



AUDIT REPORT

Facility Condition Reviews – Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices

January 30, 2020



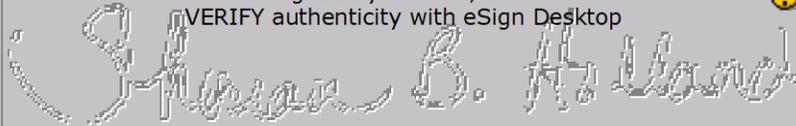
Report Number 20-071-R20



January 30, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: TODD S. HAWKINS
DISTRICT MANAGER, GREATER INDIANA DISTRICT

E-Signed by Holland, Shirian
VERIFY authenticity with eSign Desktop



A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Shirian B. Holland". Above the signature, the text "E-Signed by Holland, Shirian" and "VERIFY authenticity with eSign Desktop" is displayed. A small yellow question mark icon is located in the top right corner of the box.

FROM: Shirian B. Holland
Acting Director, Supply Management and Facilities

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Facility Condition Reviews –
Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices
(Report Number 20-071-R20)

This report presents the results of our Facility Condition Reviews at the Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Shirian Holland, Acting Director, Supply Management and Facilities, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit Response Management
Vice President, Facilities
Vice President, Great Lakes Area Operations

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of facility conditions at the Greenfield (owned), Maxwell (leased), and New Palestine (leased) Post Offices in the Greater Indiana District (Project Number 20-071). This audit was designed to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential risks related to facility conditions. The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe and healthy environment for both employees and customers in accordance with its internal policies and procedures¹ and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)² safety laws.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to determine if Postal Service management is adhering to building maintenance, safety, and security standards, and employee working condition requirements at post offices. We also followed up on issues related to the Greenfield Post Office reported in our Facility Condition Reviews – Great Lakes Area in fiscal year 2016 (see [Appendix A](#)).

To accomplish our objective, we developed a checklist of requirements related to building maintenance, safety, and security. We judgmentally selected the Greenfield Post Office based on the number of maintenance, safety, and security deficiencies identified in our prior facility condition reviews. We selected the Maxwell and New Palestine Post Offices based on their close proximity to the Greenfield Post Office. In addition, we reviewed Postal Service systems to identify maintenance issues and analyzed documentation for deficiencies. We conducted site visits from October 8-10, 2019, and performed observations, completed the checklists, and briefed local management on the issues identified.

We relied on computer-generated data from the Safety Toolkit and electronic Facility Management System (eFMS). We assessed the reliability of the extracted data by reviewing the documentation and comparing it to our observations for completeness, validity, and accuracy. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We conducted this performance audit from October 2019 through January 2020 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls as we considered necessary under the circumstances. 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 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 January 8, 2020, and included their comments where appropriate.

¹ Handbook MS-47, *Housekeeping Postal Facilities*, TL-5: June 27, 2014.

² OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

We found that the building maintenance and safety at the Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices did not meet prescribed standards. We identified 33 deficiencies at these three facilities, ranging from minor to more serious violations (see [Appendix B](#)). None of the three facilities performed required semiannual housekeeping inspections or maintained a Postal Service (PS) Form 4851, Housekeeping Inspection. We did not observe any security deficiencies at the three facilities.

Building Maintenance

At the Greenfield Post Office, we identified issues related to non-functioning bathrooms, rusting, damaged walls, dirty fans, improperly stored supplies and equipment, improper lighting, building issues, and general clutter. Although some of these issues were previously reported in eFMS, others were not. For items the postmaster reported and took corrective action on, we did not make a recommendation.

Due to an ongoing septic issue, the Greenfield Post Office has not had a fully functioning bathroom since November 2018 (see Figure 1). Instead, staff were required to use an outdoor portable restroom (see Figure 2). Management is aware of this issue and reported it in eFMS in November 2018, December 2018, and January 2019. A plumbing company assessed the issue and provided an estimate to make the repairs. However, due to the severity of the problem (including collapsed sewer lines), the extent of repairs needed, and potential costs involved, the Postal Service requested a price proposal from an architectural and engineering firm in January 2019 and awarded the work order in March 2019. The Postal Service issued a work order modification in September 2019. As of the date of this report, the work has not been completed.

Figure 1. Non-Functioning Restroom



Source: OIG photo taken October 8, 2019.

