

Airport Station, Charlotte, NC: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 25-080-1-R25 | June 17, 2025



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Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

June 17, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: SCOTT MANIER
MANAGER, NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Wolski", is centered below the "MEMORANDUM FOR" section.

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

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Airport Station, Charlotte, NC: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 25-080-1-R25)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Airport Station in Charlotte, NC.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesy 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, Atlantic Area Retail & Delivery Operations
Director, Retail & Post Office Operations Maintenance
Corporate Audit and Response Management

Results

Background

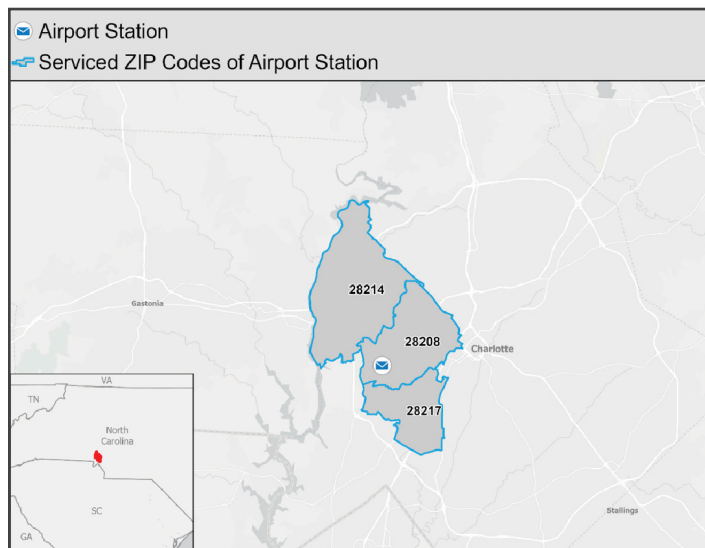
The U.S. Postal Service's mission is to provide timely, reliable, secure, and affordable mail and package delivery to more than 160 million residential and business addresses across the country. The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews delivery operations at facilities across 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 Airport Station in Charlotte, NC (Project Number 25-080-1). The Airport Station is in the North Carolina District of the Atlantic Area and serves about 111,915 people in ZIP Codes 28208, 28214, and 28217 which are considered a predominantly urban area (see Figure 1). Specifically, 111,697 (99.8 percent) live in urban communities and 218 (0.2 percent) live in rural communities.¹ The unit also services ZIP Code 28219 for PO Box routes.

This delivery unit has 52 city routes and 18 rural routes. From February 22 through March 21, 2025, the delivery unit had four supervisors assigned.² Of these supervisors, two were employees acting in a higher-level supervisor detail. As of March 7, 2025,³ the employee availability rate for the Airport Station was 88.3 percent year to date for fiscal year (FY) 2025, which is under the Postal Service's retail and delivery operations employee availability goal of 93.7 percent for FY 2025. The Airport Station is one of three delivery units⁴ the OIG reviewed during the week

of April 7, 2025, that are serviced by the Charlotte Regional Processing and Distribution Center (RPDC).

Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Airport Station



Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

We assessed all units serviced by the Charlotte RPDC based on the number of Customer 360⁵ (C360) delivery-related inquiries,⁶ Informed Delivery⁷ contacts, stop-the-clock⁸ (STC) scans performed away from the delivery point and at the unit, undelivered route information, and first and last mile failures⁹ between December 1, 2024, and February 28, 2025.

We judgmentally selected the Airport Station primarily based on the number of C360 inquiries related to delivery, Informed Delivery contacts, and STC scans performed away from the delivery point. The unit was also chosen based on first mile failures

¹ We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from 2020 Census Bureau information.

² According to the Postal Service's Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS). TACS is the system used by the Postal Service to automate the collection of employee time and attendance information.

³ The last day of Pay Period March 7, 2025.

⁴ The other two units were the Concord Main Post Office, Concord, NC (Project Number 25-080-2) and the Concord Parkway Station, Concord, NC (Project Number 25-080-3).

