



October 2, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: JUDITH W. HERRICK
DISTRICT MANAGER, PHILADELPHIA METROPOLITAN
DISTRICT

Shirian B. Holland

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

SUBJECT: Management Alert – Property Condition Issues at Spring
Garden Station (Report Number 20-293-R21)

This management alert presents Property Condition Issues at the Postal Service's Spring Garden Station. These issues came to our attention during our ongoing audit of Employee Safety – Postal Service COVID-19 Response (Project Number 20-259). The objective of this management alert is to provide Postal Service officials immediate notification of the issues identified during the ongoing audit. The issues require immediate attention and remediation.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President
Vice President, Facilities
Vice President, Retail and Delivery Operations Atlantic
Corporate Audit Response Management

Introduction

While conducting a site visit for the Employee Safety – Postal Service COVID-19 Response audit (Project Number 20-259), we identified building maintenance and safety issues at the Spring Garden Station in the Eastern Area that were not directly related to the scope of the audit. Specifically, we identified 30 deficiencies ranging from minor to more serious violations. We believe these issues warrant management's immediate attention and corrective action.

The U.S. Postal Service has over 30,000 leased and owned retail facilities nationwide. It is required to maintain a safe and healthy environment for both employees and customers in accordance with its internal policies and procedures¹ and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)² safety laws.

Building Maintenance

At the Spring Garden Station, we observed an active roof leak; damaged, stained, buckling and missing ceiling tiles (see [Figure 1](#)); standing water, broken pipe coverings, rusted equipment, chipped and peeling walls, and cobwebs in the basement (see [Figure 2](#) and [Figure 3](#)); improperly stored supplies and equipment; poor lighting in the men's restroom; and general clutter.

In addition, walls throughout the facility had peeling paint, were chipped, and visually dirty (see [Figure 4](#)) and an air conditioner vent was uncovered and hanging from the ceiling (see [Figure 5](#)). Although the air conditioning unit and leaking roof were previously reported in the electronic Facilities Management System (eFMS), others were not.

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

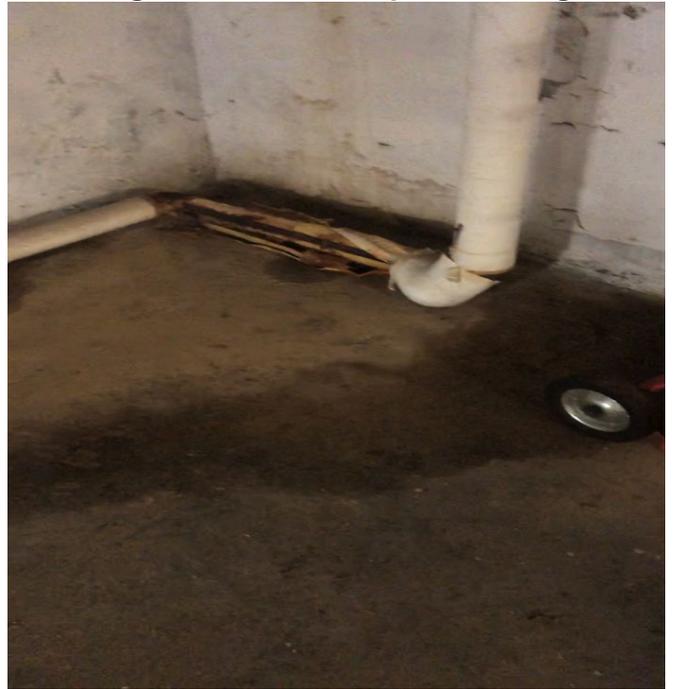
² OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

Figure 1. Damaged and Missing Ceiling Tile



Source: U.S Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 2. Broken Pipe Covering



Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 3. Standing Water in Basement



Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

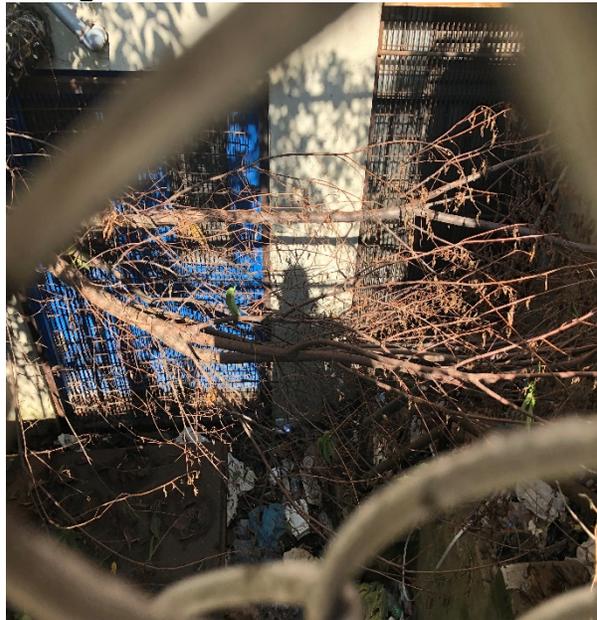
Figure 4. Damaged Walls



Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 5. Uncovered Vent

Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 6. Downed Tree and Trash

Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

We also identified the following 14 issues at the Spring Garden Station:

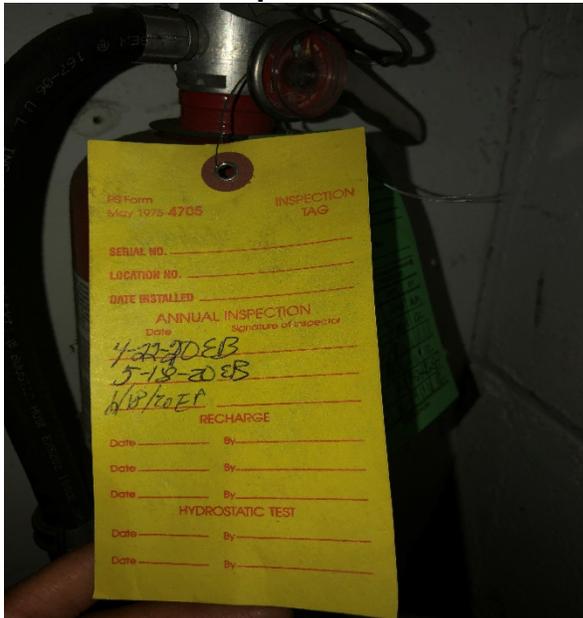
1. Trash throughout yard.
2. Downed tree, trash, and a large metal box blocking stairs to the basement (see Figure 6).
3. Excess equipment stored on the dock when there was room for the items in the basement.
4. Leaves and debris on the roof.
5. The air conditioning unit was not working when we arrived but a contractor was onsite repairing it.
6. Lights uncovered or not working throughout the facility.
7. Broken and dirty blinds.
8. Missing tiles on walls in restrooms and lobby.
9. Seat cover holders in women's restroom held up with tape.
10. Rusty partitions in restrooms.
11. Sink in restroom constantly runs.
12. Stained and peeling ceiling in women's restroom.
13. Metal pipe sticking out about two inches from the wall in women's restroom.
14. Insulation hanging from ceiling.

In addition, the facility did not perform required semiannual housekeeping inspections or maintain Postal Service (PS) Forms 4851, Housekeeping Inspection.

Building Safety

At the Spring Garden Station, we identified missing monthly and annual fire extinguisher inspections, trip hazards, and blocked doors, including the emergency exit (see Figures 7 and 8). Electrical panels throughout the facility were uncovered, open, or blocked (see Figure 9). In addition, the floors were damaged and uneven in some places, and one section had a piece of plywood covering a possible hole (see Figure 10).

Figure 7. Missing Fire Extinguisher Inspections



Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 8. Blocked Exit



Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 9. Blocked and Open Electrical Panels

Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 10. Plywood Covering Possible Hole

Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

We also identified the following seven safety issues:

1. Excessive mail throughout facility causing trip hazards.
2. Emergency exit blocked by equipment inside and outside of the facility (see [Figure 11](#)).
3. Extension cords that were daisy chained (see [Figure 12](#)).
4. Fire extinguisher inspections had not been performed since April 2015 for any of the fire extinguishers, except the basement fire extinguisher which was last inspected in June 2020.
5. Only one vestibule door was accessible; the other was blocked by equipment filled with mail (see [Figure 13](#)).
6. Unsecured ladder and light fixture in basement.
7. Flammable items not properly stored.

