



# OFFICE OF **INSPECTOR GENERAL**

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

## City Letter Carriers Returning After 5 P.M. – Capital District

### AUDIT REPORT

Report Number  
DR-AR-14-006

July 21, 2014





# OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

## UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

### Highlights

***The number of city carriers returning after 5 p.m. is a growing problem in the Capital District, increasing by 14 percent from FY 2011, Quarter 1 to FY 2013, Quarter 4. City carriers returned after 5 p.m. because mail coming from processing facilities did not always meet times established in the integrated operating plan.***

### Background

In recent years, more city letter carriers have been returning from their delivery routes after 5 p.m. Safety concerns increase after dark and a number of recent incidents of violence against carriers have been reported in the media. Media have also reported that customers are unhappy when their mail arrives after dark. From fiscal year (FY) 2011 to FY 2013, the percentage of city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. nationwide increased from 25 to 38 percent.

The U.S. Postal Service's goal is for 95 percent of city letter carriers to return from street operations before 5 p.m. Meeting this target would ensure the Postal Service collects, distributes, and delivers the mail on time.

In FY 2013, the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) risk indicator results consistently ranked the Capital Metro Area's Capital District among the five districts nationwide with the most city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. Our objective was to assess city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. in the Capital District.

### What the OIG Found

The number of city carriers returning after 5 p.m. is a growing problem in the Capital District, increasing by 14 percent from FY 2011, Quarter 1 to FY 2013, Quarter 4. City carriers returned after 5 p.m. because mail coming from processing facilities did not always meet times established in the integrated operating plan and management did not always properly supervise city delivery operations. Adhering to integrated operating plans will improve mail arrival time at delivery units. Further, better supervision of city letter carriers will reduce the number of carriers returning after 5 p.m., increase carrier safety, and reduce late mail delivery.

In other matters, external stakeholders suggested the Postal Service take additional safety measures such as providing brightly colored, reflective clothing to make city carriers more visible and identifiable in the dark. Other suggestions included providing additional safety training and realigning delivery routes so carriers can deliver mail earlier in the day in dangerous areas.



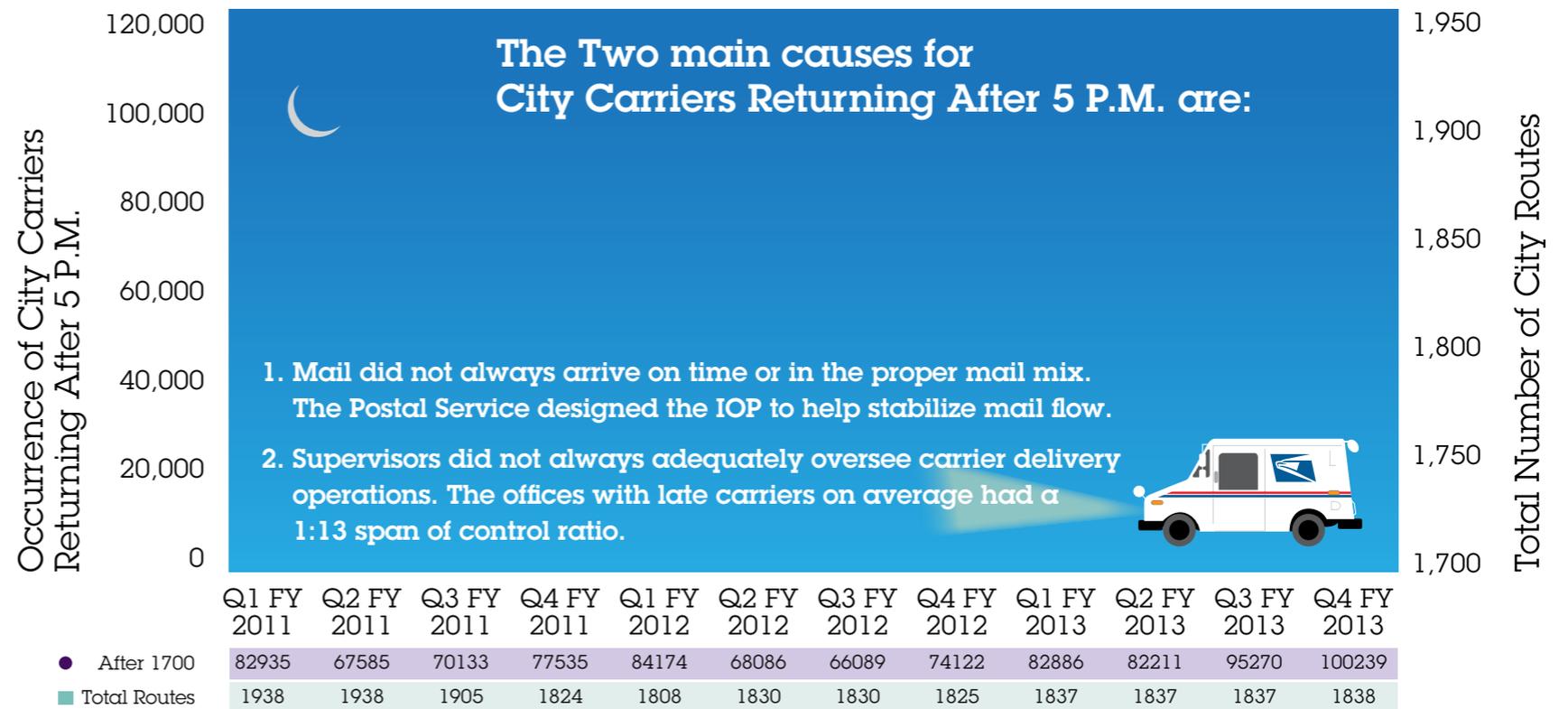
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### What the OIG Recommended

We recommended the manager, Capital District, prepare integrated operating plans with facility processing managers that include changes to the 24-hour clock to facilitate earlier

arrival of mail at delivery units. We also recommended adherence to Postal Service policies and procedures for supervising city delivery operations and collaboration with managers and union officials to address carrier safety.



