

Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Santa Fe Main Post Office, Santa Fe, NM

Report Number 22-132-3-R22 | August 5, 2022





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

August 5, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN S. MORGAN
DISTRICT MANAGER, ARIZONA-NEW MEXICO DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph E. Wolski".

FROM: Joseph E. Wolski
Director, Field Operations 2

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Santa Fe Main Post Office, Santa Fe, NM (Report Number 22-132-3-R22)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions – Santa Fe Main Post Office, Santa Fe, NM.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit and Response Management
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Executive Vice President
Vice President, Delivery Operations
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations
Vice President, WestPac Area Retail & Delivery Operations

Results

Background

This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Santa Fe Main Post Office (MPO) in Santa Fe, NM (Project Number 22-132-3). The Santa Fe MPO is in the Arizona-New Mexico District of the WestPac Area and services ZIP Codes 87501, 87504, and 87506.¹ These ZIP Codes serve about 28,861 people and are considered to be urban communities.² We judgmentally selected the Santa Fe MPO based on the number of stop-the-clock³ (STC) scans occurring at the delivery unit, rather than at the customer's point of delivery.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Santa Fe MPO in Santa Fe, NM.

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.⁴ 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" area⁵ and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 1 with management on July 19, 2022, and included their comments where appropriate.

The Santa Fe MPO is one of four delivery units⁶ the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed during the week of June 6, 2022, that are serviced by the Albuquerque Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC). We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding the conditions we identified at the Santa Fe MPO. We will issue a separate report⁷ 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 Santa Fe 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 week of June 6, 2022.

1 The unit also services ZIP Codes 87501 and 87506. Zip Code 87504 is mainly used for post office boxes.

2 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 19,011 (about 65.87 percent) are considered urban and 9,414 (about 32.62 percent) are considered living in rural communities.

3 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".

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

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

6 The other three units were Rio Rancho Branch, Rio Rancho, NM (Project Number 21-132-1); Richard J. Pino Station, Albuquerque, NM (Project Number 22-132-2); and Santa Fe Coronado Station, Santa Fe, NM (Project Number 22-132-4).

7 Project Number 22-132.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of June 7, 2022, we identified about 10,988 pieces of delayed mail at nine carrier cases (see Table 2 and Figures 1 and 2). The unit reported 6,041 pieces (54.98 percent) in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)⁸ system which resulted in under reporting of about 4,947 pieces (see Table 2).

Table 2. Type of Delayed Mail

Type of Mail	OIG Estimated Count of Delayed Mail	Reported Delayed Mail	Estimated Under Reported Delayed Mail
Letters	8,968	5,800	3,168
Flats	1,956	75	1,881
Packages	64	166	(102)
Totals	10,988	6,041	4,947

Source: OIG count of delayed mail pieces identified during our visit June 7, 2022 and analysis of DCV data.

Figure 1. Examples of Delayed Mail in the Carrier Cases



Source: OIG photos taken on June 7, 2022.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail at the Carrier Cases



Source: OIG photos taken on June 7, 2022.

Why Did It Occur

The unit had delayed mail because it was understaffed due to unscheduled leave. The staff shortage resulted in portions of nine routes not being delivered from the previous day. Management did not accurately report the delayed mail in DCV because the PM supervisor was not properly trained to count mail.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured all committed mail was delivered or accurately reported as delayed mail volume in DCV. Postal Service policy⁹ states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. Further, policy¹⁰ states that managers must be sure replacement employees are available for unscheduled absences and develop contingency plans for situations that may interfere with normal delivery service. In addition, managers are required¹¹ to report all mail in DCV that remains in a unit after the carriers have left for their street duties or upon realization that there would be delayed mail.

8 A tool for unit management to manually self-report delayed mail, which provides a snapshot of daily mail conditions at the point in time when carriers have departed for the street.
 9 *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.
 10 Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, Transmittal Letter 14, Section 111.2, June 2019.
 11 *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization, User Guide, March 2022.*

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When mail is delayed, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand. Inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in DCV provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with an inaccurate status of mail delays and can result in improper actions taken to address issues.

Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit. In total, employees scanned 3,892 packages at the delivery unit between February and April 2022 (see Table 3). Further analysis of the Stop-the-Clock (STC)¹² scan data for these packages showed that about 90.31 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. In addition, we only included “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” scans performed Monday through Friday to avoid legitimate scans for businesses closed on weekends.

Table 3. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	February	March	April	Total	Percentage
Delivered	1,149	1,311	1,055	3,515	90.31%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	32	74	108	214	5.50%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	50	33	16	99	2.54%
No Secure Location Available	5	20	34	59	1.52%
Refused	1	2	2	5	0.13%
Total	1,237	1,440	1,215	3,892	100%

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 June 7, 2022, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 60 packages¹³ to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 60 sampled packages, 16 (26.67 percent) had missing or improper scans, including:

- Six (five from the carrier cases and one from the “Notice Left” area) were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- Four from the carrier cases were scanned “Delivered”, which should only be used when leaving the package at the delivery point.
- Three from the “Notice Left” area were scanned “Receptacle Full/Item Oversized” at the delivery unit rather than the delivery point.
- Two from the carrier cases were scanned “No Such Number” and should have been returned to the sender.
- One from the carrier cases was scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access” at the delivery unit rather than the delivery point.

