

**OLMSTED COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS
MAILBOX SUPPORT POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION OF M.S. 169.072, SUBD. 3.**

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago, the Minnesota legislature passed a bill (M.S. 169.072-Hazardous Mailbox Supports) which prohibits the existence of mailbox installations on public highways which do not meet acceptable standards established by the Commissioner of Transportation. The “acceptable standards” became effective August 22, 1994, so the law is now enforceable. The Statute authorizes local road authorities to notify owners of non-conforming mailboxes that they must bring their mailbox into conformance within 60 days of notification or the road authority may replace the installation and bill the owner up to \$75 for the work. Attached is a copy of that Statute and Rules Chapter 8818.

POLICY STATEMENT

Olmsted County Public Works should survey the highway system (need only consider those highways with speed limits of 40 miles per hour or greater, since this is the scope of the rules or standards) for unauthorized/non-conforming mailbox installations.

All non-conforming mailbox installations under the commissioner’s jurisdiction should be removed and replaced in accordance with Minnesota Statute 169.072 and Minnesota Rules, Chapter 8818, within 5 years.

Olmsted County Public Works will proceed toward full implementation (5 years) cautiously, with the understanding of possible adverse public reaction. Five years of gradual, phased implementation is acceptable. Many of these hazards have been in place for several years; systematic, gradual replacement is reasonable and prudent and does not compromise the statute’s intent.

The owner or resident of a non-conforming mailbox installation must be given the opportunity to replace their installation on their own. The Statute mandates that we give them 60 days notice, by personal contact or certified mail, of our intent to remove and replace their installation.

Mailbox supports are an eligible state-aid expense, but mailboxes are not. The decision on whether or not to charge owners is left to the local agency.

Although the Statute allows us to charge the owner or resident up to \$75 to cover our costs if we must remove and replace a nonconforming mailbox installation, Olmsted County Public Works will not seek any cost recovery during this 5 year implementation phase. After the 5 year implementation, any newly installed nonconforming installations that we are required to remove will be done at owner’s expense, not to exceed \$75.

On certain construction projects where existing mailboxes are disturbed, whether or not they are non conforming, mailbox supports may be replaced at no cost to the owner.

Replacement of nonconforming installations by Olmsted County Public Works does not signify any change of ownership. All future maintenance and replacements are the responsibility of the owner or resident, not Olmsted County Public Works.

When Olmsted County Public Works must remove and replace a mailbox installation, it shall be done in such a manner as to cause no interruption of mail delivery if at all possible. In no case shall the owner or resident be without a mailbox installation for more than 24 hours. (Mn/DOT agreed to this in MOU with the USPS.)

Olmsted County Public Works will make every effort to replace nonconforming multi-mailbox installations with crash tested multi-mailbox designs, so as to perpetuate aggregation of mailboxes to the greatest extent possible. (Mn/DOT agreed to this in MOU with the USPS.)

Olmsted County Public Works will work closely with local postmasters to keep them apprised of our statewide and local implementation plans as we deal with nonconforming installations. The United States Postal Service has no responsibility for, nor interest in, "enforcement" of these Rules or standards under this statute. Local postmasters can be a very valuable resource in disseminating the information contained in the Rules, that define what nonconforming installations are. (Mn/DOT agreed to this in MOU with the USPS.)

Key factors that may affect priorities for removal could be such things as degree or severity of individual mailbox hazards (worst case scenario), ADT, geometrics, existence of other fixed objects in the clear zone, workload, etc...

Districts or maintenance areas are encouraged to name a local mailbox implementation coordinator.

An annual update on the progress of ridding our highways of non-conforming mailbox installations should be compiled.

On road reconstruction projects, mailbox support systems will be installed at no cost to the owner or resident. The owner or resident must furnish and mount their own mailbox on the support system. Thereafter, replacement, repair and maintenance will be the landowner's or resident's responsibility and they will incur all costs related to any future repairs or replacements. The cost will be \$75 for each single mailbox support system requested after initial installation.