Figure 2. Alternative Restroom

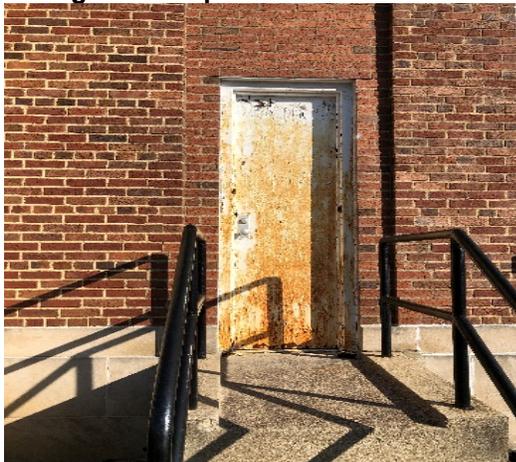


Source: OIG photo taken October 8, 2019.

Several areas throughout the Greenfield Post Office needed painting. Specifically, the outside Inspection Service access door was rusted (see Figure 3) and handrails were chipped (see Figure 4). Inside, the walls in the lobby were dirty and needed paint. Some of the same deficiencies were previously identified at the Greenfield Post Office during

our 2016 review of facility conditions in the Great Lakes Area and were also reported in eFMS.

Figure 3. Inspection Service Door



Source: OIG photo taken October 8, 2019.

Figure 4. Chipped Handrail



Source: OIG photo taken October 8, 2019.

Other maintenance issues at the Greenfield Post Office include:

- Large gashes in the walls in the rural carrier area.
- Dirty ceiling fans, including one that was missing a blade.
- Excess supplies and equipment left outside and not properly stored.
- More than half of the lights behind the retail counter were out and some of the lights throughout the facility flickered or were out.
- Crumbling concrete on the loading dock.
- The basement was cluttered and had a cracked window and stained ceiling, indicating a possible leak.

At the Maxwell Post Office, the restroom was dirty and served as a storage closet (see [Figure 5](#)). Both the inside and outside of the facility, including the main entrance door, needed repair. Specifically, there was rotted wood on the side of the building (facing the parking lot), chipped cement around the windows, and the entire building (internally and externally) needs painting. Lastly, the mailbox near the front door was severely dented, rusted, dirty, and in need of repair.

Figure 5. Dirty Restroom at the Maxwell Post Office



Source: OIG photo taken October 10, 2019.

At the New Palestine Post Office, the women's restroom needed repair. Only one side of each faucet worked, the ceiling tile had cracks, and the hand railing outside of the facility was chipped and needed paint.

Building Safety

At the Greenfield Post Office, sections of the rural carrier floor were buckling and had metal plates causing a trip hazard (see Figure 6). In our 2016 Great Lakes Area audit, we identified a missing section of the rural carrier floor. Management installed sections of metal plates to address the issue; however, the metal plates flex and are uneven.

Figure 6. Rural Carrier Floor



Source: OIG photo taken October 9, 2019.

Other safety issues identified at the Greenfield Post Office include:

- An electrical outlet hanging from the ceiling and frayed internet cables were not secured on the workroom floor.
- One fire extinguisher missing a monthly inspection and one missing an annual inspection.
- A section of the wall in the basement was covered in a substance that appeared to be potential mold (see Figure 7).

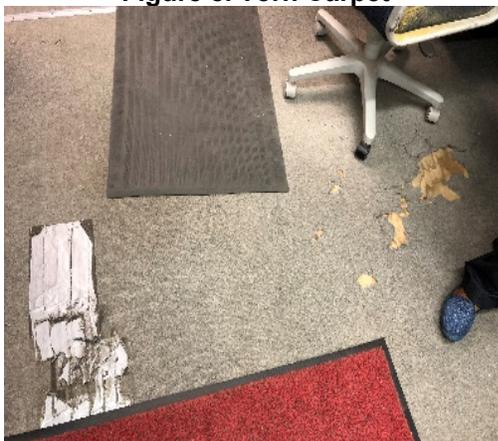
Figure 7. Potential Mold on Basement Wall



Source: OIG photo taken October 8, 2019.

At the Maxwell Post Office, one fire extinguisher was missing both annual and monthly inspections, the floor was uneven, and sections of the carpet were torn, causing a tripping hazard (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Torn Carpet



Source: OIG photo taken October 10, 2019.

At the New Palestine Post Office, the drainage valve in the women's restroom handicap stall was uneven and a potential trip hazard. The only smoke detector in the facility was not working and, instead of having it fixed or replaced, it was disconnected. Lastly, there were cracks and potholes throughout the customer parking lot and along the entry to the

facility (see Figure 9). This was previously reported in eFMS in April 2018, February 2019, and September 2019, and remained an issue at the time of our review.

Figure 9. Broken Concrete at Facility Entrance



Source: OIG photo taken October 9, 2019.

None of the three facilities posted the Spanish version of the OSHA poster, *Job Safety and Health*, as required by the Postal Service; only the English version was posted.

