



AUDIT REPORT

Delivery and Customer Service Issues – College Station, New York, NY

July 3, 2019



Report Number DRT-AR-19-007



July 3, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: LORRAINE G. CASTELLANO
DISTRICT MANAGER, NEW YORK DISTRICT

E-Signed by Hilderbrand, Sherry
RIFY authenticity with eSign Desk

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sherry A. Hilderbrand", is displayed within a grey rectangular box.

FROM: Sherry A. Hilderbrand
Director, Delivery and Retail Response Team

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Delivery and Customer Service Issues –
College Station, New York, NY
(Report Number DRT-AR-19-007)

This report presents the results of our College Station, New York, NY Delivery and Customer Service Issues audit (Project Number 19RG022DRT000).

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

Attachment

cc: Corporate Audit and Response Management
Kevin L. McAdams
Eric D. Chavez

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of Delivery and Customer Service Issues – College Station, New York, NY (Project Number 19RG022DRT000). College Station is in the New York District of the Northeast Area. This audit was designed to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential delivery and customer service risks at College Station.

College Station has nine city and three parcel delivery routes delivered by 13 carriers (seven Full-Time Regulars, four City Carrier Associates (CCA), and two CCAs assigned to College Station from another unit). College Station also has seven clerks who perform retail and customer service functions. We selected College Station based on our analysis of carriers returning after 6:00 p.m. data from the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW).¹

Objective, Scope and Methodology

The objective of this audit was to assess retail and mail delivery service at College Station in New York, NY. To accomplish our objective, we analyzed delivery metrics such as mail arrival, distribution up time, carriers return to office time, and the number of routes and carriers to assess performance of delivery operations. In addition, we analyzed Enterprise Customer Care (eCC) case data and retail metrics such as wait-time-in-line and In-Store Window Operations Survey Earned – Actual Staffing. During our site visit from May 14 - 16, 2019, we interviewed management and employees, conducted delivery and retail unit observations, reviewed scanning procedures on packages, and evaluated the process completed by delivery supervisory personnel in response to eCC cases.

We relied on computer-generated data from the EDW, Scan Point Management System, and eCC. We did not test the validity of controls over these systems; however, we verified the accuracy of the data by testing the completeness and reasonableness of the data, observing operations at the unit, and interviewing Postal Service officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We conducted this audit from May through July 2019, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. 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 objective. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on June 14, 2019 and included their comments where appropriate.

¹ A repository intended for all data and the central source for information on retail, financial, and operational performance. Mission critical information comes to the EDW from transactions that occur across the mail delivery system, points-of-sale, and other sources.

Finding #1: Mail Delivery Service Issues

We identified undelivered mail for two routes² during our observations at the unit. Specifically, mail scheduled for delivery on Monday, May 13, 2019 was still at the carrier case the day of our site visit on Tuesday, May 14, 2019 (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figures 1 & 2. Mail Scheduled for Delivery on May 13, 2019 Was Not Delivered



Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) photographs taken at College Station the morning of May 14, 2019.

Unit management stated that this condition occurred because multiple letter carriers took unscheduled leave, which created a shortage of carriers. Although unit management contacted the acting Customer Service Operations Manager (CSOM) who then provided an additional CCA, the unit did not subsequently contact the CSOM once they realized two routes were not going to be delivered. During our review, management initiated corrective personnel actions related to excessive unscheduled leave.

Additionally, we reviewed the Customer Service Daily Reporting System (CSDRS)³ and noted the unit did not report the curtailed and delayed mail, as required.⁴ While management was aware of the procedures, they did not adhere to them.

Customers rely on timely and consistent mail delivery service. Additionally, inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in CSDRS provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with inaccurate status of mail delays and limits opportunities for corrective action to prevent mail delivery delays.

² College Station route numbers six and ten.

³ The formal reporting process of delayed mail that is critical in fulfilling the requirement to report delayed mail.

⁴ Delivery Unit Service Talk – Committed Mail and Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail, February 2019.

Recommendation #1: We recommend **the Manager, New York District**, review and assign the appropriate number of carriers to College Station to ensure daily mail delivery and implement additional measures to minimize unscheduled leave.

Recommendation #2: We recommend **the Manager, New York District**, instruct unit management to follow city delivery standard operating procedures for reporting delayed mail.

