

Maryland District: Delivery Operations in Washington, DC

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 24-065-R24 | June 11, 2024



Lammond Riggs
Station



Ward Place
Carrier Annex



Brookland
Station



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OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

June 11, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR: LORA M. MCLUCAS
MANAGER, MARYLAND 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 – Maryland District: Delivery Operations in Washington, DC
(Report Number 24-065-R24)

This report presents the results of our audit of mail delivery and property conditions at the Maryland District in Washington, DC.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Exec 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

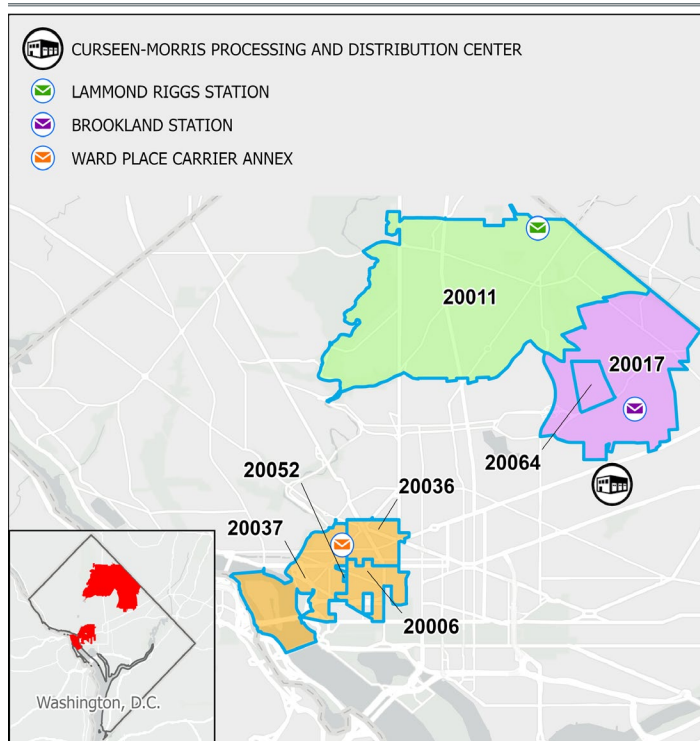
Background

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 that 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 select delivery units in the Maryland District (Project Number 24-065). These delivery units included the Brookland Station, Lammond Riggs Station, and Ward Place Carrier Annex (see Figure 1).

We previously issued interim reports¹ to district management for each of these units regarding the conditions we identified. In addition, we issued a report on the efficiency of operations at the Curseen-Morris Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC),² which services these three delivery units.

Figure 1. Delivery Units Audited in the Maryland District



Source: OIG

We judgmentally selected these three delivery units primarily based on the number of Customer C360 (C360)³ inquiries related to delivery and stop-the-clock (STC)⁴ scans performed at the unit or away from the delivery point. The units were also chosen based on first and last mile failures⁵ and undelivered routes. See Table 1 for a comparison of some of these metrics between the unit and the rest of the district.

¹ Brookland Station in Washington, DC: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-065-1-R24), dated April 11, 2024; Lammond Riggs Station in Washington, DC: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-065-2-R24), dated April 11, 2024; Ward Place Carrier Annex in Washington, DC: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-065-3-R24), dated April 11, 2024.

² Efficiency of Operations at the Curseen-Morris Processing and Distribution Center, Washington, DC (Report Number 24-065-R24), dated April 11, 2024.

³ A cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.

⁴ A scan event that indicates the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the mailpiece. Examples of STC scans include "Delivered," "Available for Pick-Up," and "No Access."

⁵ A first mile failure occurs when a mailpiece is collected and does not receive a processing scan at the P&DC on the day that it was intended. A last mile failure occurs 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. First and last mile failures can occur due to processing, transportation, or delivery operations.

