



CITY of NOVI CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item 2
November 28, 2011

SUBJECT: Policy discussion on the repair and replacement of mailboxes damaged as a result of winter maintenance operations.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Department of Public Services, Field Operations Division *RS* *M.W.*

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: *[Signature]*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Mailbox damage that is caused during winter maintenance operations is a common and generally unavoidable occurrence - especially during a severe winter when there are heavy snowfalls and snow banks are high. Damage occasionally occurs when a plow operator comes in contact with a mailbox and/or post; however, the most common type of damage occurs when heavy snow gets thrown to the snow bank and the force of the snow dislodges the mailbox from its post.

When a mailbox is damaged during snow removal activities, DPS's past practice has been to repair or replace the mailbox on an in-kind basis. The estimated cost to sustain this practice ranges from \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year, depending on the number and type mailboxes that are damaged, and the number of non-standard or decorative mailboxes that get damaged (see attached memorandum dated November 16, 2011).

The attached draft resolution provides a policy that is similar to what many communities in Michigan have adopted. It states that a damaged mailbox will be repaired if feasible; or, if a repair is not practical, then the owner can choose to either have the mailbox unit replaced with a standard USPS mailbox and post, or to receive a flat reimbursement amount.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Policy discussion on the repair and replacement of mailboxes damaged as a result of winter maintenance operations.

	1	2	Y	N
Mayor Gatt				
Mayor Pro Tem Staudt				
Council Member Casey				
Council Member Fischer				

	1	2	Y	N
Council Member Margolis				
Council Member Mutch				
Council Member Wrobel				

RESOLUTION

Mailboxes Damaged as a Result of Winter Roadway Maintenance Operations

WHEREAS, post-mounted mailbox units are installed behind the curb on most public streets throughout the City of Novi; and,

WHEREAS, during the winter months mailboxes occasionally become damaged as a result of the City's winter roadway maintenance operations; and,

WHEREAS, it is unavoidable that some damage will occur to mailboxes installed in the City's rights-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to create a uniform policy intended to repair or replace damaged mailboxes, or to compensate residents and businesses for damages to mailboxes caused by the removal of snow from the roadway.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in the event a mailbox or post is reported to have been damaged by the City during its performance of winter roadway maintenance activities, the City will:

1. Verify that a pre-existing structural condition (such as a rotten wooden post) did not contribute to the reported damage.
2. Place a temporary mailbox so that mail service continues uninterrupted.
3. Repair the damaged mailbox/post if deemed practical by the City.
4. Replace the damaged mailbox/post if repairing it is deemed impractical by the City. The replacement unit will be a standard steel USPS box mounted on a 4" by 4" treated wooden post.
5. Reimburse the resident or business owner an amount of \$50 toward the purchase and installation of a new mailbox and post if the affected resident or business owner does not want the City to replace the mailbox unit. If only the mailbox or post is damaged, then the City will reimburse the resident or business owner an amount of \$25 toward the purchase and installation of either a new mailbox or a new post.


CERTIFICATION

I, Maryanne Cornelius, Clerk of the City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan, hereby certify that the above is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the City Council of the City of Novi at a regular meeting held on _____, at which time a quorum was present.

Maryanne Cornelius
City Clerk

MEMORANDUM



TO: CLAY PEARSON, CITY MANAGER
FROM: ROB HAYES, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES/CITY ENGINEER 
SUBJECT: REPAIR/REPLACEMENT OF DAMAGED MAILBOXES
DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2011

Background

Post-mounted mailboxes are installed behind the curb on most public streets throughout the City of Novi. Mailbox damage caused by DPS's winter maintenance operations is a common and generally unavoidable occurrence, especially during a severe winter when there are heavy snowfalls and snow banks are high.

Damage occasionally occurs when a plow operator comes in contact with a mailbox and/or post; however, the most common type of damage occurs not when one of our plows makes physical contact with the mailbox, but rather when heavy snow gets thrown to the snow bank and knocks the box off of its post. In addition, most damage occurs on major roads where higher plow speeds cause the thrown snow to exert more force and therefore cause more damage.

To quantify the issue, during the past winter season, DPS repaired or replaced a total of 68 mailboxes (see Table 1, attached).

Current Practice

Even though mailboxes get installed in the right-of-way without a permit or license agreement, the City has traditionally repaired or replaced them when damaged by City snow clearing crews. There is no formal policy that addresses the repair or replacement of damaged mailboxes.

DPS's current practice that has been employed for many years is to repair or replace all damaged mailboxes on an "in-kind" basis. For example, if a decorative wooden mailbox is damaged, then it will either be repaired to its original condition or replaced with the same type of decorative wooden mailbox.