Finding #2: Delays in Distribution Up Time

Our analysis and observations⁵ showed that College Station did not meet its scheduled Distribution Up Time (DUT) of 9:30 A.M. The DUT is the time clerk's complete sorting and distributing mail to each city carrier route. The average delay for this time was about one hour and 37 minutes (see [Table 1](#)).

⁵ We analyzed DUT data from April 5 - May 4, 2019, and observed operations from May 14 -16, 2019.

Table 1. DUT at College Station, New York, NY, April 5 – May 4, 2019

Count	Date	Scheduled DUT	Actual DUT	Variance
1	04/05/2019	9:30	11:16	01:46
2	04/06/2019	9:30	10:53	01:23
3	04/08/2019	9:30	11:58	02:28
4	04/09/2019	9:30	11:53	02:23
5	04/10/2019	9:30	10:37	01:07
6	04/11/2019	9:30	11:59	02:29
7	04/12/2019	9:30	10:20	00:50
8	04/13/2019	9:30	12:37	03:07
9	04/15/2019	9:30	10:24	00:54
10	04/16/2019	9:30	10:35	01:05
11	04/17/2019	9:30	10:30	01:00
12	04/18/2019	9:30	11:06	01:36
13	04/19/2019	9:30	13:16	03:46
14	04/20/2019	9:30	11:37	02:07
15	04/22/2019	9:30	11:03	01:33
16	04/23/2019	9:30	10:22	00:52
17	04/24/2019	9:30	10:46	01:16
18	04/25/2019	9:30	10:00	00:30
19	04/26/2019	9:30	11:01	01:31
20	04/27/2019	9:30	11:00	01:30
21	04/29/2019	9:30	10:31	01:01
22	04/30/2019	9:30	12:09	02:39
23	05/01/2019	9:30	10:44	01:14
24	05/02/2019	9:30	10:40	01:10
25	05/03/2019	9:30	10:40	01:10
26	05/04/2019	9:30	11:16	01:10
Average Variance				01:37

Source: OIG analysis of Scan Point Management System data.

Unit management stated that late DUT occurred because of clerk vacancies and excessive unscheduled leave. We reviewed the unit’s clerk staffing which showed eight authorized positions based on the amount of mail volume received at the station. However, only five clerks were on-board and available at the time of our site visit. One employee assigned to the unit was on extended leave due to an injury sustained on the job and the unit had two vacancies.

Due to clerk vacancies and excessive unscheduled absences, the morning supervisor often sorts the mail for distribution. This does not provide the supervisor an opportunity to properly manage the floor and ensure carriers depart the office to begin street delivery at the established times.

Late DUTs could result in carriers delivering mail afterhours while increasing safety risk and incurring overtime.

Recommendation #3: We recommend **the Manager, New York District**, review and assign the appropriate number of clerks to College Station to ensure distribution up time is being met and implement additional measures to minimize unscheduled leave.

Finding #3: Customer Complaints Not Resolved Timely

College Station did not resolve customer complaints timely. Our review of complaints recorded in the eCC system indicated College Station received 1,374 complaints from October 1, 2018 through March 31, 2019. Our analysis of eCC data showed that 68 percent of the complaints received during this period were either not resolved or were not resolved timely (see Table 2).

**Table 2. College Station Timeline for Resolving Complaints
October 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019**

Number of Days to Resolve Complaint	Number of Occurrences	Percentage of Complaints Within the Timeframe
6+ Days	499	36%
4 – 5 Days	426	31%
1 – 3 Days	438	32%
No Record of Resolution	11	1%
Total	1,374	100%

Source: OIG analysis of complaints recorded in the eCC system.

Unit management stated that higher priorities in operations affected their ability to resolve the complaints timely. The Postal Service's goal⁶ is to resolve and close eCC complaints within three business days. Failure to address complaints timely could alienate customers and result in negative publicity and impact the Postal Service brand.

Recommendation #4: We recommend the **Manager, New York District**, instruct unit management to adhere to customer service procedures for resolving customer complaints.

Other Matters

During our review of retail operations, we observed the following conditions that we brought to the attention of unit management:

- One of the retail windows only accepted cash as the credit/debit card equipment had been broken for about two weeks.
- The Package Drop Box next to the self-service kiosk was broken. The drop box has been broken for quite some time and was taped shut.

