outside edge of the shoulder), with the support base a minimum of 24" outside the shoulder line. The box and base must be strong enough to withstand wind, flying snow and slush from traffic and snowplows. County operators who hit mailboxes with their plow or wing note the time and place of the incident and report the same to their immediate supervisor as soon as practical. Documentation of all incidents is mandatory, and it shall be the responsibility of the Supervisor in charge to ensure compliance. Mailboxes and/or bases actually hit by County equipment shall be repaired or replaced, whichever is more practical, as soon as emergency snow removal operations have abated.



**Where to Place the Mailbox**

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

Position your mailbox 42" to 48" from the road surface to the bottom of the mailbox or point of mail entry.

Place your mailbox 24" to back from the edge of the shoulder line.

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 post, and farm equipment (e.g., milk cans filled with concrete).

Bury your post no more than 24" deep.

# MAILBOX GUIDELINES

**SAFE MAILBOX EXAMPLES**



**HAZARDOUS MAILBOX EXAMPLES**



## *Here's the problem...*

It's January 10, there's 10 inches of snow on the ground, 30 inches of snow piled up by your mailbox, and your mailbox is 10 feet away from its post... knocked down again by that doggone snowplow for the fourth time this winter.

Next spring, you decide, you'll plant that mailbox on a really sturdy post that no snowplow can affect! How about a nice cement-filled milk can like your neighbor across the way? Or a wire cage filled with large rocks and a post supported in the middle?

But wait, that may not be a good idea .... Sign posts along the edge of state and county highways must meet required DOT highway standards, which over the years have been extended to areas adjacent to the traveled way. Mailbox posts should also meet these sign standards.

A hazard is anything that can cause damage or injury if struck by an errant vehicle. A mailbox and its support can damage a vehicle that strikes it, but light-weight supports will cause a minimum of damage and are not considered a "hazard" under this definition.

This is not so with some of the more massive mailbox supports such as plowshares, concrete pillars or stone aggregate held together by a wire cage you might find placed along Wisconsin roads. If hit, these can cause extensive damage to a car, bike or motorcycle, not to mention the occupants and operators of said vehicles. Also, if the vehicle rides up on a massive support, the driver could lose control of the car. This can throw the car back into the path of other vehicles or cause it to turn over.

Finally, if a series of mailboxes mounted improperly on a horizontal plank is struck by a careening vehicle, the whole assembly could come apart. The loose plank could be thrust through the passenger compartment--spearing the occupants.

## *Here are the statistics...*

In 1987 there were 1,725 accidents involving mailboxes in Wisconsin. Injuries resulted from 144 of these accidents and there were 2 fatalities. This could have serious repercussions for a homeowner. In a legal sense, a mailbox that is a hazard and fails to meet U.S. Post Office mailbox regulations and specifications may constitute a nuisance. The owner of such a mailbox may be liable to others for personal injury or property damage resulting from the hazard.

## *Here are the standards...*

According to the Division of Highways and Transportation Services at the Transportation Department, there are several alternative methods for installing single or multiple mailboxes:

**Single mailboxes.** An acceptable support for a mailbox includes wood posts 4" x 4" square or 4.5" in diameter. Soft metal conduits which are 1.5" to 2.5" in diameter are also acceptable. These supports should be embedded no more than 24" into the ground. There are additional support systems which allow the mailbox to swing if struck. On either of these two types of supports, one or two mailboxes may be mounted.

**Multiple mailbox installations.** Multiple mailbox installations involve more than two units. The DOT recommends that additional boxes be placed on independent supports and spaced at a safe distance from each other. Standards suggest that supports be spaced apart at a distance equal to at least 75% of the height of the box and support--for instance, if the mailbox is 46" off the ground, the supports should be 34" apart.

When supports are separated in this fashion, the mailboxes shouldn't pile up in front of a vehicle that strays off the road--and the driver won't ride up over them as easily, losing control. Also, there are commercially available multiple mailbox units. If you choose one of these, make sure it carries the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officers) seal of approval.

### ***Does all this really matter?***

You bet it does. Not only will you meet the required highway standards and possibly save a life, you may also relieve yourself of a liability on your in-surance, should there ever be an accident on your property. It makes good sense to follow the guidelines put out by DOT. So...please plant your mailbox safely today!