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Transmittal Letter

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GE UNITED STATES POSTAL S	
July 22, 2021	
MEMORANDUM FOR:	GARY J. VACCARELLA MANAGER, DELAWARE-PENNSYLVANIA 2 DISTRICT
	Sem Bally
FROM:	Sean Balduff Director, Delivery and Retail Response Team
SUBJECT:	Audit Report – Mail Delivery and Customer Service Operations – Newark Post Office, Newark, DE (Report Number 21-177-R21)
This report presents the re Operations – Newark Pos	esults of our audit of Mail Delivery and Customer Service at Office, Newark, DE.
	ration and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any nal information, please contact Jennifer Schneider, Operational 48-2100.
Attachment	
Vice President, Delive	I & Post Office Operations,

Results

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of Mail Delivery and Customer Service Operations at the Newark Post Office in Newark, DE (Project Number 21-177). The Newark Post Office is in the Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District of the Atlantic Area. This audit was designed to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential scanning, mail delivery, and customer service operations risks at the Newark Post Office.

The delivery unit has 61 city routes which are delivered by 72 full-time carriers and 25 city carrier assistants. The delivery unit also has one rural route which is delivered by one regular rural carrier, one rural carrier associate, and two assistant rural carriers. The Newark Post Office has 26 clerks (including 16 full-time and 10 postal support employees) and four mail handlers. We selected the Newark Post Office for review based on the number of customer inquiries the unit received. Specifically, there were 1,398 inquiries recorded in the Customer 360 (C360)¹ system from February through April 2021. Most of the inquiries (1,292 or 92.42 percent) related to package tracking and mail delivery.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate select mail delivery and customer service operations and determine whether internal controls were effective at the Newark Post Office, Newark, DE.

To accomplish our objective, we reviewed delivery metrics including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, the amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, distribution up-time (DUT),² carriers return to office time, C360 inquiries, and truck arrival scan data. During our site visits on May 25 - 26, 2021,

we reviewed unit safety and security procedures, mail conditions, Voyager credit card and arrow lock key³ security procedures, and COVID-19 safety procedures. We analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and in the "Notice Left"⁴ area and interviewed unit management and employees.⁵

We conducted this performance audit from May through July 2021 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 the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on July 7, 2021 and included their comments where appropriate.

We relied on computer-generated data from the Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) system,⁶ Customer Service Daily Reporting System (CSDRS),⁷ and the Surface Visibility database.⁸ Although we did not test the validity of controls over these systems, we assessed the accuracy of the data by reviewing existing information, comparing data from other sources, observing operations, and interviewing Postal Service officials knowledgeable about the data. Therefore, we determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

We found delayed mail and packages at the unit during our site visit on the morning of May 25, 2021. Specifically, we identified about 41,904 pieces of delayed mail dated as far back as May 9, 2021 located on the workroom floor (see Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2).

¹ A cloud-based application which enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.

² Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

³ 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 lock keys are accountable property and subject to strict controls.

⁴ The area of a postal facility where letters or packages that carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

⁵ The city carriers we interviewed had from one to 33 years of service.

⁶ A system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

⁷ A delivery unit-based system that provides a snapshot of the daily condition of the mail at the point in time when the carriers have departed for the street. Management relies on accurate manual recording of delayed mail by the unit to effectively use this reporting tool.

⁸ A mobile scanning application that enables Postal Service personnel to track the mail across the surface transportation network.

Table 1. Delayed Mail by Type

Mail Type	Number of Pieces
Flats	33,333
Letters	2,111
Packages	6,460
Total	41,904°

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis based on conducted mail counts.

Figure 1. Delayed Priority and First-Class Parcels



Source: OIG photos taken on May 25, 2021.

Figure 2. Delayed Flats and First-Class Letters



Source: OIG photos taken on May 25, 2021.

