

September 26, 2007

MEGAN J. BRENNAN VICE PRESIDENT, EASTERN AREA OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Audit Report – City Delivery Vehicle Mileage – Base Versus Actual – Eastern Area (Report DR-AR-07-014)

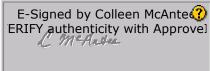
This report presents the results of our audit of the City Delivery Vehicle Mileage – Base Versus Actual in the Eastern Area (Project Number 07XG026DR000). This is one in a series of reports on City Delivery Vehicle Mileage – Base Versus Actual issued under the Value Proposition Agreement between the Vice President, Delivery and Retail, and the U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Our overall objective was to evaluate the accuracy of city delivery route mileage information in the Eastern Area. Specifically, we evaluated (1) the accuracy of established route base mileage information in the Automated Vehicle Utilization System (AVUS) and (2) variances between the established route base mileages and actual mileages recorded.

Management can improve the accuracy of city delivery route mileage information in the Eastern Area. Specifically, AVUS route base mileage information did not agree with the authorized route base mileage in the Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS) for over 50 percent of the routes reviewed. Additionally, management did not always have adequate support for mileage variances. Overall, these conditions existed because district officials did not monitor city delivery mileage information. As a result, we will report \$832,800 in unrecoverable questioned costs in our *Semiannual Report to Congress*.

Management agreed with our findings and recommendations and has initiatives planned addressing the issues in this report. Although management agreed that the \$832,800 could be considered questioned, they did not agree with the monetary impact as they did not believe the audit substantiated the mileage variations were unwarranted. Management's comments and our evaluation of these comments are included in the report.

The OIG considers recommendation 1 significant, and therefore requires OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. The recommendation should not be closed in the follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendation can be closed.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Rita Oliver, Director, Delivery, or me at (703) 248-2100.



Colleen A. McAntee
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Mission Operations

### Attachments

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### INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

The U.S. Postal Service has over 216,000 postal-owned vehicles that carriers use daily to deliver over 680 million pieces of mail annually on over 163,000 city routes. In fiscal year 2005, the postal-owned vehicles traveled approximately 1.2 billion miles and used over 125 million gallons of fuel.

On motorized routes, city carriers are required to follow their authorized lines of travel at all times. This includes travel to and from authorized routes, lunch locations, break locations, refueling locations, and collection boxes on the route.

Supervisors and managers use the Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS) and the Automated Vehicle Utilization System (AVUS) to assist them in managing daily carrier operations. DOIS data includes mail volume, mail arrival and dispatch times, and projected office and street hours for routes. AVUS, a web-based application, includes daily vehicle utilization and authorized base and actual delivery vehicle mileage.

The Postal Service generally establishes city route base mileage during route inspections using Postal Service (PS) Form 3999, Inspection of Letter Carrier Route. District or unit management enters the base route mileage in DOIS after the route inspection. Delivery unit supervisors then manually establish or update a route in AVUS with the authorized base mileage. The beginning mileage is verified or entered when the carrier departs for the street by scanning the "Depart to Route" barcode that prompts for the mileage. Upon returning to the office, the carrier scans the "Return to Office" barcode, which prompts for the ending mileage. Supervisors review and analyze carriers' actual mileage data using the AVUS Vehicle Daily Usage Report. Supervisors conduct discussions with carriers on mileage deviations and make corrections in AVUS using the information in this report. Supervisors must edit AVUS information daily and the system stores the corrections through the end of the month. AVUS data is consolidated by reporting period and shared electronically with the Vehicle Management Accounting System (VMAS) and Web-Enabled Enterprise Information System (WebEIS). Vehicle maintenance facilities use VMAS reports to monitor vehicle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Postal Service released Web AVUS and DOIS nationally in 2002 (AVUS was DOS-based prior to 2002).

usage. The monthly mileage data is electronically sent to WebEIS<sup>2</sup> for each area to show mileage utilization. (See flowchart in Appendix C.)

The base route mileage information in DOIS and AVUS should agree to effectively manage city route mileage. When the actual route mileage recorded in AVUS does not agree with the authorized base route mileage in AVUS, a variance exists. Factors such as incorrect recording of odometer readings, auxiliary assistance, and incorrect base miles recorded in AVUS could cause a variance.