The cost to repair or replace damaged mailboxes ranges from approximately \$50 for a standard steel USPS box on a wooden post (Figure 1 below), to as much as \$1,000 for a non-standard decorative mailbox (Figure 2 below). DPS typically expends \$20,000 to \$30,000 each year (including up to 500 man-hours of labor) to repair or replace damaged mailboxes. Much of this expense stems from the repair/replacement of non-standard mailboxes.



Figure 1 – Example of Standard USPS Mailbox/Post



Figure 2 - Examples of Non-Standard Decorative Mailboxes Repaired/Replaced in 2011

DPS staff queried several Michigan communities (including the cities of Livonia, Farmington Hills and Sterling Heights, and Bloomfield Township in southeast Michigan) and found that none have adopted a practice similar to Novi's – especially as it relates to the repair/replacement of non-standard units. Instead, most communities have policies that call for installing a standard USPS mailbox and post, providing a flat reimbursement amount to the property owner, or allowing the owner to choose one of these two options. Policies such as these not only minimize costs, but they also reduce the number of hours spent by City crews that could otherwise be dedicated to preventive maintenance of roads and drains.

Policy Recommendation

Our recommendation is that City Council adopts a policy for the repair or replacement of mailboxes damaged as a result of winter maintenance that includes these components:

1. Once damage to an otherwise structurally sound unit is verified, DPS will place a temporary mailbox so that mail service can continue uninterrupted. (Verifying that a pre-existing condition did not contribute to the failure is important because many times we replace units that have rotten wooden posts or steel posts that are nearly rusted-through.)
2. DPS will repair a damaged mailbox/post if practical. For example, if a box gets removed from its post, then DPS would re-attach it.

3. DPS will replace a damaged mailbox/post if repairing it is impractical. The replacement unit will be a standard steel USPS box mounted on a 4" by 4" treated wooden post.
4. If the property owner does not want DPS to replace the mailbox, then the City would reimburse the owner an amount of \$50 toward the purchase and installation of a new mailbox and post, which would be the maximum estimated cost to purchase and install a standard steel USPS box mounted on a 4" by 4" treated wooden post. If only the mailbox or post is damaged, then the City will reimburse the resident or business owner an amount of \$25 toward the purchase and installation of either a new mailbox or a new post.

A draft version of the recommended policy resolution is presented in Attachment 1. Please let me know if you have any questions, comments or concerns in regard to this policy recommendation.

cc: Matt Wiktorowski, Field Operations Senior Manager
Victor Cardenas, Assistant City Manager

RESOLUTION

Mailboxes Damaged as a Result of Winter Roadway Maintenance Operations

WHEREAS, post-mounted mailbox units are installed behind the curb on most public streets throughout the City of Novi; and,

WHEREAS, during the winter months mailboxes occasionally become damaged as a result of the City's winter roadway maintenance operations; and,

WHEREAS, it is unavoidable that some damage will occur to mailboxes installed in the City's rights-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to create a uniform policy intended to repair or replace damaged mailboxes, or to compensate residents and businesses for damages to mailboxes caused by the removal of snow from the roadway.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in the event a mailbox or post is reported to have been damaged by the City during its performance of winter roadway maintenance activities, the City will:

1. Verify that a pre-existing structural condition (such as a rotten wooden post) did not contribute to the reported damage.
2. Place a temporary mailbox so that mail service continues uninterrupted.
3. Repair the damaged mailbox/post if deemed practical by the City.
4. Replace the damaged mailbox/post if repairing it is deemed impractical by the City. The replacement unit will be a standard steel USPS box mounted on a 4" by 4" treated wooden post.
5. Reimburse the resident or business owner an amount of \$50 toward the purchase and installation of a new mailbox and post if the affected resident or business owner does not want the City to replace the mailbox unit. If only the mailbox or post is damaged, then the City will reimburse the resident or business owner an amount of \$25 toward the purchase and installation of either a new mailbox or a new post.

CERTIFICATION

I, Maryanne Cornelius, Clerk of the City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan, hereby certify that the above is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the City Council of the City of Novi at a regular meeting held on _____, at which time a quorum was present.

