

The Ultimate DIY Mailbox Installation Guide



Thank you for visiting Easy Living Yards!

This awesome guide will help you install a brand new street mailbox step-by-step. You can confidently build a mailbox that will withstand years of service to the postal hardships of today's society. This post is sturdy, functional, and attractive.

This design is for a 'Large' size mailbox. It can be adapted to fit a standard mailbox or extra large package box.



The finished mailbox will sit 42in above the ground and 7in back from the curb. It is anchored 24in below ground. This is within guidelines recommended by USPS



Here's what you need :

Tools

Must have

- [Pointed shovel](#) – for, umm, digging a hole. A trench shovel or post hole digger may work better
- [Drill](#) – my most used tool around the house. I've used this drill well since 2010.
- Drill bits – to pre-drill holes for screws and optional lag bolt
- **Work gloves** – I like these [leather gloves](#) and these [garden gloves](#)
- [Circular saw](#) or [compound miter saw](#) or (gasp) [hand saw](#).
The big box store might cut the lumber for you if you're exact on your measurements and go at a slow time.
- [Deadblow hammer](#) or [mini sledge](#) or heavy hunk of wood to hammer temporary support stakes.
- [Tape measure](#) – to measure lengths before cutting
- [Level](#) – to set post plumb (vertical)
- **Pencil** or marking crayon or marker – to mark cut points and drill spots. I prefer pencil for precision and ability to remove.

Nice to have

- [Post level](#) – for setting plumb of your new mailbox. Makes it way easier
- [Spud bar](#) – for prying out old post and concrete, packing new gravel, and digging tough holes
- [Trench shovel](#) or [garden spade](#). I don't have a trench shovel, but sometimes wish I did. I get by with the garden spade and it's more useful for other stuff as well.
- [Post hole digger](#) – Can be frustrating to use but better than a shovel. This Fiskars digger is better on your knuckles than other types!

