



Saint Louis County

Public Works Department • Richard H. Hansen Transportation & Public Works Complex
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James T. Foldesi, P.E.
Public Works Director/
Highway Engineer

Public Works Department Mailbox Policy

It is the goal of St. Louis County 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).

I. Ownership of Mailbox Supports

Mailboxes and mailbox supports are the property of the mail route patron. St. Louis County 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 County 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.

II. Replacement of Unlawful Mailbox Supports and Installations

Any mailbox deemed unlawful by the St. Louis County 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 County'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.

III. Replacement of Damaged Mailbox Support and Mailboxes by St. Louis County

The Public Works Department will replace all lawful compliant mailbox supports damaged by County equipment during snowplowing operations or other maintenance activities provided the support was properly installed according to U.S. Postal and St. Louis County 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 St. Louis County 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 mail box support. St. Louis County will not be responsible for damage to non-standard mailbox support installations and will not replace supports damaged by third parties.

St. Louis County 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.

IV. 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 St. Louis County 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 St. Louis County 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 St. Louis County 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 St. Louis County 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.

V. 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.

VI. Interruption of Mail Delivery

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

VII. Mailbox Support Requirement part of Access Permits

The St. Louis County 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.

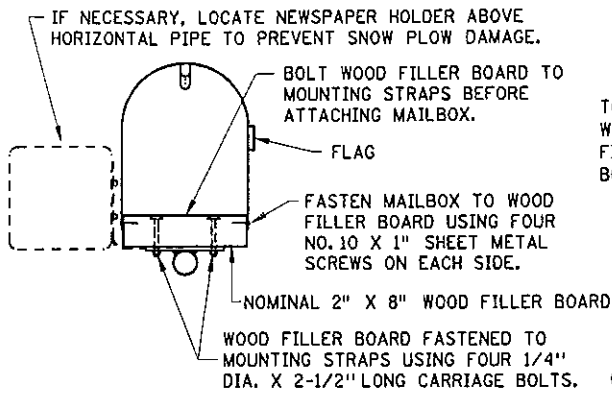
VIII. Replacement of Mailbox Supports Under County Highway Improvement Program

St. Louis County will provide and install, at the County's expense, conforming mailbox supports within the limits of all St. Louis County highway reconstruction and highway resurfacing projects.

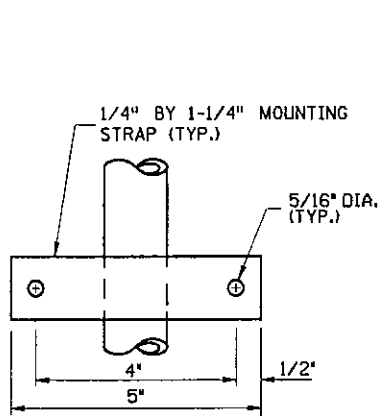
The County is able to provide this service only on reconstruction/resurfacing projects since they are an eligible state aid expense and therefore reimbursable.

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

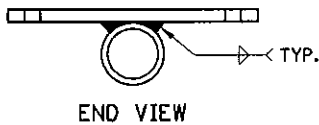
48 Hours prior to installation of any new mailbox support, contact Gopher State One Call for utility locates (1-800-252-1166).