Table 1. Site Selection Data (Per Route)

Delivery Units	Delivery Related C360s	STC Scans at the Unit	STC Scans Away from the Delivery Point
Brookland Station	6.9	9.0	9.4
Lammond Riggs Station	7.3	N/A*	N/A*
Ward Place Carrier Annex	8.9	9.4	16.8
District Average	6.1	7.9	6.9

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service’s C360, Informed Delivery, Facility Database, and Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data extracted on January 4, 2024. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

* We judgmentally selected the Lammond Riggs Station primarily based on the number of C360 inquiries related to delivery.

The three delivery units have a combined total of 103 city routes that serve about 114,267 people in several ZIP Codes (see Table 2), which are considered urban communities.⁶

Table 2. Service Area and Population

Delivery Units	Service Area ZIP Code	Population	City Routes
Lammond Riggs Station	20011	66,425	55
Ward Place Carrier Annex	20006, 20036, 20037, 20052	26,780	30
Brookland Station	20017, 20064	21,062	18
Total		114,267	103

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

As part of our analysis of these units, we conducted text analytics on all C360 inquiries submitted to the units between October 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023. In total we reviewed and categorized the customer’s description of the inquiry for 3,740 records.⁷ See Figure 2 for the results of our analysis.

Figure 2. C360 Inquiry Analysis



Source: OIG analysis of C360 Inquiries.

Package delivery, package scanning, and mail delivery issues for mail and packages made up the majority of the C360 comments. Comments associated with package scanning issues included multiple complaints of mail showing delivered when it was not received. Also, one complaint included a package that was scanned delivered 121 feet from the intended address and another complaint stated their package was delivered to Alaska when the delivery address was in Washington, DC.

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

7 We excluded 1,411 voice records, 373 records of text less than or equal to 40 characters, and 105 records considered outliers.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective is to evaluate delivery and customer service operations and property conditions at the Brookland Station, Lammond Riggs Station, and Ward Place Carrier Annex.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on five audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,⁸ carrier complement and timekeeping, and property conditions. Specifically, we reviewed delivery metrics, including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, carrier work hours and time adjustments, and distribution uptime.⁹ During our site visits, we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; timekeeping documentation; and unit safety, security, and maintenance conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and in the “Notice Left” areas,¹⁰ and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 3 with management on May 28, 2024, and included their comments, where appropriate. See

Appendix A for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at all three delivery units. Specifically, we found delayed mail and deficiencies with package scanning, timekeeping, and property conditions. We also identified issues with the management of arrow keys and the sortation of packages for dispatch at the Lammond Riggs Station (see Table 3). Subsequent to our audit fieldwork, the Postal Service addressed the issues we identified and provided us documentation of the corrective actions taken. We consider the issues resolved; therefore, we are not making any recommendations in this report.

We did not identify any issues with arrow key security or carrier complement at any of the three offices visited. However, we did identify issues with arrow key management at Lammond Riggs (see Finding 3) and timekeeping management at all three units (see Finding 4).

Table 3. Summary of Issues Identified

Controls Reviewed	Deficiencies Identified – Yes or No		
	Brookland Station	Lammond Riggs Station	Ward Place Carrier Annex
Delayed Mail	Yes	Yes	Yes
Package Scanning	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arrow Keys	No	Yes	No
Carrier Complement and Timekeeping	Yes	Yes	Yes
Property Conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other Issues - Sortation of Packages for Dispatch	N/A*	Yes	N/A*

Source: Interim reports from selected units.

*Brookland and Ward Place were not required to sort Priority mail packages because of their size.

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

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of February 6, 2024, we identified about 5,512 pieces¹¹ of delayed mail at 52 carrier cases at the Brookland Station, Lammond Riggs Station and the Ward Place Carrier Annex. In addition, management at all three units did not report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition

Visualization (DCV)¹² system, and carriers did not use Postal Service (PS) Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report,¹³ to document the undelivered mailpieces. See Table 4 for the number of pieces for each mail type and Figures 3, 4, and 5 for examples of delayed mail found at the units.

