

TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

147 CORDAVILLE ROAD · SOUTHBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS 01772-1802 * (508) 485-1210 · FAX (508) 983-7754

Mailbox Damage Reimbursement Policy

Purpose:

This policy establishes a consistent approach for reimbursing citizens for mailbox damage caused by snow removal operations conducted by the Town of Southborough Department of Public Works (DPW). The DPW is committed to ensuring roadways remain free of snow and ice during the "Snow and Ice Season." Given that most mailboxes are located within the public right-of-way, damage to them during snow removal operations may be unavoidable. This policy recognizes the shared responsibility between the town and homeowners for mailbox damage during such operations.

Policy:

- 1. Customer Responsibility for Mailbox Location and Maintenance**
 - a. The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has guidelines on mailbox installation, please refer to the guidance on the USPS website: <https://www.usps.com/manage/mailboxes.htm>.
 - b. The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) also requires customers to maintain mailboxes to ensure mail delivery and collection. Customers must keep the area around mailboxes clear of snow. This responsibility does not fall to the DPW or its subcontractors.
- 2. Mailbox Damage and Reimbursement Eligibility**
 - a. While the DPW strives to avoid hitting mailboxes during snow removal, poor visibility and other factors can result in accidental damage to the mailbox by plow trucks.
 - b. Reimbursement for mailbox damage will only apply if a Town or Town-contracted plow directly strikes the mailbox. Damage caused by the weight of snow from the plow (plow windrow) will not be covered. Homeowners are responsible for repair or replacement in such cases. The Town recommends installing a protective snow guard shield that will protect your mailbox from snow casting. See examples attached to this policy.
 - c. Decorative, elaborate or expensive mailboxes and/or posts installed and unprotected within the right-of-way are installed at the homeowner's risk.

3. Filing a Reimbursement Claim

- a. Homeowners must notify the DPW and submit a **Mailbox Reimbursement Request Form** within **48 hours** of the alleged damage. Requests submitted after this period will be reviewed at the DPW's discretion.
- b. All damaged mailboxes and posts must remain available for inspection.
- c. If the damage is determined to be caused by a private contractor under contract with the Town, the DPW will assist the Owner in making a claim against the Contractor.
- d. Approved claims may qualify for reimbursement of up to **\$50.00** to cover mailbox, post, and bracket damages. No additional reimbursement will be granted regardless of mailbox cost, location, or design.

4. Claim Submission Requirements

- a. Claims must include a receipt for repairs and be sent to:

Town of Southborough Department of Public Works – Mailbox Claim
147 Cordaville Road
Southborough, MA 01772.

5. Preventative Maintenance

- a. Property owners are encouraged to inspect mailboxes and posts annually, replacing any rotted or unstable components.
- b. To minimize damage risks, posts should be placed to the left of driveway openings or further from the roadway edge, following USPS guidelines for mailbox placement.

6. Claim Limitations

- a. Only **one claim per household per year** will be accepted by the DPW.

7. Policy Authorization

- a. This policy **was** approved by the **Select Board** on **December 3, 2024** It will remain in effect until modified or rescinded by a subsequent vote of the Select Board.

The Southborough Public Works Department offers these tips to help reduce the risk of mailbox damage:

- Place a 6- to 8-inch piece of reflective tape on the mailbox to help snowfighters see it at night.
- Remove snow from around your mailbox, but avoid throwing the snow back onto the roadway. This video shows how to minimize snow being thrown onto your mailbox and driveway: <https://youtu.be/8Bm7mJxJOSU>
- Inspect your mailbox. Make sure it is firmly supported in the ground and check for deteriorated wooden posts and rusted metal posts. Also, make sure your mailbox is securely mounted to the post. Check the mounts for rust and wear as well.
- If possible, avoid plastic mailboxes. Some plastic mailboxes have a tendency to shatter in cold weather.
- If your mailbox continues to get knocked down, you may want to consider changing the location of the mailbox. Sometimes moving the mailbox a few feet in either direction can help.



The Southborough DPW is not able to repair damaged mailboxes. Homeowners who have followed these tips in the past and have still experienced mailbox damage should consider installing protective mailbox snow guard shields (as shown in the attached photos) for your mailbox or install a swinging mailbox support that will swing the mailbox out of harm's way.

EXAMPLES OF MAILBOX PROTECTIVE SNOW GUARD SHIELDS



MAILBOX REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

I _____ of _____ (address),
(Owner Name) (Property Address)

Southborough request reimbursement for damages caused to my mailbox and related fixtures
caused by snow removal operations on _____ (date).

Describe damages:

I understand the Town of Southborough has a right to review this claim and may reimburse me up to \$50.00 for damages to the mailbox, post and brackets. No reimbursement shall exceed \$50.00 regardless of the location, size, original cost or elaborateness of the mailbox, post and brackets. Claims must include a receipt for the repairs. The Town of Southborough is tax exempt and will not cover sales tax. This claim must be submitted within forty-eight (48) hours of the date of the alleged damage. Any claim presented after the 48-hour period will not be accepted by the DPW.

Submit to: *Town of Southborough
Department of Public Works
147 Cordaville Road
Southborough, MA 01772*

I affirm the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

_____ (Signature) _____ (Date)

_____ (Printed Name)

For Town Use Only

Date Received: _____

Reviewed By: _____

Recommended Action: _____

cc: DPW Superintendent, Department of Public Works



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Architectural Mailboxes

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(609) Questions & Answers (44)



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- Includes steel mailbox, aluminum post, and all mounting hardware
- Installs directly in-ground (concrete footing recommended)
- Rust-resistant galvanized steel construction with plastic accents

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