Maryanne Cornelius
City Clerk

*Table 1
City of Novi
Department of Public Services
Mailbox damage 2010/2011*

Date	Name	Address	Telephone	Subdivision	Reason for Call	Mailbox	Notes	Installers Name
12/10/10	Chris Stanley reported	22032 Sunflower						
12/13/10	Sara Keblish	23117 Meadowbrook	305-8738		Mailbox damage - box laying in snow - post???			
12/13/10	Wally Chisam	24520 Taft	349-1755		his house. He put up a temp. so he can get mail today...but it will not last.			
12/13/10	Lisa took mess.	22220 Taft					PERM.	
12/14/10	Kimberly Sirian	31127 Kingswood	709 0612		out of Clear Lumber 1/2 inch trex material can be purchased at Home Depot - as per resident.	Lisa took mess.		
12/14/10	Janet McCoy	24056 Argyle	946 4734		2 boxes 1 post - wooden. No mail			
12/14/10	Brenda Zingle	45176 Dunbarton Dr.	349 5129		2 metal blk boxes - 1 post - both boxes down.			
12/14/10	Mr. Kucharczyk	23095 Beck Rd.	444 3823		Beige rubbermade - no mail			
12/14/10	Mr. Kucharczyk	23075 Beck Rd.	444 3823		Blk metal box - box knocked off post			
12/15/10	Michelle Divine	50965 Sunday	345 2121		Rod iron mailbox - cross bar damaged - maybe more...still receiving mail.		PERM.	
12/16/10	Dawn	22824 Braydon Ct.	613 7912		Mailbox damaged - she can't even find it.			
12/17/10	Ruby Giessler	1311 S. Lake Dr.	624 2073		Mailbox still there - needs to be secured			
12/21/10	Ryan Shoebring	25490 Wixom Rd	or 281-686-1760		Standard mailbox hit.			
01/03/11	Resident	50880 Applebrooke			Mailbox dam. (rec'd e-mail on 01/3/11 from Parkplace Assoc. providing us with this infor.			
01/12/11	Tom Grabowski	24548 Kingspointe	348 9465		2 mailboxes 1 post - white metal boxes.			
01/26/11	Jim Kuehl	43634 Serenity	374 9720		Him & his neighbor's box damaged. They are ok now...but would like them eventually fixed.	Dean Reid Took Message		
02/02/11	Elise Martin	24011 Meadowbrook	348-0461		Mailbox completely off post - condition of post unknown.	**02/07/11 4th call looking for status		
02/02/11	Mrs. Russette	21644 N. Center St.	344 8274		Black metal mailbox knocked completely off post.			

Table 1
City of Novi
Department of Public Services
Mailbox damage 2010/2011

Date	Name	Address	Telephone	Subdivision	Reason for Call	Mailbox	Notes	Installers Name
02/02/11	Mr. Gallo	48000 11 Mile Rd.	349 8158		Black metal box (box barely hanging on to post - post needs to be replaced too - hit many times - he can't fix anymore.	Kevin looked at - wasn't sure what was wrong. Resident did temp. fix - (recheck) post damaged and box damaged		
02/03/11	Resident	25430 Wixom Rd.			Mailbox damaged - knocked off	VM Message - no name no # left.		
02/03/11	Jeff Kulie	25570 Wixom Rd.	974 5737		Tan Rubbermaid mailbox - has it temp. wired together			
02/03/11	Josh White	23625 Ripple Creek	427 9666		Mailbox damaged			
02/03/11	Rick Sutton	47510 Cheltenham Dr.	867 8876	Cheltenham	2 decorative boxes 1 post - completely damaged - needs temp.			
02/03/11	Kevin McClorey	48188 Andover	344 0743		2 decorative wood boxes on 1 wood post.			
02/03/11	Anand Meron	47480 Cheltenham Dr.	982 0889	Cheltenham	Decorative box - laying next to post			
02/04/11	Ann Janiton	48160 Andover	347 0009		Mailbox damage - vm left - called resident back for additional information - left message	Post is fine - 2 wooden boxes 1 post.		
02/04/11	Mr. Bitrite	47590 Aberdeen Dr.	431 9920	Cheltenham	Decorative Metal Black Box - knocked off completely			
02/04/11	Sandy Mitchell	23740 Meadowbrook	474 4377		Mailbox damage - Wood box covering metal -		PERM.	
02/04/11	Robert Cummings	45145 9 Mile Rd.	349 4528		Black Rubbermaid mailbox			
02/04/11	Joann Thelamn	21399 Beck	348 3309					
02/07/11	Jan Mouch	25491 Abbey Dr.	349 3274		2 boxes on 1 post - wooden with a metal box inserted - they will try to do temp repair.			
02/07/11	M. Fasbak	22483 Ennishore	305 9339		Metal Black box - completely off post - probabably will need new post			
02/07/11	Tari Declerck	45692 Bristol Circle	756 6899		Wood mailbox - damaged - and post	Still getting mail - damaged		
02/07/11	Christine Sweda	47639 Edinborough Ln.	734 737 5130		Wood mailbox	Matt rec'd e-mail 02/07/11		
02/07/11	Sherri Herman	41031 W. 10 Mile Rd.	302 9556		Green plastic mailbox - sits on wood post.		PERM.	

