

City of Rice Lake Mailbox Policy

It is the goal of the City of Rice Lake to provide right-of-way for the traveling public that is safe, efficient, and free of unnecessary hazards, while minimizing the inconvenience to property owners. Minnesota law declares certain mailbox installations to be a public nuisance, a road hazard, and a danger to the health and safety of the traveling public (Minnesota Rules Chapter 8818), and authorizes the road authority to remove and replace such a support (Statute 169.072).

1. Ownership of Mailbox Supports

Mailboxes and mailbox supports are the property of the mail route patron. The City of Rice Lake does not issue written permits for the placement of mailboxes within the road right-of-way, nor do our easements provide for mailbox construction. All mailboxes placed within the road right-of-way are placed there at the owner's risk. Replacement or installation of mailbox supports by the City does not signify any change of ownership. The mailbox and support remains the property of the owner and it is the owner's responsibility to maintain to conformance standards.

2. Replacement of Unlawful Mailbox Supports and Installations

Any mailbox deemed unlawful by the City of Rice Lake Public Works Department, as defined by Minnesota Rules Chapter 8818 (attached), shall be replaced. Once a support is deemed unlawful, the owner shall be notified in writing that the non-compliant mailbox or support shall be replaced within sixty (60) days. Failure to comply with the City's mailbox policy will result in removal of any non-conforming support at the owner's expense and misdemeanor prosecution of the property owner for a right-of-way violation.

3. Replacement of Damaged Mailbox Support and Mailboxes by City of Rice Lake

The Public Works Department will replace all lawful compliant mailbox supports damaged by City equipment during snowplowing operations or other maintenance activities provided the support was properly installed according to U.S. Postal and City of Rice Lake Public Works Department standards. If the installation is a standard swing-away mailbox support and damage is caused to the vertical support by direct contact of the snowplow or maintenance equipment, the City of Rice Lake will repair or replace the support with a standard swing-away mailbox support as soon as possible. All replacements will be a standard swing-away mailbox support. City of Rice Lake will not be responsible for damage to non-standard mailbox support installations and will not replace supports damaged by third parties.

City of Rice Lake will not replace mailboxes. Snowplowing activities are inherently abusive on mailboxes. Even if the installation is at the correct height and setback, windrows of snow can and will damage a mailbox. In addition, the different styles and materials used in manufacturing each present problems. For example, the plastic mailboxes are light weight and resist corrosion, but at cold temperatures they can shatter upon impact with a windrow of snow.

4. Installation Information

Location

Mailboxes shall be placed for maximum convenience to the patron but shall be consistent with safety considerations for highway traffic, the carrier, and the patron. Mailbox locations shall minimize the walking distance within the roadway for the patron, maximize the stopping sight distance in advance of the mailbox, and shall not restrict the sight distance exiting the driveway. The placing of mailboxes along high-speed highways should be avoided if other practical locations are available.

Mailboxes shall be located on the far right side of the highway in the direction of travel. The bottom of the box shall be set at an elevation of 42 to 48 inches above the roadway surface as established by the U.S. Postal Service. The roadside face of the mailbox shall be located so that it is:

- 8 - 12 inches outside of the paved or aggregate shoulder, or
- 6 - 12 inches back from the face of the curb.

Where a mailbox is located near an intersection or driveway, it shall be in accordance with local ordinances and/or policies. If a mailbox is installed near an existing guardrail, it shall be located behind the guardrail, where practical.

Exceptions to these mailbox location requirements must be approved by the City of Rice Lake Public Works Department and the local Postmaster.

Structure

Mailboxes shall conform to the requirement of the U.S. Postal Service, Minnesota Rules Chapter 8818 and shall be acceptable to the City of Rice Lake Public Works Department. No more than two (2) mailboxes shall be mounted on a support structure.

All new and replacement mailbox supports shall meet the City of Rice Lake Public Works Department standard specifications for swing-away mailbox support design. The attached drawing and specifications detailed below are from Mn/DOT Standard Plate 9350A.

The metal support shall weigh three (3) pounds per lineal foot or less and shall not be fitted with an anchor plate. The post must be embedded a minimum of four (4) feet below ground and project at least two (2) feet or more above ground as needed depending on roadway in-slope. The minimum spacing between the centers of support posts shall be thirty (30) inches.

The post-to-box attachment details should be of sufficient strength to prevent the box from separating from the post top if the installation is struck by a vehicle. The exact support hardware dimensions and design may vary. The product must result in a satisfactory attachment of the mailbox to the post, and all components must fit together properly.

There are several swing-away mailbox supports manufactured for sale to the public. It is acceptable for residents to purchase and install these products if the product has passed NCHRP 350 crash requirements and meets Minnesota Rules Chapter 8818.

Exceptions to these mailbox structures designs must be approved by the City of Rice Lake Public Works Department and the local Postmaster.

Spacing of Mailbox Supports

In accordance with Minnesota Rules Chapter 8818, mailbox supports shall be spaced no closer than thirty (30) inches.

5. Miscellaneous Attachment to Mailbox Supports

Newspaper delivery boxes, advertisement delivery boxes, nameplates, address plates, etc., shall not be installed underneath the mailbox, whether attached to the mailbox support to on a separate post. The area underneath the mailbox shall remain free of obstructions in order to allow the unhindered passage of the snowplow wing blade. 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.

6. Interruption of Mail Delivery

When the City must remove and replace a mailbox support, it shall be done in such a manner as to cause minimal interruption of mail delivery.

7. Mailbox Support Requirement part of Access Permits

The City of Rice Lake Public Works Department will require that all mailbox supports associated with the issuance of an access permit be constructed in accordance with the Department's specifications for lawful supports. The property owner will pay for the cost of the supports.

8. Replacement of Mailbox Supports Under City Road Improvement Program

City of Rice Lake will provide and install, at the City's expense, conforming mailbox supports within the limits of all City of Rice Lake highway reconstruction and highway resurfacing projects.

The City is able to provide this service only on reconstruction/resurfacing projects since they are an eligible state aid expense and therefore reimbursable.

9. Call Before You Dig (Gopher State One Call)

48 Hours prior to installation of any new mailbox support, contact Gopher State One Call for utility locates (1-800-252-1166).

10. Repealer

This policy hereby repeals and replaces any former Mailbox Policy.

11. Effectuation

This policy was approved and adopted by Rice Lake City Council on July 6, 2020.



John Werner, Mayor

Attest: 

Toni Blomdahl, City Clerk-Treasurer