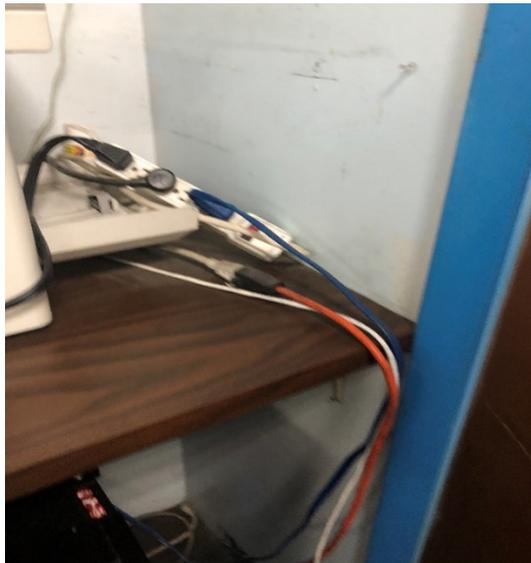
In addition, neither the English nor Spanish version of the OSHA poster, *Job Safety and Health*, or the CA-10, *What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work* was posted. Further, upon review of the Safety Toolkit, we did not find evidence that the facility performed Safety & Health Inspections, Fire Inspections, or Program Evaluation Guide Inspections.

Figure 11. Blocked Exit



Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 12. Daisy Chained Extension Cord



Source: OIG photograph taken August 5, 2020.

Figure 13. Blocked Vestibule Door



Source: OIG photo taken August 5, 2020.

The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe environment for both employees and customers. In addition, OSHA requires employers to provide a safe and healthful workplace free of recognized hazards. More important, these issues could jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of Postal Service employees and customers. Further, it could 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.

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

compensation claims, lawsuits, and OSHA penalties; and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand. We identified issues that could potentially result in \$54,600³ of risk exposure.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the **District Manager, Philadelphia Metropolitan District**, address all building maintenance and safety issues identified.

Recommendation #2: We recommend the **District Manager, Philadelphia Metropolitan District**, ensure fire extinguisher inspections are performed annually.

Recommendation #3: We recommend the **District Manager, Philadelphia Metropolitan District**, ensure all housekeeping, safety & health, fire, and program evaluation guide inspections are performed and documented as required.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the alert's findings and recommendations.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated that building maintenance and safety issues identified at the Spring Garden Station have been or will be abated by field maintenance staff and district leadership. Management listed issues that have been addressed and provided photos of some completed items, with remaining items to be completed by September 30, 2020.

To abate the excessive mail issue that caused tripping hazards and blocked exits, management stated that packages are being processed at the Processing and Distribution Center and Paschall Delivery Unit. The long-term plan is to look for an alternate location to better suit the number of employees necessary to service customers. Management provided a target completion date of September 30, 2020.

Regarding recommendation 2, management ordered new fire extinguishers and scheduled annual and monthly inspections for September 28, 2020.

Regarding recommendation 3, management will direct the station manager and safety manager to complete the required semiannual housekeeping inspections and maintain Form 4581. They will also ensure all safety and health inspections are performed and documented as required. The targeted completion date is October 2, 2020.

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

³ Based on the average fine amount the Postal Service paid for OSHA violations from 2017 to 2019 for post offices.

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. We also appreciate the corrective actions management has taken to date.

Regarding recommendation 1, management needs to address the remaining deficiencies such as trash removal, dirty and broken blinds, blocked egresses, and missing posters; and provide supporting documentation or photos confirming that the issues have been addressed. For those items addressed but without supporting documentation, management needs to provide photos or other evidence confirming the items were abated.

Regarding recommendation 2, management needs to provide confirmation that the fire extinguishers were replaced and evidence that annual and monthly inspections were performed.

Regarding recommendation 3, management needs to complete and document the required housekeeping, safety and health, and program evaluation guide inspections and provide evidence of the completed inspections.

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

Recommendations 1, 2, 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.

Appendix A: Management's Comments

DISTRICT MANAGER
PHILADELPHIA METROPOLITAN DISTRICT



September 17, 2020

Memorandum for: Lazerick C Poland
Director Audit Operations
Subject: Management Alert-Property Condition Issues at Spring Garden Station
(Project Number 20-293-Draft)

I am currently in receipt of the Draft Audit Report that has been created in reference to the Property Condition Issues at Spring Garden Station. I have reviewed your findings with the Acting Postmaster of Philadelphia, as well as with the Philadelphia Safety Manager and Staff, the Philadelphia Finance Manager, the acting Facilities Specialist and the Safety Manager from the Eastern Area. The draft report provided was reviewed in depth and on-site visits by the District Manager, the Philadelphia Postmaster, the Philadelphia Human Resources Manager, the Philadelphia Safety Staff and the Manager of Field Maintenance for the Philadelphia District were conducted. Several of the items identified by the report were abated almost immediately, and will be outlined in this response. Others that require additional resources are ongoing and will be abated by the target dates that will also be outlined in this response. ***Philadelphia District Management agrees with each of the three (3) recommendations contained in the Draft Audit Report.*** Herein are the responses to the recommendations cited:

Recommendation #1: We recommend the District Manager Philadelphia Metropolitan District, address all building maintenance and safety issues identified.

