

WADENA COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT INSTALLATION and MAINTENANCE of MAILBOX SUPPORTS

Minnesota Statutes, section 169.072 and Rule 8818.0300 declares certain mailbox supports to be a public hazard, and authorizes local road authorities to remove those supports. State standards require Counties to have a clear area (zone) adjacent to driving lanes of roads and highways for safety reasons, and unlawful mailbox supports would be a violation of that standard.

Mailboxes and mailbox supports are the property of the mail route patron (owner). Wadena County does not issue written permits for the placement of mailboxes within the road right-of-way, nor do easements provide for mailbox construction. All mailboxes placed within the road right-of-way are placed there at the owner's risk.

When there is an accumulation of snow, the location of mailboxes close to the highway makes the plowing operations of the County difficult and renders the boxes quite susceptible to damage as a result of such activity. Separate newspaper holders, supports and paraphernalia may result in damage to mailbox supports. Newspaper boxes should be installed adjacent to mailboxes (typically on the left side) and not below them as they can be more easily damaged by snow plowing. It is the County's policy to use special care and consideration when plowing snow in their vicinity. Despite this care and consideration, some mailboxes will be knocked down or destroyed during the snow removal season. In the vast majority of cases it is the weight of snow coming off the snowplow or wing which destroys a mailbox not the actual plow blade. On occasion, however, plow wings will hit and damage them.

It is believed most mailbox damage which occurs during a typical winter would be minimized if postal patrons would install a mailbox support that swings away when hit by snow or snowplow equipment. Attached is a drawing of a steel post mailbox support system which has been approved for use in Wadena County. This mailbox configuration has been crash tested and is acceptable in terms of nationally tested safety criteria. The use of this approved mailbox support provides a much safer environment for all motorists. It also makes the job of snow removal much easier while reducing the cost and irritation to the mail patrons. Consequently, Wadena County's policy encourages the use of this recommended support.

Specific elements of the current mailbox policy are as follows:

1. Wadena County will provide and install at the County's expense conforming mailbox supports within the limits of all Wadena County highway reconstruction and highway resurfacing projects.
2. The mailbox support shall be the property of the property owner upon completion of installation and any future repair or replacement will be at the owner's expense (see note 4).
3. Once the support is in conformance with the County approved standards, it cannot be replaced with a different non-conforming support. Failure to comply with the County's mailbox policy may result in removal of any non-conforming support and misdemeanor prosecution of the property owner for a right-of-way violation.
4. The Wadena County Highway Department will replace, at no cost, all approved and lawfully placed mailbox supports damaged by county equipment during snow plowing operations or other maintenance activities. This is provided that the mailbox support was properly installed in conformance with U.S. Postal Service and Wadena County Highway Department standards.
5. All property owners applying for new driveway accesses with mailboxes shall be requested to install a County approved JMD Manufacturing, Inc. mailbox support or an approved equal as part of the County Driveway Access Permit form. The cost of the support and installation will be paid by the property owner prior to placement. The Wadena County Highway Department will install the new support for the owner. The owner is responsible for mounting the actual mailbox to the support. The recommended mailbox size is 1A (8"W x 21"L x 10½"H).
6. The attached drawing "Standard Mailbox Support Installation" shows the current Wadena County Highway Department recommended installation standard for mailbox supports.
7. The Wadena County Highway Department is authorized to sell mailbox supports to the general public at a fee approved by the County Board of Commissioners. The fee shall include all materials and labor to assure the mailbox support is properly installed.
8. If property owners living along County highways do not wish to wait for a new mailbox support until their road is improved, they may have a new one installed by the County if they contact the Wadena County Highway Department and pay the cost of the support and installation.

Any questions on this policy can be directed to the Wadena County Highway Department at (218) 631-7636.

Approved: (April 2007)