

## Audit Report

# Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station, Milwaukee, WI

Report Number 22-147-3-R22 | August 31, 2022





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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August 31, 2022

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** SAMARN S. REED  
MANAGER, WISCONSIN DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is centered below the recipient information.

**FROM:** Sean Balduff  
Director, Field Operations

**SUBJECT:** Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station, Milwaukee, WI (Report Number 22-147-3-R22)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station, Milwaukee, WI.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact please contact Valeta Bradford, 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, Central 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 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station in Milwaukee, WI (Project Number 22-147-3), and responds to a request from Senator Tammy Baldwin asking for a review of delivery operations in the Milwaukee, WI area. The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station is in the Wisconsin District of the Central Area and services ZIP Code 53212. This ZIP Code serves about 30,296 people and is considered to be an urban community.<sup>1</sup> We judgmentally selected the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station based on the number of Stop-the-Clock (STC)<sup>2</sup> 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 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station in Milwaukee, WI.

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.<sup>3</sup> 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" area<sup>4</sup> and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized

in Table 1 with management on August 10, 2022, and included their comments where appropriate.

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station is one of four delivery units<sup>5</sup> the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed during the week of June 27, 2022, that are serviced by the Milwaukee Processing and Distribution Center. We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding the conditions we identified at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station. We will issue a separate report<sup>6</sup> 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 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station. Specifically, we found issues with all 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 the of June 27, 2022.

<sup>1</sup> We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from Esri, which is based on 2010 Census Bureau information.

<sup>2</sup> 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."

<sup>3</sup> Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

<sup>4</sup> The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

<sup>5</sup> The other three units were the North Milwaukee Station, Milwaukee, WI (Project Number 21-147-1); the Waukesha Main Post Office, Waukesha, WI (Project Number 22-147-2); and the Bradley Carrier Annex, Milwaukee, WI (Project Number 22-147-4).

<sup>6</sup> Project Number 22-147.

# Finding #1: Delayed Mail

## What We Found

On the morning of June 28, 2022, we identified about 11,772 pieces of delayed mail at 10 carrier cases.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, we identified about 10,368 letters, 1,358 flats, and 46 packages. In addition, this mail was not reported as delayed in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)<sup>8</sup> system. See Figure 1 for examples of delayed mail found at carrier cases.

## Why Did It Occur

Management did not ensure the station had enough resources to deliver the mail. Unit management stated the unit was short-staffed due to carriers being out on COVID-19 related leave. Unit management said they contacted district management about the shortage but were told there were 67 call-offs across the Milwaukee area so there was no help available.

Management did not report the delayed mail because the acting PM supervisor was not familiar with DCV, nor were they aware of the requirement to report it. The station manager had not instructed or trained the acting PM supervisor to enter delayed mail into the DCV system.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured that the station had enough resources to deliver all the mail each day. Postal Service policy<sup>9</sup> states that managers must review all communications that may affect the day's workload and be sure that replacements are available for unscheduled absences. In addition, policy<sup>10</sup> states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. Managers are required to report all mail in the DCV system that remains in a unit after the carriers have left for their street duties.<sup>11</sup>

## 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. In addition, inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in the DCV system 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.

**Figure 1. Examples of Delayed Mail in the Carrier Cases**



Source: OIG photos taken June 28, 2022.

7 OIG estimate based on Postal Service conversion factors in Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*, Appendix D.

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 Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, TL-14, Section 111.2, June 2019.

10 *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

11 *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, March 2022.

## Finding #2: Package Scanning

### What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit. In total, employees scanned 596 packages at the delivery unit between March and May 2022 (see Table 2). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 80.54 percent of these packages were scanned “Delivered.” This data excludes scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as “Delivered - PO Box” and “Customer (Vacation) Hold” but, rather, 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 the weekends.

**Table 2. STC Scans at Delivery Unit**

STC Scan Type	March	April	May	Total	Percentage
Delivered	32	139	309	480	80.54%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	27	19	29	75	12.58%
No Secure Location Available	9	6	6	21	3.52%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	6	4	3	13	2.18%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	4	0	0	4	0.67%
No Authorized Recipient	1	1	0	2	0.34%
Refused	0	1	0	1	0.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>100%</b>

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 28, 2022, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 51 packages<sup>12</sup> to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 51 sampled packages, 18 (35.29 percent) had improper or missing scans, including:

- Seventeen (14 from the carrier cases and three from the “Notice Left” area) had “Delivered” scans, which should only be performed when the package is successfully left at the delivery point.
- One from the carrier cases was missing an STC scan to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.