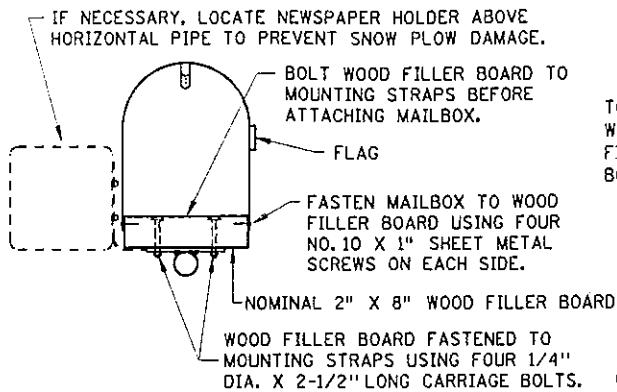
If a landowner or resident, who lives along a County State Aid Highway or County Road, requests a new mailbox support system prior to the road being reconstructed, the landowner or resident will be provided with one mailbox support system, a \$75 cost. The landowner or resident will be responsible for installation. Thereafter, replacement,

repair and maintenance shall be the landowner's or resident's responsibility and they shall incur all costs associated with repair or replacement.

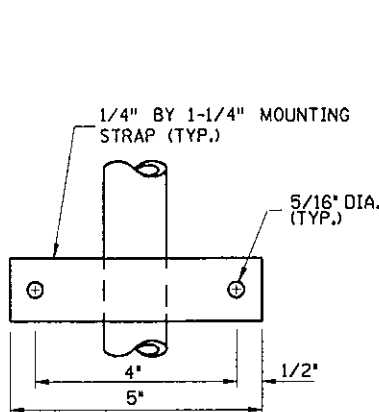
Those residents and landowners living along a township road within Olmsted County are allowed to purchase a mailbox support system for the same price of \$75 per system. The landowner or resident will be responsible for installation.

This Policy is to be considered in conjunction with the requirements of Minnesota Statute 160.27 which deals with obstructions within road rights of way.

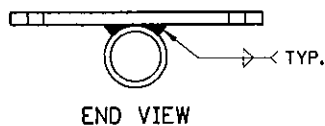
T:\Highway Division\ENGINDOC\HIGHWAY\Mailbox Support.doc



