

Corryville Station, Cincinnati, OH: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 24-148-1-R25 | December 4, 2024



Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

December 4, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR: DON KRAVOS
MANAGER, OHIO 2 DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is centered below the "MEMORANDUM FOR" section.

FROM: Sean Balduff
Director, Field Operations, Central and Southern

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Corryville Station, Cincinnati, OH: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 24-148-1-R25)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Corryville Station in Cincinnati, OH.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ramona Gonzalez, 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, Central Area Retail & Delivery Operations
Director, Retail & Post Office Operations Maintenance
Corporate Audit and Response Management

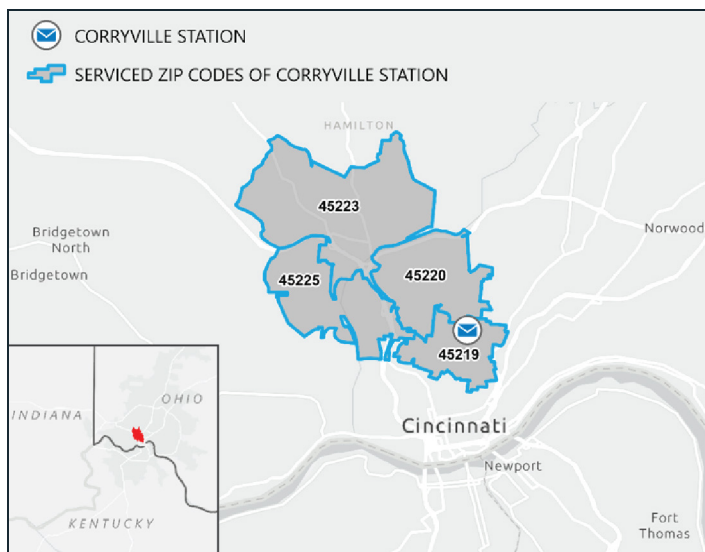
Results

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 Corryville Station in Cincinnati, OH (Project Number 24-148-1). The Corryville Station is in the Ohio 2 District of the Central Area and services ZIP Codes 45219, 45220, 45223 and 45225 (see Figure 1). These ZIP Codes serve 57,350 people and the region is considered to be an urban area.¹

Figure 1. ZIP Codes Served by the Corryville Station



Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

This delivery unit has 30 city routes. From July 13 through August 16, 2024, the delivery unit had three supervisors assigned.² There was also one employee that was acting in a higher-level supervisor detail at this facility. The Corryville Station falls under the Cincinnati Post Office for employee availability measurement. As of August 19, 2024, the employee availability rate for the Cincinnati Post Office was 93.3 percent year to date, which is under the Postal Service's retail and delivery operations employee availability goal of 93.6 percent for FY 2024. The Corryville Station is one of three delivery units³ the OIG reviewed during the week of September 9, 2024, that are serviced by the Cincinnati Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) and Network Distribution Center (NDC).

We assessed all units serviced by the Cincinnati P&DC and NDC based on the number of Customer 360⁴ (C360) delivery-related inquiries,⁵ Informed Delivery⁶ contacts, stop-the-clock⁷ (STC) scans performed away from the delivery point, and undelivered route information between May 1 and July 31, 2024. We also reviewed first and last mile failures⁸ between May 4 and August 2, 2024.

We judgmentally selected the Corryville Station primarily based on the number of C360 inquiries related to delivery and Informed Delivery contacts. The unit was also chosen based on first and last mile failures. See Table 1 for a comparison of some of these metrics between the unit and the rest of the district.

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

² According to the Postal Service (PS) Form 50, *Notification of Personnel Action*, associated with the unit as of August 16, 2024.

³ The other two units were the Fairfield Branch, Fairfield, OH (Project Number 24-148-2) and the Mid City Cincinnati Carrier Annex, Cincinnati, OH (Project Number 24-148-3).

⁴ A cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.

⁵ A compilation of package inquiry, package pickup, daily mail service, and hold mail inquiries.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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."

⁸ 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.

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

Delivery Metric	Unit Average per Route	District Average per Route
C360 Delivery Inquiries	11.7	5.1
Informed Delivery Contacts	40.7	18.1

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service’s C360 and Informed Delivery data extracted August 6, 2024.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Corryville Station in Cincinnati, OH.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on the following audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,⁹ 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; 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 November 13, 2024, and included their comments, where appropriate.

We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding conditions we identified at the Corryville Station. We will issue a separate report¹⁰ that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all three delivery units, as well as the district. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Corryville Station. Specifically, we found issues with four of the areas we reviewed (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Results

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

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of September 9, 2024.