The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers. In addition, OSHA requires employers to provide a safe and healthful workplace free of recognized hazards. More importantly, these issues could jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of Postal Service employees and customers, and can create an environment that dissuades customers from doing business in these offices. If management does not address hazards, the Postal Service could potentially incur fines.

Conditions related to maintenance and safety occurred because management did not follow up on existing issues or address current ones or was not aware that any issues existed. For example, at the Greenfield Post Office, we found issues such as chipped paint on railings and walls, and a rusted Inspection Service door that existed during our prior audit. At the Maxwell Post Office, when issues arise, the Postal Support Employee contacts the landlord directly rather than the Postmaster, who is responsible for ensuring maintenance requests are entered and tracked in eFMS.

Postal Service policy requires management to report and track repair work through eFMS, regardless of the dollar amount or where the responsibility falls.³ Management is also required to conduct housekeeping inspections semiannually,⁴ a requirement of which local management was not aware. Finally, fire extinguishers were not always inspected monthly or annually as required⁵ due to a lack of oversight.

Management's attention to maintenance, safety, and security deficiencies can reduce the risk of injuries to employees and customers; reduce related costs, such as workers'

³ *Standard Operating Procedures for HUB Repairs and Alterations*, Section 1.3, January 2014.

⁴ *Custodial Team Cleaning Handbook*, Section 4.6, March 13, 2019.

⁵ OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.157.

compensation claims, lawsuits, OSHA penalties; and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand. We identified issues that could potentially result in \$49,140⁶ of risk exposure.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the **Manager, Greater Indiana District** address all building maintenance and safety issues identified at the Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices.

Recommendation #2: We recommend the **Manager, Greater Indiana District** reiterate policy to report all maintenance and safety issues through the electronic Facilities Management System; and monitor the status of all reported issues through completion.

Recommendation #3: We recommend the **Manager, Greater Indiana District** perform Housekeeping Inspections and ensure fire extinguishers are inspected monthly and annually at the Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with our findings and recommendations.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated that the Greenfield Post Office sewer repairs are a long-term project and will be completed in stages with a target completion date of March 31, 2020. Management indicated that some repairs at the Greenfield Post Office were completed, such as removing the broken ceiling fan, removing excess supplies and equipment stored outside to the extent possible, and tying up the electrical outlet hanging from the ceiling. Management plans to address other maintenance issues, such as repairing gashes in the walls by Spring 2020; removing basement clutter by February 29, 2020; and painting and repairing handrails, the inspection door, the lobby area, crumbling concrete, and a cracked window by the target implementation date of March 31, 2020.

Management stated that the restroom at the Maxwell Post Office was cleaned and excess supplies removed to the extent possible on October 29, 2019; and they contacted the landlord regarding the main office door, rotten exterior wood, and chipped concrete and painting. They expect these repairs to be completed by Spring 2020, and they plan mailbox replacement by February 28, 2020. Finally, management stated that no further repair or modification to the uneven floor is possible.

⁶ Based on the average fine amount the Postal Service paid for OSHA violations from 2017 to 2019 for post offices.

Regarding recommendation 2, on January 24, 2020, management stated that they instructed postmasters at the Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices to follow applicable procedures for reporting maintenance and safety issues and monitor the status of reported issues through completion. Additionally, they were instructed to include the post office operations manager and district safety manager on the reported items and provide them with regular status updates.

Regarding recommendation 3, management stated that they instructed the Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices to perform regular housekeeping inspections and provide copies to their operations managers. They also instructed the responsible postmasters on the proper procedures and schedule for fire extinguisher inspections. The target implementation date was January 27, 2020.

See [Appendix C](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations and planned actions should resolve the issues identified in the report.

Regarding recommendation 1, management needs to provide clear evidence of corrective actions taken, completed, or in progress; and those affecting the remaining maintenance issues to be addressed at each facility, including photos of completed items.

Regarding recommendation 2, we view management's corrective action taken in instructing postmasters to follow applicable procedures for reporting maintenance and safety issues and monitoring the status of reported issues through completion to be sufficient to satisfy the intent of our recommendation. Accordingly, we consider recommendation 2 closed with the issuance of this report.

Regarding recommendation 3, although management provided evidence of current fire extinguisher inspections for Greenfield and New Palestine Post Offices, they need to provide clear documentation and/or photos showing current fire extinguisher inspections for the Maxwell Post Office and current housekeeping inspections for the three facilities.

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

Recommendations 1 and 3 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. Based on the information provided by Postal Service management, we consider recommendation 2 closed with the issuance of this report.

