

Massachusetts-Rhode Island District: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 24-154-R25 | March 24, 2025



**Brookline Branch
Post Office**



**Revere
Carrier Annex**



**Fort Point
Station**



BOSTON

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Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

March 24, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: MICHAEL W. RAKES
MANAGER, MASSACHUSETTS-RHODE ISLAND DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Wolski", is centered below the memorandum header.

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

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Massachusetts-Rhode Island District: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 24-154-R25)

This report presents the results of our audits of delivery operations and property conditions in the Massachusetts-Rhode Island District in the Atlantic Area.

All recommendations require U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. Recommendations 1 and 2 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. We consider recommendation 3 closed with issuance of this report.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Valeta Bradford, 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, Atlantic 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. To fulfill this role, the Postal Service is committed to ensuring its delivery platform and services are always a trusted, visible, and valued part of America's social and economic infrastructure. This includes leveraging people, technology, and systems to provide world-class visibility of mail and packages as they move through the Postal Service's integrated system. 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 report presents a summary of the results of our self-initiated audits of delivery operations and property conditions at three delivery units, as well as district-wide delivery operations in the Massachusetts-Rhode Island (MA-RI) District in the Atlantic Area (Project Number 24-154). The delivery units included the Brookline Branch, Fort Point Station,

and Revere Carrier Annex in Massachusetts. The report also responds to a delegation of U.S. Senators and Representatives to review specific mail delivery concerns in Massachusetts.

We previously issued interim reports¹ to district management for each of the three delivery units regarding the conditions we identified. In addition, we issued a report on the efficiency of operations at the Boston Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC),² which services these delivery units. We judgmentally selected the three delivery units based on the number of Customer 360³ (C360) inquiries related to delivery,⁴ Informed Delivery⁵ contacts associated with the unit, and stop-the-clock (STC)⁶ scans performed away from the delivery point and compared them to the district average. The units were also chosen based on first and last mile failures⁷ and undelivered routes.

These three delivery units had a total of 143 city routes, 12 combination services routes,⁸ and six parcel routes⁹ that served about 168,519 people across several ZIP Codes in urban communities¹⁰ (see [Table 1](#)).

1 *Brookline Branch, Brookline, MA: Delivery Operations* (Report Number, 24-154-1-R25, dated December 10, 2024); *Fort Point Station, Boston, MA: Delivery Operations* (Report Number, 24-154-2-R25, dated December 10, 2024); and *Revere Carrier Annex, Revere, MA: Delivery Operations* (Report Number, 24-154-3-R25, dated December 10, 2024).

2 *Efficiency of Operations at the Boston Processing and Distribution Center, Boston, MA* (Report Number, 24-153-R25, dated December 10, 2024).

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 mail piece. Examples of STC scans include "Delivered," "Available for Pickup," and "Delivery Attempted-No Access to Delivery Location."

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 plant on a final processing operation and is not delivered to the customer on the day it was intended.

8 Motorized routes that provide a variety of services such as collecting inbound mail, delivering mail, and placing mail in lockable receptacles located along carrier routes for carriers to pick up and deliver.

9 A city route in which the principal function is to deliver large packages.

10 We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from 2020 Census Bureau information.

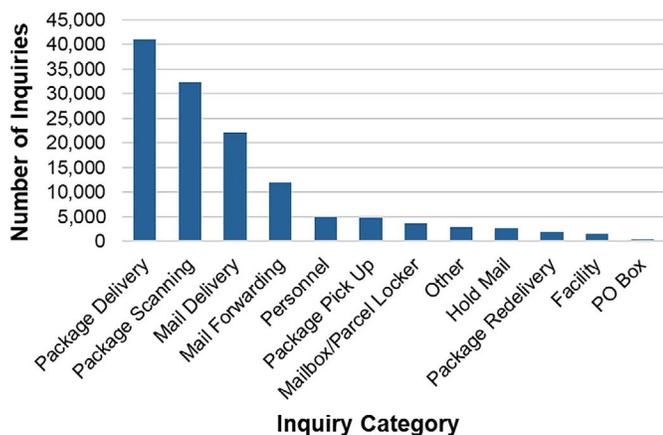
Table 1. Service Area and Population

| Delivery Units | Service Area and ZIP Codes | Population | City Routes | Combination Services Routes | Parcel Routes |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Brookline Branch | 02445 and 02446 | 54,374 | 39 | 12 | 6 |
| Fort Point Station | 02109, 02110, 02111, and 02210 | 22,019 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| Revere Carrier Annex | 02151 and 02176 | 92,126 | 64 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 168,519 | 143 | 12 | 6 |

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service National Labeling List and Census data.

We conducted a text analysis of C360 inquiries for the entire MA-RI District between October 1, 2023, and November 30, 2024. In total, we reviewed and categorized the customer notes for 192,642 inquiries.¹¹ See Figure 1 for the results.

Figure 1. C360 Inquiry Analysis



Source: OIG analysis of C360 inquiries.

Package delivery, package scanning, and mail delivery issues made up the majority of the C360 comments. Examples of customer comments from these categories included:

- Receiving “delivered” scans for packages that were not delivered.
- Not receiving mail delivery for several days in a row.

- Not receiving all intended mail each delivery day.

We also analyzed the Postal Service’s Triangulation Report¹² to determine how the MA-RI District performed for mail and package delivery in relation to all 50 Postal Service districts. The Postal Service provides an opportunity ranking that lists all 50 districts from 1 through 50, where 1 indicates the lowest performing district and 50 is the top performing district. For the period September 1 – November 30, 2024, the MA-RI District had an average rank of 43 for mail delivery and 38 for package delivery, placing the district as significantly above average for mail delivery and above average for package delivery. See Table 2 for the results of our analysis.