Management stated that these conditions occurred because they received an unexpectedly high volume of mailpieces on Sunday, May 23, 2021. In addition, when volume to the delivery unit is low, the plant will wait for the next scheduled truck to transport the mail. However, based on our observations, these conditions occurred because management did not follow policy to certify and ensure the unit was clear of committed mail¹⁰ for the day's delivery. Specifically:

Management did not ensure all committed mail was distributed before performing the DUT scan on the days of our site visits. Specifically, on May 25, 2021, the DUT scan was performed at 8:41 a.m., which was when we identified the delayed mail. After the carriers left for their routes, management stated they instructed the clerks to continue sorting the packages and would have the carriers return later in the day to deliver them. We returned at about 6:00 p.m. that day and observed the clerks still sorting the delayed packages. In addition, the carriers were already gone for the day, the carrier hampers were filled with sorted delayed packages, and several containers were full of packages that were still not sorted. Further, on May 26, 2021, the DUT scan

⁹ We established a piece count, using the Postal Service National Conversion Container Rate for letters, flats, and packages.

¹⁰ Committed mail consists of First-Class Mail that is scheduled for delivery on the day of receipt and Marketing Mail that is color coded to represent scheduled delivery for that day.

was performed at 9:34 a.m., prior to all the packages being sorted. Shortly after the carriers left for their routes, we observed management instruct the clerks to change the processing date on the Passive Adaptive Scanning System (PASS)¹¹ machine to the next business day. The acting postmaster stated that he made the date change so the parcels wouldn't appear on the parcel select failures report.

Management did not ensure that all mail was properly identified with the commitment date. Specifically, we observed mail handlers removing Mail Transport Equipment Labeler (MTEL) placards from mail containers upon arrival at the unit. By removing the MTEL placards, staff cannot determine when the mail arrived at the unit to ensure processing is done in the order it is received. The acting postmaster instructed mail handlers to remove all MTEL placards upon arrival and to perform all distribution scans at the end of their shift to foster scan compliance.

Postal Service policy¹² states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. Any committed mail not processed and taken out for delivery on the day of receipt is delayed. In addition, the supervisor must ensure and certify in the Delivery Management System that the delivery unit is clear of committed mail for that day's delivery.¹³ Postal Service policy¹⁴ also states that employees should scan all container placard barcodes from the containers being unloaded and then move scanned containers to the designated staging areas for workload management and sorting. As a result of the current operations, there is an increased risk of unidentified delayed mail, which could lead to customer dissatisfaction and adversely affect the Postal Service brand.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, instruct **Newark Post Office management** to develop and execute a plan to ensure all committed mail has been distributed to carriers before daily Distribution Up Time and verify the delivery unit is clear of committed mail daily.

Finding #2: Reporting of Delayed Mail

Management did not ensure that all delayed mail was accurately reported in CSDRS. Specifically, we determined that no delayed mail was reported in CSDRS on May 25, 2021, which was the first day of our visit. However, we identified about 41,904 delayed mailpieces that were not delivered on that day.

The acting postmaster stated that reporting delayed mail is the responsibility of the a.m. supervisor; however, we found the acting postmaster opened the unit on the morning of May 25, 2021, because the a.m. supervisor was on scheduled leave. The acting postmaster stated that he did not report the delayed mail in CSDRS because his postmaster duties took priority.

Managers are required¹⁵ to report in CSDRS all properly addressed mail that remains at a delivery unit after the carriers have left the office to begin their street duties. Inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in CSDRS 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.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, instruct **Newark Post Office management** to develop and execute a plan to monitor and ensure all delayed mail is reported daily in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System.

¹¹ A scanning system used in delivery units to scan packages and identify associated delivery routes. PASS enables clerks without route knowledge training to sort packages and provides both visual and audible indicators for routing information.

¹² Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail stand-up talk, February 2019.

¹³ Delivery Management System, Standard Work Instruction, September 2018.

¹⁴ Mail Transport Equipment Labeler (MTEL) - Plant to DU, Standard Work Guide, rev 2.3.

¹⁵ Customer Service Daily Reporting System, Guidelines and Definitions, September 2016.

Finding #3: Package Delivery Scanning

Delivery unit employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit rather than at the delivery point. We analyzed package scans performed between February and April 2021 and found that 53,690 packages received a stopthe-clock (STC)¹⁶ scan at the delivery unit instead of at the delivery point (see Table 2). The majority of these packages were scanned "Delivered" (see Table 3).