Further, we identified handling issues with 11 of the 51 packages (21.57 percent), including:

- Four from the carrier cases that were not put in with the outgoing mail the previous night.
- Four from the “Notice Left” area that had either a “Moved – Left No Address” or “Addressee Unknown” scan and should have been returned to sender.
- Two from the “Notice Left” area were not returned to the sender, as required.<sup>13</sup> Both packages were two days past when they should have been returned.
- One from the carrier cases had a “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” scan on June 13. This package should have been transferred to the “Notice Left” area.

### Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures, as they were more focused on mail delivery. The acting PM supervisor stated that every evening they reviewed scanning reports to identify packages that did not receive STC scans and looked around the office for any packages that showed up on the report. If they could not find the packages, they scanned them “Delivered – PO Box,” so the packages did not show up

<sup>12</sup> We judgmentally selected 30 packages from the carrier cases and all 21 packages from the “Notice Left” area.

<sup>13</sup> *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.

as scanning failures. The supervisor was trained to record these false scans as part of closing duties.

In addition, of the 596 packages scanned at the delivery unit, 423 (70.97 percent) were addressed to three businesses. The carriers who delivered to these businesses did not always use firm sheets.<sup>14</sup> Instead, on days with lower volume, they scanned the packages “Delivered” as they put them into bags at the unit and then left the bags of packages at the businesses upon delivery.

### **What Should Have Happened**

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance. This includes ensuring that all packages are scanned at the delivery point and package handling procedures are properly followed. The packages scanned “Delivered – PO Box” should have been scanned

appropriately at the delivery point and delivered to the customer. If they were not delivered, the packages should have been documented as delayed in the DCV system. In addition, management should ensure that firm sheets are used, when appropriate. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,<sup>15</sup> which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.<sup>16</sup>

### **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.

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<sup>14</sup> A list of packages for delivery to one address documented with a single barcode. Firm sheets are used to link packages sent to one address on a single form.

<sup>15</sup> *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

<sup>16</sup> *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

# Finding #3: Truck Arrival Scanning

## What We Found

Employees at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station did not scan all incoming trailer/truck barcodes as required. We reviewed data related to morning truck arrival scans from March 1 through May 31, 2022, and found that employees did not perform a scan for 247 of 250 (98.80 percent) scheduled inbound trips (see Table 3). We also found during our observations on the morning of June 28, 2022, that employees were not scanning the incoming mail trucks upon arrival.

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

Month	Count of Inbound Trips	Count of Missed Scans	Percentage Missing
March	86	85	98.84%
April	83	81	97.59%
May	81	81	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>98.80%</b>

Source: OIG analysis of data extracted from the Postal Service's Surface Visibility System. 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.

## Why Did It Occur

The station manager did not monitor scan performance data to ensure all trucks received an arrival scan or enforce scan procedures for trailer/truck barcodes because he assumed the scans were being properly performed. In addition, the AM supervisor was not aware of the requirement to scan the trailer/truck barcodes upon arrival. We also spoke with the two morning clerks about the truck scanning procedures; one clerk was unaware of the requirement to scan the trailer/truck barcodes. The other clerk performed the scans previously but asked management whether the scans were required and did not receive a response so the clerk stopped performing them.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have conducted reviews to ensure that all expected truck scans were being performed. They also should have instructed employees to perform appropriate trailer/truck barcode scans and enforced the requirement. According to Postal Service policy,<sup>17</sup> employees must scan the trailer barcode on Postal Service trailer/trucks and Highway Contract Route trucks arriving at the delivery unit during local operating hours.

## Effect on the Postal Service and its Customers

When employees do not scan the truck barcode, 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.

<sup>17</sup> United States Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure – Subject: Trailer Scans at the Delivery Units (DU).