Table 2. MA-RI District Average Ranking Compared to All 50 Districts

| Month | Mail Delivery Opportunity Rank | Package Delivery Opportunity Rank |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| September | 39 | 33 |
| October | 43 | 40 |
| November | 45 | 40 |
| Average | 43 | 38 |

Source: Postal Service Triangulation Report.

¹¹ We analyzed 192,642 inquiries and excluded 40,396 voice messages, 14,726 text messages with less than or equal to 40 characters, and 6,739 outliers — resulting in 130,781 records used to create the model by category.

¹² The Triangulation Report is designed to provide the health of operations within a delivery unit regarding mail and package delivery. The report includes an analysis of several key performance indicators including C360 inquiries, first and last mile failures, route coverage, employee availability, and scanning integrity.

We reviewed employee retention data obtained from Workforce¹³ for the MA-RI District. From December 1, 2023, through November 30, 2024, the MA-RI District hired a total of 2,942 carriers and clerks. Of those hired during this time, 849 (28.9 percent) were no longer employed in the district as of January 14, 2025. Overall, the MA-RI District had a better employee retention record when compared to other districts we recently audited (see Table 3). In addition, the district had 936 authorized Executive and Administrative Schedule (EAS)¹⁴ positions, of which 903 employees (3.5 percent vacancy rate) were on the rolls as of January 14, 2025.

Table 3. District Turnover Information

| District Audited | Turnover Percent for Carriers & Clerks | Hiring Time Period |
|------------------|--|-------------------------|
| AL-MS | 45.1 | July 2023 – August 2024 |
| CO-WY | 45.1 | Oct. 2023 – Sept. 2024 |
| OH-2 | 32.3 | Oct. 2023 – Sept. 2024 |
| MA-RI | 28.9 | Dec. 2023 – Nov. 2024 |

Source: Postal Service Workforce.

There were three different district managers during our audits. We interviewed two, and they both stated hiring for the Greater Boston area can be challenging at times. These challenges include long commute times and high rent, parking, and public transportation costs in the city.

Delivering for America Initiatives in MA-RI District

As part of the Postal Service’s ten-year plan, *Delivering for America*, it is making changes to its delivery, processing, and logistics networks. We reviewed Mail Processing Facility Reviews (MPFR)¹⁵

to assess processing facilities undergoing changes within the MA-RI District.¹⁶ Specifically, an MPFR was conducted to move originating letter and flat mail from the Brockton, MA, P&DC to the Providence, RI, P&DC. The final decision to proceed was approved on April 12, 2024. The Postal Service estimates this consolidation effort will save between \$1.8 and \$2.4 million each year. The Brockton facility is expected to remain open and be modernized as a Local Processing Center.¹⁷

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations in the MA-RI District of the Atlantic Area.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on the following audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,¹⁸ carrier separations and transfers, and property safety and security conditions. Specifically, we reviewed delivery metrics, including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, and carrier complement. During our site visits we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; employee separation procedures; and unit safety and security conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and interviewed unit management and employees.

In addition to summarizing our findings at the three delivery units, we analyzed service performance scores for First-Class Mail, Marketing Mail, Priority Mail,¹⁹ and Ground Advantage²⁰ products, and reviewed carrier and clerk retention levels within the MA-RI District. Lastly, we obtained and analyzed data from various Postal Service systems related to facility closures, suspensions, leases, and vacancies in the Greater Boston area. We discussed our observations and conclusions, as summarized in Table 3, with

¹³ Workforce is a centralized hub that links to staff planning, insights, and analytics.
¹⁴ EAS is a salary structure that applies to most managerial and administrative employees.
¹⁵ MPFRs assess the service standard impacts for all classes of mail, consider issues that customers may encounter, identify impacts to staffing, and analyze the savings and costs associated with moving mail processing operations.
¹⁶ For the current listing of these reviews, see MPFRs.
¹⁷ These processing facilities sort letters and flats to individual mail carrier routes in the regional area, as well as provide some package sortation.
¹⁸ 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.
¹⁹ An expedited service for shipping mailable matter, subject to certain standards, such as size and weight limits, that includes tracking and delivery in one to three expected business days.
²⁰ A service providing an affordable and reliable way to send packages inside the U.S. Packages under 70 pounds arrive in two to five business days.

management on March 10, 2025, and included its comments, where appropriate. See [Appendix B](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues related to service performance across the MA-RI District, and issues affecting delivery operations, arrow key management, employee transfers, and property conditions at the delivery units audited. Specifically, we found delayed mail and property condition issues at two units; deficiencies with package scanning and arrow keys at all three units; and deficiencies with employee transfers at one unit (see Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of Issues Identified

| Controls Reviewed | Deficiencies Identified - Yes or No | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Brookline Branch | Fort Point Station | Revere Carrier Annex |
| Delayed Mail | Yes | No | Yes |
| Package Scanning and Handling | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Arrow Keys | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Employee Transfers | Yes | No | No |
| Property Conditions | Yes | NA* | Yes |

Source: Interim reports for selected units.
 *We did not review property conditions at the Fort Point Station because it is co-located with the Boston P&DC, which maintains the building.

