



AUDIT REPORT

Mail Delivery Issues – Vista Station, Sparks, NV

December 4, 2019

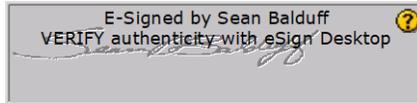


Report Number 19-043-R20



December 4, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN DIPERI
MANAGER (A), NEVADA-SIERRA DISTRICT



FROM: Sean Balduff
Director, Delivery and Retail Response Team

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery Issues – Vista Station, Sparks,
NV (Report Number 19-043-R20)

This report presents the results of our audit of the Mail Delivery Issues – Vista Station, Sparks, NV.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Sherry Hilderbrand, Operations Manager, at shilderbrand@uspsig.gov, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit and Response Management
Vice President, Delivery and Retail Operations
Vice President, Western Area Operations

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of Mail Delivery Issues – Vista Station, Sparks, NV (Project Number 19-043). The Vista Station is in the Nevada-Sierra District of the Western Area. This audit was designed to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential mail delivery risks at the Vista Station.

The delivery unit has a total of 52 routes (42 city and 10 rural). The 42 city routes are delivered by 54 carriers (44 full-time and 10 city carrier assistants¹ [CCA]). The 10 rural routes are delivered by 17 carriers (nine full-time and eight rural carrier associates [RCA]).² The Vista Station also has 11 clerks who perform retail and customer service functions.

We selected the Vista Station based on our analysis of city carriers returning after 6:00 p.m. using data from the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW).³

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to assess mail delivery service at the Vista Station in Sparks, NV. To accomplish our objective, we analyzed delivery metrics such as mail arrival, distribution up time (DUT), carrier return to office time, and the number of routes and carriers to assess performance of delivery operations. In addition, we analyzed Enterprise Customer Care (eCC) case data to assess customer concerns. During our site visit on October 2 and 3, 2019, we observed delivery unit operations and interviewed delivery unit personnel and unit management to verify data and identify causes for carriers returning to the unit after 6:00 p.m. We also reviewed arrow lock key security procedures.

We relied on computer-generated data from the eCC application, EDW, Product Tracking Reporting System, and the Web-based Complement Information System.⁴ Although we did not test the validity of controls over these systems, we assessed the accuracy of the data by comparing data from other sources, observing operations, and interviewing Postal Service officials knowledgeable about the data. Therefore, we determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We conducted this audit from October through December 2019, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We

¹ CCAs deliver mail on designated city routes and are covered by the National Association of Letter Carriers agreement.

² RCAs are responsible for the safe and efficient delivery and collection of the U.S. Mail™, working part time when regular rural carriers have scheduled days off or take vacation days

³ EDW provides a single repository for managing the Postal Service's corporate data assets. EDW provides a common source of accurate corporate data across organizations to a wide variety of users.

⁴ WebCoins is a web-based tool for managing and tracking complement information about employees.

believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on November 13, 2019, and included their comments where appropriate.

Finding # 1: City Carriers Returning After 6:00 p.m.

We determined that city carriers at the Vista Station were returning to the office after 6:00 p.m. Specifically, for the time frame of March – August 2019, about 50 percent of city carriers returned by 6:00 p.m., 72 percent returned to the office by 7:00 p.m., and 87 percent returned to the office by 8:00 p.m. We noted that the percentage of city carriers returning after 6:00 p.m. increased significantly between March and August (see Table 1). The Postal Service’s goal is to have 100 percent of the carriers returning to the office by 6:00 p.m.⁵ When carriers return after 6:00 p.m., customer service can suffer and mail collected by the carriers may be late to the Processing and Distribution Center.

Table 1. Vista Station City Carriers Returning After 6:00 p.m.

Month	Percentage of Carriers Returning to the Office by 6:00 p.m.	Percentage of Carriers Returning to the Office by 7:00 p.m.	Percentage of Carriers Returning to the Office by 8:00 p.m.
March	75.11%	95.82%	99.82%
April	70.01%	94.72%	99.65%
May	47.97%	83.86%	97.20%
June	33.02%	56.17%	77.57%
July	33.33%	53.48%	74.89%
August	35.69%	48.12%	71.02%
Average	49.67%	72.49%	86.95%

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of City Carriers Returning After 6 p.m. data from an OIG data model based on EDW-Delivery Data Mart.

This condition occurred due to:

- **Recent Route Adjustments:** The Vista Station underwent a full office Route Count and Inspection (RCI)⁶ in May 2019, with the resulting adjustments being implemented in July 2019. On August 21, 2019, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) grieved this adjustment. On October 23, 2019, the Dispute Resolution Team⁷ (DRT) found in favor of the NALC and instructed management to review the adjustments and make the routes as close to eight hours as possible.

⁵ *Staffing and Scheduling Tool, Function 4 Applications User Guide*, 2016.

⁶ RCIs are conducted to achieve and maintain an appropriate daily workload for delivery units and routes, and includes an analysis of operating procedures, work hours, volumes, and possible deliveries.

⁷ The primary role of the Dispute Resolution Team is to address grievances presented to them in a timely manner, and to communicate the basis for the decision to the affected parties, using a format agreed upon at the national level.

Properly adjusted routes allow carriers to perform their required work and return to the office by 6:00 p.m. and management is able to more efficiently manage operations and improve mail delivery service.

