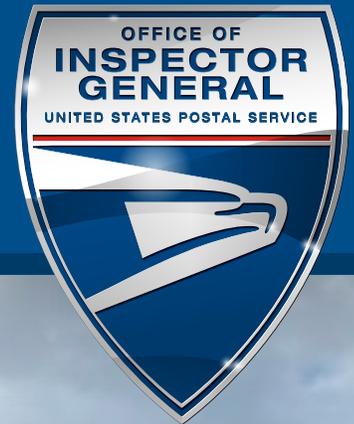


Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Saint Peters Main Post Office, Saint Peters, MO

Report Number 22-115-1-R22 | July 13, 2022





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

July 13, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: EDDIE L. BANNER
MANAGER (A), KANSAS-MISSOURI DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is centered below the "MEMORANDUM FOR" section.

FROM: Sean Balduff
Director, Field Operations

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Saint Peters Main Post Office, Saint Peters, MO (Report Number 22-115-1-R22)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Saint Peters Main Post Office, Saint Peters, MO.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact please contact Latrice Pope, Operational Manager, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit and Response Management
Vice President, Delivery Operations
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations
Vice President, Central Area Retail & Delivery Operations
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Exec VP
Chief Logistics & Processing Operations Office & Exec Vice President

Results

Background

This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Saint Peters Main Post Office (MPO) in Saint Peters, MO (Project Number 22-115-1). The Saint Peters MPO is in the Kansas-Missouri District of the Central Area and services ZIP Code 63376, which serves about 71,535 people and is considered to be urban.¹ We judgmentally selected the Saint Peters MPO based on the number of customer inquiries per route the unit received. From December 1, 2021 through February 28, 2022, the unit received 12.54 inquiries per route, which was more than the average of 7.02 inquiries per route for all sites serviced by the St. Louis Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC).

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Saint Peters MPO in Saint Peters, MO.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on four audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, truck arrival scans, and property conditions. Specifically, we reviewed delivery metrics including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, and distribution up-time.² During our site visit, we reviewed mail conditions; package and truck arrival scanning procedures; and unit safety, security, and maintenance conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and in the “Notice Left” area³ and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized

in Table 1 with management on June 22, 2022, and included their comments where appropriate.

The Saint Peters MPO is one of four delivery units⁴ the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed during the week of May 2, 2022 that are serviced by the St. Louis P&DC. We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding the conditions we identified at the Saint Peters MPO. We will issue a separate report⁵ that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all four delivery units. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Saint Peters MPO. Specifically, we found issues with three of the four areas we reviewed (see Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of Results

Audit Area	Issues Identified	
	Yes	No
Delayed Mail		X
Package Scanning	X	
Truck Arrival Scanning	X	
Property Conditions	X	

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of May 2, 2022.

¹ We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from Esri, which is based on 2010 Census Bureau information. Of the people living in this Zip Code, about 71,338 (about 99.7 percent) are considered urban and 197 (about .28 percent) are considered living in rural communities.

² Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

³ The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

⁴ The other three units were Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 21-115-2); Chouteau Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 22-115-3); and Marian Oldham Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 22-115-4).

⁵ Project Number 22-115.

Finding #1: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees scanned 282 packages at the delivery unit between January and March 2022 (see Table 2). Further analysis of the Stop-the-Clock (STC)⁶ scans for these packages showed about 49 percent of these packages were scanned “Delivered”. Note that this data excludes scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as “Delivered - PO Box” and “Customer (Vacation) Hold” but, instead represents scans performed at the delivery unit that should routinely be made at the point of delivery.

Table 2. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	January	February	March	Total	Percentage
Delivered	39	43	57	139	49.29%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location*	12	77	15	104	36.88%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	15	3	6	24	8.51%
No Secure Location Available	2	2	2	6	2.13%
No Authorized Recipient	1	3	0	4	1.42%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	0	3	1	4	1.42%
Refused	0	0	1	1	0.35%
Total	69	131	82	282	100%

*For this STC scan type, we only included scans performed Monday through Friday to avoid legitimate scans for businesses closed over the weekend.

