

## **DAMAGED MAILBOX POLICY**

(4-16-14)

Street right-of-ways are public use areas adjacent to the roadway intended for public utilities such as electric, gas, and communications distribution and service. In addition, this public right-of-way adjacent to the roadway is intended for street maintenance activities such as posting traffic control signage, storm water collection, and areas for distribution of snow during winter weather events.

A traditional use of the right-of-way is for positioning mailboxes for postal delivery. Because the mailbox is in close proximity to the actual roadway, mailboxes are subject to damage from passing traffic and are particularly vulnerable to snowplowing operations. During heavy snows, the weight of the snow coming off the plow can damage the mailbox and/or knock the post and mailbox completely over. Again, the weight of the snow, not the actual snowplow truck, is what causes this damage, and unfortunately, is unavoidable. When property owners place specialty mailboxes in this right-of-way, the damage can be significant related to cost. With the increased use of these specialty boxes coupled with tight city budgets, the city has reviewed and modified the current mailbox replacement policy.

The Damaged Mailbox Replacement Policy will replace damaged mailboxes and/or posts (due to winter snow removal operations) with a standard U. S. Postal mailbox and/or post. This standard mailbox will be either white or black and measure 6.5 inches in width, 19 inches in length, and 8.5 inches in height. In addition, the mailbox will have a hinged door and flag. Damage posts will be replaced with a standard 4" x 4" wooden post meeting U.S. Postal guidelines.

Residents desiring replacement of specialty boxes and posts must do so at their own risk related to recovering costs above the standard style mailbox and post reimbursement. As has been the case in the past, city snowplowing operations will attempt to minimize damage to mailboxes, but again, this collateral damage is typically beyond the control of the snowplow operator.

The first step for residents will be to report the damage to the Department of Public Services as soon as it is discovered. Questions regarding the City of Portage Mailbox Replacement Policy can be directed to the Department of Public Services at (269) 329-4444.