Finding #1: Service Performance in the MA-RI District

What We Found

We visited three delivery units in the MA-RI District on the morning of September 17, 2024, and identified about 10,829 pieces of delayed mail at two of the units from the prior day.²¹ See Table 5 for the number of pieces for each mail type and Figure 2 for an example of delayed mail found at a unit. Management at the Brookline Branch and Revere Carrier Annex did not report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)²² system. In addition, carriers at these two units did not complete the Postal Service (PS) Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,²³ to document undelivered mailpieces.

Table 5. Type of Delayed Mail

| Type of Mail | Brookline Branch | Fort Point Station | Revere Carrier Annex | Total |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Letters | 4,272 | 0 | 1,889 | 6,161 |
| Flats | 3,711 | 0 | 943 | 4,654 |
| Packages | 9 | 0 | 5 | 14 |
| Totals | 7,992 | 0 | 2,837 | 10,829 |

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit September 17, 2024.

Figure 2. Example of Delayed Mail at a Brookline Branch Carrier Case

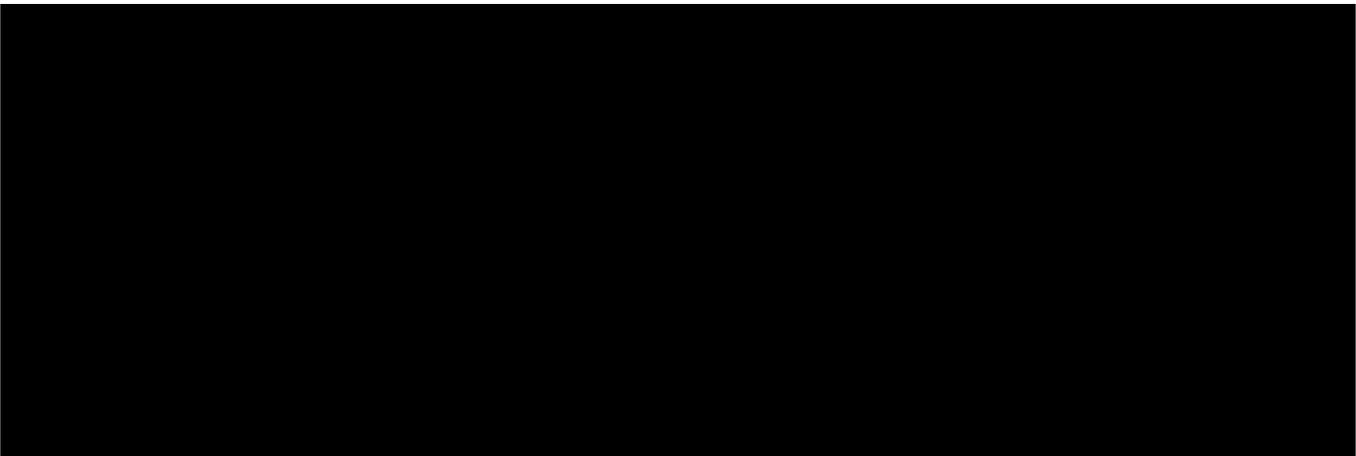
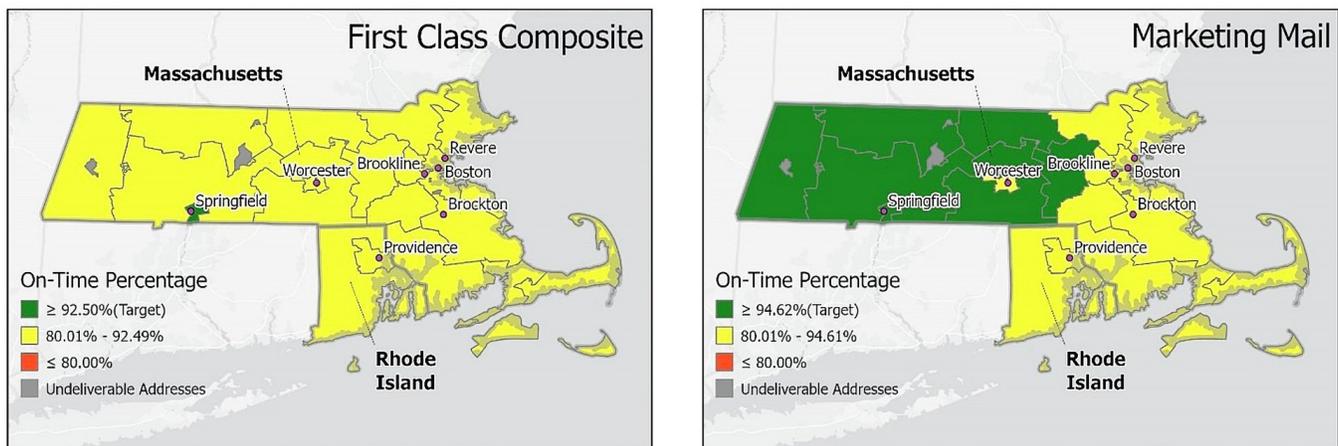


Source: OIG photo taken September 17, 2024.

We also found portions of the district had service performance scores that did not meet target goals. Specifically, we analyzed service performance scores in the district for First-Class Mail, Marketing Mail, Priority Mail, and Ground Advantage products mailed within the MA-RI District between April 1 and September 30, 2024. This analysis showed performance scores for First-Class Mail did not meet the target score in any area of the district. In addition, Marketing Mail and Ground Advantage products did not meet the targets for much of the district, whereas Priority Mail generally met the target for most of the district's 3-digit ZIP Codes. See Figure 3 for heat maps showing the performance for each product in the MA-RI District.