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service’s Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

In addition, on the morning of May 3, 2022, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 54 packages⁷ to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 54 sampled packages, 15 (28 percent) had scanning issues. For example:

- Seven (six from the carrier cases and one from the “Notice Left” area) had a “Delivered” scan, which should only be used when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address. Five of these packages were re-scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” and “Held at Post Office at Customer Request” within minutes of the delivered scan, which is an indication the carriers were scanning them “Delivered” prior to verifying they could actually deliver the packages. One package was scanned “Delivered” 3.5 miles from the point of delivery and the remaining package was placed in the “Notice Left” area.
- Four from the carrier cases had a “Held at Post Office at Customer Request” scan but were scanned between .5 and 5.9 miles from the point of delivery.
- Three from the carrier cases had a “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” scan but were scanned between .3 and 1.7 miles from the point of delivery.
- One in the “Notice Left” area was missing an STC scan to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.

Further, 11 packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned to the sender, as required.⁸ These packages ranged from 2 to 32 days past their return dates.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because management did not adequately monitor proper package scanning. Specifically, management stated that they are required to clear all packages daily, ensuring that there is a STC scan. However, they stated that they did not review the type of scan performed on packages brought back to the delivery unit because of time constraints.

6 A scan event that indicates the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the mail piece. Examples of STC scans include “Delivered”, “Available for Pick-up”, and “No Access”.

7 We reviewed all 24 packages from the carrier cases and judgmentally selected 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area.

8 *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, dated July 2007, states that domestic packages should be returned to sender on the 15th calendar day after a notice is left and international packages should be returned to sender on the 30th calendar day after a notice is left.

In addition, packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned due to inadequate management oversight. Management stated that they did not ensure proper coverage when the clerk who was designated to oversee the “Notice Left” area went on leave.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced scan compliance. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,⁹ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.¹⁰ Packages on the “Notice Left” area should have been reviewed for second notices and returned to sender if they remained after the prescribed number of days.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Customers rely on accurate scan data to track their packages in real time. When employees do not scan mailpieces correctly, customers are unable to determine the actual status of their packages. By improving scanning operations, management could potentially improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

⁹ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

¹⁰ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

Finding #2: Truck Arrival Scanning

What We Found

Employees at the Saint Peters MPO did not scan all incoming trailer/truck barcodes as required. We reviewed data related to morning truck arrival scans from January 1 to March 31, 2022 and found that employees did not perform a scan for 32 of the 149 scheduled trucks (about 21 percent) arriving from the St. Louis, MO P&DC (see Table 3).

Table 3. Truck Arrival Scans from January 1 through March 31, 2022

Month	Count of Inbound Trips	Count of Missed Scans	Percentage Missing
January	49	14	28.57%
February	44	8	18.18%
March	56	10	17.86%
Total	149	32	21.48%

Source: OIG analysis of data extracted from the Postal Service's Surface Visibility (SV) System. SV collects end-to-end data by linking multiple scans of a single asset to create visibility data to support planning, management, and optimization of the surface network.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not monitor scan performance data to ensure all trucks received an arrival scan. Management stated that they were not aware they should be monitoring truck arrival scans, nor did they know where to get the reports to be reviewed. Management also stated that the previous contract driver would consistently drop the mail off and leave without notifying a clerk; however, they recently acquired a new contract driver who notifies the clerks when he arrives.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored truck trailer scanning data to ensure that all expected truck scans were being performed. According to Postal Service policy,¹¹ employees must scan the trailer barcodes on Postal Service trailer/trucks and Highway Contract Route trucks arriving at the delivery unit during local operating hours.

¹¹ *United States Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure* – Subject: Trailer Scans at the Delivery Units (DU).

