Brighton Main Post Office, Brighton, CO: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT
Report Number 24-137-1-R24 | September 24, 2024

Transmittal Letter

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

September 24, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR: DOUGLAS S. SMITH
MANAGER, COLORADO-WYOMING DISTRICT

[signature: Joseph E. Wolski]

FROM: Joseph E. Wolski
Director, Field Operations, Atlantic & WestPac

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Brighton Main Post Office, Brighton, CO: Delivery
Operations (Report Number 24-137-1-R24)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the
Brighton Main Post Office in Brighton, CO.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
    Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Executive Vice President
    Vice President, Delivery Operations
    Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations
    Vice President, WestPac Area Retail & Delivery Operations
    Director, Retail & Post Office Operations Maintenance
    Corporate Audit and Response Management

Results

Background

The U.S. Postal Service's mission is to provide timely, reliable, secure, and affordable mail and package delivery to more than 160 million residential and business addresses across the country. The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews delivery operations at facilities across the country and provides management with timely feedback in furtherance of this mission.

This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Brighton Main Post Office in Brighton, CO (Project Number 24-137-1). The Brighton Main Post Office is in the Colorado-Wyoming (CO-WY) District of the WestPac Area and services ZIP Codes 80601, 80602 and 80603 (see Figure 1). These ZIP Codes serve 100,196 people in a predominantly urban area. Specifically, 90,021 (90 percent) live in urban communities and 10,175 (10 percent) live in rural communities.[1]

This delivery unit has 20 rural routes and 14 city routes. The Brighton Main Post Office is one of four delivery units[2] the OIG reviewed during the week of July 29, 2024, that are serviced by the Denver Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC).

We assessed all units serviced by the Denver P&DC based on the number of Customer 360[3] (C360) delivery-related inquiries,[4] Informed Delivery[5] contacts, stop-the-clock[6] (STC) scans performed away from the delivery point, and undelivered route information between March 1 and May 31, 2024. We also reviewed first and last mile failures[7] between March 2 and May 31, 2024.

We judgmentally selected the Brighton Main Post Office primarily based on the number of C360

inquiries related to delivery and Informed Delivery contacts. The unit was also selected based on last mile failures. See Table 1 for a comparison of some of these metrics between the unit and the rest of the district.

Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Brighton Main Post Office
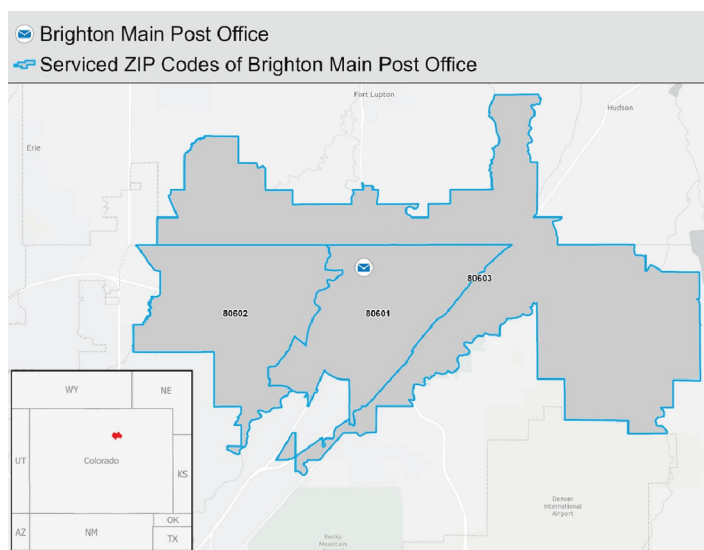
Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

Table 1. Delivery Metric Comparison Between March 1 and May 31, 2024

Delivery Metric	Unit Average per Route	District Average per Route
C360 Delivery Inquiries	6.4	6.2
Informed Delivery Contacts	18.4	11.8

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of Postal Service's C360 and Informed Delivery, and Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data extracted July 1, 2024. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