²¹ Count of mail included individual piece counts and estimates based on conversion factors in Management Instruction PO-610-2007-1, *Piece Count Recording System*.
²² 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.
²³ PS Form 1571 lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

Figure 3. Service Performance Heat Maps by 3-Digit ZIP Code in the MA-RI District from April 1 - September 30, 2024



Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service Informed Visibility (IV) and Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) data. IV provides comprehensive and integrated capabilities for data-driven real-time service performance measurement and diagnostics of market-dominant products, mail inventory and predictive workloads of all mail to include packages, and end-to-end tracking and reporting for mail. EDW is a repository intended for all data and the central source for information on retail, financial, and operational performance.

We analyzed service performance scores for the same period for mail being sent from the district to other locations in the nation and mail coming into the district from other locations in the nation. Overall, we found the district met performance targets for inbound Marketing Mail; however, it did not meet the target for outbound Marketing Mail. In addition, it did not meet the targets for inbound or outbound First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, or Ground Advantage products. Although service performance failures for this type of mail could be attributed to a plant or delivery unit outside the district, the failures may negatively impact customer perceptions within the district.

While the district had a significantly above average opportunity ranking in the Triangulation Report

for mail delivery and an above average ranking for package delivery, we found 10,829 unreported delayed mail pieces at two of the three units. In addition, C360 complaints in the district were primarily about undelivered packages, poor scanning, and undelivered mail. Based on these observations, we would expect to see a significant amount of reported delayed mail across the district. However, we reviewed DCV data for the entire district for September 16, 2024. Of the 378 units listed in the DCV system for the district, we determined only 12 units (3.2 percent) reported 23,693 total pieces of delayed mail. This indicates issues with reporting delayed mail are more prevalent within the district overall.

We interviewed the current and previous district manager to determine how the district tracks local service data and lost mail. Both managers stated they review metrics such as C360, National Delivery Intelligence,²⁴ and Triangulation Report data daily. They also discuss mail arrival from the plants to the delivery units with plant managers. In addition, neither manager was aware of any significant volumes of lost mail.²⁵

Why Did It Occur

The delayed mail identified at the Brookline Branch and Revere Carrier Annex occurred primarily because unit management did not know or enforce the Redline²⁶ process. In addition, the Brookline Branch AM supervisor stated she did not report delayed mail in the DCV system due to other priorities, such as assigning staff to case and deliver mail for uncovered routes. The PM supervisor, on the other hand, did not know delayed mail was supposed to be reported in the DCV system. Management at both units did not ensure carriers completed PS Form 1571 for undelivered mail brought back to the unit, and the district was not relying on DCV reporting to track local service data.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have processed and delivered all mail daily and properly identified any mail returned from a route. Postal Service policy²⁷ states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. In addition, policy²⁸ states delivery units must follow the Redline process, which includes carriers completing a PS Form 1571 for any undelivered mail brought back to the delivery unit. Further, managers must complete the PM checklist verifying that the unit is free of all outgoing mail.

Managers are also required²⁹ 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. For example, in our analysis of the C360 inquiries detailed in the [Background](#), we found numerous instances of customers stating mail was not delivered for multiple days in a row. In addition, inaccurate delayed mail reporting provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with an unreliable status of mail delays and can result in improper actions taken to address issues.

Management Actions

During our audit, district management provided evidence demonstrating unit management at the three units received training on proper delivery practices and reporting of delayed mail. It also provided evidence that Brookline Branch management is following the Redline process. In addition, district management monitored for proper delayed mail reporting at the units we visited, which may improve mail visibility.

24 National Delivery Intelligence is a tool that leverages data from Intelligent Mail barcodes to provide near real-time visibility into the mailstream, allowing the Postal Service to track mailpieces throughout their journey and identify potential delivery delays or issues, essentially providing insights into where mail is located and when it is likely to be delivered, enhancing delivery accuracy and customer service.

25 For a discussion of facility closures that could impact service, see [Appendix A](#).

26 A standardized framework encompassing manager and carrier responsibilities after carriers return to the delivery unit upon completion of delivery assignments, ensuring that any mail returned from the street is identified with a signed completed PS Form 1571 and that no mail is taken back to the carrier case.

27 *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

28 Standard Operating Procedures, Redline Policy.

29 *DCV Learn and Grow*, August 1, 2024.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **District Manager, Massachusetts-Rhode Island District**, confirm management at the Revere Carrier Annex is following the required Redline process and properly documenting delayed mail.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **District Manager, Massachusetts-Rhode Island District**, train management at all delivery units in the district on the proper procedures for reporting delayed mail

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding and the associated recommendations. Regarding recommendation 1, management at the Revere Carrier Annex will be trained on the Redline Process and proper use of PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*. The target implementation date is April 30, 2025. Regarding recommendation 2, management stated it will provide a district-wide webinar on the proper procedures for reporting delayed mail in the DCV system. The target implementation date is May 31, 2025. See [Appendix C](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

OIG Evaluation

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to recommendations 1 and 2.

Finding #2: Package Scanning and Handling

What We Found

We identified package scanning and handling issues at all three delivery units. In total, employees scanned 922 packages at the Brookline Branch, Fort Point Station, and Revere Carrier Annex instead of at the recipients' delivery point from May 1 – July 31, 2024 (see Table 6).

Further analysis of STC scan data for these packages showed about 87.4 percent were scanned as “Delivered.” This data did not include scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit such as “Delivered – PO Box” and “Customer (Vacation) Hold,” but rather represented scans that should routinely be made at the point of delivery.