SECTION A-A

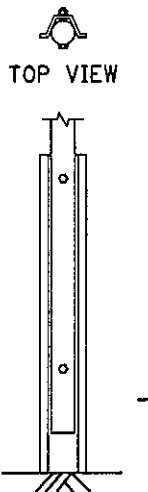


TOP VIEW



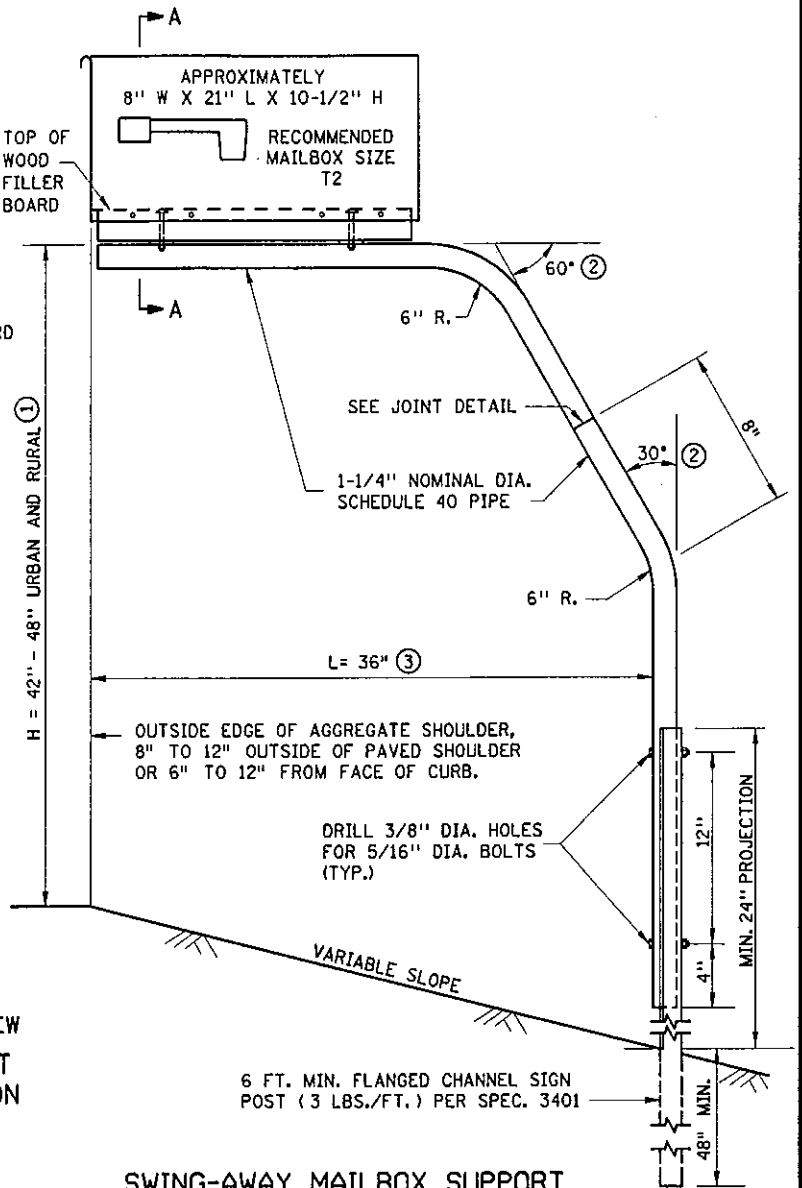
END VIEW

MOUNTING STRAP DETAIL

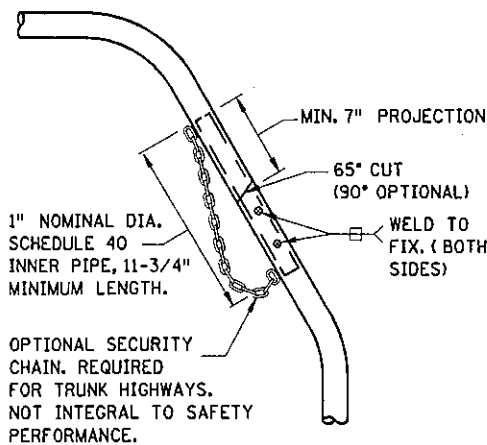


TOP VIEW

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

CHAPTER 8818
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MAILBOX INSTALLATION AND SUPPORT STANDARDS

8818.0100 DEFINITIONS.
 8818.0200 PURPOSE AND SCOPE.
 8818.0300 PROHIBITED MAILBOX STRUCTURES; EXCEPTIONS.

8818.0100 DEFINITIONS.

Subpart 1. **Airspace.** "Airspace" means the space extending vertically upward from a particular surface on the earth.

Subp. 2. **Cross-sectional area.** "Cross-sectional area" means the area of the resultant shape defined by cutting through something at a right angle to its axis.