9 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.
10 Project Number 24-148.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of September 10, 2024, we identified 5,214 delayed mailpieces at 17 carrier cases and the hot case.¹¹ Specifically, we identified 4,309 letters and 905 flats.¹² In addition, 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 Figure 2 for an example of delayed mail found at carrier cases. Further, the carriers did not complete PS Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,¹⁴ to document the undelivered mailpieces.

Table 3. Types of Delayed Mail Identified

Type of Mail	Carrier Case	Hot Case	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	3,685	624	4,309
Flats	905	0	905
Totals	4,590	624	5,214

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit on September 10, 2024.

We further identified 137 Business Reply¹⁵ mailpieces at a carrier case dating back to January 2021 that were received from various government agencies requesting an address verification. The address verifications had been completed but not returned to the mailer.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail in the Carrier Cases



Source: OIG photos taken September 10, 2024.

Why Did It Occur

The delayed mail we identified was due to management not enforcing the redline¹⁶ process. Specifically, management did not verify carriers identified and placed mail that they brought back from their routes into the appropriate area to be returned to the P&DC or complete a PS Form 1571 to document the reason why the mail could not be delivered. Management also did not provide oversight to verify that Business Reply Mail (BRM) was given to clerks for further processing.¹⁷ In addition, supervisors did not complete the PM checklist, which would have included looking through the carrier cases for undelivered mail brought back to the unit. Further, management did not report mail in the DCV system because the AM supervisor did not have access to the system. This supervisor had been at the unit since May 2024.

¹¹ A case designated for final withdrawal of mail as carriers leave the office.
¹² Count of mail included individual piece counts and OIG estimate based on Postal Service conversion factors in Management Instruction PO-610-2007-1, *Piece Count Recording System*.
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 First-Class Mail and Priority Mail service that enables a sender to pay per piece fees and postage only for the responses received.
¹⁶ 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.
¹⁷ Designated Postal Service employees are responsible for the basic BRM functions, which are to weigh, distribute, compute, and process all classes and types of BRM.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured that all mail was processed and delivered daily and that any mail returned from a route was properly identified. Postal Service policy¹⁸ states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. In addition, policy¹⁹ states delivery units must follow the redline process, which includes carriers completing a PS Form 1571 for any undelivered mail brought back to the delivery unit. Further, managers must complete the PM checklist verifying that the unit is free of all outgoing mail, which would include the identification of BRM waiting to be processed and returned to the mailer. Managers are also required²⁰ to report all mail in the delivery unit after the carriers have left for their street duties as either delayed or

curtailed in DCV. Further, management must update DCV if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When mail is delayed, or not returned to the sender timely, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand. In addition, inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in DCV 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.

¹⁸ *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

¹⁹ Standard Operating Procedures, Redline Policy.

²⁰ *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.²¹ We also found issues with employee barcode management.

We reviewed package scanning data for scans that occurred at the unit and removed any potentially accurate scans performed.²² In total, employees improperly scanned 115 packages at the delivery unit between May 1 and July 31, 2024 (see Table 4). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 80 percent of them were scanned “Delivered.”

Table 4. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	Count	Percentage
Delivered	92	80%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	23	20%
Total	115	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.

We also found issues with scanning and handling of packages in the unit. On the morning of September 10, 2024, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected all 28 packages from the carrier cases to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 28 sampled packages, 11 (39 percent) had improper scans or handling issues, including:

- Three packages were scanned “Vacant” or “Insufficient Address” from August 22 to August 30, 2024. These packages should have been returned to sender.
- Three packages were scanned “Held at Post Office at Customer Request” or “Delivery Attempted –

No Access to Delivery Location” from August 22 to August 30, 2024. These packages should have been moved to the “Notice Left” area.²³

- Two packages were scanned “Delivered,” which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address.
- One package was scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” .8 miles away from the delivery point. Scans should be made as close to the delivery point as possible.
- One package was missing an “Arrival-at-Unit” scan, which is necessary to provide complete visibility.
- One package was scanned “Held at Post Office at Customer Request,” but did not have a hold request on file.

Finally, employee barcodes were not properly managed at the facility. Specifically, unit management hung a list of employee barcodes on the workroom floor, which could allow employees to log into a scanner as someone else.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. Management stated it monitors scans daily. However, it focuses on integrity and scan failure reports instead of reports that show improper scans and scans made away from the delivery point. In addition, supervisors did not complete the PM checklist, which would have included looking through the carrier cases for packages that were scanned incorrectly. Further, the AM supervisor stated the employee barcode list was posted for employees to use if they forget their badges. He was unaware that the list should be secured, and he promptly removed the list from the workroom floor after becoming aware of the policy.

