

What's Your NUMBER?

By Charles Missman, Fire Captain

Address Visibility

For the most part, your family, friends, neighbors, postal carriers and other people already know where you live.

When someone new is trying to find your home, time is usually not a critical element. If they've missed your house, they can always find a phone and call for directions.

So what is the problem? The ability to locate your home quickly by emergency personnel may become an issue if your address is not clearly visible. Fire, ambulance and police personnel need to be able to find your home easily and quickly in order to help you. If your home does not CLEARLY show your address, it can delay vital emergency help to you (or your neighbors). Minutes can seem like hours when waiting for emergency crews to arrive in time of need. Help them help you by following these guidelines for posting your address on your home or business:

On roadside mailboxes

Size: The larger the numbers, the better. Standing six feet away from your mailbox, one inch numbers may seem sufficient. However, a fire engine rushing up to help a heart attack patient may have difficulty seeing them.

Visibility: Be certain decorations or flags do not obstruct numbers. If you live on a through street, an emergency vehicle can come from either direction, so it's a good idea to mark both sides of your mailbox.

Location: If your mailbox is not directly in front of your home, mark the box for the benefit of the mail carrier. However, be certain to mark your fence, driveway or home as follows for emergency personnel:

On the building

Size: Again, the larger the number, the better. Since the house is farther from the street than the mailbox or fence, use larger numbers. We recommend using a minimum of 4 inch block-style numbers, preferably a reflective material. Fancy "script" type numbers are attractive but are difficult to read quickly from a distance or in the dark.

Color: Some people paint their address numbers to match their home, thereby effectively camouflaging them. The numbers should be painted to contrast background color.

Location: Place numbers above a garage door if it faces the street and is visible, or above or to the side of the main entrance (front door) to your home. These are the most common places to put numbers and are the first places we look when trying to find your address in a hurry.

Please make your address highly visible! Help us help you in case of an emergency.