Table 2. STC Scans Completed at Delivery Unit

February	March	April	Total
19,847	16,284	17,559	53,690

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service PTR system data.

Table 3. STC Scan Types Completed at the Delivery Unit

Scan Type	Count	Percent of Scans
Delivered	53,685	99.99%
Receptacle Full and Refused	5	0.01%
Total	53,690	100%

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service PTR system data.

Further analysis showed that four routes attributed to about 94 percent of the scans at the unit. We spoke with the carriers who stated they deliver a high volume of packages daily to 22 businesses and are not using firm sheets.¹⁷ The carriers stated that as of December 2020, management no longer required the use of firm sheets due to misdelivery issues. Management explained that many

of the business addresses have suite numbers and the PASS machine does not identify addresses to that depth of sortation. The carriers stated they scan each package "Delivered" at the delivery unit as they sort them further in preparation for delivery because it takes too much time at the delivery point. Management stated that they are scheduled to receive a Small Delivery Unit Sorter¹⁸ machine in October 2021, which can sort to a finer address level and should help alleviate the firm sheet issues.

We also conducted on-site observations at the unit on the morning of May 25, 2021, before carriers arrived for the day. During our observations, we selected 22 packages (13 were in the carrier cases and nine were in the "Notice Left" area) for review of scanning and tracking data. Our analysis of these packages showed one package from the carrier cases was scanned "Delivered". A "Delivered" scan should only be made when a package is successfully left at the delivery address.

This issue occurred because management did not adequately monitor scan performance and enforce compliance of scanning procedures. Postal Service policy states that each morning station management should review the previous day's scanning exceptions.¹⁹ 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 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 could improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

¹⁶ 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", "No Access", and "Business Closed".

¹⁷ A list of packages for delivery to one address documented with a single barcode. Firm sheets are used to link packages sent to one address on a single form. Postal Service guidance states that firm sheet usage for delivery points that receive 25 or more trackable pieces per day would result in highly increased efficiency.

¹⁸ Machine designed to help delivery units expedite package processing.

¹⁹ Delivery Management System, Standard Work Instruction Morning Walkthrough Tasks - Prior Day Review

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

²¹ Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience stand-up talk, July 2017.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, instruct **Newark Post Office management** to review scan data daily and enforce compliance of scanning procedures.

Finding # 4: Inbound Truck Scanning Procedures

Newark Post Office employees did not scan all incoming trailer/truck barcodes (99T)²² arriving from the Delaware Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC). From February through April 2021, employees did not scan 126 of 520 99T barcodes (24 percent) on incoming trailer/trucks (see Table 4).

Table 4. Missing Inbound Truck Arrival Scans From February through April 2021

Scheduled Arrival Time	Trip Origin	Total Trips	Total Missing Scans	Percentage Missing
3:00 A.M.	Delaware P&DC	77	10	12.98
4:30 A.M.	Delaware P&DC	77	21	27.13
6:00 A.M.	Delaware P&DC	77	15	19.18
11:20 A.M.	Delaware P&DC	64	0	0.00
11:50 A.M.	Delaware P&DC	1	1	100.00
12:30 P.M.	Delaware P&DC	88	27	30.68
1:10 P.M.	Delaware P&DC	1	0	0.00
5:15 P.M.	Delaware P&DC	76	30	39.47
6:30 P.M.	Delaware P&DC	2	0	0.00
6:55 P.M.	Delaware P&DC	57	22	38.59
Total		520	126	24.23

Source: OIG analysis of data from Surface Visibility.

This occurred because unit management did not review 99T scan performance data and follow-up with mail handlers regarding missing scans. During our interviews, one mail handler stated that he normally scans the 99T barcodes on the trucks, but there were times he missed the scans because he was on lunch break and the truck driver did not wait for him to return. Another mail handler

stated that he does not scan the Postal Service trucks coming from the plant because the Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) driver scans them.

Postal Service policy²³ states that employees must scan the trailer barcode upon Postal Service trailer/trucks and Highway Contract Route trucks arriving at the

²² The 15-digit trailer barcode on the back door and inside right and left walls of the trailer.

²³ United States Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure - Subject: Trailer Scans at Delivery Units.

