Temporary Mailbox Support Guidance

CES Bureau
May 3, 2018

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has encountered a small number of uniformity issues concerning the use of traffic control devices as temporary mailbox supports. MDT does not allow the use of traffic control devices as temporary mailbox supports as this violates driver expectancy. This can also potentially cause confusion with similar devices being used as channelizing devices, approach delineation, or to mark specific locations within the construction zone. The 2014 Edition of the Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction under Section 623, Mailboxes, addresses the issue of temporary mailboxes.

Section 623 states, "Furnish a NCHRP 350 or MASH compliant crashworthy support for temporary resets of mailboxes. Do not use traffic control devices as mailbox supports. If multiple mailboxes are required at one location, furnish and install a multiple box system in accordance with the current edition of the AASHTO Guide for Erecting Mailboxes on Highways." In addition, "Temporary supports and locations must be approved by the Project Manager." And, "Removal, temporary resets, salvage, numbering, disposal, and maintenance are not measured for payment."

The Construction Engineering Services Bureau conducted research to develop options for temporary mailbox supports. Development of these support systems is an alternative for contractor use in construction zones. These support systems should create uniformity throughout the construction zone, maintain driver expectancy with temporary traffic control devices, and provide crashworthy compliant devices.

The first option is illustrated in Detailed Drawings 623-30 and 623-35. These Drawings describe a wooden support and ballast, mounting system, and hardware required.

The second option involves a mailbox mounted on an approved plastic drum. This temporary mailbox support system performed acceptably according to the results of NCHRP Report 350 Test Number 3-71. While the plastic drum with a correctly mounted mailbox is deemed crashworthy, the plastic drum cannot be the same color, normally orange, as those used a temporary traffic control devices within the construction zone. Painting a plastic drum white (keeping the reflective bands clear of paint) and using that white drum as a temporary mailbox support is acceptable.

These two options are not intended to prevent the contractor from proposing alternative crashworthy systems. Other options for temporary resets of mailboxes may be approved by the Project Manager provided they are NCHRP 350 or MASH compliant.