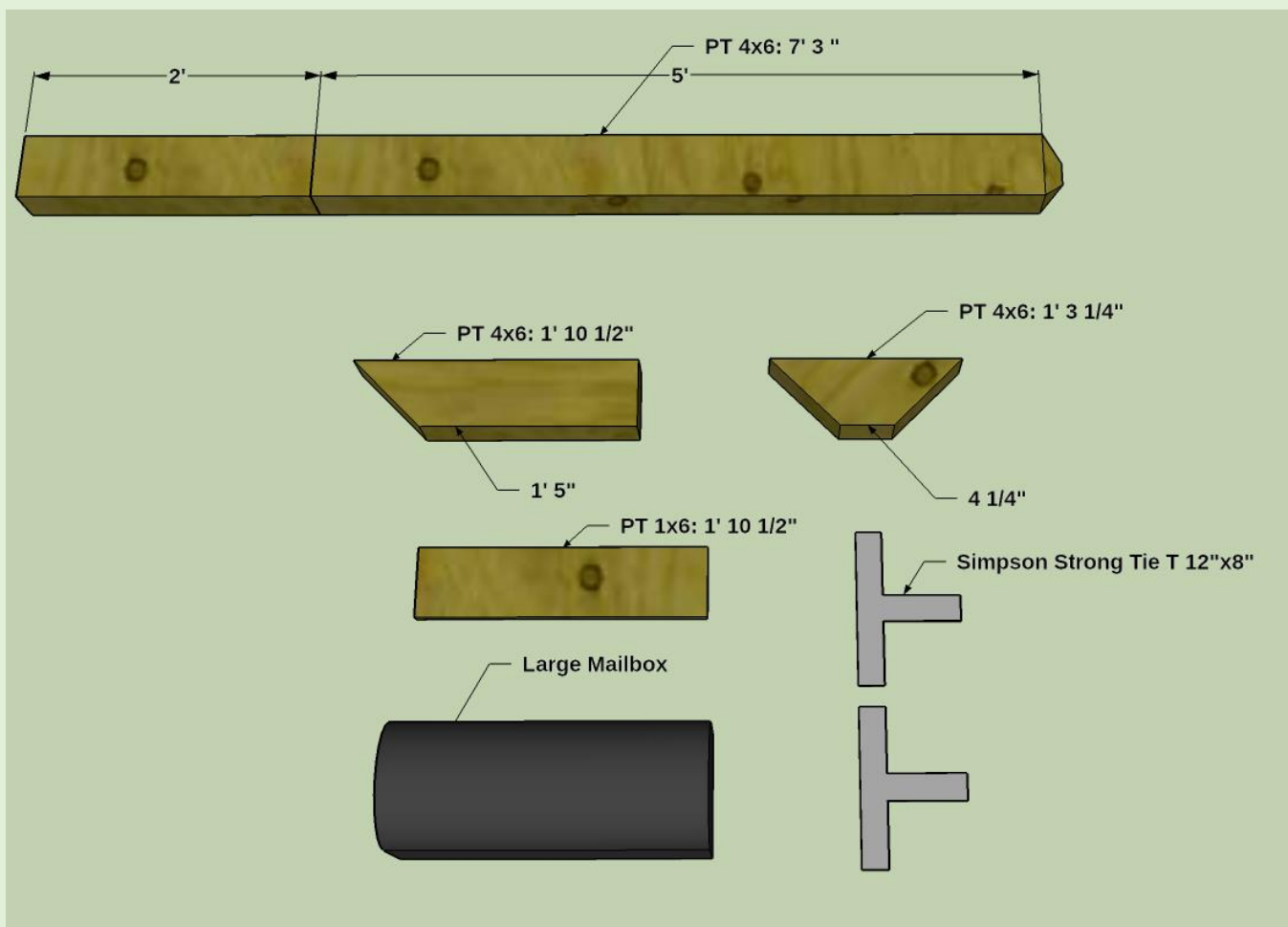


- [Concrete mixing pan](#) – nice for.... mixing concrete. I actually use this for all sorts of things around the yard as well. You can also use a 5-gallon bucket or wheelbarrow. Wash them out as soon as you can!
- [Rafter square](#) – to quickly measure angles for cuts

Materials

- Pressure treated 4x6 lumber: total ~10ft 6in
 - One pressure treated 4x6 vertical post: 7ft 3in
 - One pressure treated 4x6 horizontal mailbox support: 1ft 10-1/2in, cut at 45deg angle (1ft 5in on short side)
 - One pressure treated 4x6 diagonal support: 1ft 3-1/4in, cut at 45deg inward angle on both ends (4-1/4in on short side)
- Two T fasteners to attach horizontal support: [Simpson Strong Tie 12inx8in](#) or [Decorative 12in Strong Tie](#)
- One pressure treated 1x6 mailbox platform: 1ft 10-1/2in – length and width varies based on mailbox size
- Crushed gravel 1/4in - 1/2in: 2 bags (100lb total)
- Exterior grade primer for subsoil ([Kilz](#))
- Finish for aboveground post as desired (stain, water seal, paint)
- One large size mailbox: [like this one](#), or [extra large](#)
- Exterior grade galvanized screws: 2-1/2in to attach posts
- Exterior grade galvanized screws: 3/4in to attach mailbox
- Exterior grade galvanized lag bolt and washer – 5-1/2in to attach horizontal support to post (optional)
- Scrap lumber or three to four 8ft 2x4 lumber for temporary supports





Here's what to do:

- **Mark your utilities before digging (Call 811 in most areas in US)**
- **Build your new mailbox post before removing your old one**
 - **Prep**
 - Mark lengths for cuts on your 4x6 post
 - Double check your measurements



- Make your cuts
 - Dry fit parts together to see if they look correct
 - Cut a 45-degree angle on the top in the desired pattern. I decided to make ours a central peak (45-degrees on all sides. This is a more difficult pattern than one or two cuts but looks very nice
 - Mark a line at 7-ft from the bottom entirely around the post
 - If desired for ease, mark two of the sides with a 45-degree angle. Additional marks will likely be removed with cutting anyway.
 - Use your saw to make your angled cuts
- **Mark measurement lines before assembly**
- Lay the vertical post piece on the ground, with the wide (5-12in) face laying flat
 - Mark the post at 24in from the bottom
 - This is your ground level. If you cannot dig a hole to 30in, you will shorten your post from the bottom to make up the difference.
 - Mark a line on the front (one of the 3-1/2in sides) of the post at 5ft-3/4in (60-3/4")
 - This is the bottom of the horizontal support piece
 - Mark a faint line on the facing side of the post at 5ft 3-1/2in (63-1/2")
 - This is the center line of the T-support
 - Mark the same height on the opposite face