Table 6. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

| STC Scan Type | Brookline Branch | Fort Point Station | Revere Carrier Annex | Total | Percent |
|---|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Delivered | 679 | 54 | 73 | 806 | 87.4 |
| Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location | 31 | 4 | 56 | 91 | 9.9 |
| Delivered to Agent for Final Delivery | 5 | 6 | 0 | 11 | 1.2 |
| Refused | 5 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0.7 |
| No Secure Location Available | 3 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0.5 |
| Delivery Exception – Animal Interference | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0.2 |
| No Authorized Recipient Available | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.1 |
| Total | 724 | 64 | 134 | 922 | 100 |

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service's Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data from May 1 – July 31, 2024, for these units. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

We also reviewed 291 scans occurring away from the delivery unit and over 1,000 feet³⁰ from the intended delivery point for the three units from May 1 – July 31, 2024. We removed scans that could have been performed away from the delivery point per the policy, such as “Animal Interference” and “Unsafe Conditions,” from our review. Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed 85.6 percent were scanned as “Delivered” (see Table 7).

Table 7. STC Scans Over 1,000 Feet Away From the Delivery Point

| STC Scan Type | Number of Scans | Percent |
|---|-----------------|------------|
| Delivered | 249 | 85.6 |
| Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location | 32 | 11.0 |
| Delivered to Agent for Final Delivery | 9 | 3.1 |
| Held at Post Office at Customer Request | 1 | 0.3 |
| Total | 291 | 100 |

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service's PTR System data from May 1 – July 31, 2024, for these units.

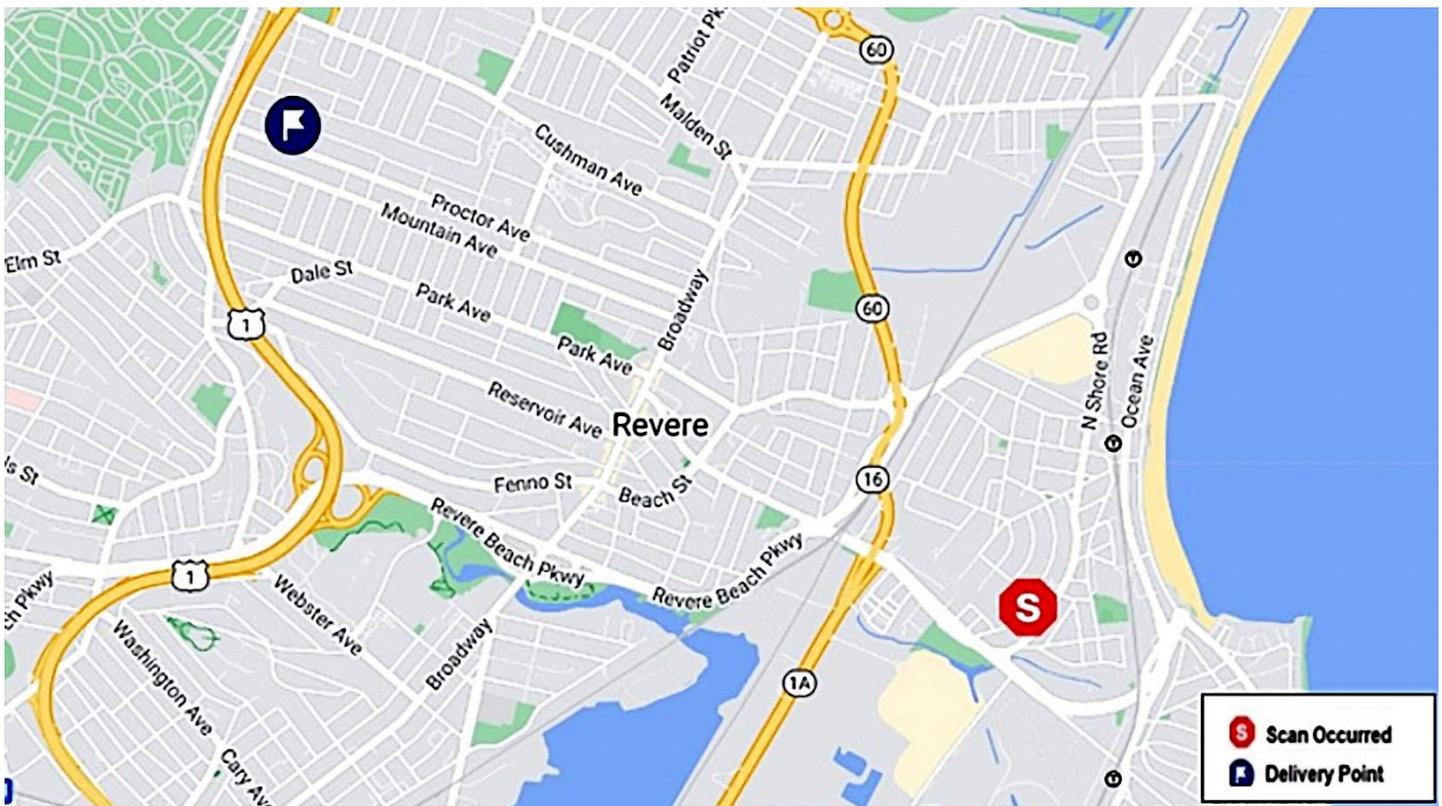
³⁰ Packages are expected to be scanned within a designated buffer distance from the delivery point. The OIG evaluates any package that was scanned more than 1,000 feet from the delivery point.

In addition, on the morning of September 17, 2024, before the carriers arrived for the day, we selected a total of 39 packages from carrier cases at the Fort Point Station and Revere Carrier Annex to review and analyze for scanning and tracking history.³¹ Of the 39 sampled packages, 17 (43.6 percent) had missing/improper scans or improper handling.