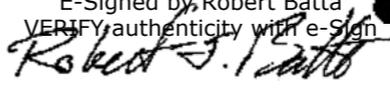
# Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

July 21, 2014

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** KELVIN L. WILLIAMS  
MANAGER, CAPITAL DISTRICT

E-Signed by Robert Batta  
VERIFY authenticity with e-Sign  


**FROM:** Robert J. Batta  
Deputy Assistant Inspector General  
for Mission Operations

**SUBJECT:** Audit Report – City Letter Carriers Returning After  
5 P.M. – Capital District  
(Report Number DR-AR-14-006)

This report presents the results of our audit of City Letter Carriers Returning After 5 P.M. – Capital District (Project Number 14XG014DR000).

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

Attachment

cc: Corporate Audit and Response Management

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# Findings

***City carriers returned after 5 p.m. because mail from the processing facilities did not meet times established in the integrated operating plan (IOP) and management did not always properly supervise city delivery operations. Adhering to IOPs will improve mail arrival time at delivery units. Further, improved supervision of city letter carriers will reduce the number of carriers returning after 5 p.m., improve carrier safety, and reduce late mail delivery.***

## Introduction

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of City Letter Carriers Returning After 5 P.M. in the Capital District (Project Number 14XG014DR000). This report is one in a series that resulted from U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) risk indicator<sup>1</sup> results that consistently ranked the Capital District among the five districts nationwide with the most carriers returning after 5 p.m. Our objective was to assess city letter carriers<sup>2</sup> returning after 5 p.m. in the Capital District.

In recent years, more city letter carriers have been returning from their delivery routes after 5 p.m. There are increased safety concerns about carriers delivering mail after dark and a number of recent incidents of violence against carriers have been reported in the media. There has also been media coverage about customers being unhappy that their mail is arriving after dark. The nationwide average number of city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. increased from 34,933 per day (25 percent) in fiscal year (FY) 2011 to 38,206 per day (29 percent) in FY 2012 and 50,307 per day (38 percent) in FY 2013. The Postal Service's goal is for 95 percent of city letter carriers<sup>3</sup> to return from street operations before 5 p.m. Achieving this goal would help the Postal Service meet its 24-hour clock operational requirement to collect, distribute, and deliver mail on time (see [Appendix A](#) for additional background information).

## Conclusion

The number of city carriers returning after 5 p.m. is a growing problem in the Capital District, increasing by 14 percent from FY 2011, Quarter (Q) 1 to FY 2013, Q4. City carriers returned after 5 p.m. because mail from the processing facilities did not meet times established in the integrated operating plan (IOP) and management did not always properly supervise city delivery operations. Adhering to IOPs will improve mail arrival time at delivery units. Further, improved supervision of city letter carriers will reduce the number of carriers returning after 5 p.m., improve carrier safety, and reduce late mail delivery.

In other matters, external stakeholders suggested the Postal Service take additional safety measures such as providing brightly colored, reflective clothing to make city carriers more visible and identifiable in the dark. Other suggestions included providing additional safety training and realigning delivery routes so carriers deliver earlier in the day to areas considered to be dangerous.

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1 OIG risk indicator results identify potential districts and city delivery operational risk areas potentially contributing to service issues in the district (staffing, overtime); provide audit teams with a quick overview of a district's city delivery performance and potential efficiency indicators for further analysis to formulate cost savings; and help identify potential audit locations.

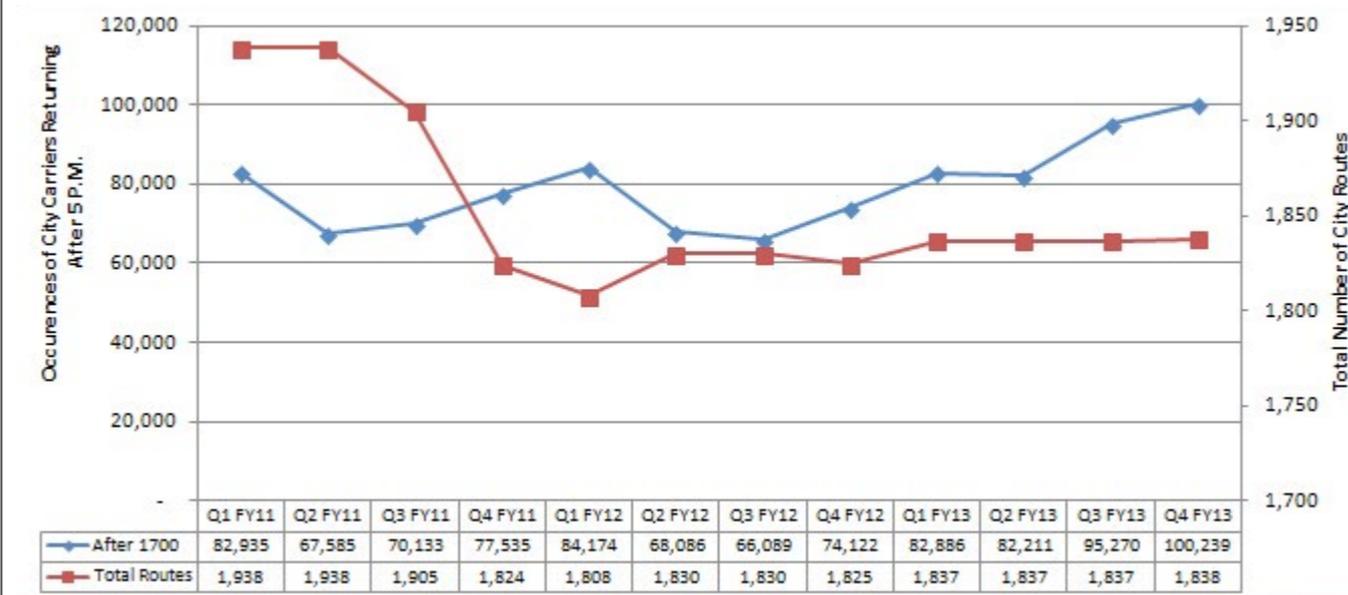
2 The Capital District uses both city and rural carriers. Both groups provide the same core service of delivering mail to business and residential addresses 6 days a week.