SECTION A-A



TOP VIEW

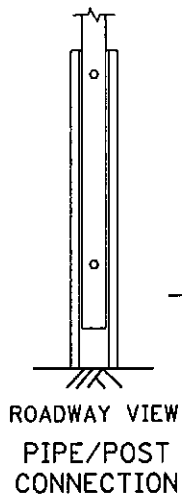


END VIEW

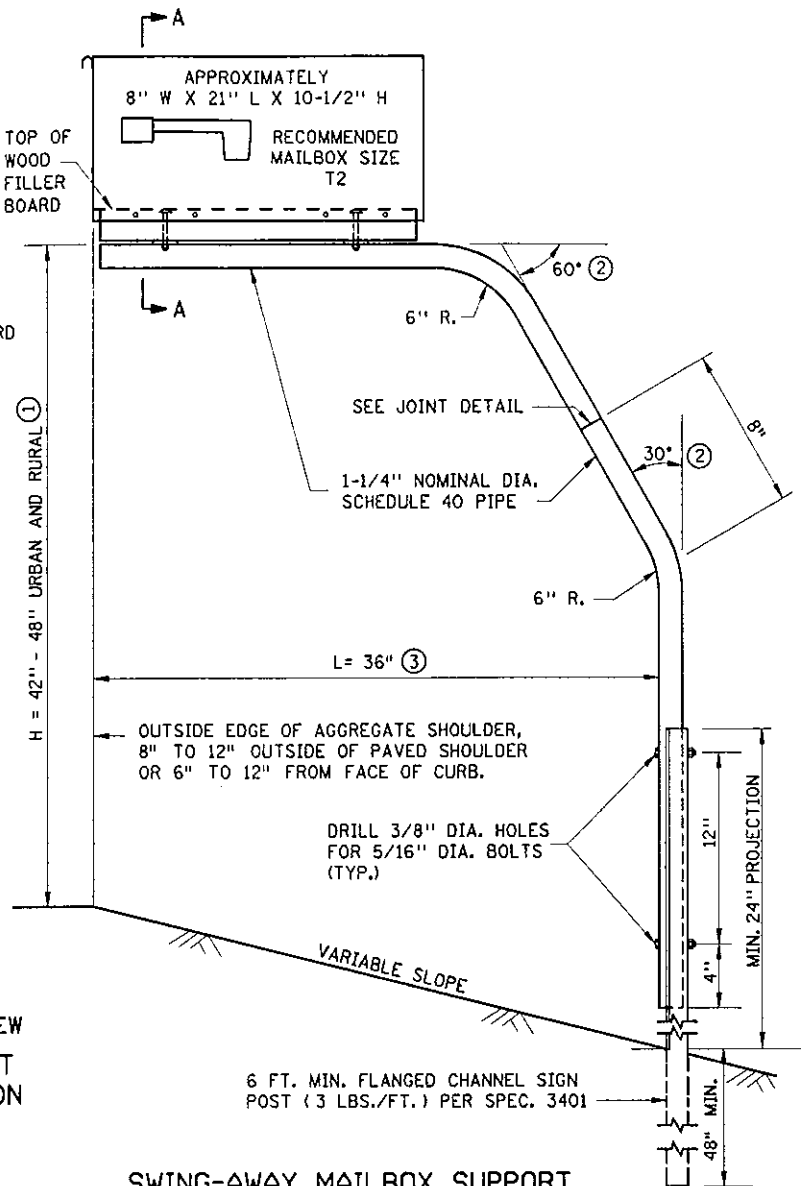
MOUNTING STRAP DETAIL



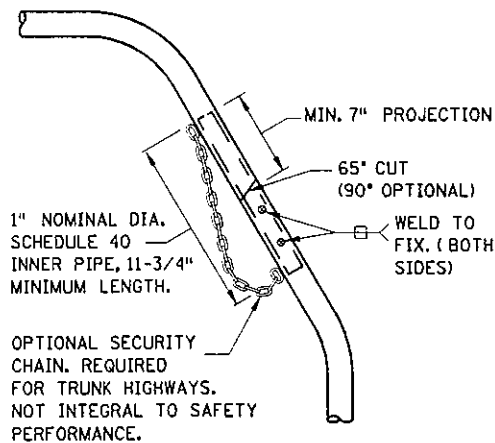
TOP VIEW



ROADWAY VIEW
PIPE/POST
CONNECTION



SWING-AWAY MAILBOX SUPPORT



JOINT DETAIL

NOTES:

MAILBOX LOCATIONS SHOULD BE STAKED BEFORE INSTALLATION FOR PROPER HEIGHT AND DISTANCE FROM THE ROADWAY. ONCE STAKED, THE INSTALLER MUST NOTIFY THE ENGINEER AND THE POST OFFICE. THE ENGINEER AND THE POSTMASTER SHALL APPROVE THE STAKED LOCATIONS PRIOR TO FINAL INSTALLATION.

THE MINIMUM SPACING (CENTER TO CENTER) BETWEEN MULTIPLE MAILBOX SUPPORTS SHALL BE EQUAL TO THE HEIGHT OF THE MAILBOX SUPPORT.

OTHER MAILBOX SUPPORT DESIGNS MAY BE USED IF THEY SATISFY NCHRP REPORT 350 CRITERIA IN ACCORDANCE WITH FHWA ACCEPTANCE LETTER, MEET MINNESOTA RULES 8818 AND U.S. POST OFFICE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH MN/DOT REQUIREMENTS WHICH MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING (REQUIRED ON TRUNK HIGHWAYS):

- PIPE SHALL CONFORM TO SPEC. 3362, SCHEDULE 40 OF ASTM A53/A53M.
- ALL FASTENERS SHALL CONFORM TO SPEC. 3391.
- PIPES, POST AND OTHER STEEL COMPONENTS SHALL BE GALVANIZED PER SPEC. 3392.