Table 4. Type of Delayed Mail

Type of Mail	Brookland Station	Lammond Riggs Station	Ward Place Carrier Annex	Total
Letters	1,149	3,005	1,004	5,158
Flats	90	67	168	325
Packages	16	3	10	29
Total	1,255	3,075	1,182	5,512

Source: OIG count delayed mail identified during our visit on February 6, 2024.

Figure 3. Brookland Station Delayed Mail



Source: OIG photo taken February 6, 2024.

Figure 4. Lammond Riggs Station Delayed Mail



Source: OIG photo taken February 6, 2024.

¹¹ Count of mail included individual piece counts and estimates based on conversion factors in Management Instruction PO-610-2007-1, *Piece Count Recording System*.

¹² A tool for unit management to manually self-report delayed mail, which provides a snapshot of daily mail conditions at the point in time when carriers have departed for the street.

¹³ Undelivered Mail Report, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

Figure 5. Ward Place Carrier Annex Delayed Mail



Source: OIG photo taken February 6, 2024.

Why Did It Occur

This occurred because management at all the three sites did not provide adequate oversight to verify that a thorough walkthrough was conducted to ensure all mail was cleared from the units and any delayed mail was accurately reported in the DCV system. Also:

- Brookland Station management stated that most of the delayed mail identified was returned mail from split routes. The carriers were unfamiliar with these routes, and the unit had not reviewed the mailpieces to determine whether they could be delivered or should be returned to sender.
- Lammond Riggs Station management stated they did not report the undelivered mail as delayed because broken customer lock boxes caused the non-deliveries. They were not aware that they were required to report it in the DCV system.

- The Ward Place Carrier Annex management stated that they did not do a walkthrough to check for delayed mail or report delayed mail in the DCV system because the volume of undelivered mailpieces was small and other duties took priority.

Also, management at all three sites did not ensure that carriers completed PS Forms 1571 and note the reason why mail could not be delivered. Management at the Ward Place Carrier Annex stated that some of the newer carriers may not have been aware of the requirement to document undelivered mail on PS Forms 1571, and they did not follow up because other duties took priority.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have made sure that all mail was processed and delivered on the day it was committed for delivery and reported delayed mail in the DCV system. Postal Service policy¹⁴ states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. Management should have instructed carriers to complete PS Form 1571¹⁵ and monitored that these were completed.¹⁶ In addition, managers are required¹⁷ to report all mail in the delivery unit after the carriers have left for their street duties as either delayed or curtailed in the DCV system. Further, management must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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

¹⁴ Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail stand-up talk, February 2019.

¹⁵ Handbook M-41, *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*, TL-5, Section 44, June 2019.

¹⁶ Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, TL-14, Section 126.2, June 2019.

¹⁷ *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, August 2023.

Corrective Action Taken

Subsequent to audit fieldwork, the Postal Service trained the supervisors at the three sites concerning certain mail being committed for delivery on the day of receipt and about the DCV policy and how to submit undelivered mail through the system. They also trained the carriers on how to use PS Form 1571, to document mail that could not be delivered. District management also provided documentation demonstrating how they monitored the sites for compliance. We consider the issue resolved; therefore, we are not making a recommendation for this finding.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service generally agreed with this finding. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages, scanned packages away from the intended delivery points, and handled packages incorrectly at all three delivery units.

In total, employees improperly scanned 643 packages at the delivery units instead of at the

customers' delivery points between October and December 2023 (see Table 5). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 76.5 percent of them were scanned "Delivered," and 20.7 percent were scanned as "Delivery Attempted-No Access to Delivery Location."

Table 5. Stop-The-Clock Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	Delivery Units			Total	Percent
	Brookland Station	Lammond Riggs Station	Ward Place Carrier Annex		
Delivered	158	55	279	492	76.5%
Delivery Attempted - No Access to Delivery Location	3	127	3	133	20.7%
Receptacle Full/Item Oversized		5		5	0.8%
No Secure Location Available	1	9		10	1.6%
Delivery Exception - Animal Interference		2		2	0.3%
No Authorized Recipient			1	1	0.2%
Total	162	198	283	643	100%*

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service's Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

*Total percentage does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

We also reviewed 379 scans occurring away from the delivery units and over 1,000 feet¹⁸ from the intended delivery points between October and December 2023 (see Table 6). We removed scans that could have been performed within policy, such as those that were done because of animal interference and unsafe conditions. Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 93.1 percent of them were scanned "Delivered."

