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Saginaw County Road Commission

Shake Your Mailbox Release

Shake Your Mailbox

Saginaw Mich. - Today, the Saginaw County Road Commission (SCRC) asked county residents to prepare for winter by shaking their mailbox.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has officially proclaimed Saturday, October 24, 2009 as 'Shake Your Mailbox Day' in Michigan. Shake Your Mailbox Day is a joint effort on the part of the road commission and the U.S. Postal Service.

"Many homeowners have started the practice of changing batteries in smoke detectors when clocks are changed for daylight savings time," Brian Wendling, SCRC's Managing Director said. "In the same manner, Shake Your Mailbox Day reminds homeowners of the importance of preparing their mailbox for winter."

"Record snow falls in recent winters have led to an increase in the number of mailboxes damaged by heavy snow thrown from passing plows," Wendling said. "Many of the mailboxes damaged by winter snow removal have become loose after years of use. Damage to these posts and receptacles could have been prevented by proper routine maintenance."

Although the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Saginaw County Road Commission have policies in place regarding replacement of mailboxes that have clearly been damaged by winter maintenance operations, road agencies have never assumed responsibility for mailbox damage caused by flying snow being plowed from the roadway.

"We understand that damage to mailboxes is inconvenient to residents and we want to minimize problems this winter," Wendling said. "The majority of mailbox damage is caused by thrown snow. Taking time to tighten screws and secure mail receptacles now can prevent serious headaches later."

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“If the mailbox moves when shaken, this is likely an indication the mailbox and/or post may not be able to withstand standard snow removal operations and should be repaired or replaced prior to the onset of winter,” Wendling said.

The Saginaw County Road Commission and U.S. Postal Service are reminding residents that this is also a good time to replace loose hinges on the mailbox door and to replace or add reflective house numbers to allow postal workers and emergency responders to easily find your home.

Mailboxes are one of the only objects allowed by law to be placed in the road right-of-way. The location and construction of mailboxes must conform to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Postal Service and standards established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in “*A Guide for Erecting Mailboxes on Highways*.”

“We will be out in coming weeks marking roadsides and preparing for winter maintenance operations,” Wendling said. “Each year we find mailboxes erected during the summer that pose a serious roadside hazard to motorists and a liability risk for homeowners. Although milk cans filled with concrete, brick structures and other items are artistic, they present very real dangers.”

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Note: A fact sheet is attached providing information on the standards required for placement of mailboxes on public roads.

Is your mailbox strong enough to survive the winter?



On “Shake Your Mailbox Day”, please give your mail box an aggressive shaking and a thorough inspection. More often than not, damage to mailboxes is caused by snow pushing against weakened posts or hardware. If you can shake your mailbox, it probably needs maintenance. Take time now to make any repairs needed so your mailbox will be strong enough to survive the winter. Proper maintenance may help to prevent damage that results in delayed mail delivery, or worse, having to make alternate delivery arrangements.

Did you know:

- * Your mailbox is in the road right of way, and is allowed by road commissions as a convenience to you.
- * Check with your road commission and the US Postal Service for rules and requirements with respect to the construction and placement of your mailbox.
- * Flying snow makes it look like snow plow trucks are traveling much faster than they are, but the average speed of travel is about 25 m.p.h. Even at this speed, the force of the snow being pushed off the road can damage mailboxes and other roadside items.
- * Mailbox replacement policies vary from county to county. If your mailbox is damaged by winter maintenance operations, contact your road commission. Should the need arise, your local post office may provide suggestions for temporary mailbox placement or alternate delivery options.

We encourage you to *Shake Your Mailbox* on October 24, 2009



Shake Your Mailbox Day is a joint effort on the part of your county road commission and the United States Postal Service (U.S.P.S.).