3 The OIG report, *Postal Service Work Rules and Compensation Systems* (Report Number HR-AR-11-002, dated September 19, 2011) found there are different performance standards and compensation systems for city and rural letter carriers. The inability to consistently use compensation systems to efficiently manage letter carriers who spend most of their time on the street rather than in the office is costly. The OIG is conducting a separate follow-up review on the compensation systems for city letter carriers.

## City Letter Carriers Returning After 5 P.M. in the Capital District

The number of Capital District city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. has increased by 14 percent from 82,935 occurrences in FY 2011, Q1 to 100,239 occurrences in FY 2013, Q4 on 1,834 routes<sup>4</sup> (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Occurrences of City Carriers Returning After 5 P.M.**



Source: EDW as of November 16, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Due to reporting in Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), some data reflect conditions as of a specific date in time (route start times) while others show the average over a span of time (carriers returning after 5 p.m.). This results in minor differences in some base numbers for the number of routes.

The two main causes of carriers returning after 5 p.m. are late mail arriving from the plants and insufficient supervision of city letter carriers.

### Late Mail Arrival

Mail did not always arrive on time<sup>5</sup> or in the proper mail mix. The Postal Service designed the IOP to help stabilize mail flow by setting delivery units' and processing facilities' expectations for when mail should arrive and in what quantities. This information is critical to establishing appropriate staffing and reporting times to eliminate carrier delays. Some delivery unit officials indicated they did not use the IOP because it contained outdated information. Instead, they established late carrier reporting times after 8 a.m. to ensure that 80 percent of carrier route workload (mail) had arrived from the mail processing facilities and was ready for street delivery. Carriers had reporting times of 8:30 a.m. or later on 60 percent of the routes (1,103 of 1,834) in the Capital District (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Analysis of Capital District City Delivery Route Carrier Start Times**

Number of Routes	Start Time	Percentage of District
115	Before 8 a.m.	6%
607	At 8 a.m.	33%
<b>722</b>	<b>Total 8 a.m. or earlier</b>	<b>39%</b>
967	At 8:30 a.m.	53%
145	At 9 a.m. or later	8%
<b>1,112</b>	<b>Total 8:30 a.m. or later</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>1,834</b>		<b>100%</b>

Source: EDW as of November 16, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Two processing facilities in the Capital District were consolidated and the transportation to delivery units was, in some cases, outside the 50-mile radius.

Our analysis of the 10 delivery units with the most and fewest city delivery carriers returning after 5 p.m. determined that mail did not always arrive on time from the plant and the units did not have IOPs that reflected the correct mail arrival times or quantities (see Table 2).

**Table 2. OIG Analysis of Site Visit Locations – Selected Capital District City Delivery Units**

<b>Delivery Units With the Most Carriers Returning After 5 P.M.</b>	<b>Late Mail Arrival</b>	<b>Updated Information Needed in the IOPs</b>
Friendship Station	✓	✓
Lexington Park/Pax River Post Office	✓	✓
Hyattsville Post Office	✓	✓
Georgetown Carrier Annex	✓	✓
Columbia Heights Annex	✓	✓
<b>Delivery Units With the Fewest Carriers Returning After 5 P.M.</b>	<b>Late Mail Arrival</b>	<b>Updated Information Needed in the IOPs</b>
Burtonsville Post Office	—	✓
Damascus Post Office	✓	✓
Congress Heights Station	—	✓
Montgomery Village Branch	—	✓
Bowie Post Office	✓	✓

Source: OIG analysis

In several instances, the delivery units needed to update their IOPs. For example, our review of the Friendship Station delivery unit indicated that unit and plant officials issued an IOP during the week of January 17, 2014. Although the IOP reflected a correct date, the information had incomplete mail arrival expectations for four of the 12 mail types. These are highlighted in yellow in Table 3.

**Table 3. Examples of Incomplete IOP Section: III Mail Processed and Dispatched**

	Mail Type Received	Mail Dispatch Times				Total Percentage at Unit
		1:30 A.M.	4:30 A.M.	6:50 A.M.	4:00 P.M.	Goal 80%
1.	Manual Standard Flats	25%	—	—	—	25%
2.	Automated Standard Flats	—	—	—	—	—
3.	Automated Parcel Bar Sorter (APBS Carrier Route) 137 Standard	—	—	—	—	—
4.	APBS Carrier Route 136 Periodicals	—	25%	25%	25%	75%
5.	Manual First-Class Flats	—	30%	30%	30%	90%
6.	Automated First-Class Flats	—	—	100%	—	100%
7.	Priority Mail	—	30%	20%	25%	75%
8.	First Pass Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) Rejects	—	100%	—	—	100%
9.	Final Pass DPS Rejects and Carrier Routed Bundles	—	—	—	—	—
10.	Parcel Post 200	25%	50%	25%	—	100%
11.	Flat Sequencing Sorter (FSS)	—	—	—	—	—
12.	Express 131	—	—	100%	—	100%

Source: OIG analysis based on Friendship Station IOP.