Additionally, 15 packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned to the sender at the end of the required retention period.¹⁴ These packages ranged from 5 to 25 days past their return dates.

Why Did It Occur

We determined 3,374 of the “Delivered” scans were for one delivery point and most of the scans were completed by one carrier. The carrier stated he scanned the packages while loading the vehicle and then completed the scan operation by assigning the “Delivered” code at the point of delivery. Further, management stated monitoring the scans was impacted because the unit was understaffed, and the postmaster was on extended leave.

¹² 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”.

¹³ We judgmentally selected 30 packages from the carrier cases and 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area.

¹⁴ *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.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and ensured the packages were being recorded on a Firm Sheet¹⁵, and the Firm Sheet was scanned as “Delivered” at the delivery point. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,¹⁶ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.¹⁷

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 can potentially improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

¹⁵ PASS_DSS Firm Sheet Creation.

¹⁶ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

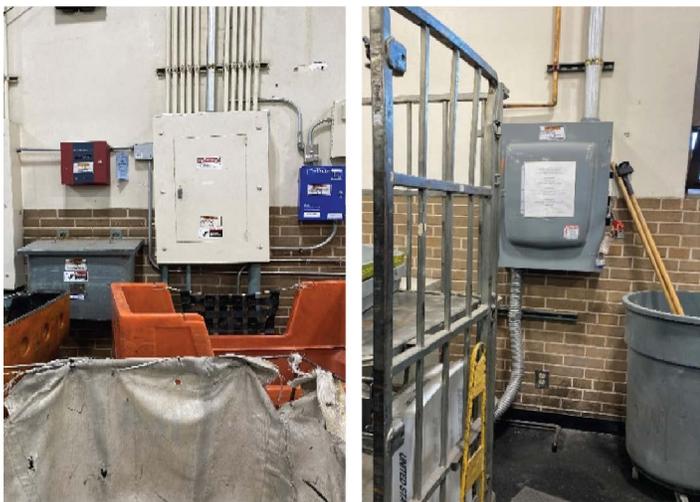
¹⁷ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

Finding # 3: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found safety, security, and maintenance issues at the Santa Fe MPO, including blocked electrical panels on the workroom floor (see Figure 3), extension cords “daisy-chained” together (see Figure 4), an unlocked door leading out to the lobby, excessive clutter in the switch room (see Figure 5), and trash in a blue postal hamper (see Figure 6) located in the lobby near the PO Box section.

Figure 3. Blocked Electrical Panels



Source: OIG photo taken June 7, 2022.

Figure 4. Cords “Daisy-Chained”



Source: OIG photo taken June 7, 2022.

Figure 5. Clutter in Switch Room



Source: OIG photo taken June 7, 2022.

Figure 6. Trash in Blue Postal Hamper



Source: OIG photos taken June 7, 2022

Why Did It Occur

The acting postmaster stated he was not aware of the conditions identified during the audit because he was assigned to the facility on May 17, 2022, and he had focused his attention on other duties, such as addressing customer inquiries and getting the mail out for delivery. He added that the facility is maintained by General Services Administration, and their custodial staff sometimes move equipment during cleaning. The postmaster had not instructed unit staff to unblock the electrical panels if custodial staff inadvertently

block the panels during cleaning. He also had not instructed staff on the proper use extension cords. While onsite, local management corrected the blocked electrical panels and removed the appliances from the daisy chain extension cord. In addition, the blue postal hamper located in the lobby was placed there for customers to put discarded mail that could be recycled, but unit management had not labeled the container.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight to ensure safety, security, and maintenance issues under their control, are reported and corrected. 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.¹⁸

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.

¹⁸ OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from June through August 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, DCV, the Surface Visibility¹⁹ database, and the electronic Facilities Management System.²⁰ 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.

¹⁹ Surface Visibility 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.

²⁰ 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.

Appendix B: Management's Comments



July 27, 2022

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Santa Fe Main Post Office, Santa Fe, NM - Project Number 22-132-3-DRAFT

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

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

Management has begun taking steps to address the three findings.


John Morgan
District Manager, Arizona-New Mexico

cc: Vice President, Area Retail & Delivery Operations (Western-Pacific)
Corporate Audit & Response Management

OFFICE OF
**INSPECTOR
GENERAL**
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Contact us via our [Hotline](#) and [FOIA](#) forms.
Follow us on social networks.
Stay informed.

1735 North Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209-2020
(703) 248-2100

For media inquiries, please email
press@uspsig.gov or call 703-248-2100