Effect on the Postal Service and its Customers

When employees do not scan truck barcodes the Postal Service does not receive timely transportation information and is unable to address issues that may be causing mail delays, which could affect customer service.

Finding #3: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found building safety and maintenance issues at the Saint Peters MPO including:

- One missing ceiling tile in the customer lobby (see Figure 1).
- A dirty ceiling fan over the retail window and one with exposed wires over the workroom floor (see Figure 2).
- A dirty/rusted air vent and stained ceiling tiles in the men's restroom (see Figure 3).
- A broken toilet, dirty walls, and a faucet with no cold water in the women's restroom (see Figure 4).
- A gate in the front of the building that was pulling the brick wall apart toward the customer sidewalk (see Figure 5).
- A handrail on the dock that is rusted at the base with its concrete chipping away (see Figure 6).

Figure 1. Missing Ceiling Tile



Source: OIG photo taken on May 4, 2022.

Figure 2. Ceiling Fans



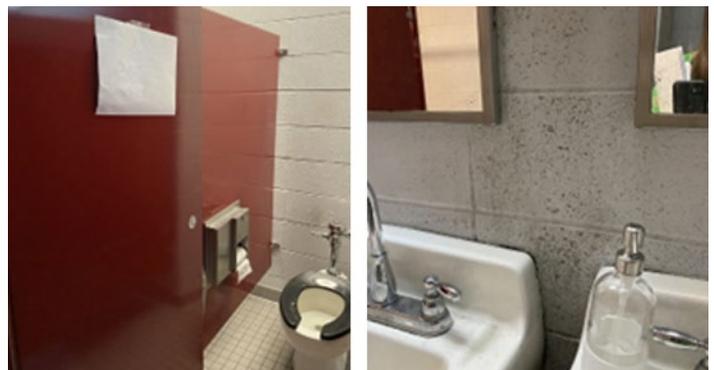
Source: OIG photos taken on May 4, 2022.

Figure 3. Men's Restroom



Source: OIG photos taken on May 4, 2022.

Figure 4. Women's Restroom



Source: OIG photos taken on May 4, 2022.

Figure 5. Inspection Gate



Source: OIG photo taken on May 4, 2022.

Figure 6. Rusted Handrail



Source: OIG photo taken on May 4, 2022.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide adequate oversight to ensure that all property condition issues were identified and reported. Specifically, management stated that they were not aware of the missing ceiling tile, the overhead fan issues, the dirty/rusted air vent and stained ceiling tiles in the men's restroom, the issues with the women's restroom, and the handrail on the dock. Management stated that they reported the issue with the gate to facilities management; however, as of May 17, 2022, the issue had not been reported in the electronic Facilities Maintenance System (eFMS).¹²

¹² A custom-built Postal Service system used to manage work orders, contracts, and payments for facility construction, repairs, and alteration contracts, along with real estate contracts.

¹³ OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight to personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety and maintenance issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers. In addition, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace free of recognized hazards.¹³

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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' compensation claims, lawsuits, and OSHA penalties; and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Management's Comments

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

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from April through July 2022 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 relied on computer-generated data from the PTR, the SV database, and eFMS. Although we did not test the validity of the controls over these systems, we assessed the accuracy of the data by reviewing existing information, comparing data from other sources, observing operations, and interviewing Postal Service officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Appendix B: Management's Comments



June 27, 2022

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property
Conditions Review – Saint Peters Main Post Office, Saint Peters, MO
(Report Number 22-115-1-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the draft audit report, *Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Saint Peters Main Post Office, Saint Peters, MO*.

Management agrees with the three findings in the report on package scanning, truck arrival scanning and property conditions.

Management has begun taking steps to address the three findings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eddie L. Banner", written over a horizontal line.

Eddie L. Banner
District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District

cc: Vice President, Area Retail and Delivery Operations (Central)
Manager, Corporate Audit Response Management

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