Updated 3:52 PM 11/16/2011

Table 1
City of Novi
Department of Public Services
Mailbox damage 2010/2011

Date	Name	Address	Telephone	Subdivision	Reason for Call	Mailbox	Notes	Installers Name
02/08/11	Ann Heitzeg`	45711 Bristol Cir.	859 4240		3 mailboxes 1 post - middle box in pieces. (Ann has box) Other 2 boxes put back on post but need to be reinforced	She has all the pieces. ** 02/14/11 - Resident called for a status		
02/08/11	Nadene Rabban	39851 Squire Rd.	921 8563		Wood over metal boxes 3 boxes 1 post - boxes back up still crocked			
02/08/11	Ray	46418 Cidermill	347 6797		Address plaque knocked off - he will send e-mail of pic.			
02/10/11	Linda	47175 11 Mile	348 2359		Neighbor called - they are out town - Condition of mailbox & post unknown			
02/10/11	Dennis	22529 Deerbrook	313 594 4970		Metal box knocked off..post damaged..his mailbox is on porch not receiving mail.		****3rd Call	
02/11/11	Teresa Wahlen	22955 Beck Rd	248-477-5782		deliver, she called before after hours and talked to a man and gave them the info.	Lisa, transferred from managers	called again on 2/23/11	
02/11/11	Jeff Pursey	48175 Cedarwood Dr.	330-5511	Echo Valley	Post in half - he temp repaired it. Blk metal box. RESIDENT WOULD LIKE US TO CALL BEFORE WE DO PERM. REPAIR	***Note Call resident		
02/11/11	Resident	26821 Meadowbrook	320 8729		Tim Sikma gave me message.			
02/15/11	Mrs. Engle	46675 W. 12 Mile Rd.	305 9889		Mailbox damage			
02/15/11	Tim Belcher	25890 Strath Haven	982 4169		Plastic Rubbermaid mailbox			
02/22/11	Sue Bonventre	24072 Devonshire		Addington	4 mailboxes on 1 post 347 9774			
02/22/11	Jeannie Arnold	41075 W. 10 Mile Rd.			Post broken			
02/22/11	Resident	45424 Addington	760-4496		4 boxes 1 post.			
02/22/11	Vince Tremain	46103 Grand River	946 4252		Mailbox knocked down. -			
02/22/11	Lydia Norstrom	41120 W. 10 Mile	477 4248		Mailbox hit again			
02/22/11	Victor	21943 Center St.	719 7176		Mailbox damaged			
02/22/11	Kyle	901 S. Lake Dr.	727-278-8738		White Metal post - post damaged too. (He put up temp. post and temp).			
02/22/11	Colleen O'Leary	40655 10 Mile Rd.	478 0765		Plastic box - no mail - Lisa took message			
02/22/11	Updated 3:52 PM 11/16/2011 Resident	25314 Buckminister	347 7004		Plastic box - post broken - no mail			

*Table 1
City of Novi
Department of Public Services
Mailbox damage 2010/2011*

Date	Name	Address	Telephone	Subdivision	Reason for Call	Mailbox	Notes	Installers Name
02/22/11	(Management Company)	51131 Park Place Dr.	465 1659	Park Place Sub	3 stainless steel mailboxes on 1 post - all damaged			
02/22/11	Ericka Miller	21815 Arbor Ln.	349 1643		Crossed bar knocked off - post still there - cream colored mailbox			
02/22/11	Heju	24157 Windridge Ln.	719 1766		2 wooden mailboxes on 1 post (her and her neighbor - both damaged)			
02/24/11	Jackie	23777 Novi Rd.	810 233 6939		Blk plastic mailbox (?) - post seems to be ok.			
02/24/11	Resident	21399 Beck Rd.			Post completely out of ground.			
02/25/11	Mr. Smith	47480 11 Mile Rd.	349 1353		board. Mailbox laying next to post. Need phillip screwdriver and 7/16 socket to reassemble.			
02/25/11	Christian 494 3119	1720 S. Lake Ct.			Wood Mailbox - no mail			
02/25/11	Sally	Rosewood Rest.			Mailbox completely off again.			
03/11/11	Patty Cheaney	21865 Daleview	248-346-8777		Two regular mail boxes. We damaged them but a car hit the pole and broke it		PERM.	
03/11/11	Denise Smith	41127 Marks Dr	248-613-7864		Rubbermaid		PERM.	
03/14/11	Larry Wardo	46844 W. 12 Mile Rd.	231-3537		Large metal mailbox hit & post cracked on vac. Just got back - Lisa took message.		PERM.	
03/14/11	Robert Hohentanner	45697 Bristol Cir	248-668-9334		metal and wood, on post with other mailboxes			
04/06/11	Sriram	24424 Cavendish Ave W	313-805-3576		The whole thing was twisted and he twisted it back and just noticed the post is cracked.			
04/18/11	Robin Ginnard	22975 Beck Rd.	248 374 3560		Her mailbox and neighbor - she did not have their address.			

