

Highway Superintendent/ Town of Barre

In the course of plowing during and after significant snowstorms, our Highway Department receives phone calls regarding damage to mailboxes, either from snowplows directly or from the force of snow being thrown from by the plows. If such damage is indeed caused by snow removal, it is not done intentionally but is an unfortunate consequence of snow removal.

As far as replacing damaged mailboxes, it must be pointed out that there is no statutory or legal authority which grants a property owner or resident along a public highway any right to place a mailbox in a highway right-of-way. The mailbox is on town or county right of way as a courtesy to the postal service.

Thus, when the necessity of keeping the highway open conflicts with the individual's reception of the mail, the latter must stand aside. The owner may even be compelled to remove the box under Highway Law # 319.

From past experiences, we have found that plastic mailboxes do not withstand the abuse of snow from the plows hitting them and are not recommended.

As a courtesy, the Highway Department will place a temporary or replace with a standard box so that a resident can receive mail if their box has been damaged by the plow. We will not replace a fancy mailbox or post.

Mailbox posts with fancy supports are not recommended as they tend to stick down under the box and provide the wing plow something too hit.

A box mounted so the wing plow can pass under it works best.