

## **TIPS FOR REPLACING OR REPAIRING MAILBOX UNITS**

Watson Iron Works has stopped manufacturing the standard mailbox units (post, decorative bracket, newspaper tube, and mailbox) we have in Water Oak. Carolina Mailboxes in Charlotte is currently the only known firm that can provide replacement mailbox units for our community. The complete mailbox unit style is termed "Beckett." The complete mail unit (including mailbox) costs \$287 and installation costs \$60, coming to \$347, plus tax. Their nomenclature calls the black mailbox a "Solar-2" type box, and their paint color that matches our standard mail units is called "Lawson." [www.carolinamailboxes.com](http://www.carolinamailboxes.com) Phone: 877-845-0850.

Carolina Mailboxes will only provide and install the complete mailbox unit, or they'll just replace the mailbox. Because our mailbox units consist of elements welded together, they will not sell the post, decorative bracket or the newspaper tube separately. Likewise, they will not do any repairs for us. When they will replace a damaged or missing black mailbox, it's done using their "Solar-2" type box that has a cost of about \$25 without vinyl numbers and an install cost of \$60, plus tax.

Our HOA has approved a suitable **substitute black mailbox** that a homeowner or handyman may be able to install at a lower cost. The info on that method is in the next paragraph below. If metal parts other than the black mailbox itself are broken, it may be possible to have a mobile welding service come by to weld and/or braze metal parts together in order to avoid the cost of the purchase and installation of an entire new mailbox unit. *There's more relevant info below!*

Here's the Water Oak ARC approved standard black mailbox that may be used as a low-cost replacement. It's the black medium capacity Gibraltar Elite (Model: E1100B00). Dimensions are 8.9"H x 6.9"W x 20.1 inches deep. Red flag shape is NOT critical. BTW: It's available at Lowes Home Improvement, Home Depot and Amazon.com for about \$20.



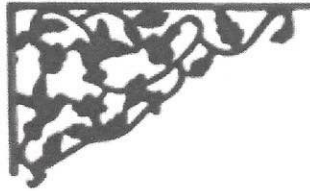
Here's some additional info relative to handyman or DIY repair. When replacing a damaged mailbox, it may be possible to salvage the piece of wood that's on the underside cavity of the old mailbox for use under the new mailbox; otherwise, it'll be necessary to also obtain a small piece of water resistant or pressure treated wood. That recessed wood constitutes a layer that sits on top of the metal newspaper tube shelf. The wood piece is in the recessed cavity underneath the mailbox, and its not visible once installed.

Also, our HOA has approved **two substitute decorative cast iron brackets** for beneath the newspaper tube. There are two different decorative cast iron brackets that may be used in place of the standard grapevine version. When installed and painted the right color, they are a close enough approximation to what's on the standard mailbox units in our subdivision. Please bear in mind that the maximum height of a replacement bracket is 7 1/2" because there is a ridge around the metal post that prevents the use of a mounting bracket that's any taller. Also those two substitute brackets below have mounting holes drilled in the sidebars, rather than having mounting hole tabs sticking out on the sidebars.

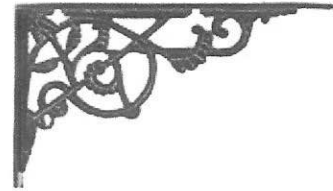
- **Bracket #1** is from Import Wholesale and is sold for \$17.93 on Amazon.com. It's a decorative cast iron wall brace that has a Hummingbird & Vine pattern. The size is 11.75" long and 7" tall.

- **Bracket #2** is House of Antique Hardware: <https://www.houseofantiquehardware.com/site/404.html>. Click on Shelf Brackets, Iron. Then scroll down to large Victorian Iron Bracket. It's 10 7/8" long by 7 1/8" tall, and the cost is \$13.99

If one of these exact brackets isn't available, just utilize the closest resemblance with similar vine pattern that's approximately 11 inches long. If searching for one on Amazon.com, search words are: "Decorative mailbox shelf bracket."

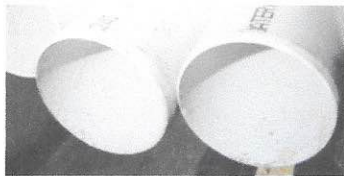


**BRACKET #1**



**BRACKET #2**

We have not been able to identify a **substitute for the newspaper tube**. However, without going into detail, it might be possible to use a PVC tube to approximate the newspaper tube. Cut to length 17" long tubes can be ordered from [www.flexpvc.com](http://www.flexpvc.com). The tube is the CL100 aka SDR41 6 inch Ultra Thin Wall PVC Pipe; the cost is \$13.00. Once you navigate to that PVC tubing on their website, just type in "CL100" in their search box and you'll see the 6" Ultra Thin Wall PVC Pipe. Then plug in the length you want the tube cut to; again, that's 1' and 5" to equal 17". Once the tube arrives, won't be easy integrate it into the mailbox unit, especially since there's no shelf piece on top of the tube. But a good handyman might be up to the challenge. Of course, the tube also needs to be painted the proper color. Hopefully, someone will eventually come forward with a better and easier option than the PVC tube.



**Improvised substitute for newspaper tube**

or PPG Paint company

Regarding the **standard paint color for mailbox units**, the mailbox pole/tube/bracket/newspaper tube units can be painted with **Valspar Stonehenge Greige exterior satin**. Once the paint dries, it's an exact match of the original color of mailbox units throughout Water Oak. The paint is sold by the quart; however, one could possibly obtain a smaller quantity by purchasing a small container of the paint as a sample color, rather than the full quart.

For those considering painting a dirty/discolored mailbox unit, try scrubbing or power-washing first. The original paint was applied very thick and heavy; so, the color and finish should survive, even after heavy-duty cleaning.

In one successful repair after a truck knocked everything off his mailbox unit post, a homeowner drilled three holes through the post and mailbox and newspaper tube (decorative bracket still attached), and then used 4" long 1/4" carriage bolts with giant washers to affix a new mailbox and the newspaper tube to the post. Repair was made extra rigid by sandwiching a 4" x 12" steel plate between the post and the rear of the mailbox and newspaper tube. View at 129 Water Oak Drive!

Please pass on any other useful info that you may have regarding Water Oak mailbox repair techniques or replacement sources via e-mail to [support@kuester.com](mailto:support@kuester.com).