¹⁸ Packages are expected to be scanned within a designated buffer distance from the delivery point. The OIG evaluates any package that was scanned more than 1,000 feet from the delivery point.

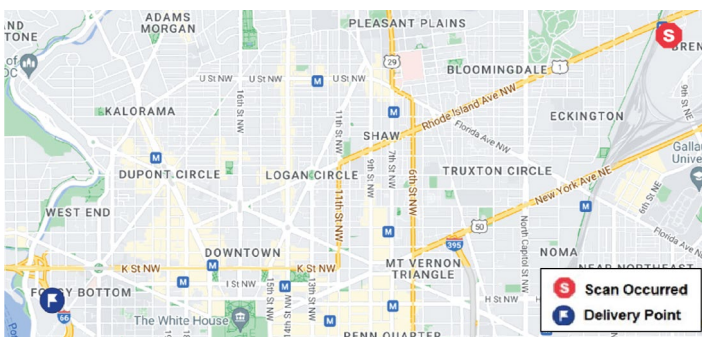
Table 6. Scans Over 1,000 Feet Away From the Delivery Points

STC Scan Type	Delivery Units			Total	Percent
	Brookland Station	Lammond Riggs Station	Ward Place Carrier Annex		
Delivered	160	112	81	353	93.1%
Delivery Attempted- No Access		19	1	20	5.3%
Return to Sender	5			5	1.3%
Unable to Forward	1			1	0.3%
Total	166	131	82	379	100%

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

For example, the map below (see Figure 6) shows an instance where a carrier scanned a package as delivered about 3.6 miles away from the delivery point.

Figure 6. Scan Away From the Delivery Point in Washington, DC



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

We also found issues with scanning and handling of packages in the units. On the morning of February 6, 2024, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 101 packages¹⁹ to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 101 sampled packages, 42 (41.5 percent) had improper scans or handling, including:

- 22 packages were scanned delivered, which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer's delivery address. Two of these were not returned to the

sender, as required and were 11 and 656 days past their scheduled return dates.

- Five packages from the carrier cases were scanned "Delivery Attempted – No Access" away from the delivery point. These scans ranged between 0.4 and 1.4 miles away from the point of delivery. Also, two of these packages should have been returned to the sender. One package had "vacant" written on it and the other "no such number."
- Four packages scanned "Forwarded" had been incorrectly placed in the "Notice Left" area and remained there from 1 to 107 days instead of being forwarded.
- Three packages should have been returned to sender but remained at the carrier case. One package was scanned "Held at Post Office at Customer Request," one was scanned "Vacant," and one was scanned "Delivery Attempted – No access."
- Two packages scanned "Insufficient Address" and "Addressee Unknown" were incorrectly placed in the "Notice Left" area and remained there 24 and 28 days later instead of being returned to sender.
- Two packages should have been returned to sender but remained at the carrier case.

¹⁹ We selected 56 packages from the carrier cases and 45 from the "Notice Left" area.

- One package from the “Notice Left” area was scanned “No Such Address” but was a valid address.
- One package from the carrier case was scanned “Available for Pickup” and should have been placed in the “Notice Left” area.
- One package was missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- One package in the “Notice Left” area was not returned to sender, as required. This package was 30 days past the scheduled return date and was an intercepted package. The customer never picked up the item.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures and, therefore, were not aware of the issues.

Brookland Station management stated that some carriers may not be fully trained on package handling and scanning procedures.