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1   We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from 2020 Census Bureau information.
2   The other three units were the Edgewater Branch, Lakewood, CO (Project Number 24-137-2); the Mile High Station, Denver, CO (Project Number 24-137-3); and the Stockyards Station, Denver, CO (Project Number 24-137-4).
3   A cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.
4   A compilation of package inquiry, package pickup, daily mail service, and hold mail inquiries.
5   Informed Delivery is a free and optional notification service that gives residential customers the ability to digitally preview their letter-sized mail and submit inquiries for mailpieces that were expected for delivery but have not arrived.
6   A scan event that indicates the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the mailpiece. Examples of STC scans include "Delivered," "Available for Pickup," and "No Access."
7   First mile failures occur when a mailpiece is collected and does not receive a processing scan at the P&DC on the day that it was intended. Last mile failures occur after the mailpiece has been processed at the P&DC on a final processing operation and is not delivered to the customer on the day it was intended.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Brighton Main Post Office in Brighton, CO.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on five audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,[8] inaccurate carrier complement and timekeeping, and property conditions. Specifically, we reviewed delivery metrics, including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, carrier complement and timekeeping, and distribution uptime.[9] During our site visit, we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; timekeeping documentation; and unit safety, security, and maintenance conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and in the "Notice Left" area[10] and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 2 with management on September 9, 2024, and included their comments, where appropriate.

We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding conditions we identified at the Brighton Main Post Office. We will issue a separate report[11] that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all four delivery units, as well as the district. See Appendix A for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Brighton Main Post Office. Specifically, we found issues with four of the five areas we reviewed (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Results

Audit Area	Deficiencies Identified	
	Yes	No
Delayed Mail	X	
Package Scanning	X	
Arrow Keys		X
Carrier Complement and Timekeeping	X	
Property Conditions	X	

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of July 29, 2024

We did not identify any issues with arrow keys or carrier complement. However, we did identify issues with timekeeping management (see Finding #3).

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8 A distinctively shaped key carriers use to open mail-receiving receptacles, such as street collection boxes and panels of apartment house mailboxes equipped with an arrow lock. Arrow keys are accountable property and are subject to strict controls.
9 Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.
10 The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.
11 Project Number 24-137.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of July 30, 2024, we identified 309 delayed mailpieces at 17 carrier cases. Specifically, we identified 301 letters and 8 flats. In addition, management did not report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)[12] system. See Figure 2 for an example of delayed mail found at carrier cases. Further, the carriers did not complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,[13] to document undelivered mailpieces.

Figure 2. Example of Delayed Mail at the Carrier Case

Source: OIG photo taken July 30, 2024.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not verify that all mail was cleared from the unit and any delayed mail was accurately reported in the DCV system. The postmaster stated that he did not report the undelivered mail as delayed because it was the result of a broken customer lock box on a carrier route, and he was not aware that he was required to report it in the

DCV system or use the PS Form 1571. The postmaster stated that the unit does not use the PS Form 1571 to document undelivered mailpieces as he was not familiar with the form.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have conducted an adequate walkthrough of the workroom to verify that all mail was delivered, and that carriers documented on PS Form 1571 the reason for undelivered mail brought back from the street. Postal Service policy[14] states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. In addition, managers are required[15] to report all mail in the delivery unit after the carriers have left for their street duties as either delayed or curtailed in the DCV system. Further, management must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When mail is delayed, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand. In addition, inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in the DCV system provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with an inaccurate status of mail delays and can result in improper actions taken to address issues.

Postal Service Response
The Postal Service agreed with this finding. See Appendix B for management's comments in their entirety.

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12 A tool for unit management to manually self-report delayed mail, which provides a snapshot of daily mail conditions at the point in time when carriers have departed for the street.
13 PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.
14 *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.
15 *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide,* August 2023.

Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees scanned packages improperly at the delivery unit, scanned packages away from the intended delivery point, and handled packages incorrectly at the unit.

We reviewed package scanning data for scans that occurred at the unit and removed any potentially accurate scans performed.[16] In total, employees improperly scanned 308 packages at the delivery unit between April and June 2024 (see Table 3). Further analysis of the STC[17] scan data for these packages showed that 49.4 percent of them were scanned "No Secure Location Available."

Table 3. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	Count	Percentage
No Secure Location Available	152	49.4%
Delivered	89	28.9%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	27	8.8%
Refused	23	7.5%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	13	4.2%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	3	1.0%
No Authorized Recipient Available	1	0.3%
Total	**308**	**100%***

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service's Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.
*Total percentage does not equal 100% due to rounding.

We also reviewed 79 scans occurring away from the delivery unit and over 1,000 feet[18] from the intended delivery point between April and June 2024 (see Table 4). We removed scans that could have been performed within policy, such as "Animal Interference" and "Unsafe conditions." Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 98.7 percent of them were scanned "Delivered."

Table 4. STC Scans Over 1,000 Feet Away From the Delivery Point

STC Scan Type	Count	Percentage
Delivered	78	98.7%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	1	1.3%
Total	**79**	**100%**

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service's PTR System data.

For example, the map below (see Figure 3) shows an instance where a carrier scanned a package as vacant 3.9 miles away from the delivery point.