PUBLIC ACT 368 OF 1925

AN ACT to prohibit obstructions and encroachments on public highways, to provide for the removal thereof, to prescribe the conditions under which telegraph, telephone, power, and other public utility companies, cable television companies and municipalities may enter upon, construct and maintain telegraph, telephone, power or cable television lines, pipe lines, wires, cables, poles, conduits, sewers and like structures upon, over, across or under public roads, bridges, streets and waters and to provide penalties for the violation of this act.

History: 1925, Act 368, Eff. Aug. 27, 1925;—Am. 1972, Act 268, Imd. Eff. Oct. 11, 1972.

The Saginaw County Road Commission is charged with the responsibility of maintaining all roads and right-of- ways under its jurisdiction in a safe condition for all motorist and pedestrians. Under the following law we have the ability and responsibility to remove any unnecessary obstructions from the road right-of-way.

~Road Commission Leadership~

Commissioners

John D. Sangster, Chairperson

Richard F. Mallette, Vice Chairperson

Wallace J. Warner, Member

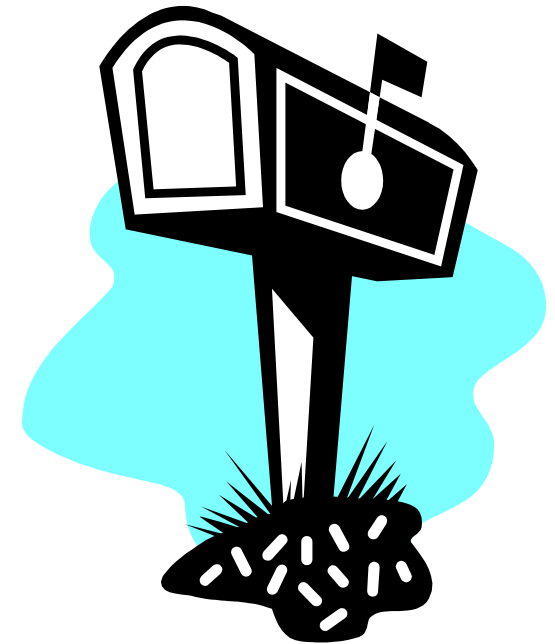
Brian J. Wendling, Managing Director

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Mail Box Construction and Placement Information



Over the past few years a new trend has developed with residents constructing Mail Receptacles with Brick & Mortar, these mail boxes while aesthetically pleasing are considered a dangerous impact hazard.

At this time it is not our intention to remove all of the existing structures only those determined to be extremely dangerous. These determinations will be made on a case by case basis. We are however preventing any new Brick and mortar mail boxes to be constructed along roads and right-of-way under the jurisdiction of the Saginaw County Road Commission.

The following are some examples of mail boxes which are approved to be placed within the road right-of-ways by the *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials* as well as the *United States Postal Service*.

APPENDIX C

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

USPS Notice to Rural Route Customers

Each year the U.S. Postal Service designates a Mailbox Improvement Week for customers served by rural delivery routes. During that week, customers on rural routes are encouraged to examine and improve, where necessary, the appearance of their mailboxes.

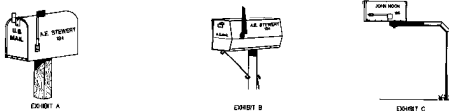
The purpose of Mailbox Improvement Week is to call attention to the need for providing mail receptacles that are designed to protect the mail from the weather and are neat in appearance, conveniently located, and safe to use. Neat, attractive mailboxes make a significant contribution to the appearance of the countryside and the streets in suburban areas.

Mailboxes that meet these four important requirements contribute to a more efficient delivery operation, and the result is improved service to the entire route. There are two approved styles of boxes: (1) traditional design in three standard sizes (see Exhibit A), and (2) contemporary design (see Exhibit B).