When asked about mail arrival, Capital District officials stated the consolidation of the Suburban Annex and Waldorf facilities into the Southern Processing and Distribution Center had a major impact on mail arrival time. Management consolidated these facilities with the expectation of having relaxed service standards, but that never happened. This resulted in a processing infrastructure geared for 2-day processing with a 1-day delivery standard. In addition, Overnight Priority service expectations were changed.

The Baltimore and Northern Virginia districts previously had 2-day delivery service to the Capital District, but were subsequently upgraded to Overnight service. This further strained the processing capacity and accounts for an increase in Priority Mail being sent on the final dispatch with units' DPS mail.

We also observed several instances of working mail<sup>6</sup> or parcel volume arriving at delivery units with the last dispatch of the morning, stacked on top of each other, and not properly organized. Usually a clerk or supervisor reorganizes the mail; however, some carriers unloaded and sorted through the containers to identify the mail for their routes (see Figure 2). When carriers have to search for their mail trays, their loading and departure are delayed, thereby delaying their delivery time.

**Figure 2: Carriers Sorting Through Mail**



Source: OIG photograph taken January 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Mail that must be manually sorted into delivery order by carriers prior to departing for street operations. Late arrival of this mail can increase a carrier's office time, resulting in late departure to begin street operations and possible overtime or return after 5 p.m.

## Supervision

Supervisors did not always adequately oversee carrier delivery operations. The offices with late carriers had, on average, a 1:13 span of control ratio,<sup>7</sup> whereas the five offices with the fewest carriers returning after 5 p.m. had, on average, a 1:8 span of control ratio (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Supervision in Capital District City Delivery Units We Visited**

Highest Number of Carriers Returning After 5 P.M.	Authorized Supervisor Complement	Routes	Observed Supervisors to Routes	Supervisor to Route Span-of-Control Ratio	Total Carriers on Routes <sup>1</sup>	Performance Indicators Trend Over Previous 5 Quarters <sup>2</sup>	Changes in Percent to Standard from Q1, FY 2013 to Q1, FY 2014
Lexington Park/Pax River Post Office	2	7	2:7	1:4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">⬇</span> Office – Down</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Street – Up</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	215.9% to 163.38%
Columbia Heights Annex	5	66	6:66	1:11	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">⬇</span> Office – Down</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Street – Up</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	130.32% to 129.01%
Friendship Station	5	36	3:36	1:12	65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">⬇</span> Office – Down</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Street – Up</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	166.01% to 130.66%
Hyattsville Post Office	6	99	7:99	1:14	101	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">⬇</span> Office – Down</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Street – Up</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	113.25% to 98.83%
Georgetown Carrier Annex	5	63	3:63	1:21	106	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">⬇</span> Office – Down</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Street – Up</li> <li><span style="color: red;">⬆</span> Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	145.26% to 114.69%
<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>21:271</b>	<b>1:13</b>	<b>380</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Carrier staffing was not a factor in units visited. However, as noted in the *Readiness for Package Growth - Delivery Operations* report number DR-MA-14-001, dated December 11, 2013. The OIG noted retention issues for City Carrier Assistants and management initiated corrective action during the audit.

<sup>2</sup> Office and Street Variance, Overtime, and Percent to Standard Performance Information for the site for FY 2013, Quarters 1-4 and FY 2014, Quarter 1.

<sup>7</sup> The Capital District carrier to route ratio was 1:30 in February 2014 and 1:36 in June 2014. The district's goal is a carrier to route ratio of 1:39 by August 2014.

Lowest Number of Carriers Arriving After 5 P.M.	Authorized Supervisor Complement	Routes	Observed Supervisors to Routes	Supervisor to Routes Span of Control Ratio	Total Carriers on Routes	Performance Indicators Trend Over previous 5 quarters	Changes in Percent to Standard from Q1, FY 2013 to Q1 FY 2014
Burtonsville Post Office	2	9	2:9	1:5	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🔴 Office – Up</li> <li>🔴 Street – Up</li> <li>🔴 Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	77.36% to 83.44%
Damascus Post Office	2	10	2:10	1:5	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🟢 Office – Down</li> <li>🔴 Street – Up</li> <li>🔴 Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	93.99% to 98.81%
Congress Heights Station	4	18	2:18	1:9	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🔴 Office – Up</li> <li>🔴 Street – Up</li> <li>🔴 Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	109.73% to 119.15%
Montgomery Village Branch	2	34	4:34	1:9	56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🔴 Office – Up</li> <li>🟢 Street – Down</li> <li>🔴 Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	104.31% to 127.81%
Bowie Post Office	4	35	3:35	1:12	48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🟢 Office – Down</li> <li>🔴 Street – Up</li> <li>🔴 Overtime – Up</li> </ul>	96.73% to 97.5%
<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>13:106</b>	<b>1:8</b>	<b>159</b>		

Source: OIG analysis.