Lammond Riggs Station management stated that they were not aware that they needed to monitor scanning compliance because they relied on the district to notify them of scanning. Regarding the “Notice Left” area, the station manager stated that she relies on the AM supervisor to assign a clerk daily and that she also periodically monitors it, but competing priorities, such as mail delivery, took priority.

Ward Place Carrier Annex management stated that carriers hired within the preceding six months were not properly trained, and unit management did not review scanning history reports regularly.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have trained carriers on proper scanning procedures, monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery

attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,²⁰ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.²¹ Also, packages on the “Notice Left” area should have been reviewed for second notices and returned to sender if they remained after the prescribed number of days.²²

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Customers rely on accurate scan data to track their packages in real time. When employees do not scan mailpieces correctly and retain undelivered mail beyond the established number of days, 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 both the customer experience and the Postal Service brand.

Corrective Action Taken

Subsequent to audit fieldwork, the Postal Service trained the carriers at the three sites on the proper scanning process and provided support that they were monitoring scans and the “notice-left” section. We consider the issue resolved; therefore, we are not making a recommendation for this finding.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service generally agreed with this finding.

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

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

²² *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, April 2016.

Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Unit management at the Lammond Riggs Station did not manage the arrow keys at the unit. Specifically, we found two extra keys that were not on the arrow key certification list.

Why Did It Occur

Lammond Riggs management stated that they kept the extra keys as spares when two routes were discontinued. They did not have the ability to add the spare keys to the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports arrow key inventory and had not asked the district for assistance.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have properly managed the arrow keys. According to Postal Service policy,²³ management must keep an accurate inventory of all arrow keys.

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.

Corrective Action Taken

Lammond Riggs Station management updated their arrow key inventory and provided an updated certification list, which documented that they had done so. We consider the issue resolved; therefore, we are not making a recommendation for this finding.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service generally agreed with this finding.

²³ USPS Arrow Key Standard Work Instructions, updated August 2023.

Finding #4: Timekeeping Management

What We Found

We determined that between October 1 through December 29, 2023, management at the three units had 126 disallowed time entries and 721 instances of unauthorized overtime for carriers in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS).²⁴ However, they did not resolve 125 of 126 (99.2 percent) disallowed time entries or 717 of 721 (99.4 percent) instances of unauthorized overtime. Specifically, they did not document the reason for the disallowed and unauthorized time occurrences, or that they had discussed the disallowed time with the employee.

At the Brookland Station, between October 1 through December 29, 2023, the unit did not complete, print, and retain PS Form 2240, *Pay, Leave, or Other Hours Adjustment Request* for the one pay adjustment during this period. Also, management had a binder for the PS Forms 1017-A, *Time Disallowance Record*,²⁵ and the PS Forms 1017-B, *Unauthorized Overtime Record*.²⁶ However, the binder did not contain documentation of any occurrences since 2022.

At the Lammond Riggs Station, management did not retain any of the printed copies of the PS Forms 1017-A, or PS Forms 1017-B for any of these occurrences. The unit had a binder that retained the most recent PS Forms 1017-A and PS Forms 1017-B, but it did not include any forms prior to 2024.

At the Ward Place Carrier Annex, management did not retain printed copies of PS Form 1017-A, or PS Form 1017-B for most of these time records. Specifically, management did not have printed copies for all 79 disallowed time and 275 of the 314 unauthorized overtime occurrences. Of the 39 printed PS 1017-B forms, only eight contained handwritten comments, and the remaining 31 were unresolved.

Finally, we noted that none of the three units stored their binders in a secured location.

Why Did It Occur

Management at all three stations did not know all of the timekeeping policies we assessed during our audit. Additionally, at the Brookland Station, management did not oversee that the pay adjustment and occurrences of disallowed time and unauthorized overtime were completed due to competing priorities. Regarding the pay adjustment, management said they sent the records to Postal Labor Relations and did not maintain a copy for its files.