The AVUS Supervisor Users Guide, dated November 2006, and Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services, dated March 1998 (updated through March 2004) require supervisors to (1) update route information when changes to routes occur after inspection to ensure accurate route mileage is recorded and (2) edit carrier route information daily to correct errors.

# Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our overall objective was to evaluate the accuracy of the city delivery route mileage information. Specifically, we evaluated the accuracy of established route base mileage in AVUS. We also evaluated variances between the established route base and actual mileages recorded.

To accomplish our objective, we interviewed managers and employees at selected districts and units in the Eastern Area. We visited and reviewed information from delivery units in the Appalachian, Central Pennsylvania, Cincinnati, Kentuckiana, Northern Ohio, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and South Jersey Districts in the Eastern Area.

We selected 25 delivery facilities from the universe of 483 delivery facilities with 15 or more routes in the Eastern Area. (See Appendix B.) We selected a random 4-month period (January through April 2007<sup>3</sup>) to review route information for each facility.

To evaluate the accuracy of the established route base mileage information in AVUS, we compared the route base

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> WebEIS delivers easy access to detailed performance data continually gathered across the entire Postal Service. WebEIS lets managers measure performance and identify areas for improvement, increasing overall Postal Service efficiency.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>AVUS only retains data in the server for approximately 3 months.

information recorded in AVUS to the mileage information in DOIS. To evaluate variances between the authorized base mileage and actual mileage recorded, we evaluated variances of four to 19 miles occurring 12 times or more within a month. In addition, we reviewed variances of 20 miles or more occurring any time within the review month. We ascertained whether a PS Form 3996, Carrier – Auxiliary Control, Route Carrier Daily Performance/Analysis Report, or other appropriate documentation explained or supported mileage variances.

We conducted this performance audit from April through September 2007 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 data from DOIS and AVUS. We did not audit these systems, but performed a limited review of data integrity to support our reliance on data. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management officials on August 28, 2007, and included their comments where appropriate.

## **Prior Audit Coverage**

We did not identify any prior audits or reviews related to the objective of this audit. The OIG is in the process of conducting a series of audits on this subject.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This report assists supervisors in evaluating the performances of all routes within a delivery unit for a single day.

### **AUDIT RESULTS**

# City Delivery Mileage Information

Management can improve the accuracy of city delivery route mileage information in the Eastern Area. Specifically, AVUS route base mileage for 54 percent of the routes reviewed did not agree with the authorized route base mileage in DOIS. In addition, AVUS actual mileage exceeded base mileage by 42,395 miles. While the majority of the 42,395 miles we questioned were supported, there was no evidence to support about 18 percent of the questioned miles. Overall, these conditions existed because district officials did not provide oversight by monitoring city delivery mileage information.

# Authorized Base Mileage Information

Management did not always record city delivery route mileage information for the Eastern Area accurately. Specifically, the route base mileage data in AVUS – the system used to manage daily vehicle route information – did not always agree with the authorized route base mileage in DOIS. Of the 723 routes reviewed in the 25 delivery units, 393 (54 percent) did not agree with DOIS as shown in Table 1. Although most differences between route information in AVUS and DOIS were generally only one to five miles, five delivery units had at least one route with a difference of 10 miles or more.

TABLE 1 ROUTE BASE MILEAGE: AVUS vs. DOIS						
DISTRICT	TOTAL NUMBER OF DELIVERY UNITS	TOTAL NUMBER OF ROUTES	AVUS VERSUS DOIS (NOT IN AGREEMENT)	PERCENTAGE OF ROUTES NOT IN AGREEMENT		
Appalachian	1	39	0	0		
Central Pennsylvania	3	182	151	83		
Cincinnati	4	84	17	20		
Kentuckiana	2	76	33	43		
Northern Ohio	5	173	69	40		
Philadelphia	3	61	47	77		
Pittsburgh	6	83	66	80		
South Jersey	1	25	10	40		
TOTAL	25	723	393	54		

SOURCE: AVUS and DOIS Reports

Unit supervisors at four of the delivery units reviewed stated they were unaware they had the capability to update AVUS base data on their routes. Unit management also indicated that updating and correcting the base mileage data in AVUS was not always a high priority because supervisors focused on other duties affecting mail delivery operations.

