



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

**Dayton, OH Processing and
Distribution Center Congressional
Request**

Management Advisory

March 5, 2012



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

HIGHLIGHTS

March 5, 2012

Dayton, OH Processing and Distribution
Center Congressional Request

Report Number DA-MA-12-004

IMPACT ON:

Dayton Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) personnel and the general public.

WHY THE OIG DID THE AUDIT:

The report responds to a request from the Office of Senator Sherrod Brown regarding an anonymous November 28, 2011 complaint. The complaint was from a U.S. Postal Service employee working at the Dayton P&DC who indicated that the plant manager stopped the mail cancellation process to meet their goal to process mail by 9:30 p.m. Allegedly, unprocessed mail entered the mailstream, bypassing the Biohazard Detection System (BDS).

Our objective was to determine whether the Dayton P&DC plant manager bypassed the BDS while processing mail.

WHAT THE OIG FOUND:

Based on our review of the Advanced Facer Canceller System runtime data, on-site observations, and interviews with Dayton P&DC personnel, we concluded the allegation that the Dayton P&DC plant manager bypassed the BDS while processing mail was not substantiated.

WHAT THE OIG RECOMMENDED:

Based on our finding, we did not make a recommendation.

WHAT MANAGEMENT SAID:

The Postal Service reviewed the discussion draft of this report and had no comments or concerns. Management elected not to provide written comments because there were no recommendations.

[*Link to review the entire report*](#)



March 5, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: JORDAN M. SMALL
VICE PRESIDENT, EASTERN AREA OPERATIONS

E-Signed by Michael A. Magalski
VERIFY authenticity with e-Sign

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Michael A. Magalski". To the right of the signature is a small yellow circular icon with a question mark.

FROM: Michael A. Magalski
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Support Operations

SUBJECT: Management Advisory – Dayton, OH
Processing and Distribution Center
Congressional Request
(Report Number DA-MA-12-004)

This report presents the results of our audit of the Dayton Processing and Distribution Center congressional request (Project Number 12YO016DA000).

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Monique P. Colter, director, Facilities, Environmental, and Sustainability, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachments

cc: David E. Williams Jr.
Joshua D. Colin
Frank Neri
Corporate Audit and Response Management

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Introduction

This report presents the results of our review of an allegation against a manager at the Dayton Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) (Project Number 12YO016DA000). On December 13, 2011, the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) received an inquiry from the office of the Honorable Sherrod Brown, U.S. Senator from Ohio, regarding an anonymous complaint from a U.S. Postal Service employee working at the Dayton P&DC. The complaint indicated that the plant manager stopped the mail cancellation process to meet their goal to process mail by 9:30 p.m.¹ Allegedly, unprocessed mail entered the mailstream, bypassing the Biohazard Detection System (BDS).² Our objective was to determine whether the Dayton P&DC plant manager bypassed the BDS while processing mail. This audit addresses operational risk. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about this audit.

Within a geographic area, mail is collected from residential mailboxes, curbside collection boxes, and retail units and transported to a local P&DC for sorting and processing. Mail that meets automation processing specifications passes through an Advanced Facer Canceller System (AFCS) machine, which automatically faces cancels postage and postmarks letters.³ While the AFCS processes mail, the BDS collects air samples and automatically performs a periodic analysis to determine whether biohazards are present.

Conclusion

Based on our review of the AFCS Web End-of-Run (WebEOR)⁴ data, onsite observations, and interviews with Dayton P&DC personnel, we concluded the allegation that the Dayton P&DC plant manager bypassed the BDS while processing mail was not substantiated.

Bypassing the Biohazard Detection System

The allegation that a Postal Service employee made in a letter dated November 28, 2011 to Senator Brown did not identify a specific timeframe when mail allegedly bypassed the BDS. Based on our analysis, we identified that AFCS/BDS stop times varied daily and there was no evidence the plant manager fixed the stop time at 9:30 p.m.

¹ The Postal Service has created goals to complete eight critical operations for processing and delivering mail using a 24-hour clock. Cancelling mail by a set time is one of the critical goals.

² The purpose of the BDS is to protect Postal Service personnel and the general public from the threat of biohazardous materials sent through the mail.