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
PUBLIC SERVICE DIVISION



12973 FARMINGTON ROAD
LIVONIA, MICHIGAN 48150-4202
(734) 466-2655
FAX: (734) 466-2660

MAINTENANCE SERVICES

- Roads
- Parks
- Water
- Sewer
- Building
- Animal Control
- Forestry
- Equipment
- Storm Drains
- Traffic Signs
- Golf Courses
- Solid Waste / Recycling

JACK E. KIRKSEY
MAYOR

KEVIN L. MAILLARD, P.E.
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

DONALD R. ROHRAFF
SUPT. OF PUBLIC SERVICE-ENVIRONMENT & UTILITIES

PAUL ST. HENRY
SUPT. OF PUBLIC SERVICE-OPERATIONS

BRIAN D. WILSON
SUPT. OF PUBLIC SERVICE-MUNICIPAL SERVICES

To the resident at _____ Date _____

The Roads section of the Public Service Division is aware of the damage to your mailbox and/or post, and a temporary mailbox may have been placed with your address. Whenever possible we will repair and reinstall your mailbox and/or post. The replacement options are as follows:

(Option A) We will install a standard metal rural mailbox (Black with white numbers) and/or a standard 4X4 wooden cross post at the specified height and distance to the roadway when weather permits. **Please contact us as soon as possible if you choose this option.**

(Option B) You may purchase and install your own mailbox and/or post, then detach and return the damage claim form below with a copy of your receipt. The maximum reimbursement is \$50.00 and the City will not reimburse the cost of installation with this option. Once your installation is complete, please notify the Roads Department to pick up the temporary mailbox.

Please keep this portion for your records. We apologize for the inconvenience; if you have any questions please contact us (M-F 8:30 am – 5:00 pm) at 734-466-2655 or dps@ci.livonia.mi.us

City of Livonia mailbox damage claim form (Option B).

Claimant's Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contact Phone Number _____ Description / date of damage _____

Claimant's Signature _____

Send completed form and a copy of your receipt to:

Roads Department
City of Livonia Public Service
12973 Farmington Rd.
Livonia, Mi. 48150



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES
GARY MEKJIAN, DIRECTOR

MAILBOX REPAIR NOTE

Thank you for contacting the City of Farmington Hills Department of Public Services with regards to your mailbox. Throughout the winter months, our Public Works Division is responsible for the thorough and efficient removal of snow and ice from City streets, meeting the needs of our residents and businesses for safe, passable roads. Although our equipment operators are highly trained and cautious, occasionally they cause damage to mailboxes and posts while providing these services.

Our supervisory staff has reviewed this incident with the equipment operator and has field verified that the City's winter maintenance operations most likely caused the damage to your mailbox. A temporary repair will be completed by our Public Works Division as soon as possible to ensure continuous mail delivery. Should the mailbox and/or post need replacement, then the City can provide you \$100 toward the purchase and installation of a new mailbox and/or post.

*If you have any questions, please contact the
Farmington Hills DPW
at (248) 871-2850*

Winter Mail Box Damage Policy

Winter Mail Box Damage Policy

It is the policy of the City of Holland to pay damage claims, or make physical repairs, to mailboxes and/or posts that have been directly hit by a snow plow blade or some portion of the plow truck. The City is not liable and does not pay claims for mailboxes or posts that are damaged due to their inability to withstand the force of plowed snow. Home and business owners need to be aware that the force of snow being thrown by a plow during one heavy snowfall, or over a series of plowings, is substantial, and mailboxes need to be able to withstand the impact of plowed snow. No portion of the mailbox should extend beyond the back of the curb. The U.S. Postal Service standards state that the bottom of the box should be 42 to 48 inches above the surface of the street. The front of your mailbox should be approximately 6 to 8 inches away from the edge of the street or the back of the curb if you have one.

If you believe your mailbox was physically hit by a plow, you should call the Transportation Services Department at 928-2400. We will send someone to review it. A mailbox hit by a plow will look demolished, or have a clear indication of being struck by a plow blade. If your mailbox was hit by a plow, the City offers two options:

- 1) We will provide and install a standard mailbox and/or post, or replace the existing mailbox or post; however, you must be aware that this repair or replacement may take several days depending on snowfall or workload.
- 2) You may replace the box yourself, and file a claim form with the City Clerk's Office for reimbursement. This will be forwarded to the insurance company for review.