What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy²⁷ states that pay adjustment certifications are to be kept on file and attached to supporting documentation for the current calendar year plus the three previous years. Policy²⁸ further states unit personnel must complete PS Form 1017-A and PS Form 1017-B entries and place them in a notebook binder that is secured from unauthorized access documenting the reason for the disallowed time or unauthorized overtime. Postal guidance²⁹ provides instructions on how to complete the entries in TACS.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When proper documentation of pay adjustments, time disallowance, and unauthorized overtime are not completed, management could incur excess administrative time. In addition, the Postal Service risks violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act³⁰ when unit management does not maintain documentation that shows the justifiable reason and employee notification for disallowed time.

²⁴ The system used by the Postal Service to automate the collection of employee time and attendance information.

²⁵ Form used only when a supervisor observes, or has reason to know, that an employee did not work, while "on the clock." The supervisor must document the basis for any such disallowance. These forms serve as a cumulative record of disallowed time.

²⁶ Managers and supervisors are required to complete a PS Form 1017-B when a non-exempt employee incurs unauthorized overtime. The form serves as a cumulative record of unauthorized overtime.

²⁷ *AdjustPay User Guide*, Course No. 31202-25, updated February 9, 2017.

²⁸ Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance*, February 2016.

²⁹ TACS Training Page, *Training Video 1017-A 1017-B Enhancement Demo*.

³⁰ 29 United States Code, Chapter 8 § 211.

Corrective Action Taken

The Postal Service has trained the supervisors at the three sites about the timekeeping policy and provided support that they are following the proper process. We consider the issue resolved; therefore, we are not making a recommendation for this finding.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service generally agreed with this finding.

Finding # 5: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found safety and maintenance issues at all three delivery units; and security issues at two of the delivery units.

Property Safety:

At the Brookland Station, we found all five fire extinguishers did not have monthly inspections and one was missing in the vestibule area. In the customer lobby we found a dislodged electrical socket, a raised sidewalk, a cord hanging from a monitor, a non-functioning handicap access button and an expansion joint needing repair posing a trip hazard. On the workroom floor we found several doors were missing the required "This is Not an Exit" signs, and an unsecured electrical cord posing a trip hazard. There was also a blocked sprinkler and hydraulic control in a storage room, a broken handrail at the dock area, and an unsecured ladder in the custodial closet.

At the Lammond Riggs Station, we found three damaged electrical outlets, two blocked/covered internal Postal Inspection Service doors, and an electrical extension cord improperly used at three carrier cases. In the workroom area, we found a blocked electrical panel and a missing fire extinguisher leading to the back dock.

At the Ward Place Carrier Annex, we found all six fire extinguishers were missing monthly and annual inspections, and one fire extinguisher was blocked and inaccessible in the workroom area.

Property Security:

At the Brookland Station, we found there were no "Subject to Search" signs posted in the parking lot and no "U.S. Property No Trespassing" signs posted around the facility.

At the Lammond Riggs Station, we found there were no "Subject to Search" signs posted in the parking lot. Also, there was an unsecured employee entrance door (near the street) during non-peak hours of operation.

Property Maintenance:

At the Brookland Station, we found a tree hanging over the awning and fallen tree debris scattered on the grounds; trash, excessive equipment, and overgrown foliage around the unit; and the exterior of the building at the customer parking lot needed a power wash. In the customer lobby, we found dirty blinds, cobwebs, and dust throughout the area, a loose structure above the PO Box area, door frames and glass needed cleaning, and the handrails at the customer lobby entrance need painting. Also, there were missing, broken, misaligned, and stained ceiling tiles throughout the facility and dock area, as well as a leaking faucet in the men's restroom. Finally, we found an inoperable light over the dock platform and several inoperable lights on the workroom floor and over the PO Box area.

