

USPS policy from the Postal Operations Manual is as follows:

623.2 Blocked Mail Receptacles

623.21 General

The customer is responsible for keeping the approach to the mailbox clear to facilitate delivery

What are the general rules for a carrier's accessibility to a mailbox?

During and after a storm the Postal Service employees will make every reasonable, safe attempt to deliver mail to each and every address on their routes.

For successful mail delivery during and after storms, we ask for the cooperation of our customers to keep their mailboxes clear of snow and ice so that our employees return home safe at the end of each work day. Letter carriers are cautioned about delivering mail to locations where safety issues — such as icy steps, snow-packed paths or icy overhangs — create perilous conditions.

Residents who receive delivery to roadside mailboxes also must keep the approach to, and exit from, the mailbox clear of snow along or vehicles, or trash cans or any other obstacles.

Customers should be aware that there is always the possibility of lawsuits by any individual, including letter carriers, who injure themselves on unclear paths.

But I am not getting mail. When will I get it?

The U. S. Postal Service curtails delivery only after careful consideration, and only as a last resort. If mail is curtailed, delivery is attempted the next delivery day.

Is it the carrier's call on what is safe/accessible? Who decides?

Carriers are not required to deliver to locations where safety issues — such as threatening animals, slippery steps, snow-packed paths or icy overhangs — create perilous conditions. Even when customers make a path for us, conditions can and do change throughout a particularly stormy day. This could affect mail delivery.

While our goal is to deliver the mail, we stand by the decisions of local managers and/or carriers when delivery is suspended due to an immediate, serious safety concern — particularly during changeable weather conditions.

In short, the rule of thumb for postal deliveries is simple: If the letter carrier can't reach the mailbox at curb or at the house, he or she can't deliver the mail.