

Cluster Box Maintenance Procedures for Single Family Neighborhoods

When Columbia, MD, was developed, cluster box units were installed in single family detached home neighborhoods for mail delivery and since that time, the United States Postal Service (USPS) has maintained them. This pamphlet was created to help Columbia's residents understand and navigate USPS's process when seeking repairs and maintenance to damaged cluster mailbox units.

Should you require USPS maintenance, follow these steps:

- Location of the cluster box in need of repair or replacement.
 - Be sure to specifically identify the area as a single family neighborhood. Procedures differ for apartments and corporate cluster boxes.
- List the unit's 5-digit, USPS-marked, postal ID number. This is usually visible on the front or side of the body or pedestal
- Describe the issue with the cluster box and why it requires maintenance. Be sure to indicate any safety hazards.
- Contact your local Postmaster which can be found from this web address.
tools.usps.com/find-location.htm
- Request the Postmaster put in a service ticket using the information gathered above.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q: What if the USPS Employee says USPS does not repair or maintain cluster boxes?

A: Residents should speak to the Postmaster directly in order to submit their request. Be sure to tell them the cluster box is located in a single family neighborhood. Cluster boxes in multifamily neighborhoods like apartments, condos, and townhouses may be privately owned.

Postal Operations Manual Chapter 6.32 and USPS Bulletins 22545 and 22571 establish that USPS does, in fact, maintain cluster box units located in single family detached home neighborhoods and that they have specific procedures in place for repairing and replacing hazardous or damaged cluster box units.

Q: My cluster box is an eyesore, what can I do to get it replaced?

A: Currently, USPS has stated they do not have the funding for aesthetic repairs or replacements. Instead, they are recommending aesthetic repairs that can be addressed by residents raising the necessary funds privately.

Q: My request has been submitted, what happens next?

A: The Postmaster will log the request, dispatch service personnel to investigate the cluster box according to the USPS Equipment Review Procedures, and then implement repairs (or replacement) as determined by the inspection.

Q: What if USPS referred me to the Columbia Association when I spoke with them?

A: CA has not now, or ever, been a part of the federal mail delivery service. CA does not own cluster mailbox equipment nor is it installed on CA property. In some multi-family neighborhoods private HOAs may maintain the equipment, however that situation does not apply to single family neighborhoods.