⁵ A cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.

⁶ A compilation of package inquiry, package pickup, daily mail service, and hold mail inquiries.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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."

⁹ 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.

and undelivered routes. See Table 1 for a comparison of some of these metrics between the unit and the rest of the district.

Table 1. Delivery Metric Comparison Between December 1, 2024, and February 28, 2025

Delivery Metric	Unit Average per Route	District Average per Route
C360 Delivery Inquiries	15.1	9.9
Informed Delivery Contacts	31.9	23.7
Scans Over 1,000 Feet From Delivery Point	8.3	3.8

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service’s C360, Informed Delivery, and Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data extracted March 17, 2025. PTR is the system of records for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Airport Station in Charlotte, NC.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on the following audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,¹⁰ 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 visit we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; employee separation procedures; package 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. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 2 with management on May 28, 2025, and included its comments, where appropriate.

¹⁰ 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.
¹¹ Project Number 25-080.

We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding conditions we identified at the Airport Station. We will issue a separate capping report¹¹ that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all three delivery units, as well as the district. The capping report will include actions taken by management to address the issues identified in this interim report. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Airport Station. Specifically, we found issues with four of the five areas we reviewed (see Table 2). We also found issues related to separation of packages.

Table 2. Summary of Results

Audit Area	Deficiencies Identified	
	Yes	No
Delayed Mail	X	
Package Scanning	X	
Arrow Keys	X	
Carrier Separations and Transfers		X
Property Conditions	X	
Other Issues: Separation of Packages for Dispatch	X	

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of April 7, 2025.

We analyzed employee data from February 1 through March 14, 2025. All carriers assigned to the unit either reported to work or were accounted for by management during this time, indicating no issues with employee separations and transfers.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of April 8, 2025, we identified 15,128 delayed mailpieces¹² at 50 carrier cases. Specifically, we identified 14,241 letters, 466 flats, and 421 packages. Management did not report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)¹³ system. See Table 3 for the number of pieces for each mail type and Figures 2 and 3 for examples of delayed mail found at carrier cases and the loading dock area. Further, some carriers did not complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, Undelivered Mail Report,¹⁴ to document undelivered mail.

Table 3. Types of Delayed Mail Identified

Type of Mail	Carrier Cases	Hot Case	Loading Dock	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	13,474	767	0	14,241
Flats	466	0	0	466
Packages	30	0	391	421
Totals	13,970	767	391	15,128

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit on April 8, 2025.

Why Did It Occur

The delayed mail we identified was due to limited employee availability. The unit complement is 93 full-time city carriers, but they only had 76 carriers on the rolls because they had trouble filling positions. Also, some carriers were on medical restrictions.

Further, unit management were unaware of missing PS Forms 1571 and delayed mail that needed to be reported in the DCV system because they did not effectively implement and enforce the redline process,¹⁵ or conduct an adequate walkthrough

to check for delayed mail because other duties took priority.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail at the Carrier Cases



Source: OIG photos taken April 8, 2025.

Figure 3. Delayed Mail in the Loading Dock Area



Source: OIG photo taken April 8, 2025.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that all mail was processed and delivered and that any mail returned from a route was properly identified. Postal Service policy¹⁶ states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed

¹² Count of mail included individual piece counts and OIG estimate based on Postal Service conversion factors in Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*, Appendix D.
¹³ 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.
¹⁴ PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.
¹⁵ 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.
¹⁶ *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

for delivery on the day of receipt. Management should have enforced the redline process, which includes carriers completing a PS Form 1571 for any undelivered mail brought back to the delivery unit. Management should also have conducted an adequate walkthrough of the workroom to verify that all mail was delivered¹⁷ and that the carriers documented the reason why the undelivered mail was brought back from the street. Managers should¹⁸ also have reported in the DCV system, as either delayed or curtailed, all mail in the delivery unit after the carriers left for their street duties. 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.