○ **Begin assembly**

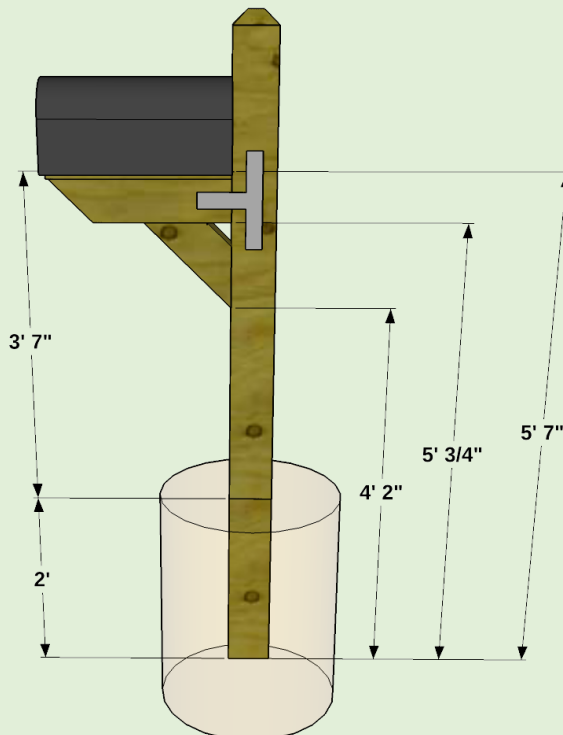
Horizontal support

- Arrange the square end of the horizontal support piece on the front end of the vertical post with the bottom aligned at the 5ft-3/4in mark
- Make sure the horizontal support is square (90degrees) to the vertical support.
 - Making it square is more important than making the cut end completely flush with the vertical post



if it's slightly off. Otherwise your mailbox will not be flat.

- Arrange the facing T-support at the marked center line at the 5ft 3-1/2in mark
- Mark four of the drill holes on the vertical support and four drill holes on the horizontal support
- Briefly remove the T-support and pre-drill the holes with an appropriate bit to the screw depth
 - An appropriate bit is smaller than the threads on the screw and the same or slightly smaller than the shaft of the screw – usually 1/8in or 7/64in
- Screw in the T-support with 2-1/2in galvanized screws
 - If using a decorative bracket, paint or finish the post before this step
 - If using a decorative bracket, you may want to add rubber washers to the screws and use decorative screws before assembling to preserve the powder coated paint finish and look nicer. Once the finish cracks, it will rust.
- Flip the assembly gently over and repeat mounting of T-support on the opposite side



- Try to alternate the location of the screws so they don't penetrate closely to the opposite screws
- If you decide to use the optional lag bolt, follow this step – otherwise move on
 - Make a mark on the back of the post at 5ft 3-1/2in (63-1/2")
 - At the mark, drill a 1/2in deep hole slightly larger than the width of the washer
 - In the center of the hole, drill an additional 5-1/2in deeper with a bit the same or slightly smaller width of the bolt shaft.
 - Screw the lag bolt into place to further anchor the horizontal support.
 - An additional lag bolt may be similarly installed into each end of the diagonal support if desired for additional strength

Diagonal Support

- Align the diagonal support below the horizontal support
 - If you have trouble getting it aligned, measure and mark 4ft 2in (50") from the bottom of the vertical post. This is the bottom of the diagonal support.
- Mark two drill hole locations approximately 1-1/2in above each end of the diagonal support. Ensure your screws will reach at least 3/4in into the facing support.
- While holding the diagonal support in place, drill holes at the marked locations. Drill perpendicular to the diagonal support surface into the facing support
- Screw in the diagonal support to both the vertical and horizontal support using 2-1/2in galvanized screws

Mailbox platform

- Before fixing the mailbox platform to the horizontal support, first place the mailbox onto the mailbox platform and open the mailbox
- Mark the location of the fastening holes of the mailbox
- Remove the mailbox



