

Damage from snow plows isn't limited to a plow actually hitting the mailbox. Another concern is windrow — the heaps of snow that are pushed by the plow and exert pressure on mailboxes.

There is a delicate balance between placing a mailbox within postal workers' reach and avoiding damage. Mailboxes may be placed within the limits of the legal right-of-way along state-owned roadways, which lets postal workers deliver mail with relative ease. The downside of this placement is that any damages from snow plows (or anything else) are considered the responsibility of the property owner.

Ideally and in many circumstances, a mailbox is placed as far from the shoulder of the roadway as possible, as long as mail carriers can still reach the box from a vehicle. If this is the case and the mailbox is placed on a firm support, the box should be able to handle plowed snow pressing against the pole.

Mail carriers will make every effort to deliver mail, but if a mailbox is buried in snow or improperly placed, mail may have to be picked up at the post office.

PennDOT offers the following recommendations:

- Check your mailbox support often.
- Clear snow from in front and on the sides of the mailbox, disposing of it properly, not on the roadway.
- Consider using reflective tape or other material to make the mailbox easier to see during storms or dark hours.

For assistance with mailbox placement along roadways, contact your post office.

Property owners who have followed the above tips in the past and have still experienced damaged mailboxes may want to consider a cantilever mailbox support that will “swing” a mailbox out of harm’s way. Diagrams and supply lists for building a cantilever mailbox support are available on PennDOT's website.