THE CONTRACTOR SHALL SEND THE SHOP DRAWINGS TO THE ENGINEER FOR APPROVAL. FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING DESIGN ELEMENTS AND BREAKAWAY FEATURES, CONTACT THE DESIGN STANDARDS UNIT.

- ① ANY CHANGE IN HEIGHT (H) MUST BE APPROVED BY LOCAL POSTMASTER.
- ② 45° BENDS MAY BE USED AS AN OPTION.
- ③ A 48" OR 53" CANTILEVER LENGTH (L) MAY BE USED AS AN OPTION FOR NON-TRUNK HIGHWAY USE.

APPROVED JUNE 1, 2007
M. Rakus
STATE DESIGN ENGINEER

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MAILBOX SUPPORT
SWING-AWAY TYPE

SPECIFICATION
REFERENCE
3362
3391
3392
3401

STANDARD
PLATE
NO.
9350A

Unsafe mailbox installations cause property damage, injury and even death.



Awareness

No one wants to be responsible for a fatality, but sometimes the public is not aware of what might be a safety concern. Mailboxes (specifically their



support tubes) often are constructed as a home decoration or are constructed to withstand snow removal efforts; unfortunately some of these designs are roadside hazards. To address this issue, State Legislation was enacted in 1991.

Legislation

Under Minnesota Statute 169.072 and Minnesota Rule 8818, local road authorities have the ability to develop and adopt rules regarding mailbox installations. The law, enacted by the 1991 Minnesota legislature, advises that mailbox installations should meet both national and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) standards and recommendations regarding breakaway installations and location. Installations that do not meet the

standards and recommendations may be removed and replaced at the owner's expense by the local road authority.



Steps for Replacing a Hazardous Mailbox

The general procedure for bringing a hazardous mailbox into compliance.

- Inform owner/resident that mailbox is non-conforming
- Inform owner/resident of mailbox installation standards
- Provide timeframe for replacement or modification
- If owner does not comply, agency will replace mailbox and may bill owner

Example of Preferred Installation - Minnesota Swing-Away Mailbox



For additional information about proper mailbox installations, go to:
www.lrrb.gen.mn.us

Acceptable Installations

Please contact your city or county engineer and post office for recommended specific installations. In general, installations should be light in weight, yet sturdy enough to resist sagging and able to stand up to snow thrown by snowplows. Moreover, they should break away when struck by an errant vehicle.

Accepted supports include:

- Swing away type installation (preferred)
- 4 x 4-inch wooden post (maximum size) or a 2-inch or less diameter metal pipe
- Minimum spacing between multiple box supports is 30 inches

Current standards allow no more than two mailboxes per single support; if more than two mailboxes are on a single support, support must meet national crash tests.



4 x 4-inch Wooden Post



2-inch diameter metal pipe



Coat Hanger Mailbox

Examples of Unsafe Installations

For the safety of the traveling public, the following installations are considered to be a road hazard on roads with a posted speed limit of 40 mph, or greater.

The following list illustrates examples of prohibited mailbox installations.

- 1) Installations with more than one vertical support.
- 2) A single support containing more than two mailboxes unless specifically approved by local road authority.
- 3) A mailbox that is not U.S. Postal Service approved.
- 4) Adjacent installations whose supports are closer than 30 inches measured from center-of-post to center-of-post.
- 5) Any neighborhood delivery or collection box unit (cluster boxes).
- 6) A support using unsafe materials stronger than the wooden 4 x 4-inch post or 2-inch diameter metal pipe.
- 7) Supports or mailboxes that encroach on a lane or shoulder of the roadway.



Is Your Mailbox a
Hazard?