¹⁷ SWI Supervisor Leadership Standard Work V4.

¹⁸ DCV Learn and Grow, August 1, 2024.

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 579 STC scans occurring away from the delivery unit and over 1,000 feet¹⁹ from the intended delivery point between December 2024 and February 2025 (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 98.4 percent of them were scanned “Delivered.”

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

STC Scan Type	Count	Percent
Delivered	570	98.4
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	5	0.9
No Authorized Recipient	3	0.5
Delivered to Agent for Final Delivery	1	0.2
Total	579	100

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

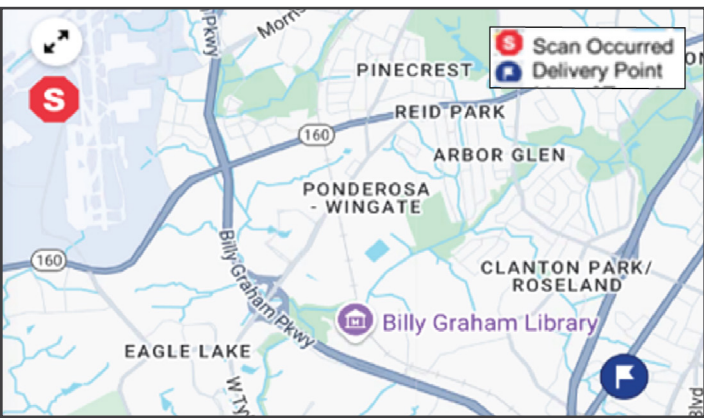
We also found issues with the handling of packages in the unit. On the morning of April 8, 2025, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected all 30 packages from the carrier cases to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 30 packages, 10 (33.3 percent) had improper handling issues, including:

- Four packages were scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location”, between 2.3 and 5.6 miles away from the delivery point. Scans should be made as close to the delivery point as

possible. See Figure 4, where one package was scanned 5.6 miles away from the delivery point.

- Three packages were scanned “Insufficient Address” and should have been returned to the sender.
- Two packages were scanned “No Such Number” and should have been returned to the sender.
- One package was scanned “Delivered”, which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address.

Figure 4. Scan Away From the Delivery Point in Charlotte, NC



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. For instance, management was not properly reviewing scan data on undelivered packages returned by carriers after they completed their street duties. Management was also not enforcing the redline process and conducting an adequate walkthrough of the workroom to identify undelivered packages with scanning or handling issues (see [Finding 1](#)). Further, the carriers acknowledged that the packages we identified in the carrier cases were incorrectly scanned delivery

¹⁹ 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.

attempted, no access to delivery location instead of scanning business closed.

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,²⁰ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.²¹ Undeliverable packages such as insufficient address and no such number should be endorsed accordingly and given to clerks for daily dispatch to the processing plant.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 customer experience and the Postal Service brand.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

²⁰ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

²¹ *Deliver and Scan Accurately*, July 2017.

²² Handbook PO-441, *Rehandling of Mail Best Practices*, April 2002.

Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Arrow keys were kept in a secure location, but the key inventory log did not match the physical keys on hand. On the morning of April 9, 2025, we reviewed the unit's arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)²³ system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. Based on our physical review of arrow keys at the unit, nine of the 85 keys listed in the RADAR system were missing and an additional 16 keys found at the unit were not recorded in the RADAR system. Management had not reported the nine missing keys to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage the arrow keys. Specifically, management certified the arrow key list in the RADAR system without properly reconciling it to the physical keys on hand. The station manager explained she

was unaware they had missing keys and did not include the 16 additional keys we found because she did not know the carrier routes with which they paired.

What Should Have Happened

According to Postal Service policy,²⁴ management must keep an accurate inventory of all arrow keys. Any missing keys must be immediately reported to the Postal Inspection Service.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When there is insufficient oversight and supervision of accountable items, such as arrow keys, there is an 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.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

²³ The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.

²⁴ *Arrow/Modified Arrow Lock (MAL) Key Accountability Standard Work Instruction*, dated May, 2024.