Management Response/Action Plan: The draft audit report identified several ***building maintenance*** issues that have been abated by the Philadelphia Field Maintenance Staff. The issues that have been addressed are:

- Damaged and missing Ceiling tiles- abated on September 3 (Figure 1).
- Standing water in basement- abated on September 3 (Figure 2).
- Broken Pipe Coverings- abated on September 10 (Figure 3).
- Chipped and Peeling Walls -abated on September 10.
- Stained and peeling ceiling in women's restroom- abated on September 11.
- Metal Pipe sticking out from wall in women's restroom- abated on September 11 (Figure 6).
- Uncovered air conditioner vent hanging from ceiling- abated on September 10 (Figure 4).
- Downed Tree and Trash in Yard- abated tree on September 8 (Figure 5), trash removal by September 30.

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PHILADELPHIA, PA 19153-9997

- 2 -

- Restroom repairs to include: Sink constantly running, missing tiles on walls, seat cover holders procured with tape and sanding and painting of rusty partitions- abated on- September 11.
- Replacement of lights that were not working- abated on September 14.
- Insulation hanging from ceiling- abated on September 11 (Figure 4).
- Replacement of broken and dirty blinds- to be removed by September 30.
- Leaking roof and debris – abated September 3 (Figure 8).

Management Response/Action Plan: The draft audit report identified several ***building safety*** issues that have been or will be abated by the Philadelphia District Leadership Staff. These issues include:

- Excessive mail throughout the facility causing trip hazards
- Emergency exit blocked by equipment inside and outside of the facility
- Blocked egresses
- Unsecured ladder and light fixture in basement- abated on September 3.
- Flammable items not properly stored- Storage cabinet ordered on September 8.
- Extension cords daisy chained- abated on September 11 (Figure 7).

To abate the excessive mail issues in the facility that caused tripping hazards and blocked egresses, Spring Garden packages are being processed at the Philadelphia Processing and Distribution Center and the Paschall Delivery Unit. The volume is sorted to the specific Carrier Route, eliminating the need for an initial distribution process. The Spring Garden Post Office is located in an area of Philadelphia that is experiencing tremendous residential growth. The long term plan will be for the Philadelphia District to look for an alternate location that will better suit the number of employees necessary to service the customers that live and conduct business in the Spring Garden section of the City of Philadelphia.

Responsible Management Official: Manager of Customer Service Operations for the Spring Garden Post Office and the Spring Garden Station Manager

Target Completion Date: September 14, 2020

Recommendation #2: We recommend the District Manager Philadelphia Metropolitan District, ensure fire extinguisher inspections are performed annually.

Management Response/Action Plan: Fire extinguishers on order and estimated delivery September 28. Annual and monthly fire inspections scheduled for September 28.

Target Completion Date: September 28.

Responsible Management Official: Philadelphia Safety Manager, Spring Garden Station Manager

- 3 -

Recommendation #3: We recommend the District Manager, Philadelphia Metropolitan District, ensure all housekeeping, safety & health, fire and program evaluation guide inspections are performed and documented as required.

Management Response/Action Plan:

The Philadelphia District Manager will direct the Spring Garden Station Manager and the Philadelphia Safety Manager to complete the required semiannual housekeeping inspections and maintain USPS form 4581, Housekeeping Inspection at the Spring Garden Post Office. In addition, the Spring Garden Station Manager, with the assistance of the Philadelphia Safety Manager will complete all Safety and Health Inspections are performed and documented as required.

Target Completion Date: October 2, 2020

Responsible Management Official: Spring Garden Station Manager, Philadelphia Safety Manager



Judith W. Herrick
District Manager
Philadelphia Metropolitan District

Figure 1. Ceiling Tiles Replaced



Figure 2. Water in Basement due to clogged drain



Figure 3. Pipe Insulation replaced.



Figure 4. The duct was removed and capped. The ceiling tile was replaced.



Figure 5. Tree was cut, to be removed by 9/30



Figure 6. Pipes were capped.



Figure 7. Refrigerator was moved upstairs.



Figure 8. Roof is not leaking, debris was removed.