Further, we observed several instances where supervisors were not on the workroom floor supervising workers or on the street observing deliveries. Supervisors said they would like to spend more time observing operations and correcting inefficient carrier habits, but are too busy with other tasks. Capital District officials further indicated that when they try to take corrective measures or progressive corrective actions to curtail inefficient carrier behaviors, the resulting grievances are nearly always settled in favor of the carriers.

On the other hand, we also observed that supervisors at the best performing units were consistently present on the workroom floor. These supervisors established clear daily expectations for employees, including timeframes for readying mail for carriers, talking with carriers about leave and return times, and using the *Workload Status* report as a tool for determining mail volume and time. When mail arrived late, supervisors redirected staff work efforts as necessary to minimize impact. Officials also followed up to identify issues for corrective actions using *Managed Service Point (MSP)* and *Route Carrier Daily Performance* report information.

Adhering to IOPs will improve mail arrival time at delivery units. Further, improved supervision of city letter carriers will reduce the number of carriers returning after 5 p.m., increase carrier safety, and reduce late mail deliveries.

***In other matters, external stakeholders suggested the Postal Service take additional safety measures such as providing brightly colored, reflective clothing to make city carriers more visible and identifiable in the dark. Other suggestions included providing additional safety training and realigning delivery routes so carriers deliver earlier in the day to areas considered to be dangerous.***

## Management Actions

During our interim meeting with Capital Area and District management, officials agreed that unit managers did not always properly supervise city delivery operations at delivery units, allowing for some inefficiency in operations. Officials indicated they have discussed with South Florida District officials<sup>8</sup> the corrective actions they implemented to address similar problems.

Officials informed the OIG that they have initiated plans to decrease the number of carriers returning after 5 p.m., including using a staff intervention/support team. The team will have daily teleconferences, review budget/production performance, and review operations at offices that did not achieve plan to determine the corrective actions needed to improve performance. The team will also help reinforce and ensure adherence to Postal Service policies and procedures through intense oversight at each delivery unit, including daily and weekly operational monitoring, site visits to delivery units, team reviews, team coaching and mentoring of supervisory efforts, and coordination with processing plant officials to revise the IOPs. Capital Area management also informed the OIG that the Postal Service is implementing a 24-hour clock initiative. This new initiative will have daily scorecards to show delivery performance and allow adjustments in units for carrier starting times, which are based on the scheduled mail arrivals from the processing plants.

## Other Matters

With the increase in carriers delivering mail after 5 p.m. comes increased risks to safety. Each day some carriers deliver mail to locations that could be considered unsafe and deliveries late in the day can exacerbate potential dangers. For that reason, the Postal Service and the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) have been working together at the national level to discuss such safety issues. It has been suggested that the Postal Service take additional safety measures such as providing brightly colored, reflective clothing so city carriers are more visible and identifiable in the dark. Other suggestions included providing additional safety training and realigning delivery routes so carriers deliver earlier in the day to dangerous areas.

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<sup>8</sup> *City Delivery Efficiency in the South Florida District* (Report Number DR-AR-14-004, dated March 4, 2014). Management implemented initiatives to reduce the number of carriers returning after 5 p.m. that include daily teleconferences, support teams to coach and mentor supervisors, review of budget/production performance, updated IOPs, and review of offices that did not have a plan to include corrective actions to improve performance.

# Recommendations

***We recommend the manager, Capital District, prepare integrated operating plans with facility processing managers that include changes to the 24-hour clock to facilitate earlier arrival of mail at delivery units. We also recommended adherence to Postal Service policies and procedures for supervising city delivery operations and collaboration with managers and union officials to address carrier safety.***

We recommend the manager, Capital District, instruct delivery unit supervisors to:

1. Prepare integrated operating plans with facility processing managers to include changes to the 24-hour clock to facilitate earlier arrival of mail at the delivery units.
2. Ensure adherence to Postal Service policies and procedures for supervising city delivery operations at delivery units.
3. Work with local managers and officials to address carrier safety.

## Management's Comments

Management agreed with the findings and recommendations.

Regarding recommendation 1, management agreed to prepare IOPs with facility processing managers to include changes to the 24-hour clock to facilitate earlier arrival of mail at delivery units. Officials indicated that operations, customer service, and processing have partnered to implement the IOPs for all customer service delivery offices. The net result of IOP implementation will be distribution up times that are earlier for most sites, allowing carriers to leave for the street sooner and return earlier, thereby reducing the number of carriers arriving after 5 p.m. The target implementation date is July 2014.

Regarding recommendation 2, management agreed to ensure adherence to Postal Service policies and procedures for supervising city delivery operations at delivery units. District officials indicated they prefer to use objective data to determine adherence instead of relying on interviews with current managers. Officials indicated that they were in the process of implementing the Delivery Enhancement and Engagement Team concept before the audit start date. Officials further indicated that the Capital District is fully utilizing a Delivery Enhancement and Engagement Team approach to train and support managers, as well as monitor progress and adherence at delivery units. This team is composed of subject matter experts who have 4 weeks of on-the-job training on various functions that need improvement. Management stated that the entire Capital District leadership supports this ongoing, comprehensive program.

Management also stated that the Capital District has started training all Executive Administration and Salary (EAS) employees to be certified route examiners. These examiners are reviewing carriers working over 8 hours on their own assignments. Officials further stated that all EAS-20 and above units are changing the distribution up time to 8:50 a.m. to improve the number of carriers on the street by 9:00 a.m. and reduce the number of carriers out after 5 p.m. The target implementation date is September 2014.