- **Medical Restrictions:** There are 54 city carriers assigned to the Vista Station; however, 26 of them (48 percent) are on various types of medical restriction, which limit their availability. Some medical restrictions reduce or restrict the number of days or hours they can work; such as only five days a week or no more than eight hours in a day. Others restrict the weight limit the employee is allowed to move; such as not lifting over 10 pounds. Any of these restrictions can result in other carriers having to provide assistance to the medically restricted carrier, causing the other carriers to work longer hours and increasing the potential of returning after 6:00 p.m. Unit management stated that prior to the RCI, only eight city carriers had restrictions to their workhours; however, following the RCI in May 2019 and the subsequent adjustments that took place, 18 additional city carriers received medical restrictions. While not all restrictions were permanent, they do create additional challenges for local management to ensure city carriers returned to the station before 6:00 p.m.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the **Acting Manager, Nevada-Sierra District** instruct district staff to complete the review of the route adjustments per the dispute resolution decision.

Finding # 2. Arrow Lock Keys and Voyager Card Management

Vista Station management did not properly manage arrow lock keys⁸ or Voyager credit cards.⁹

Arrow Lock Keys

Vista Station management could not locate ten arrow lock keys when we conducted an inventory during our visit. Two of the ten arrow lock keys were found after our visit, leaving eight keys unaccounted for. Additionally, the key log was outdated with key numbers that were no longer valid and new key numbers were not properly documented on the log. This occurred because management did not provide sufficient oversight of the unit's assigned arrow lock keys and did not ensure the arrow lock key log, which had not been updated since January 2017, was accurate.

⁸ Arrow lock keys are accountable items that are used to secure and service mail receptacles.

⁹ Each vehicle is assigned a Voyager card to purchase all commercial fuel required by that vehicle and any minor maintenance under \$300.

Postal Service policy states that postmasters must keep accurate key inventories and all keys should be kept in a secure location¹⁰ and that delivery service managers must assure that employees properly handle accountable items every day. When carriers return from their routes, clerks should be available to check in accountable items as efficiently and promptly as possible.¹¹

When there is insufficient oversight and supervision of accountable items such as arrow lock keys, there is an increased risk of mail theft.

Voyager Card Management

Vista Station management did not adequately secure Voyager fleet cards. During our site visit we were able to locate only four of 50 Voyager cards. The Vista Station has 50 assigned vehicles and every Postal Service-owned vehicle is assigned a Voyager card. Carriers stated they stored their voyager cards in various places including in their assigned Postal Service delivery vehicle, mailbag, and wallet. One carrier stated they left their card at their home.

Postal Service policy states Voyager cards should never be carried by off-duty personnel, left in unattended vehicles, or in other locations with unrestricted accesses.¹² Vista Station management had not completed the latest eFleet Card training course for site managers, which outlines Voyager card security controls. Without management oversight to ensure proper usage and security of Voyager cards, management cannot prevent potentially fraudulent charges and unauthorized purchases to the Postal Service.

Recommendation #2: We recommend the **Acting Manager, Nevada-Sierra District** instruct unit management to follow the policy for updating the arrow lock key list and to secure Voyager fleet cards. In addition, ensure appropriate personnel complete the eFleet Card training.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with all findings and recommendations in the report. See [Appendix A](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Regarding recommendation 1, management agreed to adhere to the Dispute Resolution Team's decision and plans to conduct a full route count and inspection beginning the week of January 25, 2020. Management's target implementation date is March 31, 2020.

¹⁰ *Administrative Support Manual*, Section 273 and *Postal Operations Manual*, Issue 9, 633.42, Arrow Lock Keys, July 2002 (updated with revisions through April 30, 2019).

¹¹ Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, Sections 111.2 and 127, June 2019.

¹² Standard Work Instruction (Quick Reference) US Bank Voyager Fleet Card Management for Site managers, January 2019.

Regarding recommendation 2, management is in the process of updating the arrow lock key list and securing Voyager feet cards. Management's target implementation date is December 18, 2019.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations in the report.

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed.

Recommendations should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendations can be closed.

APPENDIX A. MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS

NEVADA-SIERRA DISTRICT



12/02/2019

Lazerick C. Poland
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Draft Audit Report – Mail Delivery Issues – Vista Station, Sparks, NV (Project Number 19-043)

Management agrees with each OIG finding and observations.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the **Manager, Nevada-Sierra District** instruct district staff to complete the review of the route adjustments per the dispute resolution decision.

Management Response/Action Plan: We agree with the recommendation. Operations Programs Support staff reviewed the route adjustment data per the Dispute Resolution Team decision. In accordance with the Dispute Resolution Team decision, Operations Programs Support conducted a route count and inspection for the 271g's for a minor adjustment ending 11/1/2019. The NALC does not agree to a minor adjustment at this time. Operations Programs Support will do a formal inspection starting January 25th, 2020. This will be a two week official route count and inspection, evaluating one zone per week.

Target Implementation Date: 03/31/2020

Responsible Official: [REDACTED] A/Manager Operations Programs Support

Recommendation #2: We recommend the **Manager, Nevada-Sierra District** instruct unit management to follow the policy for updating the arrow key list and to secure Voyager fleet cards. In addition, ensure appropriate personnel complete the eFleet Card training.

Management Response/Action Plan: We agree with the recommendation. Customer Service is currently updating the arrow key list and validation of securing Voyager fleet cards. All appropriate personnel are in process of completing the eFleet Card training.

Target Completion Date: 12/18/2019

Responsible Official: Postmaster, Sparks NV, MPOO, District Finance Manager Validator to process.

John DiPeri
A/District Manager
Nevada- Sierra District

cc: Corporate Audit and Response Management
Gregory G. Graves, Vice President, Operations – Western Area
Felipe Flores, Manager, Operations Support / A – Western Area
[REDACTED] Controller/A – Western Area

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