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delivery unit during local operating hours. When employees do not scan the 99T barcode, the Postal Service does not receive timely transportation information and is unable to address upstream issues that may be causing mail delays.

Recommendation #4

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, instruct **Newark Post Office management** to review truck/trailer arrival scanning performance daily for compliance and follow up for correction as necessary.

Finding #5: Safeguarding of Assets

Newark Post Office management did not properly manage and safeguard Postal Service assets including arrow lock keys and mail delivery vehicles.

Arrow Lock Keys

On the morning of May 25, 2021, we reviewed the unit's arrow lock key log and conducted a physical inventory of the keys. Six arrow lock keys were identified as spares on the inventory list, but management could only locate one of them. In addition, the arrow lock keys and vehicle keys were kept in pouches for each route in the registry cage. We observed a clerk distribute the pouches to the carrier cases around 5:00 a.m. and the carriers signed for them when they arrived at 8:00 a.m. Management stated this was done to enable the carriers to perform a vehicle check. Further, once carriers returned to the office, they dropped their pouches at the unmanned registry cage (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Accountable Items Left at Unmanned Registry Cage



Source: OIG photo taken on May 25, 2021.

These conditions occurred due to insufficient management oversight. Specifically, management allowed the arrow lock keys to be unsecured in the pouches for about three hours each day. Furthermore, management did not enforce the use of a log to clear carriers upon returning the keys at the end of the day, again leaving them unsecured.

According to Postal Service policy,²⁴ management must ensure accountable items are properly handled. Further, Postal Service policy²⁵ states that keys must remain secured until they are individually assigned to personnel. A supervisor or clerk must supervise employees signing out or using a "key check" system to receive keys. Insufficient oversight of arrow lock keys increases the risk of mail theft.

Delivery Vehicles

During our site visit on May 25, 2021, we found 10 of 67 Postal Service vehicles (15 percent) left unlocked in the unit's gated parking lot. Postal Service policy states that all vehicle doors must be secured when vehicles are left unattended and out of the driver's immediate sight.²⁶ This condition occurred because unit management did not ensure carriers were securing and locking their vehicles at the end of the day by following the P.M. Verification of Activity Checklist. This checklist requires supervisors to verify that vehicles are free of mail and trash and are locked and secure. When vehicles are left unlocked, there is an increased risk that they could be vandalized or stolen.

Recommendation #5

We recommend **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2**, instruct **Newark Post Office management** to develop and execute a plan to ensure employees follow procedures for properly securing arrow lock keys and delivery vehicles

Management's Comments

Management agreed with all findings and recommendations in the report. See Appendix A for management's comments in their entirety.

Regarding recommendation 1, district management stated they will instruct unit management to clear all committed mail daily and report extenuating circumstances to the Manager, Post Office Operations (MPOO). In addition, the MPOO will conduct periodic audits to ensure the unit is clear of committed mail. Management's target implementation date is August 13, 2021. Regarding recommendation 2, district management stated they will instruct unit management to accurately report daily conditions in CSDRS. Unit management will also be given training time to review the CSDRS guidelines. In addition, the MPOO will conduct periodic audits to ensure CSDRS information is accurate. Management's target implementation date is August 13, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 3, district management stated they will require unit management to perform a daily review of the scanning exceptions on the Delivery Management System dashboard and provide the results to the MPOO and district staff. Unit management will also provide service talks on delivering accurately and with integrity to all employees. Management's target implementation date is August 13, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 4, district management stated the District Integrated Operating Specialist will conduct and document on-site training with employees responsible for scanning. District personnel will also monitor scanning data to ensure compliance and escalate any findings to the postmaster and MPOO. Management's target implementation date is August 13, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 5, district management stated the postmaster will implement the Arrow Key Standard Work Instructions to ensure accountability in protecting vehicle keys, arrow lock keys, and Voyager cards. In addition, the district coordinator will conduct routine audits to ensure vehicles and accountable items are secured. Management's target implementation is August 13, 2021.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

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

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. Recommendations should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendations can be closed.

²⁴ Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services, Section 111.2, Daily Operations, March 2004.

²⁵ Arrow/Mail Key Accountability Guide, August 2017.