21 We found a nominal amount of scans occurring away from the delivery unit and over 1,000 feet from the intended delivery point between May 1 and July 31 2024.
22 This data does not include scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as “Delivered – PO Box” and “Customer (Vacation) Hold.” Additionally, PO Box scans at the unit were only counted when the delivery point was an address away from the unit. This category does not include mail addressed for a PO Box.
23 The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance. The Postal Service's goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,²⁴ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.²⁵ In addition, temporary badges must be controlled and issued by the facility head to authorized personnel who arrive without their assigned badge during normal duty hours.²⁶

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 both the customer experience and the Postal Service brand. Further, securing employee sensitive information prevents the opportunity for theft or other non-authorized activities to occur.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

²⁴ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

²⁵ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

²⁶ *AS-805 Information Security*, September 2022.

Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Unit management did not properly manage arrow keys. On the morning of September 12, 2024, we reviewed the unit's arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)²⁷ system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. The unit reported 46 keys in RADAR, and we determined that all 42 keys located at the unit were on the list. However, four keys on the list could not be located. Unit management had not reported any of the missing keys to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS).

Why Did It Occur

Management did not properly inventory arrow keys due to competing priorities, such as managing delivery operations and monitoring carriers as they returned from the street.

What Should Have Happened

According to Postal Service policy,²⁸ management must keep an accurate inventory of all arrow keys. Any missing keys must be immediately reported to the USPIS.

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.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

²⁷ The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.

²⁸ *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 Corryville Station, including:

Property Safety:

- Five fire extinguishers were missing annual inspections.
- Two exit signs were not illuminated (see Figure 3).
- There was chipped and unlevelled floor tile at the threshold of the customer service lobby (see Figure 3).
- One electrical outlet was broken in the lobby area (see Figure 4).
- An exit door was blocked by blue hampers (see Figure 4).
- One Inspection Service door was blocked (see Figure 5).
- The microwave and vending machine in the employee break room were plugged into a power strip.

Figure 3. Examples of Property Safety Issues

Exit Sign Not Illuminated



Source: OIG photo taken September 12, 2024.

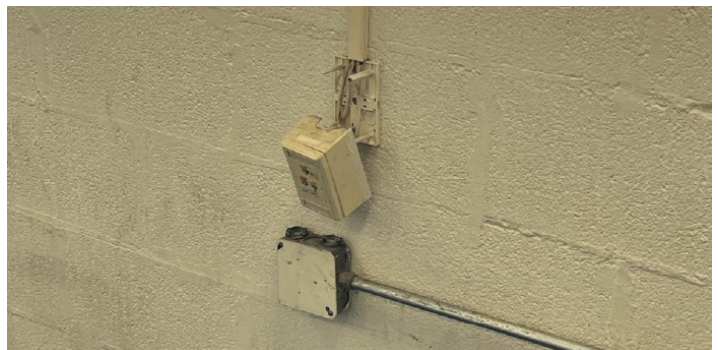
Chipped and Unleveled Floor Tile



Source: OIG photo taken September 12, 2024.

Figure 4. Examples of Property Safety Issues

Broken Outlet in the Lobby



Source: OIG photo taken September 12, 2024.

Exit Door was Blocked by Blue Hampers



Source: OIG photo taken September 12, 2024.

Figure 5. Example of Property Safety Issue

Blocked Inspection Service Door



Source: OIG photos taken September 12, 2024.

Property Security:

- Three doors leading to the workroom floor of the facility were not secured, including the back door, the parcel pickup door, and the door from the lobby area.
- The security gate for the parking lot was inoperable.
- There was no sign posted in 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 verify that property condition issues were corrected. Management was aware of the chipped floor tile, as it had already been reported in eFMS in May and November 2023. However, the issue was disapproved by facilities,²⁹ due to the unit's failure to respond to a request for additional information. Management stated it was not aware of the other issues, as they were focused on daily activities such as conference calls and delivery operations.

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.³⁰

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

²⁹ Hub Management – The first group within HQ Facilities to contract out repairs to buildings.

³⁰ Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July 2020.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from August through November 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 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 Fairfield Branch, Mid City Cincinnati Carrier Annex, and the Corryville Station, as well as the district.

We assessed the reliability of PTR, DCV, and the Time and Collection System 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



November 14, 2024

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Management Response: Corryville Station, Cincinnati, OH: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 24-148-1- DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Corryville Station, Cincinnati, OH: Delivery Operations*

Management agrees with the four findings in the report on delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys, and property conditions.


Management has begun taking steps to address the four 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*. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

Package Scanning: Management will provide a service talk on proper handling and package 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 any missing keys to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Management will also provide training on proper handling and security of arrow keys. Additionally, reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

Property Conditions: Management has abated 9 of 10 property conditions identified and submitted a work order for the remaining condition as it requires repair by resources outside of local management.

 E-SIGNED by Donald.D Kravos
on 2024-11-19 16:41:02 EST

Donald D. Kravos
Acting Manager, Ohio 2 District

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

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