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16 This data does not include scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as "Delivered – PO Box" and "Customer (Vacation) Hold." Additionally, PO Box scans at the unit were only counted when the delivery point was an address away from the unit. This category does not include mail addressed for a PO Box.
17 A scan event that indicates the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the mailpiece. Examples of STC scans include "Delivered," "Available for Pick-up," and "No Access."
18 Packages are expected to be scanned within a designated buffer distance from the delivery point. The OIG evaluates any package that was scanned more than 1,000 feet from the delivery point.

Figure 3. Scan Away From the Delivery Point in Brighton, Colorado
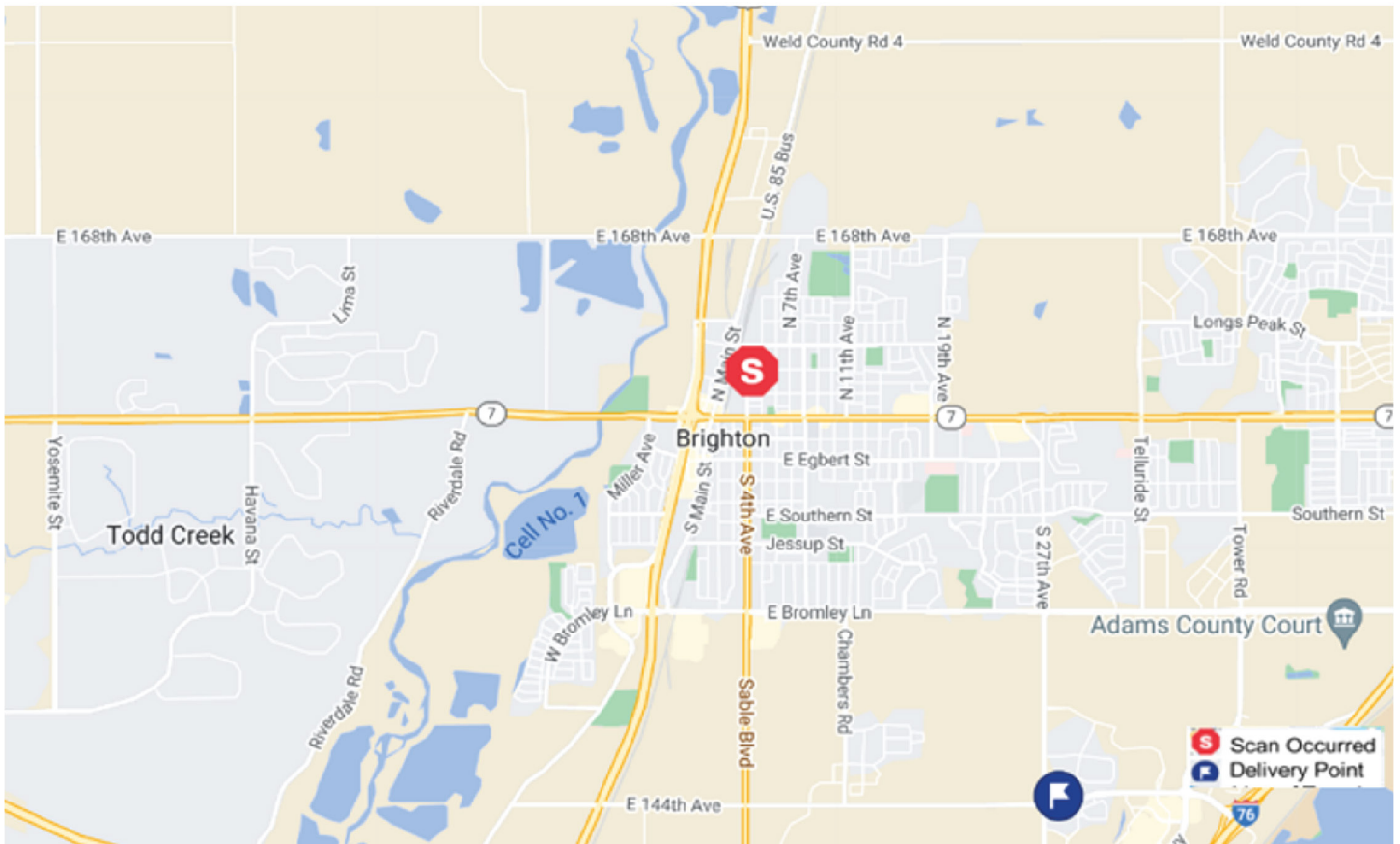
Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

We also found issues with scanning and handling of packages in the unit. On the morning of July 30, 2024, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 60 packages[19] to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 60 sampled packages, 16 (26.7 percent) had improper scans or handling issues, including:

- Six packages (five from the carrier cases and one from the "Notice Left" area) were scanned "Delivery Attempted – No Access," and were scanned away from the delivery point. These scans occurred between 0.6 and 4.3 miles from the delivery point.