At the Lammond Riggs Station, we found there was black dust on and around the air vents throughout the station, damaged walls, and missing ceiling tiles in the vestibules, two inoperable safes behind the window section, and damaged walls in the hallways. The women's restroom had a damaged sink countertop; wall damages; missing wall section behind a toilet; and a dirty floor. The men's restroom had a dirty floor, damaged wall, a clogged toilet, taped shut toilet stall, an inoperable urinal, a faucet that barely streamed, and a loose faucet. The men's locker room had a broken doorknob, peeling paint on the ceiling air ducts, damaged ceiling, damaged walls, and dirty floor. The customer lobby had a broken door hinge, damage to a window ledge, damaged ceiling tile, and a dirty floor. Outside, we found graffiti on the back brick wall, a damaged gutter down spout with missing parts, damaged concrete, postal vehicle parking lots littered with empty equipment and trash, and the flagpole in front of the station is too short to fly flags at half-staff. On and near the dock we found a large hole at the base of the concrete step going up to the back, a broken door hinge, a damaged fence, and a loose exterior door post.

At the Ward Place Carrier Annex, we found that no hot water in men's restroom on first and second floors, or in women's restroom on the first floor. Some sinks were inoperable in both men's and women's restrooms. There were two workorders submitted almost a year ago, on February 27, 2023, and unit management did not follow up on them. Also, multiple ceiling tiles were stained in the Caller Services office and the women's restroom on the second floor. Management submitted a work order for new ceiling tiles on September 15, 2023, but had not followed up. Multiple ceiling tiles were missing in the Caller Services office, men's locker room, and postmaster's office. Finally, one vent was dirty in the workroom area and one inoperable faucet was found in the workroom area's sink.

Why Did It Occur

Management at all three offices did not provide sufficient oversight and take the necessary actions to verify that property condition issues were identified, reported, and corrected due to other duties taking priority.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety, security, and maintenance issues as they arose, and monitored them for completion. The Postal Service requires management to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers.³¹

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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

Corrective Action Taken

During our audit, district management provided documentation showing that they have addressed all property condition issues identified at the three sites. Subsequently, we will not be making any recommendations for this finding. See Figures 7, 8, and 9 as examples of issues resolved at the three units.

Figure 7. Brookland Station: Dislodged Electrical Socket in Customer Lobby

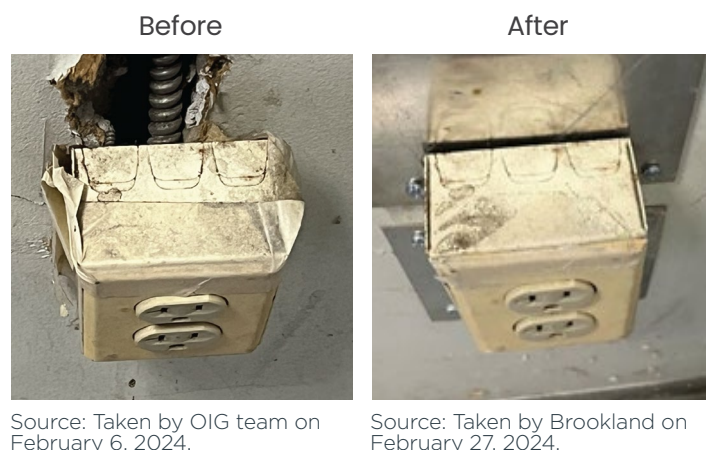
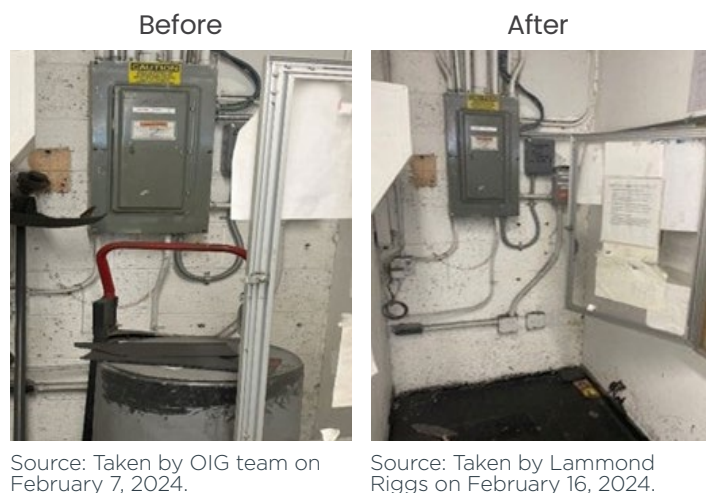


Figure 8. Lammond Riggs Station: Blocked Electrical Panel in Workroom



³¹ Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July 2020.