Specifically, at the two units, 16 packages had scanning issues, and one was improperly handled, including:

- Ten packages were scanned delivered, which should only occur when a package is successfully left at the customer's delivery address.
- Four packages were scanned over 1,000 feet from the delivery point. These scans ranged from 0.3 miles to 2.2 miles from the delivery point. Three of the packages had "Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location" scans and one was scanned "Delivered" (see Figure 4).
- One package was missing an "Arrival-at-Unit" scan, which is imperative for meeting customer expectations.
- One package that was out for delivery the prior day did not have an STC scan.
- One package had a "Return to Post Office for Address Verification" scan and was left in the carrier case.

Figure 4. Scanned Away From the Delivery Point in Revere, MA



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

Why Did It Occur

Unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce package scanning and handling procedures. Specifically, these issues occurred because:

³¹ The Brookline Branch did not have any packages in the carrier cases to sample.

- Station management at the Brookline Branch stated carriers sometimes get packages intended for customers with Caller Service³² and Premium Forwarding Service.³³ To ensure packages get a “delivered” scan, the carriers stated they scanned these packages as “delivered” in the office before providing them to other unit employees for final processing and delivery. Unit management only checks scanning reports for improper afternoon scans, so it was not aware of these scans.
- Station management at the Fort Point Station did not regularly verify scans were completed and performed at the correct location. In addition, the PM supervisor had instructed carriers to scan all packages with STC scans before returning to the unit. The station manager said he will monitor to make sure the PM supervisor is in alignment with scanning procedures. He also stated the supervisor and carriers may need refresher training on proper scanning procedures.
- The manager at the Revere Carrier Annex stated he was not aware of the improper scans made by carriers. He also stated carriers sometimes scanned packages at the correct location, but the scan data indicated a location farther away. Management had not reported the issue for further investigation to the information technology Help Desk.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance, including verifying all packages were scanned at the delivery point and not at the delivery unit. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,³⁴ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.³⁵ Management should have reported scanner technical issues to the Help Desk for further investigation.³⁶

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. Package scanning complaints were the second most common C360 inquiry type in the district, as demonstrated in [Figure 1](#). By improving scanning operations, management increases mail visibility and customer satisfaction, and enhances the customer experience and integrity of the Postal Service brand.

Management Actions

During our audit, district management provided evidence showing managers at the three units were trained on standard operating procedures governing package scanning and handling, as well as the tracking of scanning performance. District management also verified that unit managers were properly monitoring package scanning at the three delivery units.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **District Manager, Massachusetts-Rhode Island District**, confirm management at the Revere Carrier Annex reported scanner technology issues to the Help Desk.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding and the associated recommendation. Management stated it reported scanner issues to the Help Desk at the Revere Carrier Annex and provided a system-generated ticket log with detailed information on the issues. The Postal Service requested closure upon issuance of this report.

OIG Evaluation

The OIG considers management’s comments responsive to the recommendation. After reviewing the documentation management provided to support actions taken, the OIG agreed to close the recommendation upon issuance of the report.

³² Provides optional delivery service to customers willing to pay a fee, such as those with large volumes of mail.

³³ Provides residential delivery with a forwarding service for customers who are away from their primary residences. Most mail from the permanent address is forwarded once a week via Priority Mail service to the temporary address.

³⁴ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

³⁵ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

³⁶ *Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure - Scanning*, page 4.

Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Management at the three delivery units did not properly manage the arrow keys, and two units did not safeguard the keys. We reviewed the units' arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications Reports (RADAR)³⁷ system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the units. The RADAR lists contained a combined 355 keys at the three units; however, we found discrepancies during our observations on September 18, 2024. For example, we found 413 keys during our observations. Also, 58 keys from the RADAR list were not found at the unit, nor were they reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service as lost. Specifically:

- At the Brookline Branch, the RADAR list showed 94 keys; however, we found 125 keys at the unit. Also, 24 keys that were on the RADAR list could not be located. The arrow keys were not always kept in a secure location and were left unattended [REDACTED]. Unit management did not report any of the missing keys to the Inspection Service.
- At the Fort Point Station, the RADAR list showed 178 keys; however, we found 205 keys at the unit. Also, 30 keys that were on the list could not be located. Unit management did not report any of the missing keys to the Inspection Service.
- At the Revere Carrier Annex, the RADAR list showed 83 keys. Although we found 83 keys at the unit, we could not locate four keys from the list; however, we found four additional keys that were not on the list. In addition, arrow keys were not always kept in a secure location. Specifically, when carriers returned to the unit in the afternoon, we observed them leaving the arrow keys [REDACTED] unattended.

Why Did It Occur

Management at the three delivery units did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage arrow keys. Specifically:

- Brookline Branch management did not have an arrow key accountability process in place. For example, when the station manager was on extended leave, there was no one to ensure the spare keys purchased were accounted for in the RADAR system. Management was not aware two boxes of 100 spare keys were purchased and one of the boxes was left unopened for over a year without being certified in the RADAR system. Also, management was not aware there were missing keys since a supervisor or clerk did not verify all keys had been returned and accounted for daily.
- Fort Point Station management did not ensure the list of keys in RADAR matched the keys at the unit when conducting its key certifications. In addition, the PM supervisor stated he was new to the process and, although he had taken the computer-generated training to enter the certification in RADAR, he was not aware the list of arrow keys in the RADAR system differed from the list of arrow keys the unit maintained in the registry cage. The station manager and supervisor did not report the missing arrow keys to the Inspection Service because they were unaware the unit was missing any keys.
- Revere Carrier Annex management was not aware of the extra keys found or that the arrow key certification did not include all the unit's arrow keys. In addition, unit management did not properly safeguard arrow keys returned by carriers because it overlooked the risk of leaving the keys unattended [REDACTED].