- Four packages (three from the carrier cases and one from the "Notice Left" area) were scanned "Delivered" which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer's delivery address.

- Three packages from the "Notice Left" were scanned "No Secure Location Available" and were scanned 2.2 miles away from the delivery point.

- Two packages from the carrier cases were scanned "No Such Number" at the unit and were scanned between 0.8 and 4.4 miles away from the delivery point. One package was successfully delivered the next day.

- One package from the carrier case was scanned "Vacant" and was scanned 3.9 miles away from the delivery point.

Further, nine packages in the "Notice Left" area were not returned to the sender, as required. These

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19   We judgmentally selected 30 packages from the carrier cases and 30 packages from the "Notice Left" area.

packages ranged from two to 124 days past their scheduled return dates.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management had not always effectively monitored and enforced proper package scanning and handling procedures. The STC scans at the unit declined from April to June 2024. The postmaster stated that he has been monitoring and addressing scanning issues regularly, but he was not aware of the improper scans our team found.

The packages in the "Notice Left" section were not returned due to inadequate management oversight. The postmaster stated that they do not have a regular clerk that handles the area. Additionally, the postmaster stated that he does not review the "Notice Left" section due to competing priorities, such as ensuring that the mail is delivered.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance. The Postal Service's goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,[20] which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.[21] Packages in the "Notice Left" area should have been reviewed for second notices and returned to sender if they remained after the prescribed number of days.[22]

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Customers rely on accurate scan data to track their packages in real time. When employees do not scan mailpieces correctly, customers are unable to determine the actual status of their packages. By improving scanning operations, management can improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and the Postal Service brand.

> ### Postal Service Response
> The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

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20 *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.
21 *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.
22 *Notice Left and Return Guidelines,* April 2016. Domestic packages should be returned to sender on the 15th calendar day after a notice is left, and international packages should be returned to sender on the 30th calendar day after a notice is left.

Finding # 3: Timekeeping Management

What We Found

We determined that the station had nine instances of unresolved disallowed time occurrences between April 6 through June 28, 2024. Management did not complete PS Forms 1017-A, *Time Disallowance Record,* entries in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS).[23] Further, management did not print and retain PS Forms 1017-A, for any of these occurrences. The unit created a binder in June of 2024, but it did not have any of the nine unresolved disallowed time occurrences, and it was not maintained in a secure location.

Why Did It Occur

The postmaster stated that he did not complete the disallowed time occurrence documentation in TACS because he was not aware that he was required to do so. In addition, he stated that he only recently became aware of the requirement to maintain a binder. However, he was not consistently printing and including the Forms 1017-A in the binder. Further, he was not aware the binder needed to be maintained in a secure location.

What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy[24] states unit personnel must complete PS Form 1017-A entries and place them in a notebook binder that is secured from unauthorized access, documenting the reason for the disallowed time. Postal Service guidance[25] provides instructions on how to complete the entries in TACS.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When proper documentation of time disallowance and unauthorized overtime is not completed, management could incur additional managerial workhours. In addition, the Postal Service risks violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act[26] when unit management does not maintain documentation that shows the justifiable reason and employee notification for disallowed time.

> **Postal Service Response**
> The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

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23   The system used by the Postal Service to automate the collection of employee time and attendance information.
24   Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance,* Section 146 – Approving Entries, February 2016.
25   TACS Training Page, Training Video 1017-A 1017-B Enhancement Demo.
26   29 USC § 201-219.
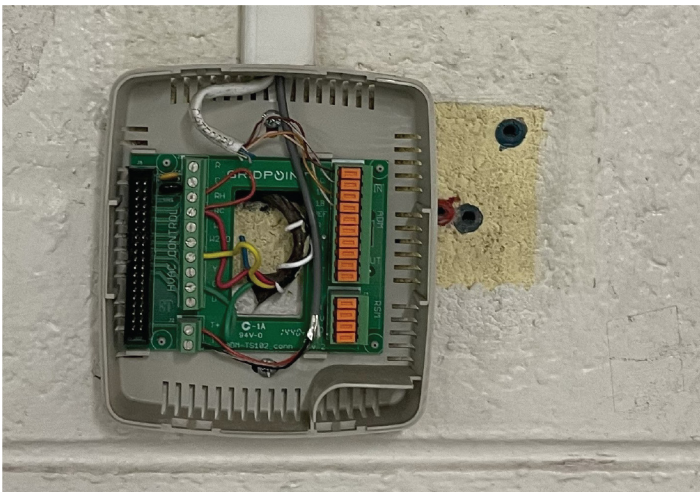
Finding # 4: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found safety and maintenance issues at the Brighton Main Post Office.

