

## **Subject: Clarification on Mailbox Replacement Procedures and Process for Broken Mailboxes**

Dear Homeowners,

The Office Staff and Board of Directors would like to take a moment to clarify the mailbox replacement procedures, particularly regarding instances when a mailbox is broken into but not damaged. We are aware that there has been some confusion, especially with conflicting information from the Post Office, and we want to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of the process.

### **1. Broken Into but Not Damaged**

If a mailbox is vandalized with a key or in a way that does not cause damage making it impossible to resecure, the Post Office worker delivering mail to that cluster will submit a work order to have the mailbox rekeyed (which affects the master key for the entire cluster) or repaired. **The HOA does not replace locks on individual mailboxes** since we neither access nor deliver the mail.

If you notice a mailbox cluster has been broken into using the master lock but the mailbox itself is undamaged, **please contact the Post Office directly** and inform them of the vandalism. By doing this, you can ensure they put in a work order for rekeying instead of being referred to the HOA office, helping to avoid any confusion or frustration.

### **2. Vandalized and Cannot Be Repaired**

If the mailbox is damaged beyond repair and cannot be fixed, the responsibility for replacement falls to the HOA. The HOA will cover the cost of the mailbox cluster replacement, including the removal of the old box and installation of the new one. However, please note that the HOA is not involved in the delivery or lock changes — this is entirely managed by the Post Office.

#### **Replacement Process:**

1. **USPS Notification:** USPS will place a notice on the mailbox cluster, marking it as "undeliverable."
2. **Homeowner Notification:** Homeowners inform the HOA office about the situation.
3. **HOA Tracking:** The HOA staff will gather details, such as the location and condition of the mailbox, and ensure the issue is logged for future action.
4. **Planning for Replacement:** The mailbox replacement will be added to a list and tracked, with replacements carried out as funds permit.

5. **Ordering and Installation:** The HOA will order the replacement mailbox cluster from a USPS-approved vendor and coordinate the removal of the damaged boxes and installation of the new ones.
6. **Post-Installation:** After installation, USPS will come to change the locks on the new cluster and leave a note instructing residents to pick up their keys from the Post Office.

### **3. What the HOA Has Done in 2024**

- In 2024, we were informed that the financial responsibility for the replacement of mailbox clusters had shifted to the HOA. When reporting broken clusters, we were also informed by USPS that individual mailbox replacements at the homes of residents are not allowed.
- The HOA has asked USPS for a list of mailbox clusters for which we are now responsible and a map of their locations. Unfortunately, USPS has informed us that they cannot provide this information.
- We also explored the idea of a centralized mailbox hub with RFID access, but feedback indicated that homeowners prefer mailbox clusters near their homes. Furthermore, establishing such a system would involve substantial costs for electricity, concrete, fencing, and other infrastructure, in addition to a location that can handle the traffic and the required number of clusters.
- The Board of Directors and the HOA office have been in contact with the County Commissioner and Congressmen Joaquin Castro's office to address the financial burden this change has caused. We have received support, with Castro's office and other Congress members sending a [letter](#) to the Postmaster General on behalf of our HOA and other affected communities.
- In addition, the Board of Directors has contacted the media and are members of a group of HOA's that are working with Congressmen Castro's office to get the changes overturned and the financial responsibility put back on the Post Office.

### **4. Next Steps for 2025**

We fully understand the frustrations that come with mailbox vandalism, theft of mail, and the complex replacement process. As both Board Members and staff are homeowners and residents ourselves, we share your concerns and are working to improve the situation. In 2025, the HOA's goal is to continue replacing mailbox clusters that are beyond repair in phases, ensuring this is done as cost-effectively as possible.

We ask homeowners to please notify the HOA office promptly if you see any mailbox clusters with a USPS notice stating that mail must be picked up at the Post Office. This helps us keep our list accurate and up-to-date.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we work together to address this issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the HOA office.

**Sincerely,**

**Villages of Westcreek HOA**

**VWOA Office Staff**

**Board of Directors**