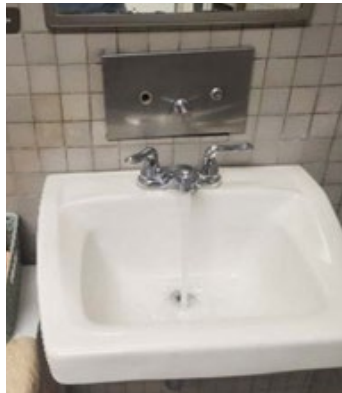
Figure 9. Ward Place Carrier Annex: Inoperable Sinks in the Restrooms

Before



Source: Taken by OIG team on February 6, 2024.

After



Source: Taken by Ward Place on February 26, 2024.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service generally agreed with this finding.

Finding # 6: Separation of Packages for Dispatch

What We Found

Employees at the Lammond Riggs Station did not properly separate packages destined for the Curseen–Morris P&DC. Specifically, on February 7, 2023, during the unit’s evening operations, we observed that Ground Advantage³² and Priority Mail³³ were commingled in the same containers. The Brookland Station and the Ward Place Carrier Annex were not required to separate Ground Advantage and Priority Mail packages due to the smaller size of their office.

Why Did It Occur

The PM supervisor was following an outdated policy and was not aware of the requirement to separate Ground Advantage and Priority Mail packages.

What Should Have Happened

In July 2023, the Postal Service made significant changes to its parcel processing operations. Specifically, delivery and retail units changed the way they separated packages dispatched to facilitate the introduction of a new package service. On September 26, 2023, the Postal Service implemented³⁴ additional changes for the preparation and dispatch of packages to processing facilities by delivery units of a certain size. Postal Service requires these units to separate Priority and Ground Advantage packages when dispatching this mail to the processing facility.

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.

Corrective Action Taken

The Postal Service has trained the supervisors at the Lammond Riggs Station on the proper procedures for separating Priority from Ground Advantage packages. We consider the issue resolved; therefore, we are not making a recommendation for this finding.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service generally agreed with this finding.

³² A service providing an affordable and reliable way to send packages inside the U.S. Packages under 70 pounds arrive in 2-5 business days.

³³ An expedited service and may contain any mailable matter weighing no more than 70 pounds.

³⁴ Mail Preparation (MTEL) Changes Level 22 and Above Only, September 2023.

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Lammond Riggs
Station



Ward Place
Carrier Annex



Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from April through June 2024, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls as we considered necessary under the circumstances. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

In planning and conducting the audit, we obtained an understanding of the 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 that we assessed these controls. Based on the work performed, we identified internal control deficiencies in all three components that were significant within the context of our objective. The actions taken by management during our audit corrected the weaknesses we identified.

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

Appendix B: Management's Comments



May 28, 2024

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Maryland District: Delivery Operations in Washington, DC
(Report Number 24-065-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report *Maryland District: Delivery Operations in Washington, DC*.

Management generally agrees with the findings related to delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys, carrier complement and timekeeping, sortation of packages for dispatch, and property conditions of safety, security, and maintenance at Brookland Station, Lammond-Riggs Station, and Ward Place Carrier Annex.

Management acted quickly to implement action plans to address all the reported issues. We appreciate the audit team's thorough review of the documents provided to support actions taken by management. The OIG determined management's actions resolved the findings and did not make recommendations in the report.

E-SIGNED by Lora McLucas
on 2024-05-28 10:45:15 EDT

Lora McLucas
District Manager, Maryland/DC District

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

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UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE



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