

CITY OF FITCHBURG MAILBOX DAMAGE POLICY

Is your mailbox designed to stand up to the rigors of the winter plowing season? What happens if your mailbox is damaged by plowing activities? The answer depends on how the damage occurred.

If the mailbox is *actually struck by a snow plow*, the city will repair or replace the mailbox, providing it's a standard design that conforms to U.S. postal specifications for minimum height and setback. Damage to non-standard mailbox assemblies that are located at the appropriate height and setback will be reimbursed **\$15** for the mailbox and/or **\$25** for the post to the property owner, with the property owner coordinating the repairs. Some examples of non-standard boxes are: mailboxes with custom lettering, custom designing or larger than standard installations.

Mailboxes should be installed and maintained to withstand snow coming off the end of the plow. If damage occurs due to snow discharge or snow storage, the city will not be responsible for repairs.

City staff investigates each complaint. If an inspection shows that the mailbox was hit by a plow or other piece of equipment, a temporary mailbox will be installed. Then in the spring, repairs will be made to install a permanent postal mailbox that conforms to U.S. Postal specifications. The Director of Public Works or designated representative is authorized to use reasonable discretion resolving disputes involving unusual circumstances.

If no signs of impact are evident, the resident is provided information about possible reasons for the problem. These may include inadequate construction or materials, age or condition of support post, needed maintenance or other sources of damage. City crews at their discretion may do a temporary repair for the property owner if minimal labor or equipment is needed.

Tips for Homeowners

In order to avoid problems with your mailbox during the winter season, residents are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Make sure your mailbox conforms to postal and city standards. That means the bottom of the box is 48 inches above the street, and the mailbox is mounted so the door, when closed, is 6 to 8 inches from the front face of the curb or a minimum of 24 inches from the edge of the pavement.
- In general, avoid installation of paper boxes, flower planters, or other attachments beneath the mailbox. However, if you do install these items, be sure they are set back at least 10 inches from the front of the mailbox. The city will not be responsible for damage to these items from snow discharge.
- Massive supports such as telephone poles, heavy metal posts, concrete posts, brick planters, antique farm equipment, or other similar items are prohibited. Any support must be designed so that if it is struck, it will bend or fall away from the striking vehicle to prevent severe damage to the vehicle or injury to the traveling public. If possible, all newspaper tubes and mailboxes shall be placed on the same post to avoid unnecessary posts.
- Use of semi-arch or extended arm-type support which allows snowplows to sweep near or under mailboxes without damaging supports is recommended.
- Conduct regular inspections and perform routine maintenance on your mailbox, just as you would for other parts of your property.
- Clear snow away from the mailbox area after each plowing. Snow that remains in front of the mailboxes will get compacted by post office vehicles and make subsequent plowing less effective.

Approved by the Board of Public Works on 10/21/13