In either case, you must notify the Transportation Services Department of your decision. If there is no evidence that the mailbox was hit by the plow, you will be so notified and instructed that the replacement of the mailbox is your responsibility. You still have the right to file a claim against the City if you believe the City is liable, and it will be referred to the City's insurance carrier for resolution.

Snow plowing is difficult work that is usually done under the worst of circumstances. City employees are professionals who take pride in their work, and accidents due to direct hits from plows are rare. They do happen on occasion, though, and when they do, we make every effort to acknowledge them and do what is appropriate to make conditions right. In a similar manner, we would ask residents whose mailboxes are damaged by the force of snow to promptly undertake the necessary repairs themselves.

MY CAR HAS BEEN TOWED! WHERE IS IT?

In order to clear the street of snow and ice, abandoned or unlawfully parked vehicles may be towed to the City's impound lot adjacent to the Public Works Facility at 7200 18 Mile Road. The owner will be ticketed and charged for the tow. Contact the Sterling Heights Police Department for details on how to retrieve your vehicle.

SIDEWALKS MUST BE CLEARED OF SNOW

Property owners in Sterling Heights are reminded that the city has an ordinance that requires the removal of snow and ice from sidewalks within 24 hours of a snowstorm. The ordinance applies to sidewalks on all sides of a home or business, including those that run along major roads and connector roads.

MAILBOXES

Mailboxes are the responsibility of the property owner, not the City of Sterling Heights. The city does not clear the snow around mailboxes, nor guarantees any service levels for mail delivery. It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure they meet the U.S. Post Office requirements for delivery. Standard mailboxes are replaced if damaged by City equipment; however, the city does not accept responsibility for damages caused by the impact of snow on a mailbox during our regular snowplow operations. Mailboxes should be constructed to withstand the impact of snow from snowplow operations.

SNOWMOBILES

DO NOT operate a snowmobile on City Streets...it is AGAINST THE LAW. Snowmobiles represent a hazard in that they are visibility problems to drivers. These vehicles are recreational and are prohibited from residential and city streets.

SAFETY REMINDERS

DO NOT allow your children to play near the street. DO NOT allow your children to play on snow banks adjacent to the street. These little ones are not plainly visible to the plow drivers. DO NOT allow your children to make snow forts in the banks of snow adjacent to the streets.

FIRE HYDRANTS

If there is a fire hydrant in front of your home, you can help us by keeping snow cleared from around it. Our crews attempt to keep the hydrant visible and accessible, but with a total of 6,800+ hydrants located throughout the City, it sometimes becomes an impossible task between snowfalls.

CATCH BASINS


If you have a catch basin (Drain) in front of your home, you can help by keeping ice and snow away from the opening so that melting snow and ice can drain freely and eliminate the accumulation of water in the streets.

HELPFUL HINT

DO NOT shovel, blow or plow snow into the street. It creates a hazard for you and vehicular traffic...this is AGAINST THE LAW and you could be ticketed.

[Home](#) | [Community](#) | [Events](#) | [Government](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#) | [Site Map](#)

To translate this page into another language, please use the pulldown menu below provided by Google Translate

Select Language  Powered by Google Translate

webmaster@sterling-heights.net
40555 Utica Rd, Sterling Heights, MI 48313 • 586.446.CITY (2489)
© 2007-2009 City of Sterling Heights, MI. All Rights Reserved.

3. The snowplow knocked down our mailbox. Will the Township replace it?

If your mailbox is damaged by a Bloomfield Township plow truck, call the Road Division at 248.594.2800 as soon as you are aware of the damage.

Damaged mailboxes and posts will be repaired and/or replaced with standard (regularly and widely used; available at local supply stores) mailboxes (large and small) and posts (wolmanized or cedar 4x4 cross member), which will be reset in dirt.

During snow clearing operations, damaged mailboxes and posts will be replaced with temporary ones when Road Division personnel become available. Once snow-clearing operations are complete, repair efforts will be directed toward the permanent repair of all damaged mailboxes and posts.

The Township does not replace ornate (elaborately decorated or custom made) mailboxes or posts.

If possible we will repair the box. If that isn't possible, we will put up a temporary box and post. In the spring, permanent boxes are installed.

City Snowplow Operators Ready for Winter!

The City of Portage operates a comprehensive snow removal program each winter to ensure the maximum degree of safety to the motoring public. As early as 3:30 a.m., snowplow operators are at work plowing, sanding and salting city streets. In order to maximize benefit to the citizen's of Portage, streets are prioritized according to how heavy the streets are traveled in the following manner:

Priority I:

All major streets (examples include South Westnedge Avenue, Oakland Drive, Milham Avenue, Kilgore Road, Shaver Road, Lovers Lane, etc.)