The base route mileage information in DOIS and AVUS should agree to effectively manage city route mileage. Correct route base mileage information is also critical to ensuring that carriers are maintaining the authorized line of travel on routes so the mail is delivered in the quickest manner possible and at the least expense (i.e., using less fuel, putting less wear and tear on vehicles, etc.).

Supporting Documentation for Mileage Variances Management did not always have adequate support for variances between AVUS base mileage and actual mileage. Based on our analysis, we questioned 42,395 in mileage variances. Although supervisors were able to provide evidence to support the majority of the 42,395 questioned mileage variances,<sup>5</sup> there was no evidence available to support 7,519 of the questioned miles. (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2 VARIANCES: QUESTIONED MILES VS. UNSUPPORTED MILES					
DISTRICT	DELIVERY UNITS REVIEWED WITHIN DISTRICT	MILES QUESTIONED	TOTAL UNSUPPORTED MILES	PERCENTAGE UNSUPPORTED MILES	
Appalachian	1	1,051	0	0	
Central Pennsylvania	3	9,432	2,887	31	
Cincinnati	4	5,914	914	15	
Kentuckiana	2	2,051	356	17	
Northern Ohio	5	12,338	1,604	13	
Philadelphia	3	4,379	309	7	
Pittsburgh	6	5,973	1,424	24	
South Jersey	1	1,257	25	2	
TOTAL	25	42,395	7,519	18	

Supervisors did not consistently monitor carriers' AVUS Vehicle Daily Usage Report to review, analyze, and either correct errors or document why actual mileage exceeded base mileage. Further, supervisors did not always conduct and document discussions with carriers on routes where actual mileage exceeded the base mileage in AVUS. Supervisors stated that higher priorities, such as managing mail delivery operations, impacted their ability to perform this daily function.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See audit comment on page 7 for an explanation of the majority of the questioned mileage variances.

Although some delivery unit supervisors stated they did accomplish these tasks, they did not always maintain documentation supporting this. Of the 625 days of route mileage data reviewed, we identified 137 days with mileage variances due to data errors or omissions. (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3  DAILY ERRORS IN AVUS <sup>6</sup>						
DISTRICT	TOTAL NUMBER OF REVIEW DAYS	ERROR DAYS	PERCENTAGE			
Appalachian	23	2	9			
Central Pennsylvania	75	32	43			
Cincinnati	101	28	28			
Kentuckiana	48	1	2			
Northern Ohio	122	6	5			
Philadelphia	79	21	27			
Pittsburgh	152	47	31			
South Jersey	25	0	0			
TOTAL	625	137	22			

For example, in the Central Pennsylvania District, we identified 32 of 75 delivery days in the review period with AVUS mileage errors. Further, of the 42,395 miles questioned in the eight districts, over 14,000 miles were due to odometer input errors. Since most of these errors related to incorrect odometer recordings, negative actual mileage, or missing odometer readings, supervisors should have detected and corrected all of them. According to the *AVUS Supervisor's Guide*, the supervisor should conduct daily reviews and provide feedback to employees regarding input errors. The guidance further suggests this process should take a minimal amount of time.

Based on our sample results, we projected the Eastern Area incurred unrecoverable questioned costs of approximately \$832,800 over an 11-month period. (See Appendix A.) The OIG will report the \$832,800 in unrecoverable questioned costs in our *Semiannual Report to Congress*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Errors for this analysis are defined as errors with negative total actual mileage, a daily actual mileage variance of 500 miles or more, blank odometer readings or odometer readings of zero. These errors were not included in the mileage variance analysis of questioned mileage.

<sup>7</sup> These errors are not represented in our table of obvious AVUS errors, as they did not meet the criteria used in

These errors are not represented in our table of obvious AVUS errors, as they did not meet the criteria used in footnote 6, yet they were additional errors the OIG identified. These errors originally appeared as questioned miles due to a variance and were supported due to odometer input errors.

### **Audit Comment**

In the 25 units reviewed, auxiliary assistance<sup>8</sup> miles represented approximately 30 percent of the 42,395 questioned miles. Because of the complexity of the auxiliary assistance issue, we did not evaluate auxiliary assistance mileage in this audit. We noted auxiliary assistance mileage in this report because of its significant impact on mileage variances and as information for management to review.