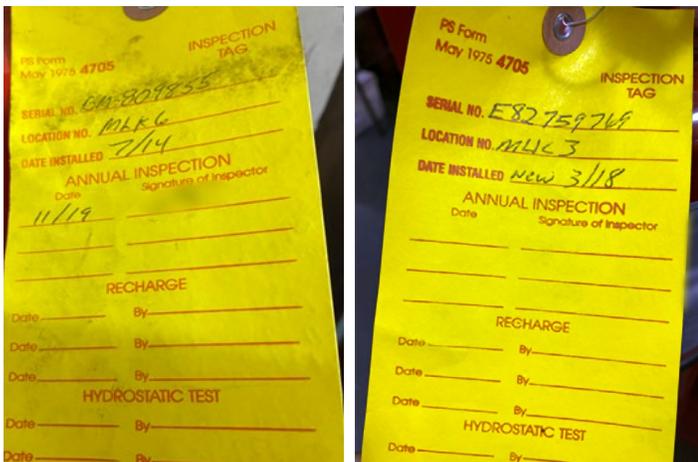
# Finding # 4: Property Conditions

## What We Found

We found safety, security, and maintenance issues at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station, including:

- Missing annual fire extinguisher inspections (see Figure 2).
- Several appliances throughout the facility were plugged into power strips rather than directly into wall outlets (see Figure 3).
- An uncovered electrical box with exposed wires located near the postal vehicle parking lot (see Figure 4).

**Figure 2. Examples of Fire Extinguishers Missing Annual Inspections**



Source: OIG photos taken June 28, 2022.

**Figure 3. Example of Appliances Plugged Into a Power Strip**



Source: OIG photo taken June 28, 2022.

- No signage posted around the facility stating that vehicles may be subject to search.
- Water-stained walls in the basement (see Figure 5).
- Cracks in the workroom walls (see Figure 6).
- Chipped flooring in several locations on the workroom floor. During our audit, management took corrective actions by repairing the chipped flooring (see Figure 7).
- A missing heating vent cover in the customer lobby (see Figure 8).

**Figure 4. Electrical Box with Exposed Wires**



Source: OIG photo taken June 28, 2022.

**Figure 5. Water-Stained Walls in the Basement**



Source: OIG photos taken June 29, 2022.

**Figure 6. Wall with Possible Water Damage**



Source: OIG photo taken June 28, 2022.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not take the necessary actions to ensure that facility conditions issues were corrected because they were more focused on mail delivery. In addition, management was not familiar with the electronic Facilities Management System,<sup>18</sup> which is used for reporting facility condition issues.

### What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of facility maintenance; reported safety, maintenance, and security issues as they arose; and followed up to ensure the issues were addressed. 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.<sup>19</sup>

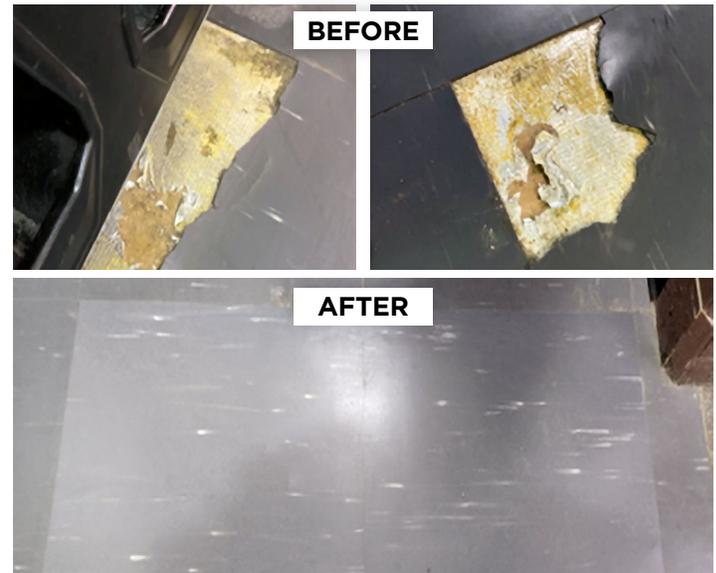
### Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

**Figure 7. Examples of Chipped Flooring**



Source: OIG took before photos on June 28, 2022. Unit management provided after photo on August 10, 2022.

**Figure 8. Missing Heating Vent Cover**



Source: OIG photo taken June 28, 2022.

### 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

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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, and the Surface Visibility database. 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



August 19, 2022

JOHN CIHOTA  
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property  
Conditions Review – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station, Milwaukee, WI  
(Report Number 22-147-3-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 – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Station, Milwaukee, WI*

Management agrees with the four findings— delayed mail, package scanning, truck arrival scanning and property conditions.

Management has begun taking steps to address the four findings.

  
for Samarn S. Reed  
Manager, Wisconsin District

cc: Vice President, Area Retail & Delivery Operations  
Corporate Audit Response Management

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**INSPECTOR  
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