Subp. 3. **Encroach.** "Encroach" means to advance beyond the specified area or space.

Subp. 4. **Mailbox installation or installation.** "Mailbox installation" or "installation" means the entire mailbox structure including the support, mailbox, hardware, and attachments.

Subp. 5. **Mailbox support or support.** "Mailbox support" or "support" means the part of the mailbox installation that holds up the mailbox, excluding hardware and auxiliary attachments.

Subp. 6. **Neighborhood delivery and collection box units.** "Neighborhood delivery and collection box units" means a cluster of several individual locked mailboxes packaged as a single unit.

Subp. 7. **Pounds per foot.** "Pounds per foot" means the weight of a one-foot portion, measured vertically, of the mailbox support.

Subp. 8. **Usable roadway.** "Usable roadway" means the normally traveled vehicular lanes as well as the adjacent road surfaces that are used by motor vehicles, such as shoulders, turn lanes, and parking lanes.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 169.072*

History: *19 SR 344*

Posted: *January 31, 2000*

8818.0200 PURPOSE AND SCOPE.

Subpart 1. **Purpose.** The purpose of parts 8818.0100 to 8818.0300 is to provide for standards and permissible locations of mailbox installations and supports on streets or highways in Minnesota so that potentially hazardous fixed roadside appurtenances are eliminated.

Subp. 2. **Scope.** Parts 8818.0100 to 8818.0300 apply only to installations on streets or highways that have a speed limit of 40 miles per hour or greater.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 169.072*

History: *19 SR 344*

Posted: *January 31, 2000*

8818.0300 PROHIBITED MAILBOX STRUCTURES; EXCEPTIONS.

Subpart 1. **Unlawful installations and supports.** The following mailbox installations and supports are declared to be a public nuisance, a road hazard, and a danger to the health and safety of the traveling public if located along a street or highway having a speed limit of 40 miles per hour or greater:

- A. an installation that contains more than one vertical support;
- B. a single support containing more than two mailboxes;
- C. a wooden support with a cross-sectional area greater than 16 square inches at any above-ground point along the support (for example, the maximum allowable square and round support dimensions are four inches by four inches and 4.5 inches in diameter, respectively), except that larger wooden supports are acceptable if, at a height four inches above the ground, the support cross-sectional area is altered in some fashion so as to reduce the cross-sectional area at that point to 16 square inches or less;
- D. a metal support of a weight of four pounds per foot or more for any one foot of vertical measurement above ground (for example, a standard steel pipe of up to two inches inner diameter would be acceptable), except that larger metal supports are acceptable if, within the first three inches above ground the metal support is less than four pounds per foot (less than one pound for the three-inch length);
- E. a mailbox that is not acceptable for delivery of mail by the United States Postal Service;
- F. adjacent mailbox installations whose respective supports are spaced closer than 30 inches, as measured from center of support to center of support;
- G. neighborhood delivery and collection box units, whether or not United States Postal Service approved;
- H. a support comprised of material other than solely wood or metal that either exceeds 16 square inches in total cross-sectional area at a height four inches above ground or is of a weight of four pounds per foot or more for any one foot of vertical measurement above ground, unless within the first three inches above ground the support is less than four pounds per foot (less than one pound over the three-inch distance). Examples of such nonconforming supports could include supports such as filled milk cans, brick structures, plows, and concrete-filled pipe; and
- I. an installation, whether a support or closed mailbox, that encroaches the usable roadway or its airspace.

Subp. 2. **Exceptions.** Notwithstanding subpart 1, mailbox installations that are documented to have passed an accredited crash test are acceptable. An accredited crash test is considered to be a test conducted in accordance with procedures described in the most recent National Cooperative Highway Research Program report, "Recommended Procedures for the Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Appurtenances," published by the Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418. This report and future revisions of this report are incorporated by reference. The report is not subject to frequent change and is available to the public at the State Law Library, Judicial Center, 25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, Minnesota 55155, and through the Minitex interlibrary loan system.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 169.072*

History: *19 SR 344*

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