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that arrow key security procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,³⁸ management must keep an accurate inventory of all arrow keys. Any missing arrow keys must be immediately reported to the Inspection Service.

In addition, policy states that arrow keys must remain secured until they are individually assigned

³⁷ The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.

³⁸ *Arrow/Modified Arrow Key (MAL) Key Accountability*, Standard Work Instruction, dated May 2024.

to personnel. A supervisor or clerk must verify employees are signing out keys on the inventory log. Upon return, arrow keys should be deposited in a secure location and a supervisor or clerk must verify all keys have been returned and accounted for daily.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When there is insufficient oversight and supervision of accountable items, such as arrow keys, there is increased risk of mail theft. These thefts damage the Postal Service's reputation and diminish public trust in the nation's mail system. Additionally, because arrow keys open mail receptacles, lost or damaged keys can result in undelivered mail.

Management Actions

During our audit, management at all three facilities provided evidence showing the district was monitoring arrow key procedures and that management received arrow key security training. The units also updated their arrow key logs and properly secured the keys. In addition, district management provided evidence showing the lost arrow keys were reported to the Inspection Service.

Due to management taking these corrective actions, we are not making a recommendation for these arrow key issues.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with the finding.

Finding #4: Employee Transfer at the Brookline Branch

What We Found

Brookline Branch management did not ensure an employee who transferred to another unit was removed from its rolls. Specifically, we identified a supervisor who transferred to another unit more than a year ago but was still on Brookline Branch's rolls.

Why Did It Occur

Unit management had not updated its rolls to reflect the supervisor was transferred to another unit because it relied on the other unit to record the transfer and did not follow up when it was not done.

What Should Have Happened

Postal Service management must process timely employee transfers to properly reflect employee

status and to maximize the office's employee complement.³⁹

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When transferred employees are not removed from the employee rolls, management is unable to hire replacements.

Management Actions

During our audit, unit management provided documentation showing the supervisor who was transferred to another unit was removed from the Brookline Branch's rolls. Due to management taking this corrective action, we are not making a recommendation regarding the employee's transfer.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with the finding.

³⁹ TACS - Supervisors Responsibilities for Time & Attendance (VII), dated February 24, 2010.

Finding #5: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found safety and security issues at the Brookline Branch and Revere Carrier Annex. Examples include:

Property Safety:

- One fire extinguisher was missing an annual inspection. In addition, two fire extinguishers were not accessible. One was blocked in a workroom area and another one was located behind a locked mechanical door.
- Two electrical panels in a workroom area were blocked (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Example of a Blocked Electrical Panel in the Brookline Branch Workroom Area



Source: OIG photo taken September 18, 2024.

Property Security:

- The parking lot gates were not closed and locked after business hours.

In addition, we analyzed specific closures and leases, including office closures caused by property conditions. We did not find that there had been any wrongdoing in managing office closures or suspensions in the offices analyzed.⁴⁰

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight and take the necessary actions to verify property condition issues were corrected at these two units.

For example:

- Brookline Branch management indicated other duties, such as getting the mail out for delivery each day, took priority over addressing the blocked fire extinguisher and electrical panel issues.
- Revere Carrier Annex management was not aware of the inaccessible fire extinguisher or the missing annual inspection. In addition, the PM supervisor stated the gates were not closed at the end of the night because she was not aware it was required.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety and security issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. The Postal Service requires management to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers.⁴¹

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Management's attention to 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.

⁴⁰ See Appendix A.

⁴¹ Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July 2020.

Management Actions

During our audit, management addressed all property condition issues identified at the Brookline Branch and Revere Carrier Annex. For example, Brookline Branch management unblocked the fire

extinguisher on the workroom floor (see Figure 6). Due to management taking these corrective actions, we are not making a recommendation for property conditions.

Figure 6. Before and After Photos of the Blocked and Unblocked Fire Extinguisher at the Brookline Branch



Source: OIG photo taken September 18, 2024.



Source: Taken by Postal Service employee October 4, 2024.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with the finding.

Appendices

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Brookline Branch
Post Office

Chelsea
Revere
Carrier Annex

South
Boston
Fort Point
Station

Appendix A: Post Office Closures and Lease Negotiations

On November 27, 2024, various U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives from the Massachusetts delegation requested we review the status of facility closures and lease negotiations in the MA-RI District, including the statuses of specific offices.

What We Found

Per our analysis, there were 153 (23 percent) owned and 509 (77 percent) leased delivery and retail units in the MA-RI District (see Table 8). In addition, the Greater Boston Area has 14 suspended⁴² facilities as of February 20, 2025.

Table 8. Owned vs. Leased Facilities

| State | Owned | Leased | Total | Percent Owned | Percent Leased |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|----------------|
| MA | 134 | 455 | 589 | 22.8 | 77.2 |
| RI | 19 | 54 | 73 | 26.0 | 74.0 |
| Totals | 153 | 509 | 662 | 23.1 | 76.9 |

Source: Facilities Database⁴³ data pulled on February 20, 2025.

The district managers stated the Postal Service wants to ensure current leases remain active or renewed upon contract expiration, provided a new facility is not replacing the current leased site. We obtained and analyzed information for the following facilities in the Greater Boston Area.

