



ULSTER COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD

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BLOWING OR PLOWING SNOW INTO THE STREET IS ILLEGAL AND DANGEROUS

Winter has arrived in the Hudson Valley and the Ulster County Traffic Safety Board would like to remind the public that blowing, plowing, or stockpiling snow in the street can be dangerous for motorists and pedestrians.

Article 1219 of New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) prohibits anyone from putting on public roads “any substance likely to injure any person, animal or vehicle”....and that includes snow from your driveway! The law covers a variety of items likely to pose a hazard to motorists, including glass, nails, wire, cans, etc. Fines for a first offense include up to a \$150 fine and/or 15 days in jail, plus applicable surcharges.

The law does not prohibit the use of salt or sand or materials that are otherwise intended to allow for safe use of the highway. It also clarifies that materials on the highway resulting from agricultural activities are exempt from the law.

As winter road conditions worsen, the onset of another annual rite of passage for rural property owners also emerges – submitting claims for damaged or destroyed mailboxes.

Highway crews do their best to avoid mailboxes, but often visibility, oncoming traffic and heavy snow will work against them. Accordingly, if a property owner places his or her mailbox in the highway right-of-way, the municipality is not liable for damage to the mailbox if such damage was caused by non-negligent municipal snow removal activities. The best method to protect your mailbox during the winter months is to ensure that it is properly attached to the post. It is also recommended that property owners keep the mailbox assembly simple in order to limit impact surface area for plowed snow.

The Ulster County Traffic Safety Board is a coalition of agencies and citizens designated with the responsibility to coordinate and approve highway safety programs in Ulster County. To learn more, visit <https://ulstercountyny.gov/traffic-safety-board>.