Appendix A: Prior Audit Coverage

Report Title	Objective	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact (in millions)
<i>Facility Condition Reviews – Great Lakes Area</i>	Determine whether management adhered to building maintenance, safety and security standards, and employee working condition requirements at retail facilities.	SM-AR-16-010	9/2/2016	\$29.4

Appendix B: Facility Deficiency Summary

	Facility	Greenfield	Maxwell	New Palestine	Total Deficiencies
Building Maintenance Issues					
1	General housekeeping (dust, clutter)	D	✓	✓	1
2	Restrooms not functioning properly or in need of cleaning	D	D	D	3
3	Lighting issues	D	✓	✓	1
4	Damaged walls	D	✓	✓	1
5	Damaged ceiling	D	✓	D	2
6	Rusted doors	D	✓	✓	1
7	Broken/damaged door	✓	D	✓	1
8	Chipped handrails	D	✓	D	2
9	Dirty and broken ceiling fan	D	✓	✓	1
10	Excess equipment and items not properly stored	D	✓	D	2
11	Crumbling concrete or chipped cement	D	D	✓	2
12	Customer parking lot (rotten wood)	✓	D	✓	1
13	Housekeeping Inspection (PS Form 4851)	D	D	D	3
Building Safety Issues					
14	Trip hazards	D	D	D	3
15	Electrical outlets (exposed wires, etc)	D	✓	✓	1
16	Smoke detector not functioning properly	✓	✓	D	1
17	Fire extinguishers not inspected (monthly/yearly)	D	D	✓	2
18	Parking lot (potholes)	✓	✓	D	1
19	Potential mold	D	✓	✓	1
20	Spanish version - OSHA poster, <i>Job Safety and Health</i>	D	D	D	3
Total Deficiencies					33

Source: OIG analysis based on facility review.

✓ – No deficiency; D – Deficiency

Appendix C: Management's Comments



January 26, 2020

Lazerick C. Poland
Director, Audit Operations

Subject: Facility Condition Reviews – Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices (Project Number 20-071-DRAFT)

Greater Indiana District management conditionally agrees with the Post Offices Report.

Recommendation 1:

We recommend the **Manager, Greater Indiana District** address all building maintenance and safety issues identified at the Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Manager, Greater Indiana District agrees that the building maintenance and safety issues identified need to be addressed.

The Greenfield Post Office sewer repairs are a long term project that will be completed in stages. Contractors responsible for the repairs have met with the postmaster and have provided a timeline for completion for the initial stage for five weeks. Once completed they will meet again to update postmaster an updated completion date with target completion of March 31, 2020. Gashes in the wall will be completed by BMC in spring, broken ceiling fan was removed and is no longer needed, excess supplies and equipment stored outside have been removed to the extent possible and basement clutter will be completed by February 29, 2020. Electrical outlet hanging from ceiling was tied up out of way (former desk location). Outside painting of handrails, inspection door repair and paint, lobby painting, crumbling concrete on loading dock and cracked window replacement will be completed by FMO when weather permits with target completion by March 31, 2020.

The Maxwell Post Office restroom has been cleaned and excess supplies removed to the extent possible on October 29, 2019. Regular cleaning will be completed. FSSP has contacted the landlord for main office door, rotten exterior wood, chipped concrete around windows, interior and exterior painting with repairs scheduled to be completed by spring. Mailbox replacement has been ordered and will be installed once received by FMO and is expected by February 28, 2020. Floor unevenness due to transition from old to new structure and no further repair or modification possible.

A log outlining the follow up actions has been included in this response.

Target Implementation Date:

March 31, 2020

Responsible Official:

[REDACTED]

Post Office Operations Manager

Recommendation 2:

We recommend the **Manager, Greater Indiana District** reiterate policy to report all maintenance and safety issues through the electronic Facilities Management System; and monitor the status of all reported issues through completion.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Manager, Greater Indiana District agrees with the recommendation. The Greenfield, Maxwell and New Palestine Post Offices have been instructed to follow applicable Postal Service procedures for reporting maintenance and safety issues and monitor the status of all reported issues through completion. This was completed on January 24, 2020. Additionally the offices will include their POOM and district safety manager on all reported items and to provide regular status updates.

Target Implementation Date:

January 27, 2020

Responsible Official:

██████████

Recommendation 3:

We recommend the **Manager, Greater Indiana District** perform Housekeeping Inspections and ensure fire extinguishers are inspected monthly and annually at the Greenfield, Maxwell, and New Palestine Post Offices.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Manager, Greater Indiana District agrees with the recommendation. The Greenfield, Maxwell and New Palestine Post Offices have been instructed to perform regular housekeeping inspections and provide copies to their POOM. Postmasters responsible for all three facilities have been instructed on the proper procedures and schedule for fire extinguisher inspections.

Target Implementation Date:

January 27, 2020

Responsible Official:

██████████



Todd Hawkins