

Grand Forks County Standards and Policy for Mailboxes

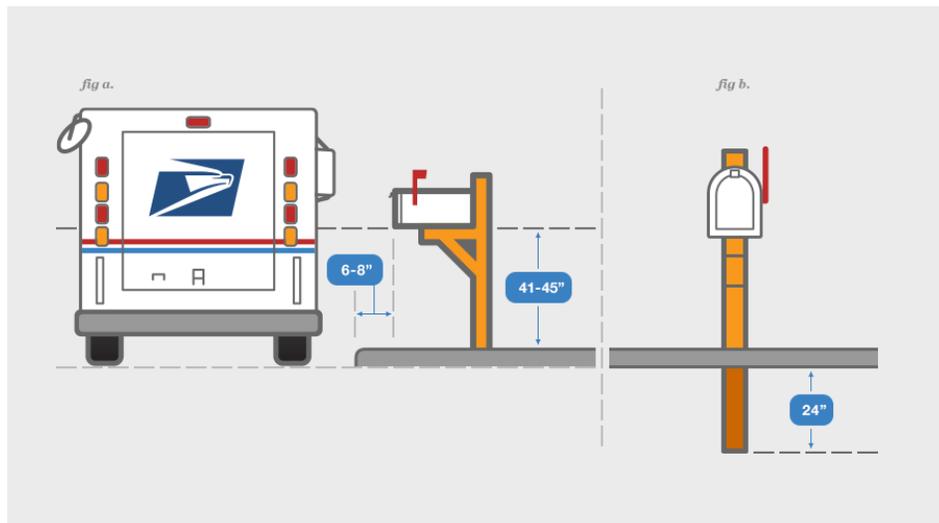
Roadside mailboxes need to be strong to stand up to the elements, convenient for mail carriers to reach inside, and installed to ensure safety for the traveling motorists. Please follow the guidelines below to make sure your mailbox meets these requirements.

Grand Forks County requires that mailboxes and newspaper delivery boxes located within the right-of-way to be constructed and installed in a manner that does not substantially interfere with the safety of the traveling public and the operation and maintenance of the County Road system. A mailbox installation that does not conform to the provisions of this policy will be considered a safety hazard. Any violation could result in a written order requiring the owner to remove the safety hazard. If the safety hazard is not removed, Grand Forks County will remove the hazard and bill the owner under North Dakota Century Code 24-06-29.

Mailbox Standards

Mailbox: Mailboxes must have a Postmaster General's seal of approval, shall be constructed from sheet metal, plastic, or similar weight materials and shall not exceed 11 pounds.

Height: Mailboxes are typically installed with the bottom of the mailbox located 41 to 45 inches above the roadway surface. Place the mailbox face 8" to 12" outside of the paved or aggregate shoulder, or 6" to 8" from face of curb. Refer to your local post office regulations for specific mailbox height requirements. The local postmaster would have final authority.



Eliminating Fixed Objects on Roadside: Grand Forks County standards ensure that the roadside remains free of fixed objects that can be dangerous to travelers, and prohibits planting or construction of any object along a roadway that will visually obstruct the view necessary for safe operation of motor vehicles on the road. In general, non-breakaway objects should be located at least 12-feet from the edge of travel lane for a road posted at 55 mph or under. A mailbox should be located to ensure that a vehicle stopped at a mailbox doesn't interfere with the adjacent travel lane (exceptions may be made for very low-volume, low-speed, or local roads). Careful consideration should be given to determine the location of the mailbox to ensure the mailbox doesn't obstruct the view of vehicles pulling out of a driveway and onto the roadway.

Support Systems:

Acceptable: The Federal Highway Administration recommends a 4" x 4" wooden support or light gauge pipe that is 2-inches in diameter or less. These supports should be anchored no more than 24-inches into the ground, as shown in *figure b* above and should bend or fall away if a car hits the support system. These systems are typically available through your local hardware stores.

Examples:



Prohibited: Mailboxes supported by structures such as non-breakaway masonry columns, railroad ties, tractor wheels, plow blades, concrete barrels, and any other non-breakaway style support systems are not acceptable.

Examples:



Preferred: To reduce the chances of damage the Grand Forks County Highway Department is encouraging the installation of cantilevered swing-away breakaway style supports. Swing-away supports has no effect on traffic operations, and provides more maneuverability and clearance for snowplowing with less chance of hitting or damaging the mailbox and support. The County Highway Department has adopted the Minnesota DOT style; refer to MnDOT Standard Plate 9350A. These systems are thoroughly tested and meet state and federal requirements.

The Highway Department does stock standard mailboxes and swing-away support systems, however they are not allowed to sell them to the general public. While there may be many manufactures of acceptable systems, two known companies are:

JMD Manufacturing, 320-231-2686, www.jmdmanufacturing.com

Herness Construction Company, 612-710-2217, www.swingsafesupports.com

Examples:



It is inevitable that snowplow operations can damage mailboxes. If the County damages your mailbox, the County will furnish and install a new standard mailbox and swing-away support system. Custom mailboxes and posts shall be furnished and installed by the landowner, even if damaged by the County. The County will not replace supports damaged by third parties or install a new mailbox. The area underneath the mailbox must remain free of obstructions in order to allow the unhindered passage of the snowplow wing blade. Newspaper delivery boxes, advertisement delivery boxes, nameplates, address plates, etc, shall not be installed underneath the mailbox. Obstacles interfering with the wing blade force the plow to swerve, often into the oncoming lane, creating an unsafe situation for motorists and plow operators. Grand Forks County, will provide and install, at the county's expense, conforming mailbox supports within the limits of all highway reconstruction and resurfacing projects.