²⁶ Handbook EL-814, Postal Employee's Guide to Safety, Section X, E, 4, Parking.

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Appendix A: Management's Comments

	STATES
POSTAL	SERVICE
July 19	9, 2021
	BALDUFF TOR, DELIVERY AND RETAIL RESPONSE TEAM
SUBJ	ECT: Mail Delivery and Customer Service Operations – Newark Post Office, Newark, DE 21-177-DRAFT
(Draft	you for the opportunity to respond to the above-mentioned draft audit report Report). We agree with the conclusions of the Draft Report that the Newark Post has opportunity to improve Customer Service and Security.
Manag	ement responds to the recommendations contained in the Draft Report as follows
We ree Post C been c	nmendation #1: commend the District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District, instruct Newark office management to develop and execute a plan to ensure all committed mail ha distributed to carriers before daily Distribution Up Time and verify the delivery unit of committed mail daily
Manag commi neede	gement Response/Action Plan: gement agrees with this recommendation. Management to be instructed to clear a tted volume, daily. Extenuating circumstances to be escalated to MPOO and if d, District Manager. MPOO will conduct periodic audits to ensure the unit is clear mitted volume.
Instruc	t Implementation Date: tion to clear committed volume, will be issued immediately. Periodic reviews to b cted by MPOO by August 13, 2021
	per, Post Official: jer, Post Office Operations; DE-PA 2 District
We ree Post C	nmendation #2: commend the District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District, instruct Newark office management to develop and execute a plan to monitor and ensure all delaye reported daily in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System.
Manar	gement Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. All Supervisors in this facility will be instructed to ensure that all CSDRS entries are completed accurately. All Supervisors will receive documented training time to review the CSDRS Guidelines and Definitions Handbook. MPOO will conduct periodic audits of the facility to ensure CSDRS entries are accurate.

Target Implementation Date:

The training will be completed by August 13, 2021. Audits to be conducted by August 13, 2021

Responsible Official:

Postmaster, Newark, DE Manager, Post Office Operations; DE-PA 2 District

Recommendation #3:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District, instruct Newark Post Office management to review scan data daily and enforce compliance of scanning procedures.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Local Management will be required to perform a daily review of the Delivery Management System (DMS) Dashboard to specifically review "Scanning Exceptions". This report outlines parcels scanned outside the parameter of a buffer created using historic scans from carriers. Management will use this data to ensure that parcels are scanned and delivered with accuracy. Findings will by provided to MPOO and District Staff. Management will also provide service talks on delivering accurately and with integrity to all employees at the facility

Target Implementation Date:

Review of scan data to begin immediately. Service talk to be delivered to all employees by August 13, 2021.

Responsible Official: Postmaster, Newark, DE Manager, Post Office Operations; DE-PA 2 District

Recommendation #4:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2, instruct Newark Post Office Management to review truck/trailer arrival scanning performance daily for compliance and follow up for correction as necessary.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. The District Integrated Operating Specialist will conduct on site, documented, training with employees responsible for scanning. Coordinator will also monitor scanning data to ensure compliance with findings escalated to the Postmaster and MPOO.

Target Implementation Date:

On-site training to be conducted by August 13, 2021. Review of Scan data to begin immediately.

Responsible Official: Postmaster, Newark, DE Integrated Operating Specialist; DE-PA 2 District

Recommendation #5:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2, instruct Newark Post Office management to develop and execute a plan to ensure employees follow procedures for properly securing arrow lock keys and delivery vehicles.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Postmaster will implement the Arrow Key Standard Work Instructions as prescribed by the United States Postal Inspection Service to ensure accountability in protecting Vehicle Keys, Arrow Keys and Voyager Cards. District Coordinator will conduct routine audits to ensure that vehicles and accountable items are secure.

Target Implementation Date:

Service Talk, "Arrow key security depends on aware employees" to be issued to employees by July 30, 2021. Arrow Key initiative will be in place and fully implemented by August 13, 2021. Periodic audits to be conducted by District Staff.

Responsible Official:

Postmaster, Newark, DE. District Arrow Key Coordinator; DE-PA 2 District Manager, Post Office Operations; DE-PA 2 District

Gary Vaccarella District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2

CC:



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