Priority II:

All primary "feeder" streets leading into various residential neighborhoods, including access streets to all schools.

Priority III

All interior neighborhood streets.

Priority IV:

Cul-de-sac and dead end streets.



When a major snow event is in progress, every effort is made to keep Priority I and II streets clear. Usually, the snowplow operators can complete all Priority I and II streets in four (4) to eight (8) hours. Once the major roads are clear, the snowplow operators begin clearing the Priority III and IV streets, which may require 24 to 48 hours to clear. De-icing materials are applied as needed throughout the duration of a snow event, with major streets, bridges, intersections, hills and curves receiving priority attention.

As a major storm moves through the area, city crews will continue efforts to ensure streets are properly plowed and de-iced. Please keep in mind that the city contains 219 miles of city streets to plow and the plow trucks normally travel through heavy snow at speeds of only 15 to 25 mph. Major thoroughfares receive primary attention and are kept as clear as possible.

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of City of Portage snowplowing operations, residents are asked to abide by city ordinances and state law:

- ◆ Chapter 78, Article 1, Section 78-2 of the Portage Code of Ordinances prohibits vehicle parking on the city roadways between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. from October 15 to April 15. Vehicles parking on the streets during this time period interfere with snowplowing activities.
- ◆ Chapter 66, Article 1, Section 66-2 of the Portage Code of Ordinances prohibits residents from having basketball stands in the city right-of-way. Likewise, during trash and recycling removal days, citizens are requested to keep their containers on the curbs verses on the actual roadways. These items impede safe snowplowing operations and can damage equipment on the trucks.
- ◆ Michigan State Law (MCL 2577.677a) prohibits residents and private snowplow operators from depositing snow from private driveways, parking lots and sidewalks onto any public roadway.

The Portage snow removal program is designed to keep city streets clear and safe in the most efficient manner possible. Questions about city snow removal operations may be directed to the Department of Streets and Equipment at 329-4444.

City of Portage Damaged Mailbox Replacement Policy

The City of Portage snow removal program is designed to keep city streets clear and safe in the most efficient manner possible. While plow trucks normally travel through heavy snow at speeds of only 15 to 25 mph, the weight of the snow coming off the plow can easily damage mailboxes and/or knock posts and mailboxes completely over.

So what is a resident to do when this happens? Call the City of Portage Streets and Equipment Department at 329-4444 or use the "Report It" tool on the city website (www.portage.mi.gov/government/report_it.asp) to report

the damage. City staff will schedule either repair of the damage or replacement of the box and post, as necessary.

Replacements will be in the form of a standard U.S. Postal mailbox and/or post. The standard mailbox is either white or black and measures 6.5 inches in width, 19 inches in length and 8.5 inches in height. The mailbox has a hinged door and flag. Damaged posts will be replaced with a standard 4" x 4" wooden cross-arm U.S. Postal post.

Residents will have the option of receiving the standard replacement mailbox installed by the city or receiving

a payment of \$44 (the cost of a standard box and post and labor). If payment is desired, the resident will be asked to sign and return a release form from the city and will be responsible for purchase and installation of the mailbox of their choosing.



If you have any questions concerning the Mailbox Replacement Program, please contact the Streets & Equipment Department at 329-4444.



CITY OF **EAST LANSING**
The Home of Michigan State University

Home « Departments « Public Works « Snow Removal Operations

Departments

Public Works

Refuse, Yard Waste & Recycling

Bins, Bags & Sticker Purchases

Engineering Division

Streets/Sewer/Water Divisions

Permit Applications

Construction Info

Sewer Back-Up Info

Street Tree Inventory

Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement

Emerald Ash Borer

» Snow Removal Operations

Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Transportation Commission

Commission on the Environment

Staff Directory

Snow Removal Operations

During the winter months, **City of East Lansing** snow plow and sidewalk plow operators work hard and with great care to make roads and sidewalks safe. No matter how careful drivers are, snow and ice control operations may cause inconveniences to you. At times, it may also cause property damage. Here are some questions you might have about snow removal on streets and sidewalks.

1. How does the city decide which streets get plowed first?

The City of East Lansing Department of Public Works (DPW) plows seven miles of state highway, 25 miles of major streets and 61 miles of local or residential streets. DPW coordinates salting and snow control with the East Lansing Police Department. Typically, plowing begins when snowfall accumulates to 3 inches or more. Crews start by plowing the main traffic arteries for emergency vehicle access. The state highways and major streets are plowed before starting on residential streets. Please understand that every street cannot be cleared at the same time.

