

Mailbox Security: an Easy Upgrade (From March 2003 SHOA Newsletter)

Mail theft continues to be an ongoing problem in our neighborhood. Representatives from your HOA have followed up with both the US Postal Service and US Congressional offices about the mail thefts. Potential solutions were discussed at the annual meeting February 4, 2003:

- Garage door mail slots. Under current US Postal regulations we cannot change our clustered mail boxes to individual garage door slots.
- Central banks of secure mailboxes, such as the ones in Denali. These are provided free by the Post Office, but the consensus at the meeting was that their appearance cheapens our neighborhood.
- Individual locking mailboxes.

The simplest answer is to upgrade your current mailbox to a locking mailbox. There is an inexpensive and attractive locking model already adopted by some of your neighbors.

In practice, the upgrade is very simple. Here is the story of how it was handled by one group of homeowners.

The first step was agreement among the three homes that shared a common mailbox pole. In conversations while picking up mail, they all agreed that they want the security of a personal locking mailbox. Each neighbor was willing to pay for the upgrade.

One homeowner purchased three mailboxes – the same model already installed by other homeowners in Sugarloaf. The mailboxes were purchased at Home Depot, for about \$60 each. Model information: “MAILSAFE™ Extra Large, Lockable Mailbox,” Color: black, Model number: MSK, SKU number: 212253, UPC Code Number 046462025946.

Next, the old mailboxes and the wooden horizontal crossbar they sat on were removed from the upright post. The post was still sturdy and did not need to be replaced. Time – a few minutes. Tools – a big hammer.

The end mailboxes were mounted on a new redwood horizontal crossbar, the crossbar was mounted to the existing post, and the middle mailbox was mounted to the crossbar. The horizontal crossbar was reinforced with diagonal supports from the vertical post. Time – about two hours. Tools – a drill, a saw, a screwdriver, a socket wrench, 3 lag bolts and 8 self-tapping wood screws beyond screws included with mailbox.

Address numbers can be applied to mailbox by permanent marker or stick-on numbers. Time – a few minutes. Tools – a permanent marker.

Finally, keys and reimbursement checks were exchanged. Everyone agreed the new boxes looked great, were much more secure, and that it was time for lunch.

PS – The next day, the homeowners across the street said: “We like those new boxes, let’s do the same thing!” They’ve purchased their supplies, and plan to install soon.

Additional Information:

Mailboxes are the property owner's responsibility. This responsibility is impacted by US Mail regulations including Planned Urban Development [PUD] regulations.

Boxes must be located within a certain height range and distance from the curb. They should not be moved from their clustered location, which is linked to PUD regulations. Mailbox should be a US Post approved. **Please submit an Architectural Project Form for approval if you will be changing your mailbox.**

From the USPS Website:

The United States Postal Service does not sell mailboxes itself.:

* You may be able to purchase approved Mailboxes at local department stores, on the internet, or at other locations.

* Mailbox manufacturers must meet the Mailbox Standard 7 for mailboxes to be used with the U.S. Mail.

Requesting a locked mailbox

* The United States Postal Service does not sell or provide personal mailboxes. If you would like to obtain a locked mailbox for your residence, you are encouraged to purchase your own locked mailbox at a local store.

Note: A mailbox with a lock must have a slot that is large enough to accommodate your daily mail volume. The Postal Service neither opens a locked box nor accepts a key for this purpose.

Here is a link to the USPS Mailbox Standard 7 mentioned above with information on mailbox placement and type:

<http://faq.usps.com/eCustomer/iq/usps/request.do?create=kb:USPSFAQ&view%281%29=c%7B1ca19850-57e2-11dc-51b6-000000000000%7D>

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