Broken retail equipment could adversely affect sales and result in a loss of revenue and negatively impact customer service. Unit management took immediate action and submitted a series work orders to repair the retail equipment. As a result, we are not making recommendations regarding these issues.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the findings and recommendations. See [Appendix A](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Regarding recommendation 1, the Manager, Customer Service Operations, conducted a meeting with College Station management to review the Function 2 complement to ensure proper staffing. Currently, College Station is properly staffed and additional non-career employees have been assigned to the station for scheduled and unscheduled leave. Going forward, a bi-weekly attendance review will be held with College Station management to address unscheduled absences. This action was completed as of June 19, 2019.

Regarding recommendation 2, management provided a Learn and Grow session to all stations and a provided a PowerPoint presentation on accurately reporting mail conditions in CSDRS. This action was completed as of June 7, 2019.

⁶ Standard Operating Procedure - eCC Resolution process, updated September 29, 2016.

Regarding recommendation 3, the Manager, Customer Service Operations, conducted a meeting with College Station management to review the Function 4 complement to ensure proper staffing. Currently, College Station is properly staffed and additional non-career employees have been assigned to the station for scheduled and unscheduled leave. Going forward, a bi-weekly attendance review will be held with College Station management to address unscheduled absences. This action was completed as of June 19, 2019.

Regarding recommendation 4, management stated that the district held a teleconference to address reopened eCC cases. Additionally, the district marketing manager attended a Learn and Grow session on monitoring eCC cases on Informed Visibility. These actions were completed as of June 26, 2019.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations in the report. We consider recommendations 1 through 4 closed with the issuance of this report.

Appendix A. Management's Comments



July 2, 2019

LAZERICK POLAND
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Delivery and Customer Service Issues – College Station, New York,
NY – Report Number DRT-AR-19-DRAFT

The findings and recommendation outlined in the above noted audit report have been reviewed and the response is as follows.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the Manager, New York District, review and assign the appropriate number of carriers to College Station to ensure daily mail delivery and implement additional measures to minimize unscheduled leave.

Management Response:

We agree with the recommendation. The Manager Customer Service Operations conducted a meeting with College Station to review the Function 2 complement to ensure proper staffing for daily mail delivery. Currently, College Station is properly staffed as per complement and additional non career were assigned to the station for scheduled and unscheduled leave. Going forward, an attendance review with College Station will be held bi-weekly to address unscheduled absences.

Target Implementation Date:

Completed – June 19, 2019

Responsible Official:

Postmaster Manhattan

Recommendation #2

We recommend the Manager, New York District, instruct unit management to follow city delivery standard operating procedures for reporting delayed mail.

Management Response:

We agree with the recommendation. A Learn and Grow training session was conducted with all Stations, via teleconference, and the attached PowerPoint presentation on accurately reporting mail conditions in CSDRS and the color coding policy was reviewed.

Target Implementation Date:
Completed – June 7, 2019

Responsible Official:
A/Manager Operation Programs Support

Recommendation #3

We recommend the Manager, New York District, review and assign the appropriate number of clerks to College Station to ensure distribution up time is being met and implement additional measures to minimize unscheduled leave.

Management Response:

We agree with the recommendation. The Manager Customer Service Operations conducted a meeting with College Station to review the Function 4 complement to ensure proper staffing to distribute mail to meet the distribution up time. Currently, College Station is properly staffed and additional non career were assigned to the station for scheduled and unscheduled leave. Going forward, an attendance review with College Station will be held bi-weekly to address unscheduled absences.

Target Implementation Date:
Completed – June 19, 2019

Responsible Official:
Postmaster Manhattan

Recommendation #4

We recommend the Manager, New York District, instruct unit management to adhere to customer service procedures for resolving customer complaints.

Management Response:

We agree with the recommendation. A District telecon is held daily to address reopened eCC cases. Additionally, the District Marketing Manager attended a Learn and Grow training on monitoring eCC cases in Informed Visibility and on the dashboard and is responsible for monitoring each Station's eCC cases.

Target Implementation Date:
Completed – June 26, 2019

Responsible Official:
District Marketing Manager and Postmaster Manhattan



Lorraine G. Castellano
District Manager, New York

cc: VP Area Operations (Northeast)
Manager, Operations Programs Support (Northeast)
(A) Manager Delivery Programs Support (Northeast)
Manager, Marketing (Northeast)
Controller (Northeast)
Postmaster Manhattan
Manager, Operations Programs Support (New York)
Manager, Corporate Audit Response Management