- Medway Main Post Office, 115 Main Street, Medway, MA, 02053: According to management, the Postal Service was evicted from this facility on August 31, 2023. Management stated as of February 20, 2025, it was reviewing potential new sites. The Bellingham Post Office now houses delivery operations for residents previously serviced by the Medway Main Post Office. The retail operations are now conducted at the Medway Village Finance Station in Medway, MA. The Medway Main Post Office is two miles from the Bellingham Post Office and half a mile from the Medway Village Finance Station.
- Watertown Square Post Office, 126 Main Street, Watertown, MA, 02472: The Postal Service was evicted from the location on January 31, 2024, based on the lessor terminating the lease while the building was under construction. As of February 20, 2025, the Postal Service was evaluating alternative locations, including possibly returning to the site, but had not made a site selection. In the interim, the Postal Service temporarily reassigned the five clerks, P.O. Box service, and passport operations to the New Town Post Office, which is about a half mile away. Caller service⁴⁴ moved to Watertown Annex, which is two miles away.
- Allston Station, 47 Harvard Avenue, Allston, MA, 02134: This was an emergency suspension, and the Postal Service terminated its lease on December 14, 2019. The building's wall buckled and there is no certificate of occupancy. Since this time, the Postal Service identified a potential site and was working through the review and

⁴² A facility may be suspended due to a natural disaster, termination of a lease or rental agreement, lack of qualified personnel to operate the office, or irreparable or severe damage to the retail facility.

⁴³ Facilities Database is a centralized system that stores information about all Postal Service facilities.

⁴⁴ Caller service is a premium service, available for a fee, to customers who want to pick up their mail at a designated Postal Service unit.

approval process as of February 20, 2025. In the interim, Allston Station carriers are working out of the Boston P&DC and the retail and post office box operations are located at the Brighton Station, which is 1.4 miles from the Allston Station.

We also have an ongoing audit entitled *Serving America: Retail Facility Customer Access* (Project Number 25-030) that will provide more information on nationwide closures and suspensions. The review will examine customer access to retail facilities; compliance with daily operating hours and physical accessibility requirements; and Post Office discontinuances, closures, and suspensions. The report is expected to be issued by end of Fiscal Year 2025.⁴⁵

Postal Service Policy and Procedures Regarding Closures

The Postal Service follows Title 39, Section 241.3, which defines the term “closure” as a “discontinuance” and does not distinguish processes for a facility “closure” or an “emergency closure.”⁴⁶ In addition, the former district manager stated a closure refers to any time employees are not allowed to enter a building to conduct operations, which includes “emergency closures.”

The Postal Service uses the Change Suspension Discontinuance Center (CSDC) system to track information about facilities throughout the post office suspension and discontinuance process. The CSDC’s goal is to help ensure compliance with requirements and to provide a clear timeline for addressing each case. The facilities analyzed above can be found in this system.

⁴⁵ For additional information on this subject, see *Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Compliance Determination Report* (FY-2023-ACD.pdf, dated March 28, 2024) and *U.S. Postal Service’s Plans to Resolve Post Office Suspensions* (Report Number, 21-239-R23.pdf, dated May 17, 2023).

⁴⁶ The law covers any proposal to: (A) replace a USPS-operated Post Office, station, or branch with a contractor-operated retail facility; (B) combine a USPS-operated Post Office, station, or branch with another USPS-operated retail facility; or (C) discontinue (e.g., permanent closure) a USPS-operated Post Office, station, or branch without providing a replacement facility.

Appendix B: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from November 2024 through March 2025 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 delivery operations 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 these controls were assessed. Based on the work performed, we identified internal control deficiencies in all three components that were significant within the context of our objective. Our recommendations, if implemented, should correct the weaknesses we identified.

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

Appendix C: Management's Comments



March 12, 2025

BRIAN NEWMAN
ACTING DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Massachusetts-Rhode Island District: Delivery Operations (24-154-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the draft audit report, *Massachusetts-Rhode Island District: Delivery Operations*.

Management generally agrees with findings.

Following are our comments on each of the three recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

We recommend the District Manager, Massachusetts-Rhode Island District, confirm management at the Revere Carrier Annex is following the required Redline process and properly documenting delayed mail.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.
Management at the Revere Carrier Annex will be trained on Redline Process and proper use of PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2025

Responsible Official:

District Manager, MA-RI District

Recommendation 2:

We recommend the District Manager, Massachusetts-Rhode Island District, train management at all delivery units in the district on the proper procedures for reporting delayed mail.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.
Management will provide a district-wide webinar on proper procedures for reporting delayed mail in DCV.

Target Implementation Date: 05/31/2025

Responsible Official:
District Manager, MA-RI District

Recommendation 3:
We recommend the District Manager, Massachusetts-Rhode Island District, confirm management at the Revere Carrier Annex reported scanner technology issues to the Help Desk.

Management Response/Action Plan:
Management agrees with this recommendation.
Management at Revere Carrier Annex is reporting scanner issues to the Help Desk. A system-generated ticket log was provided with detailed information of the issues.
Management requests closure of the recommendation with issuance of the final report.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2025

Responsible Official:
District Manager, MA-RI District

 E-SIGNED by MICHAEL.W RAKES
on 2025-03-10 14:58:36 EDT

Michael Rakes
District Manager, MA-RI District

cc: Corporate Audit & Response Management

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

UNITED STATES



This document contains sensitive information that has been redacted for public release. These redactions were coordinated with USPS and agreed to by the OIG.

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