³ Facing is the process that positions envelopes so that the address and stamp face the same direction. Canceling alters the postage stamp to prevent re-use and postmarking identifies the mail processing facility and the date on which the letter is processed.

⁴ WebEOR is a software application that allows end users to retrieve, view, and store various EOR statistics from automated mail processing equipment.

The Dayton P&DC has four AFCS machines. Using WebEOR data, we reviewed the average AFCS machine stop times for a 3-month period (September through November 2011) leading up to when the Postal Service employee sent the allegation to Senator Brown. The Postal Service employee alleged that the plant manager stopped the cancellation process to meet their goal to process mail by 9:30 p.m., thus bypassing the BDS. The purpose of our analysis was to identify whether the plant manager stopped the four AFCS machines at 9:30 p.m. to meet clearance time goals. Our analysis, as seen in Table 1, indicated that the average AFCS stop times ranged from 9:32 p.m. to 9:41 p.m. based on the mail volume presented during our 3-month review period. This data also revealed that, over the same timeframe, there were 42 days during which the AFCS machines operated later than 10 p.m.

Table 1 – AFCS WebEOR Stop Times

Dayton, OH P&DC				
AFCS Machine	September 2011	October 2011	November 2011	Average End-of-Run Time
Machine 1	9:43 p.m.	9:49 p.m.	9:30 p.m.	9:41 p.m.
Machine 2	9:24 p.m.	9:44 p.m.	9:27 p.m.	9:32 p.m.
Machine 3	9:45 p.m.	9:36 p.m.	9:36 p.m.	9:38 p.m.
Machine 4	9:45 p.m.	9:49 p.m.	9:22 p.m.	9:39 p.m.

In addition to analyzing the WebEOR data, we conducted onsite observations of mail processing operations and interviewed plant personnel. We observed the start and end times of the incoming mail being processed on the AFCS machines. During our onsite observations on February 7-8, 2012, the average stop times ranged from 8:54 p.m. to 9:15 p.m., respectively. We found these times to be appropriate based on the volume of collection mail processed.

We also interviewed 13 plant personnel,⁵ including supervisors and mail handlers, who were associated with the incoming collection mail operation. The 13 employees stated that at no time were they directed to stop the cancellation operation to meet their 9:30 p.m. clearance time goals. Plant personnel also stated that, as clearance time approached 9:30 p.m. and there was still mail to be cancelled, the normal practice was to process all incoming mail regardless of the clearance time goals. Based on our interviews, we found no evidence that the plant manager instructed employees to stop the collection mail process to meet their clearance time goals.

Based on the results of our review, we did not make a recommendation. Management elected not to provide written comments because there were no recommendations.

⁵ We interviewed two managers and 11 mail handlers, which includes all personnel from the incoming collection mail operation on that tour at the Dayton P&DC.

Appendix A: Additional Information

Background

Within a geographic area, mail is collected from residential mailboxes, curbside collection boxes, and postal retail units and transported to a local P&DC for sorting and processing. Upon arrival at a P&DC, mail is separated by mail type — stamped letters and flat mail — and placed into a culling machine to separate mail that does not meet the letter mail automation processing specifications. Once separated, letter mail passes through the AFCS machine, which automatically faces, cancels, and postmarks letters at a rate of 36,000 per hour.

While the AFCS processes mail, BDS units collect air samples and automatically perform periodic tests on the samples. This test cycle occurs every hour and a BDS unit can continually test unattended for a full 10 hours. The purpose of the BDS is to reduce the threat to Postal Service personnel and the general public of biohazardous materials sent through the mail. The BDS is attached to the front of the AFCS and must be 'on' for the mail processing equipment to operate. This feature helps ensure that processed mail is tested for biohazards before the mailpiece leaves the facility.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to determine whether the Dayton P&DC plant manager bypassed the BDS while processing mail. To accomplish our objective, we reviewed the AFCS WebEOR data, conducted onsite observations, and interviewed Dayton plant personnel.

We conducted this review from December 2011 through March 2012 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on February 24, 2012, and included their comments where appropriate.

We assessed the reliability of WebEOR data by interviewing plant officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Prior Audit Coverage

We did not identify any prior audits or reviews related to the objective of this audit.