Property Safety

- An electrical cover missing with exposed wires in the break room (see Figure 4).

- A blocked fire alarm in the dock area.

- A blocked self-contained eye wash station in the workroom area (see Figure 5).

Figure 4. Missing Electrical Cover

Source: OIG photo taken on July 30, 2024.

Figure 5. Blocked Eyewash Station

Source: OIG photo taken on July 30, 2024.

Property Maintenance

- Previously used parcel lockers stored in the dock area.

- Damaged walls in the men's restroom.

- Missing and stained ceiling tiles on the workroom floor (see Figure 6).

- An inoperable urinal in the men's restroom downstairs and an inoperable toilet in the men's restroom upstairs.

- A broken stall lock door in the men's restroom downstairs.

- A broken heat cover laying on the workroom floor.

- Potholes in parking lot area.

- Scrap garage doors on the parking lot grounds.

- Missing plaster on the wall in the breakroom and in the women's restroom.

Figure 6. Missing and Stained Ceiling Tiles on the Workroom Floor

Source: OIG photo taken on July 30, 2024.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight and take the necessary actions to verify that property condition issues were corrected due to competing priorities. The postmaster stated that he was aware of many of the issues and has been working to address the issues, but he has not made it a priority due to focusing on mail delivery and addressing other issues at the unit.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety and maintenance issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. The Postal Service requires management to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers.[27]

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Management's attention to maintenance, safety, and security deficiencies can reduce the risk of injuries to employees and customers; reduce related costs, such as workers' compensation claims, lawsuits, and penalties; and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

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27   Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook,* July 2020.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from July through September 2024 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.

In planning and conducting the audit, we obtained an understanding of the Brighton Main Post Office internal control structure to help determine the nature, timing, and extent of our audit procedures. We reviewed the management controls for overseeing the program and mitigating associated risks. Additionally, we assessed the internal control components and underlying principles, and we determined that the following three components were significant to our audit objective:

- Control Activities
- Information and Communication
- Monitoring

We developed audit work to ensure that we assessed these controls. Based on the work performed, we identified internal control deficiencies related to all three components that were significant within the context of our objectives. We will issue a separate report that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for the Brighton Main Post Office, Edgewater Branch, Mile High Station and the Stockyards Station, as well as the district. Our recommendations, if implemented, should correct the weaknesses we identified.

We assessed the reliability of PTR, DCV, and the TACS data by reviewing existing information, comparing data from other sources, observing operations, and interviewing Postal Service officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Appendix B: Management's Comments

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

September 13, 2024

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Management Response: Brighton Main Post Office, Brighton, CO: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-037-1-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Brighton Main Post Office, Brighton, CO: Delivery Operations.*

Management agrees with the four findings in the report on delayed mail, package scanning, complement and timekeeping management, and property conditions.

Management has begun taking steps to address the four findings.

Delayed Mail: Daily huddles are held to touch on scanning integrity and accuracy of mail delivery. Management has conducted service talks to reiterate policy on committed mail and the requirement to complete PS form 1571 to document undelivered mail. Management will provide training on the proper handling and recording of delayed mail in DCV and conduct reviews to monitor for compliance.

Package Scanning: Management provided service talks regarding scanning integrity and scanning accuracy. Management will continue to provide service talks and discuss proper handling and package scanning procedures in daily huddles. Management will conduct reviews to monitor for compliance.

Timekeeping Management: Local management will be trained on the proper recording of disallowed time occurrences in TACS. In addition, a stand-up talk was completed with management regarding properly securing the 1017 Binder. The binder is now properly secured in a locked cage.

Property Conditions: Management has abated seven of the thirteen property issues identified and has submitted work orders for repairs required by other resources. Management will continue to follow up with other resources to ensure completion of projects.

E-SIGNED by Douglas.S Smith
on 2024-09-13 15:08:23 EDT
_____

Doug Smith
Manager, CO-WY District

Cc: Corporate Audit & Response

Contact us via our Hotline and FOIA forms. Follow us on social networks. Stay informed.

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