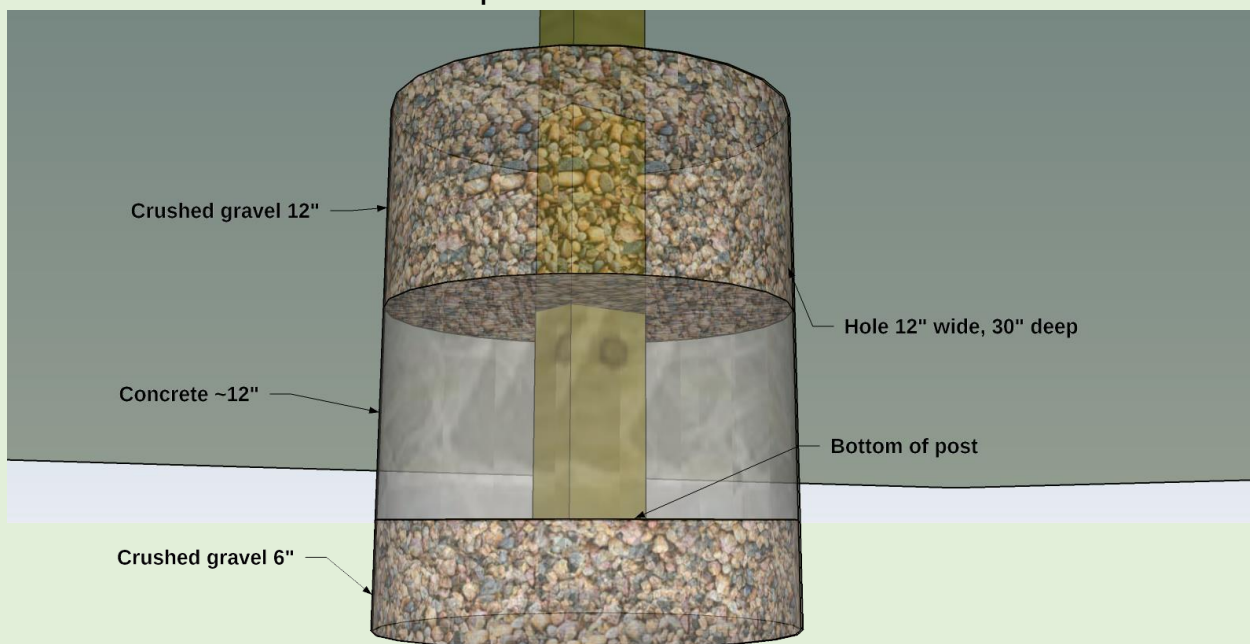
- Place the mailbox platform on the horizontal support, wedging a small 1/8in shim of scrap material where the mailbox platform meets the vertical support
 - This temporary shim allows space for the mailbox to fit onto the platform in the back once assembled
 - You can use a thin piece of wood, folded cardboard, paper, etc.
 - Mark four holes that *are not* the same as the mailbox fastening marks.
 - Pre-drill the four holes and fasten with the 2-1/2in galvanized screws
 - **Treatment**
 - Coat the entire bottom of the post with exterior grade primer up to the 24in mark to extend post life and allow to fully dry
 - Prime, paint or stain the remaining post as desired.
 - If using decorative T brackets, complete this step before assembling the T brackets
- **Remove the old mailbox**
 - It is best to remove your mailbox after the mail arrives on a Saturday, or the last postal day before a US holiday. That way you have more time for installation.
 - Dig it out, use a jack, knock it over, rock it back and forth until it all comes out
 - Pulling it with a truck actually doesn't work too well. It tends to crack the post before pulling it all out. You can still try if you want. It's still fun. It might work. Your neighbors might be entertained.
 - Get all previous post and concrete removed
 - A spud bar, standard shovel, trench shovel, and a tarp for the extra dirt are all helpful
- **Dig the new hole**
 - Your hole may already be dug from the old mailbox.
 - Double check the position of the hole
 - The center of the hole should be 2ft 9in (33") from the edge of the street/curb



- This mailbox design sticks out 1ft 11in from the front of the post
- The USPS recommends installing the front of your box 6in-8in from the curb
 - Half the depth of your 4x6 post is 2.75in
- Your hole should be 12in wide at minimum
- Your hole should be 30in deep
 - If you cannot dig 30in, subtract your depth from 30in, then remove the same number of inches from the bottom of your vertical post. This will keep your post at the appropriate height after installation.

