

TOWN OF GREENE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

806 HOTCHKISS ROAD, PO BOX 129 GREENE NEW YORK 13778 phone 607-656-8762

Town of Greene Highway Department Policy on mail box damage

It is understood that mailboxes must be placed on the highway right-of-way; however this does not grant people any legal rights in the highway when needed for highway purposes. According to New York State's Highway Law, when the necessities of keeping the highway open conflict with the reception of mail, the latter must stand aside. Under the law, a homeowner could even be required to remove the mailbox.

Regrettably, in extreme winter conditions, mailboxes can be damaged during snow removal because they are installed too close to the road in the highway right-of-way as a courtesy to the US Postal Service. In most cases, damage is a result of the force of snow coming off a plow's blade. This scenario is dependent on weather conditions, amount of snowfall, and the weight of snow. At times, a Town or private contractor's plow will accidentally hit and damage a mailbox.

This is an unfortunate consequence of snow removal with heavy equipment in challenging weather conditions.

How can you determine how your mailbox was damaged? Typically, if a mailbox is pushed over and has no impact marks, it probably knocked over by the weight of the snow coming off the plow's blade. If the mailbox or post shows evidence of an impact, it may have been struck by the Town or private contractor's plow blade or a passing vehicle. The angle at which a mailbox has fallen also helps to determine the source of damage.

If a Town of Greene plow directly hits and damages a mailbox, the town will replace the mailbox with a standard issue black, white, or silver metal box depending on the availability of colors at the current time, and a single 4x4 post if the current mailbox or post cannot be repaired. The Town is not responsible for replacing designer boxes, post or any style newspaper box. (If you have such a box, you may want to consider removing it for the winter months and replace with standard box.) Boxes need to be installed per US Post Office Regulations (see page 2 of this document). If a mailbox and or mailbox post is damaged from snow coming off a plow blade the Town will not replace the mailbox or post. If a private contractor plows your driveway, we recommend that you learn their policies regarding damage to your (or your neighbor's) property caused by their operators or equipment.

Mailboxes and post are replaced only if hit by snowplow equipment, so check your mailbox, newspaper box and the supporting posts in the fall: perform the "shake test". If the post is already "shaky", chances are the post is unstable in the ground, and will not withstand the pressure of flying snow. Check your mailbox for loose or missing parts including where the mailbox attaches to the post before winter.

If you believe the Highway Department is responsible for damage to your mailbox, please call the highway department at 607-656-8762

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The following information regarding mailboxes can be found on the United States Postal Service website at: <https://www.usps.com/manage/know-mailbox-guidelines.htm>

United States Postal Service Mailbox Guidelines: So what makes a good mailbox? From the wear and tear of daily use to constant assault from the elements, these guidelines will help you set up a mailbox that stands up to it all. If you're buying a new mailbox, look for the Postmaster General's seal of approval; every new mailbox design should be reviewed and approved before it goes to market. If you opt to construct your own mailbox, you should run your plans by your local postmaster. Overall, the mailbox you build will need to meet the same size, strength, and quality standards as manufactured boxes. The house or apartment number should be clearly displayed on your mailbox. And, if your mailbox is on a different street than your house, the street name should appear on it, too.

Placement: Because of varying road and curb conditions, the Postal Service™ recommends that you contact your local postmaster for approval of the location of your mailbox before you put it up. Put a roadside mailbox where a carrier can safely reach inside without leaving the truck. That means positioning it about 41" to 45" off the ground and back about 6" to 8" from the curb. In the absence of a raised curb, contact your local postmaster for guidance. Remember to keep the path to your mailbox clear in inclement weather.

The Post: If you're mounting a curbside mailbox on a post near the street, the support should be secure and safe. The best supports are designed to bend or fall away if a car hits them. The Federal Highway Administration recommends...

- A wooden mailbox support no bigger than 4" x 4"
- A 2"-diameter standard steel or aluminum pipe Bury your post no more than 24" deep, so it can give way in an accident.

Don't use potentially dangerous supports, such as...

- Heavy metal pipes
- Concrete posts
- Farm equipment, such as milk cans filled with concrete In areas with lots of snow, we suggest a semi-arch or extended arm-type support. That way, snowplows will be able to sweep under without knocking it down.

Maintenance: Your mailbox takes a serious beating from the weather, especially in the winter. We suggest a routine mailbox check-up every spring. You might just need to...

- Replace loose hinges on the door
- Repaint rusty or peeling parts
- Remount the post, if it's loose
- Replace missing or faded house numbers and year-round keep obstructions away from your mailbox.

Your carrier may not deliver your mail if there's a car, shrub, snowdrift, or unfriendly dog in front of it.