Regarding recommendation 3, management agreed to work with local managers and officials to address carrier safety. Officials indicated they prefer to have objective carrier safety data to review instead of relying on interviews with current managers. Officials indicated the Delivery Enhancement and Engagement Team process will drive efficiency by getting carriers out for delivery earlier and driving down the number of carriers out after 5 p.m. Officials are revising one route with a line of travel concern based on the 24-hour clock process. Management is also reviewing craft and EAS staffing and addressing it as needed. Officials are giving safety awareness talks to carriers before they leave for the street several times a week and the Capital District Safety Office is conducting ongoing "safety blitzes" to assess carriers on the street and curtail unsafe behaviors. Finally, managers at each facility are enforcing the requirement that carriers complete Notice 76 – Vehicle Checks prior to leaving to reduce the potential for accidents. The target implementation date is August 2014.

Management indicated that the Capital District has also partnered with the NALC to create a Joint Safety Task Force that will focus on employee safety at units identified as having safety concerns. The process began July 7, 2014, and will be ongoing. Management further stated that the Capital District is continuing to hire city carrier assistants (CCA) in an effort to fill all 500 authorized positions. District officials have currently staffed 350 of the 500 positions and converted 175 CCA positions to full-time regular status.

See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments, in their entirety.

## **Evaluation of Management's Comments**

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations in the report.

Officials indicated that they would prefer to have objective data to review for recommendations 2 and 3 instead of interviews with current managers. For recommendation 2, we included data on supervisor span of control and various efficiency indicators and data from the EDW and the Delivery Operations Information System for city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. For recommendation 3, we did not include data in the section of the report addressing carrier safety because it was an "Other Matters" issue and not part of the objective. Nevertheless, we felt the safety issue was important to report on.

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

# Appendices

*Click on the appendix title to the right to navigate to the section content.*

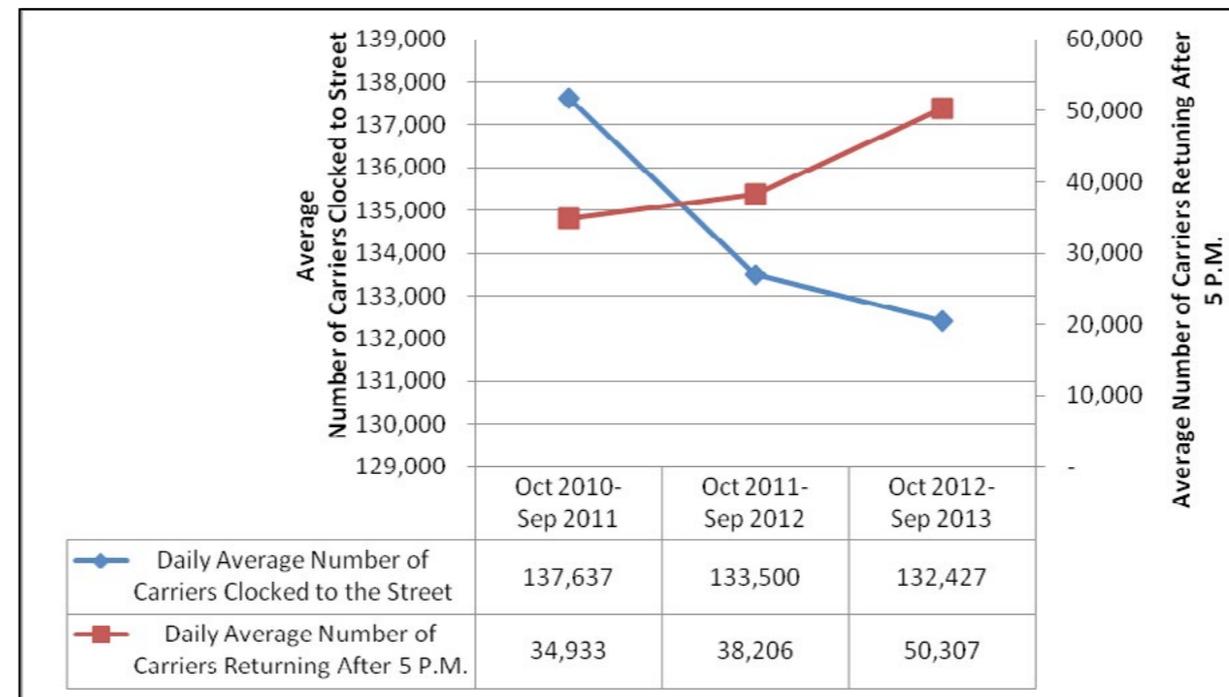
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## Appendix A: Additional Information

### Background

In recent years, more city letter carriers have been returning from their delivery routes after 5 p.m. This increases safety concerns and recent media reports have highlighted instances of violence involving carriers delivering mail in the dark. The average number of city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. has increased from 34,933 (25 percent) in FY 2011 to 38,206 (29 percent) in FY 2012, and 50,307 (38 percent) in FY 2013 (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Average Number of Occurrences of City Letter Carriers Returning After 5 P.M. From FYs 2011 to 2013**