2. Why do the city snow plows push snow into my driveway and who is responsible for clearing it?

Because of normal snow plowing operations, snow may be placed in your driveway unavoidably. Plows are angled to the right for plowing from the centerline of the street to the curb. For this reason, a certain amount of snow will be deposited in driveways. Snow placed in driveways or on sidewalks by the city while snow plowing is the residents and owners responsibility to remove.

3. I just shoveled my sidewalk. Why did the city snow plow push snow on it?

Some areas of the city have narrow public rights of way. When plowing, the snow may end up on the sidewalk you just shoveled. We apologize for the inconvenience this causes you.

If your schedule permits, you may want to wait and clear your sidewalk after city plows have passed through your street. If it is a significant snowfall, the snowplows will probably be back. Streets are typically opened with one pass through, so that streets can be made passable for drivers as soon as possible. Snowplows may return to open the street curb-to-curb. This is done to clear areas for on-street parking, where it is permitted, and to allow melting snow to drain into catch basins. We regret that you may find some of this snow on your recently shoveled sidewalk and you have to shovel it again.

4. Why is the snow plow operator driving so fast considering the road conditions?

It might appear at times that the snow plow operator is driving too fast for road conditions. While operators drive safe and legal speeds, at times they need to "roll" the snow to remove it from the road. A sufficient speed needs to be maintained by the driver to do this and clear the street.

5. Can snow from my driveway be pushed across the street?

Snow may not be pushed into or across the street from private property, according to city ordinance. Please keep this in mind when clearing your driveway. If you hire a private service to clear your driveway, let the contractor know.

6. When does my sidewalk need to be cleared and whose responsibility is it?

Residents and owners are reminded to remove snow from sidewalks within 24 hours of snowfall and to use salt or another abrasive on sidewalk ice within 12 hours after ice forms. The city opens sidewalks in some higher volume pedestrian traffic areas including downtown and in areas around schools. Even if the city does this, you are still responsible for making sure the sidewalk next to your property is maintained and clear enough for everyone to use, including those in wheelchairs.

7. Who do I contact if a city snow plow hits my mailbox?

Should your mailbox get struck by the city during snow plowing, contact the Department of Public Works at 337-9459. DPW will review the policy with you and determine the responsibility of replacement. The city uses a standard design wood post and a standard design metal mail box for replacement. If the property owner wants a different mailbox or post other than the standard design provided, the owner may receive up to \$25 compensation for post replacement and up to \$25 for mailbox replacement. Sorry, but the city will not repair or replace decorative mailboxes and decorative posts. Non-standard mailboxes and enclosures placed in the public right of way are at the owner's risk and responsibility.

8. What if landscaping or irrigation in the right of way is damaged?

Remember not to landscape with rocks, bricks, timbers, shrubs and other items in the right of way. Snow plows and sidewalk plows could cause damage and we do not repair or replace landscape materials. Some residents have irrigation in the right of way. This is done at the owner's risk and responsibility. Keep any irrigation heads away from the edges of the sidewalk. Sidewalk snow plow

Plowing Service Limitations

The City Street Department Snow Removal Policy is designed to provide the best and safest service possible, but residents and business owners should have realistic expectations. Unpredictable weather conditions and limited financial resources make it impossible to maintain dry, bare pavement on road surfaces all winter. Residents can help:

1. Don't park cars on the street during a snow event.
2. Clean around mailboxes to assure mail delivery.
3. Don't allow children to play on snow banks close to streets.
4. Stay back a clear distance from plows and loaders moving snow.
5. Maintain storm drains and fire hydrants in front of your home.

Mailbox Damage Policy

The Traverse City Commission adopted an official Mailbox Damage Policy on 1/21/1991 stating that "The City will repair or replace a mailbox or post (both if both are damaged) if physically hit by the plow equipment. The replacement will be made with a standard steel box and a 4x4 treated post. Mailboxes and posts damaged by the weight of snow coming off the plow equipment will not be repaired by the City, but rather the responsibility of the property owner to repair."

Driveway Plowing

Residents should keep in mind that snow plows are designed to remove snow from the roadway by pushing snow off to the edge of the road. It is likely that the plow will leave behind a windrow of snow in front of driveways. Residents and business owners are responsible for removing this snow, and are reminded that *City Ordinance and State Law prohibit placing snow on any public roadway. Property owners will be responsible for any private plow contractor placing snow in the public right of way.*

Summary of Policy

This Policy has been developed to provide general guidelines. This Policy intends to cover the majority of situations normally encountered in winter storm events. Each decision to mobilize the snow plow crews is a judgment call based on the particular weather conditions combined with past experience along with the resources available at the time, and therefore may not adhere strictly to this general policy.