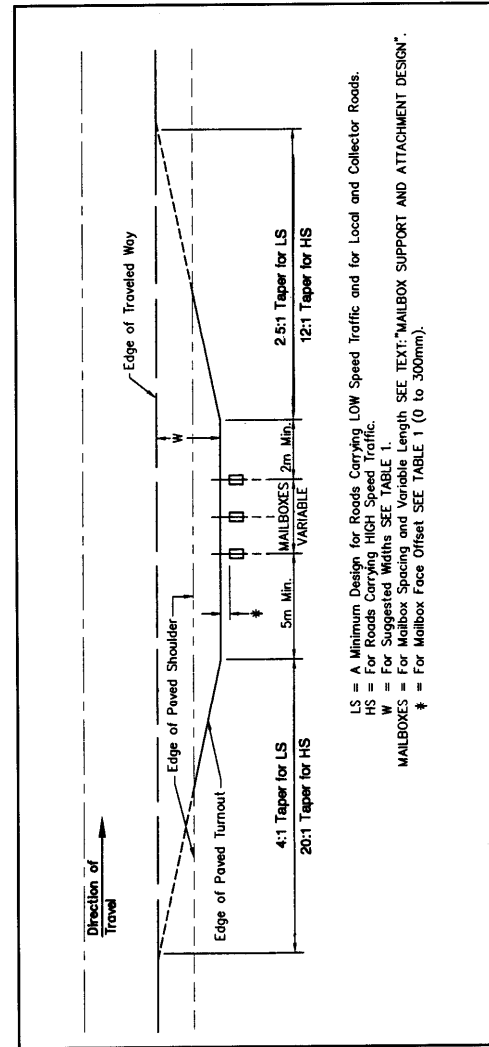
Mailboxes of the approved traditional or contemporary design are required whenever a mailbox is newly installed or an unsuitable receptacle is replaced. Exception: custom-built, rural-type mailboxes may be used if prior approval is given by the postmaster.

Where box numbers are assigned, the box number must be shown on the side of the box visible to the approaching carrier, or on the door where boxes are grouped. Customers are encouraged to group boxes whenever this is practicable, especially at or near crossroads, at service turnouts, or at other places where a considerable number of boxes are located.

In areas where snow removal is a problem, the use of a semi-arch or extended arm type of support is suggested (see Exhibit C). This allows snowplows to sweep near or under boxes without damage to supports and provides easy access to the boxes by carrier and customers.



The tapers shown in Figure 5 represent theoretical layouts. It may be more practical to square the ends of the turnout or to provide a stepped layout with the full width of the shoulder strengthened, if required, for the length of the turnout and the shoulder widened to the full width of the turnout for the entire length of the portion of the turnout outside the shoulder width. It may also be simpler to construct a continuous turnout-width shoulder rather than individual turnouts where mailbox turnouts are closely spaced.



SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR LATERAL PLACEMENT OF MAILBOXES

Table 1

Highway Type and Traffic Conditions	Width of All-Weather Surface of Turnout or Available Shoulder at Mailbox - Meters		Distance Roadside Face of Mailbox is to be Offset Behind Edge of Turnout or Usable Shoulder - Millimeters	
	Preferred	Minimum	Preferred	Minimum
Rural highway ADT over 10,000 vpd	> 3.6	3.0	200 to 300	0
Rural highway ADT = 1,500 to 10,000 vpd	3.6	2.4		
Rural highway ADT = 100 to 1,500 vpd	3.0	2.4		
Rural road ADT under 100 vpd	2.4	1.8	200*	200*
Residential street without curb or all-weather shoulder	1.8	0		
Curbed residential street	Not applicable		200 to 300 Behind Traffic Face of Curb	150 Behind Traffic Face of Curb

ADT = Average Daily Traffic vpd = Vehicles Per Day
* If a turnout is provided, this may be reduced to zero.

All mail boxes erected along a road under the jurisdiction of the Saginaw County Road Commission shall be placed on supports which will break away if struck by any vehicle.

These posts and supports may be wood (not to exceed 6" diameter) or light weight metal (not to exceed 1 1/2" diameter) and shall be placed so the face of mail box (door) is 12" away from edge of shoulder or face of curb whichever applies.