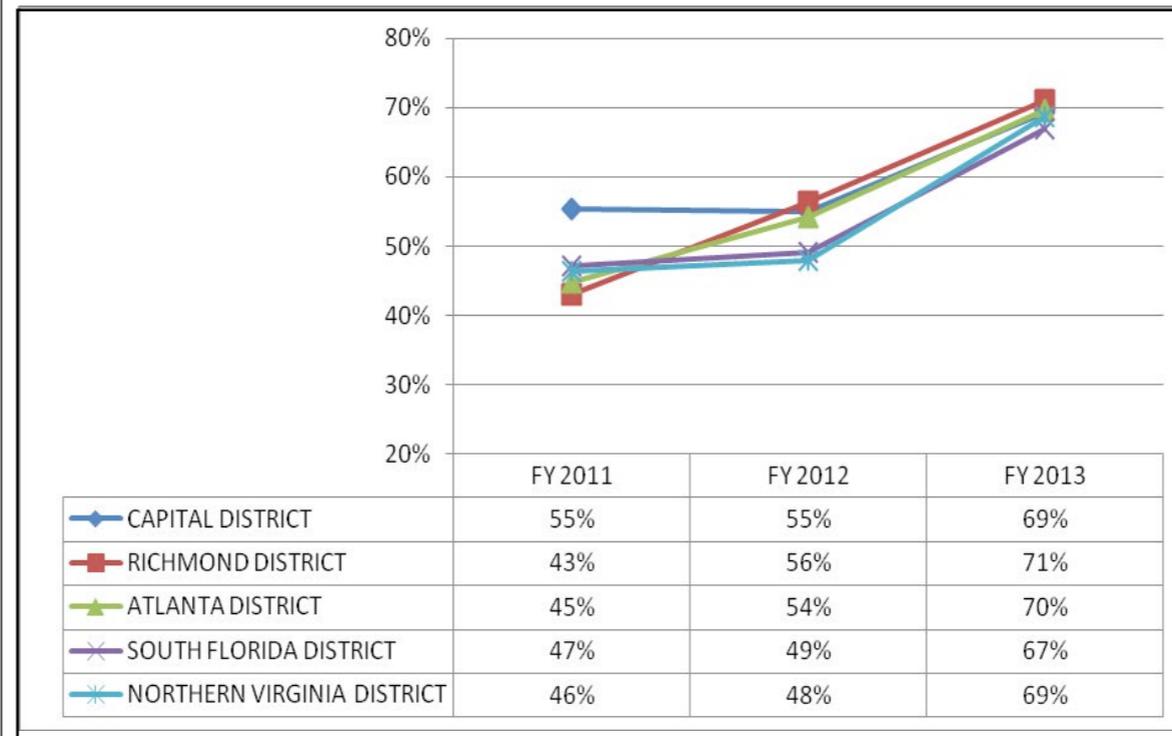


Source: EDW as of November 16, 2013.

The Postal Service's goal is for 95 percent of city letter carriers to return from street operations before 5 p.m. Achieving this goal helps the Postal Service meet its 24-hour operational requirement to collect, distribute, and deliver mail on time. To accomplish this, supervisors ensure facilities update IOPs on time and stabilize mail flow into the units, which is critical to establishing appropriate carrier reporting times. Supervisors must also maintain a presence on the workroom floor, review work expectations, and observe street deliveries. Finally, supervisors use the Customer Service Daily Reporting System (CSDRS) to report mail arrival issues from mail processing facilities and workload status reports to help manage available mail volume in relation to time. Management follows up on discrepancies from the previous days using the MSP and *Route Carrier Daily Performance* reports.

The OIG's City Delivery Efficiency PARIS risk indicator results for FY 2013 consistently ranked the Capital Metro Area's Capital District among the five districts nationwide with the most city carriers returning after 5 p.m. (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4. National Ranking City Letter Carriers Returning After 5 P.M.**



Source: EDW as of November 16, 2013.

## Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to assess city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. in the Capital District. To accomplish our objective, we:

- Reviewed documentation and applicable policies and procedures related to city delivery efficiency in office and street operations to identify opportunities to improve operational efficiency.
- Reviewed city delivery efficiency indicators for FY 2011, Q1 through FY 2013, Q4 and identified inefficiencies in the Capital District. Our scope did not include review of rural delivery carriers since the data is only available for the previous 90 calendar days.
- Obtained and analyzed delivery unit data from the EDW and Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS) from FY 2013, Q1 through FY 2013, Q4 for city letter carriers returning after 5 p.m. We also reviewed and analyzed carriers returning after 5 p.m. data as reported in the CSDRS to determine incidents of rural carriers returning after 5 p.m.
- Selected and observed the five delivery units with the highest percentage of carriers returning after 5 p.m., which included the Friendship Station, the Lexington Park/Pax River and Hyattsville post offices, and the Georgetown and Columbia Heights Annex delivery units.
- Selected and observed the five delivery units with the lowest percentage of carriers returning after 5 p.m., which included the Burtonsville, Damascus, and Bowie post offices; the Congress Heights Station; and the Montgomery Village Branch.
- Interviewed area, Capital District, and selected unit officials to discuss delivery efficiency and carriers returning after 5 p.m.

We conducted this performance audit from January through July 2014, 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 discussed our observations and conclusions with management on March 4, 2014 and June 5, 2014, and included their comments where appropriate.

We relied on data obtained from Postal Service database systems, such as EDW, DOIS, and CSDRS. We did not directly audit the systems, but performed a limited data integrity review to support our data reliance. We assessed the reliability of systems' data by reviewing existing information about the data and the systems that produced it and interviewing agency officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of the report.

## Prior Audit Coverage

Report Title	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact (in millions)
<i>City Delivery Efficiency - South Florida District</i>	<a href="#">DR-AR-14-004</a>	3/4/2014	\$30,587,250

**Report Results:** The report determined the South Florida District has opportunities to enhance efficiency in city delivery operations. We found that 83 of 112 delivery units (74 percent) used 374,982 more workhours than projected. This occurred because management did not always enforce policies and procedures for supervising city delivery operations. Also, office and street supervision was inconsistent at the delivery units, allowing for some inefficiency in operations. Officials indicated their office workload priorities limited their ability to monitor carriers delivering mail. We identified the potential to eliminate 374,982 workhours through improved supervision and other efforts. Management agreed with our findings, recommendations, and monetary impact.