Finding # 4: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found property safety and security issues at the Airport Station.

Property Safety:

- Eight of nine fire extinguishers were missing monthly inspections. They were last inspected in February 2025.
- There were two low hanging wires on the workroom floor (see Figure 5).
- There was an uneven metal surface in the lobby area covered with a rug – potential trip hazard (see Figure 6).

Figure 5. Low Hanging Wires on Workroom Floor



Source: OIG photo taken April 9, 2025.

Figure 6. Uneven Metal Surface in Lobby Area



Source: OIG photo taken April 9, 2025.

Property Security:

- There was no sign posted entering the employee parking area stating that vehicles may be subject to search.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight and take the necessary actions to address property condition issues because other duties, such as staffing carrier routes, took priority over addressing property/maintenance issues.

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.²⁵

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 customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

²⁵ Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July, 2020.

Finding # 5: Separation of Packages for Dispatch

What We Found

Employees at the Airport Station did not properly separate packages destined for the Charlotte RPDC. Specifically, on April 9, 2025, during the unit's evening operations, we observed that the carriers were not separating their incoming Ground Advantage²⁶ and Priority²⁷ packages (see Figure 7). We showed the PM supervisor that Priority Mail and non-Priority Mail packages were comingled, and he separated the packages prior to dispatch.

Figure 7. Comingled Packages



Source: OIG photo taken April 9, 2025.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to ensure that employees properly separated packages for dispatch to the Charlotte RPDC. The PM supervisor stated that he had instructed carriers several times to separate the packages and provided two containers for the packages. However, he had not verified carrier compliance. Also, unit management acknowledged that supervisors and craft employees needed more training on separation of packages.

What Should Have Happened

The Postal Service requires all level 22 and above units to separate Priority Mail from non-Priority Mail packages and use a specific placard when dispatching to the processing facility.²⁸

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Proper mail preparation is required for visibility throughout the Postal Service network. When mail is not properly separated for dispatch to the processing facility, in accordance with procedures, there is an increased likelihood that mail will require additional processing steps. Furthermore, this can result in delays and service failures and an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

²⁶ A service providing an affordable and reliable way to send parcels inside the U.S. Parcels under 70 pounds arrive in two to five business days.

²⁷ An expedited service that may contain any mailable matter weighing no more than 70 pounds.

²⁸ *Learn and Grow RDC/RSC Updates*, May 2024.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from March through June 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 Airport Station 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 Airport Station, Concord Main Post Office, and the Concord Parkway Station, as well as the district.

We assessed the reliability of PTR and DCV 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



June 2, 2025

VICTORIA SMITH
ACTING DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Airport Station, Charlotte, NC: Delivery Operations (Report Number 25-080-1-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Airport Station, Charlotte, NC: Delivery Operations*.

Management generally agrees with the findings related to delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys, property conditions and separation of packages for dispatch.

Management has begun taking steps to address the five findings.

Delayed Mail: Management will conduct a service talk on proper handling and recording of delayed mail in DCV. Management will also reiterate the requirement to use PS Form 1571 *Undelivered Mail Report* and follow the *Redline process*. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

Package Scanning: Management will provide a service talk on proper scanning procedures and conduct reviews to monitor compliance.

Arrow Keys: Management will update the inventory log to reflect all arrow keys on hand and report all missing keys to the US Postal Inspection Service. Management will also conduct training on proper management of arrow keys. Additionally, reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

Property Conditions: Management has abated three of the safety and security issues. A workorder was submitted for the remaining safety issue requiring assistance from other resources.

Separation of Packages for Dispatch: Management will provide service talks to reinforce package separation practices to ensure Priority Mail is not comingled with non-priority mail. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

E-SIGNED by Robert S Manier
on 2025-06-02 13:17:54 EDT

Scott Manier
District Manager, NC District

cc: Vice President, Area Retail & Delivery Operations (Atlantic)
Corporate Audit Response Management

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