- **Begin installing your new post**

- **Set the base and post**
 - Add 6in crushed gravel to the bottom of the hole
 - Pack the gravel down firmly and check the depth
 - The depth should be 24in
 - Place the post in the ground
 - A helper is useful here
 - Center the post in the hole



- **Construct a makeshift support** from scrap lumber or 2x4 lumber
 - This is just one of several ways to do this
 - Cut three 2x4 pieces to equal length – 6-8ft long if possible
 - Cut one end at a diagonal
 - Try to avoid screwing into your post if possible
 - Angle one piece of 2x4 and place across the front of your post – above the mailbox platform if your pieces are long enough
 - Take a second 2x4 and place across the previous side of the post. Butt the angled end to the face of your first support and screw through the first support into the angled butt end
 - Take your third piece and do the same, creating a tripod around three sides of your mailbox
 - The fourth side will face the street and can't have a diagonal support. Place a small piece of 2x4 to fit into here snugly and screw in place to the other 2x4 boards.

- **Plumb the mailbox post**
 - Using a level or post level, ensure both the sides and the front/back of the post are vertical (plumb). Adjust as needed, making sure the bottom of the post remains in the center.
 - Double-check that the front of the mailbox is 6-8in from the curb
 - At the ground end of the supports, drive in wooden stakes made of scrap wood and screw the supports into place
 - Snug up the support if needed to make it sturdy



- **Pour the concrete**
 - Mix the concrete according to the bag instructions
 - One bag is enough, two is bonus if you really want a sturdy install
 - I recommend mixing your concrete premix with water before adding to the hole for increased strength
 - Be careful – concrete dust is dangerous to inhale and can burn your skin. Be smart.
 - Shovel the concrete into the hole evenly around the post. Try to remove bubbles by working the shovel into the concrete once filled.
 - Work relatively quickly. You don't want your concrete sitting too long.
 - If heavy rain or freezing is in the forecast, cover your concrete for at least 24hr
 - Allow the concrete to set 24-48hr before continuing work for best strength. In a pinch, at least let the concrete set for 6-8hr.

- **Finish the hole**
 - Top the hole to 1in below the surface with crushed gravel
 - Pack down the gravel
 - Add topsoil to the surface if desired, keeping 1in of clearance from the post base

- **Install the mailbox**
 - Place your mailbox on the mailbox platform and center it to the post
 - Double check the previously marked fastening holes. Re-mark if they're not accurate
 - Remove the mailbox and pre-drill 1/2in deep holes
 - Replace the mailbox and fasten with 3/4in galvanized screws



Get excited for new mail! This completes the installation!

[Questions? Having Trouble? Get in touch here!](#)

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Ben Hale
EasyLivingYards.com

About Ben Hale

I live with my family in southwest Ohio, born and raised. I consider myself blessed with an awesome wife, three crazy sons, and amazing family and friends.



When not focused on Easy Living Yards and raising healthy happy kids, I am avid in my pursuit of the rugged outdoors, appreciate the tug of a trout on fly, and love to create. In reality, most of my time is spent trying to make our home habitable, having my sons teach me how to play, doing the dishes, making dinner, and working at my full-time day job.

I know what it's like to struggle with a tough landscape. Our current house sits on a half acre lot. The house was a mess inside and out when we bought it. It's hard to find the time to work on yard beautification while fixing up the house, working full time, and raising a young family.

- We've gotten notice of property maintenance violation while fixing our house.
- We've got angry neighbors who think mowing your yard is more important than family.
- We've got other neighbors who spite us because we don't spray our yard with chemicals.

I have the knowledge to design landscapes to be beautiful and healthy and easy.

Follow us as we transform our yard from Beast to Beauty. We're here to help you do it too!

I'm so glad you're here to change your land and your life! And I'm happy to be part of your journey!



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