### Recommendations

We recommend the Vice President, Eastern Area Operations, direct District Managers to:

- 1. Provide increased oversight by monitoring mileage information for accuracy.
- 2. Inform all delivery unit supervisors how to update the Automated Vehicle Utilization System with route changes made in the Delivery Operations Information System and provide training as necessary.
- 3. Re-emphasize to unit supervisors that route mileage information must be corrected and updated timely.
- 4. Direct supervisors to review, analyze, and correct errors daily; document reasons for actual mileage exceeding authorized mileage; and maintain supporting documentation for 30 days.

### Management's Comments

Management agreed with our findings and recommendations. Management instructed district managers to review DOIS and AVUS base mileage and make necessary corrections by September 21, 2007. Management stated they plan to make this process a quarterly requirement. In addition, management planned to disseminate instructions on proper AVUS procedures no later than September 21, 2007. Management also stated that all supervisors, managers, and postmasters will be required to review AVUS procedures and seek assistance and training from district coordinators when necessary. Finally, management planned training on an as needed basis.

Management did not agree with the \$832,800 in unrecoverable costs. While they agreed the costs that were not documented

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Auxiliary assistance is a process designed to allow delivery unit supervisors to provide assistance on a route or for vacancy by transferring a portion of deliveries to one or more carriers for that day.

properly could be considered "questioned," they did not agree that they were "unrecoverable" (therefore unwarranted) costs. Management felt the audit did not substantiate the questioned mileage variances were inappropriate use of postal equipment or funds. We have included management's comments, in their entirety, in Appendix D.

# Evaluation of Management's Comments

Management's comments are responsive to the recommendations. Management's actions taken and planned should correct the issues identified in the findings. While management did not agree with the \$832,800 in unrecoverable costs, they did agree the funds can be considered questioned costs. We agree the audit did not substantiate actual inappropriate use of Postal equipment or funds. However, the audit did identify mileage variances for which there was no reasonable explanation documented or provided. Therefore, we will report \$832,800 in unrecoverable questioned costs in our *Semiannual Report to Congress*. Management's comments provided suggested changes for report clarification which were incorporated into the final report.

### **APPENDIX A**

### CALCULATION OF COST SAVINGS IN THE EASTERN AREA

The OIG identified \$832,800 in questioned unrecoverable unsupported costs.

The OIG calculated the questioned costs through a random sample of 483 delivery facilities with 15 or more routes in the Eastern Area. After selecting the random sample, a random month within the quarter was selected for each facility. For the Eastern Area, we reviewed the 4-month period from January through April 2007.

We identified 7,519 miles that were not supported. Based on these sample results, we believe the average unsupported delivery mileage overage is at least 94,636 miles per month at the 483 delivery units in the Eastern Area.

We extrapolated our test period finding to an 11-month period (we excluded December because of seasonal issues) and computed the cost per mile.

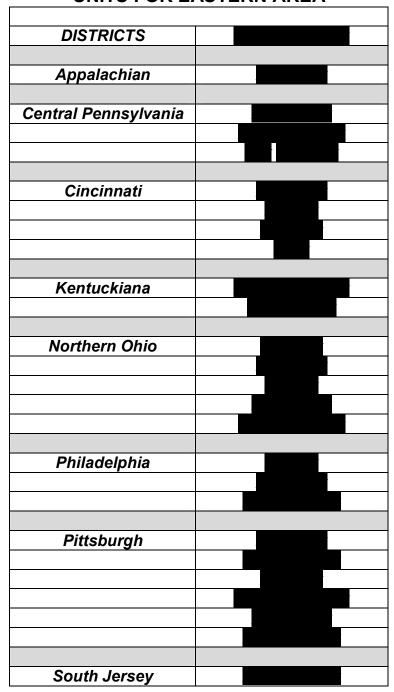
	Projected			
Unsupported	unsupported	Extrapolated		Unsupported
miles per audit	miles for audit	miles over 11-		questioned
finding	universe	month period	Cost per mile <sup>9</sup>	costs
7,519	94,636	1,041,000	\$.80	\$832,800

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The National Summary - Vehicle by Capacity Report, dated September 2006 from the VMAS Fuel Report shows a cost per mile of 73 cents, which includes 24 cents cost per mile for fuel/oil. OIG performed an analysis of fuel/oil and determined the cost to be 31 cents per mile. OIG determined the cost per mile for this audit as follows: 73 cents/mile minus 24 cents/mile for fuel (Postal Service figure) plus 31 cents/mile for fuel (OIG figure) equals 80 cents/mile.

