

# East Lyme Public Works Department Mailbox Damage Policy (revised in 2026)

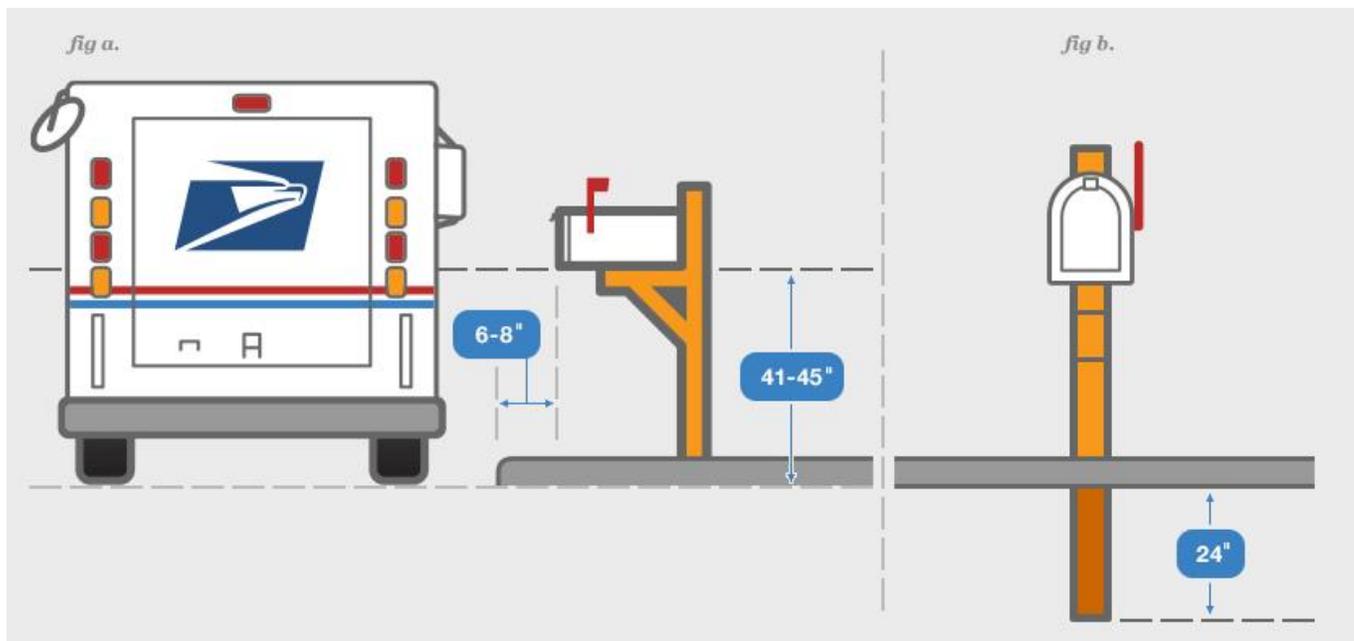
## Snow & Ice Operations – Public Guidance

The Department's goal is to provide consistent, fair responses to mailbox damage during winter operations while following U.S. Postal Service (USPS) placement standards.

### 1. USPS Compliance

To prevent potential damage, it is the resident's responsibility to ensure mailboxes are installed according to USPS standards:

- Front face of the mailbox must be 6–8 inches behind the curb or behind the paved/plowed edge of the roadway.
- Height: 41–45 inches from road surface to bottom of the box.
- No part of the mailbox or post may extend into the travel way.
- Installations not meeting USPS standards may be denied repair or reimbursement.



### 2. What the Department Does and Does Not Cover (When Eligible)

The Department does not cover damage caused by snow thrown from the plow (snow cast).

The Department may cover damage only when:

- The mailbox was physically struck by Town equipment (i.e. plow or body of vehicle).

Eligible claims may receive:

- Department repair, (if practical and possible) or

- A standard replacement (wood post + metal box), or
- Reimbursement:
  - Standard wood post: \$40
  - Standard metal mailbox: \$35
  - Maximum reimbursement: \$75 total

Reimbursement applies only after Department approval.

**The Department does not replace or reimburse decorative, premium, or custom mailbox systems.**

### **3. How to File a Claim (Must Be Submitted First)**

Submit all claims through Notify Us → Snow Related and include:

- Photos of damage
- Date/time (if known)
- Any additional details

The Department will review, investigate, and determine whether a Town vehicle or plow strike occurred.

### **4. How the Department Determines Plow Strike**

The Department will check:

- Evidence of contact (paint marks, scrape marks, tire/plow tracks)
- Proper setback and height
- Condition of post and mounting
- Whether damage matches impact or snow cast

### **5. Federal Law Clarification**

Residents sometimes claim damaged mailboxes are a “federal offense.” Federal law (18 U.S.C. §1705) applies only to willful or malicious destruction. Routine plowing and accidental contact do not meet that standard.

### **6. Resident Responsibilities**

- Install and maintain mailboxes per USPS standards.
- Ensure posts and mounting are sturdy and not rotten.
- Keep the approach clear for mail carriers.
- Report suspected strikes promptly.