<i>City Delivery – Street Efficiency Capital District</i>	<a href="#">DR-AR-12-003</a>	8/16/2012	\$9,138,265
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**Report Results:** The report determined the Capital District has opportunities to enhance street delivery efficiency and could use about 12 fewer minutes of street time per day on each carrier route, or 110,740 workhours, and save about \$4.5 million annually. Our review of selected delivery units determined that management did not always reinforce Postal Service policies and procedures for supervising city delivery street operations at delivery units, which allowed for some inefficient delivery practices. Management agreed with our findings, recommendations, and monetary impact.

## Appendix B: Management's Comments



July 3, 2014

Judith Leonhardt  
Director Audit Operations  
Office of Inspector General  
United States Postal Service

**Subject:** Response to OIG Audit Report – City Letter Carriers Returning After 5 P.M. – Capital District, Report Number DR-AR-14-Draft

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the OIG Audit of City Letter Carriers Returning after 5:00 P.M. The Capital District appreciates the independent review of our city delivery operations and we agree with the findings and recommendations in the subject audit performed in our area. We do have one concern regarding the collection of some information used in the audit. While interviews conducted with current managers were used as opposed to hard data, we prefer to have objective data to review behind each recommendation. Regardless, we do agree with the resulting recommendations.

### **Recommendation #1**

We recommend the manager, Capital District, instruct delivery unit supervisors to prepare integrated operating plans with facility processing managers to include changes to the 24-hour clock to facilitate earlier arrival of mail at the delivery units to improve operations.

### **Management Response/ Action Plan**

Management agrees with this recommendation. Operations, customer services and processing have partnered to implement integrated operating plans for all customer services delivery offices. The net result of the IOPs will allow for distribution up times to be changed to an earlier time for most sites, allowing carriers to leave for the street sooner and return earlier, reducing carriers out past 1700.

SCF 200- Will be completed by 7/5/2014  
SCF 206- Completed  
SCF 207- Will be completed by 7/5/2014  
SCF 208- Will be completed by 7/5/2014  
SCF 209- Will be completed by 7/10/2014

**Target Implementation Date**

July 2014

**Responsible Official**

Joseph A. Molfetto, Manager, Operations Programs Support

**Recommendation #2**

We recommend the manager, Capital District, instruct delivery unit supervisors to ensure adherence to Postal Service policies and procedures for supervising city delivery operations at delivery units.

**Management Response/ Action Plan**

Management agrees with this recommendation and was in the process of implementing the Delivery Enhancement and Engagement Team concept prior to the audit start date. Capital District is fully utilizing a Delivery Enhancement and Engagement Team approach to train and support managers, as well as monitor progress and adherence in delivery units. This is a comprehensive program supported by the entire Capital District Leadership. The team, comprised of subject matter experts, provides a minimum of 4 weeks of on the job training for Function 2 and Function 4 operations, building maintenance and other functions where improvements can be made. This process will significantly improve customer service performance and will be ongoing.

Capital District has also started to train all EAS (postmasters and managers and supervisors of Customer Service) to be Certified Route Examiners. This training includes PS Forms 1838 and PS Form 3999 instructions. Carriers working over 8 hours on their own assignment are being reviewed utilizing this process.

All EAS-20 and above units are changing the distribution up time to 0850. This will improve carriers on the street by 0900 and reduce carriers out after 1700.

**Target Implementation Date**

September 2014

**Responsible Official**

Managers, Post Office Operations

**Recommendation #3**

We recommend the manager, Capital District, instruct delivery unit supervisors to work with local managers and officials to address carrier safety.

**Management Response/ Action Plan**

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Delivery Enhancement and Engagement Team process will drive efficiency by getting carriers out for delivery earlier, driving down the number out after 1700. The 24-Hour Clock process has identified one route with a line of travel concern that is now being revised. Craft and EAS Staffing is also being reviewed and addressed as needed.

Safety Awareness Talks are being given before carriers leave for the street multiple times each week. Safety Blitzes by the Capital District Safety Office are being conducted to assess carriers on the street, utilizing PS Form 4584, Driving Observation, and reporting to management to address unsafe acts and behaviors noted. This will be an ongoing process.

Management at each facility is enforcing Notice 76 Vehicle Checks are completed by the carriers prior to leaving to reduce potential for accidents. Employees are also being provided with contact numbers to call should the run into a threatening situation or are otherwise challenged during the performance of their work.

Capital District has also partnered with the NALC to create a Joint Safety Task Force that will focus on employee safety throughout the units identified with safety concerns. This process will begin on July 7, 2014 and will be ongoing.

Capital District is also continuing to hire City Carrier Assistants (CCA's) in an effort to fill all 500 authorized positions. Currently, 350 of these positions are staffed.

175 CCA's have also been converted to Full Time Regular status.

**Target Implementation Date**

August 2014

**Responsible Official**

EAS Managers in each Unit

Capital District is committed to the safety of every employee that serves the United States Postal Service.

This report and management's response do not contain information that may be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA.



Kelvin L. Williams  
District Manager

cc: Leslie Johnson-Frick  
Salvatore Vacca  
Skip Stinson  
Joseph Molfetto  
Steven Darragh



Contact us via our [Hotline](#) and [FOIA](#) forms, follow us on social networks, or call our Hotline at 1-888-877-7644 to report fraud, waste or abuse. Stay informed.

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