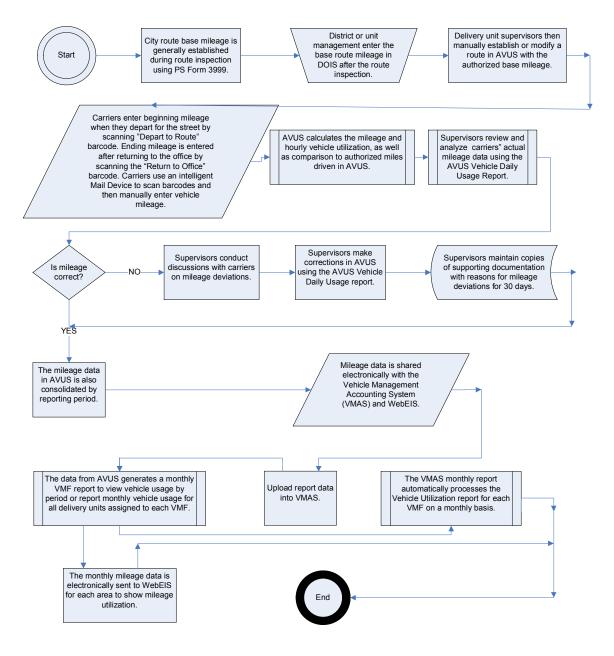
## **APPENDIX B**

# RANDOMLY SELECTED DISTRICTS AND DELIVERY UNITS FOR EASTERN AREA



### **APPENDIX C**

## FLOW CHART - AVUS MILEAGE INFORMATION PROCESS



### APPENDIX D. MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS

Megan J. Brennan Vice President, Eastern Area Operations



September 14, 2007

Colleen A. McAntee
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Mission Operations
1735 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209-2020

SUBJECT: City Delivery Vehicle Mileage - Base vs. Actual (Report Number DR-AR-07-Draft)

Having reviewed the City Delivery Vehicle Mileage Draft Audit Report, the Eastern Area is in agreement with the four recommendations listed below. However, the Eastern Area does not agree with \$832,000 unrecoverable costs. Also, as we discussed during our August 28, 2007 telecon, we have provided you some revisions for clarification to excerpts included in the Draft Audit Report.

### **Questioned costs**

The Draft Audit Report considers all undocumented mileage variances as "unrecoverable" (therefore unwarranted) costs. While the Eastern Area agrees that our supervisors should document all daily variances from base mileage, the Audit does not substantiate that these mileage variations were actual inappropriate use of Postal equipment or funds. Therefore, we agree that \$832,000 are costs that were not documented properly and can be considered "questioned," but do not agree that it has been determined that they were unwarranted. We would recommend that these monetary figures be subject to FOIA exemption and be redacted from the Audit Report.

### **Recommendations and Responses**

#### Recommendation 1:

Provide increased oversight by monitoring mileage information for accuracy.

We are in agreement that base mileage needs to be accurate and current. The District Managers have been instructed to conduct a review of DOIS and AVUS base mileage and to make any necessary corrections. Verification of the completion of this review is due to the Area office by September 21, 2007. The Area will continue to require this review and validation process quarterly.

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### Recommendation 2:

Inform all delivery unit supervisors how to update the Automated Vehicle Utilization System with route changes made in the Delivery Operations Information System and provide training as necessary.

### Response:

Supervisors, Managers, and Postmasters will be required to review the procedures that are in the AVUS Users Guide located on the AVUS Website. Questions or concerns will be directed to the District Coordinator for resolve. If additional training is required, the District Coordinator will provide that training. When refresher DOIS training is provided at the District, a refresher will be done in the maintenance of AVUS. Instructions from the Area on proper procedures will be disseminated no later than September 21, 2007.

### Recommendation 3:

Re-emphasize to unit supervisors that route mileage information must be corrected and updated timely.

### Response:

(See Response to Recommendation 1.) The instructions to the Districts concerning maintaining accurate and current base mileage also addresses the timeliness of changing base mileage.

### Recommendation 4:

Direct supervisors to a) review, analyze, and correct errors daily; b) document reasons for actual mileage exceeding authorized mileage; and c) maintain supporting documentation for 30 days.

### Response:

Districts will coordinate training for delivery supervisors as needed on the requirements of reviewing and correcting errors on a daily basis. They will be instructed that documentation for mileage variances will be maintained for a minimum of 30 days. The Area will reissue the instruction manual and a brief overview of proper procedures for the Districts' dissemination to all delivery supervisors no later than September 21, 2007.

### Recommended revisions to Draft excerpt

Below are excerpts of each paragraph as stated in the draft report. We have included the corrected statements and have highlighted the proper statements or corrections to statements.

The Postal Service establishes city route base mileage during the annual route inspection using Postal Service (PS) Form 3999, Inspection of Letter Carrier Route. District or unit management enters the base route mileage in DOIS after the route inspection. Delivery unit supervisors then manually establish or update a route in AVUS with the authorized base mileage.

5315 CAMPBELLS RUN RD PITTSBURGH PA 15277-7030 PHONE: 412-494-2531 FAX: 412-494-2542 City Routes do not have an annual Route Inspection, but a PS 3999 is to be completed once a year on each city delivery route. Base mileage for each route can be established after the completion of the PS 3999, but situations may exist that Base Mileage may be adjusted through re-sequencing of a delivery route and/or elimination of park points.

As carriers deliver mail on routes, they enter vehicle mileage information into the Mobile Data Collection Device (MDCD) at designated points along the route.

Carriers do not enter mileage at designated locations along the route. The beginning mileage is entered or verified when the carrier departs for the street by scanning the Depart to Route Barcode and then enters the ending mileage when they return to the office by scanning the Return to Office barcode.

Supervisors review and analyze the carrier's actual mileage data using the AVUS Vehicle Daily Utilization Report. Supervisors conduct discussions with carriers on mileage deviations and make corrections in AVUS using this report. Supervisors must edit AVUS information daily and store corrections for 30 days.

AVUS stores the corrections through the end of the month at which time the data is uploaded to VMAS.

Supervisors also consolidate the mileage data in AVUS by reporting period and share it electronically with the Vehicle Management Accounting System (VMAS)<sup>1</sup> and Web-Enabled Enterprise Information System (WebEIS).

Supervisors do not consolidate mileage for transmission to the VMF. A file is requested at the end of each month by the VMF and that file is electronically downloaded to that user for input to the VMF.

The data from AVUS generates a monthly Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) Report to view vehicle usage by period or report monthly vehicle usage for all delivery units assigned to each VMF. This report data is then uploaded into VMAS. The VMAS monthly report automatically processes the Vehicle Utilization Report for each VMF on a monthly basis. The monthly mileage data is electronically sent to WebEIS for each area to show mileage utilization. (See flowchart in Appendix C.)

WebEIS is updated from AVUS, not VMAS. The data between AVUS and VMAS does not match in all instances. The IBSSC at St Louis prepares a file weekly and monthly that is transmitted to WEBEIS. An electronic file is requested by the VMF User and that file is downloaded into VMAS.

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The base route mileage information in DOIS and AVUS must agree to effectively manage city route mileage. When the actual route mileage recorded in AVUS does not agree with the authorized base route mileage in AVUS, a variance exists. Factors such as incorrect recording of odometer readings, auxiliary assistance, and incorrect base miles recorded in AVUS could cause a variance.

The Base Mileage in DOIS should agree with the Base Mileage in AVUS; however this will not necessarily improve the accuracy of AVUS. Base mileage information contained in DOIS is a reference only. DOIS only has the ability to maintain Base Mileage Information on City Routes. DOIS does not provide base mileage for Collection, Relay and Rural Routes. Additionally there is no interface between DOIS and AVUS.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to your Draft Audit Report. If any additional information is required, please contact Elizabeth A. Schaefer, Manager, Delivery Programs Support at 412-494-2589.

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