

Perry Administrative Post Office, Perry, GA: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 25-015-2-R25 | February 12, 2025



Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

February 12, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: AVINESH D. KUMAR
MANAGER, GEORGIA DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is centered below the memorandum header.

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

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Perry Administrative Post Office, Perry, GA: Delivery
Operations (Report Number 25-015-2-R25)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Perry Administrative Post Office in Perry, GA.

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, Southern Area Retail & Delivery Operations
Director, Retail & Post Office Operations Maintenance
Corporate Audit and Response Management

Results

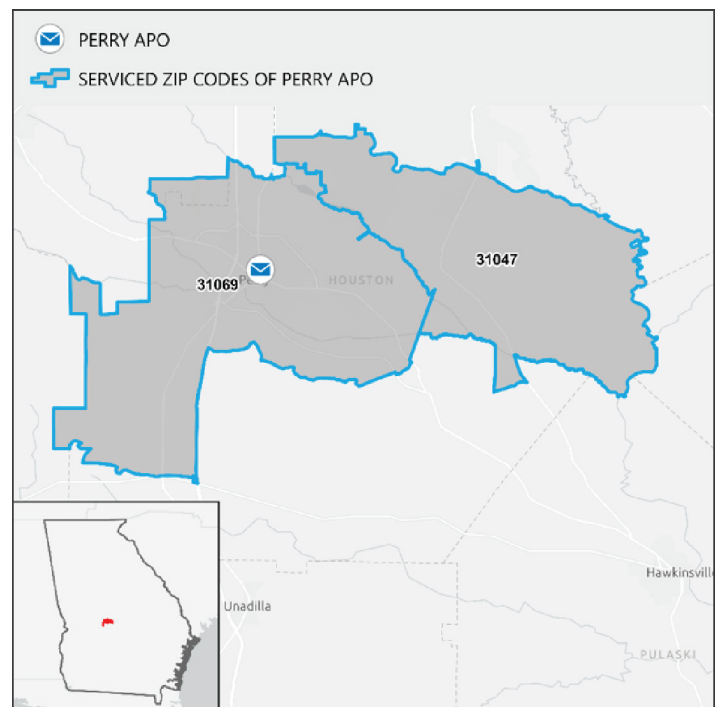
Background

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 Perry Administrative Post Office (APO) in Perry, GA (Project Number 25-015-2). The Perry APO is in the Georgia District of the Southern Area and serves about 39,840 people in ZIP Codes 31047 and 31069, which are considered predominantly urban communities (see Figure 1). Specifically, 31,205 (78 percent) live in urban communities and 8,635 (22 percent) live in rural communities.¹

This delivery unit has 28 rural routes, four city routes and one contract delivery service route. From September 7 through October 4, 2024, the delivery unit had two supervisors assigned.² As of September 20, 2024,³ the employee availability rate for the Perry APO was 91.1 percent year-to-date for fiscal year (FY) 2024, which is under the Postal Service's retail and delivery operations employee availability goal of 93.6 percent for FY 2024. The Perry APO is one of four delivery units⁴ the OIG reviewed during the week of November 18, 2024, that are serviced by the Macon Local Processing Center (LPC).

Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Perry APO



Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

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

We judgmentally selected the Perry APO primarily based on the number of C360 inquiries related to delivery and STC scans performed away from the delivery point. 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's Time and Attendance Collection system.

³ The last day of Pay Period 20.

⁴ The other three units were the Gray Main Post Office, Gray, GA (Project Number 25-015-1); Warner Robins Main Post Office, Warner Robins, GA (Project Number 25-015-3); and Zebulon Branch, Macon, GA (Project Number 25-015-4).

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

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

⁷ Informed Delivery is a free and optional notification service that gives residential customers the ability to digitally preview their letter-sized mail and submit inquiries for mailpieces that were expected for delivery but have not arrived.

⁸ A scan event that indicates the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the mailpiece. Examples of STC scans include "Delivered," "Available for Pickup," and "No Access."

⁹ First mile failures occur when a mailpiece is collected and does not receive a processing scan at the P&DC on the day that it was intended. Last mile failures occur after the mailpiece has been processed at the P&DC on a final processing operation and is not delivered to the customer on the day it was intended.

Table 1. Delivery Metric Comparison Between July 1 and September 28, 2024

Delivery Metric	Unit Average per Route	District Average per Route
C360 Delivery Inquiries	10.5	9.8
Scans Over 1,000 Feet From Delivery Point	44.4	14.1

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service's C360 and Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data extracted October 7, 2024. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Perry APO in Perry, GA.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on the following audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,¹⁰ carrier separations and transfers, and property safety and security conditions. Specifically, we reviewed delivery metrics, including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, and carrier complement. During our site visit we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; employee separation procedures; 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 January 23, 2025, 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 Perry APO. We will issue a separate capping report¹¹ that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all four delivery units, as well as the district. The capping report will include

¹⁰ A distinctively shaped key carriers use to open mail-receiving receptacles, such as street collection boxes and panels of apartment house mailboxes equipped with an arrow lock. Arrow keys are accountable property and are subject to strict controls.
¹¹ Project Number 25-015.
¹² 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.

actions taken by management to address the issues identified in this interim report. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Perry APO. Specifically, we found issues with three of the areas we reviewed (see Table 2). We also found issues related to contract delivery service (CDS) badges.

Table 2. Summary of Results

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

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of November 18, 2024.

- We reviewed STC scans occurring at the delivery unit, and those completed greater than 1,000 feet¹² from the intended delivery point between July 1 and September 28, 2024, and did not identify any systemic issues. A majority of scans performed away from the delivery point were for addresses where the package was scanned at the physical building, which was over 1,000 feet away from the mailbox.
- We analyzed employee data and did not identify any issues with employee separations and transfers.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of November 19, 2024, we identified 831 delayed mailpieces at 26 carrier cases and behind the retail counter. Specifically, we identified 699 letters, 126 flats, and six packages. 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 examples of delayed mail found at carrier cases. Further, the carriers did not complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,¹⁴ to document undelivered mailpieces.

Table 3. Types of Delayed Mail Identified

Type of Mail	Carrier Case	Retail Counter	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	699	0	699
Flats	126	0	126
Packages	4	2	6
Totals	829	2	831

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit November 19, 2024.

Why Did It Occur

The delayed mail we identified was primarily due to management not enforcing the proper redline¹⁵ process. Specifically, management did not verify carriers identified and placed mail brought back from their routes into the appropriate area or complete a PS Form 1571 documenting the reason why the mail could not be delivered. The supervisor stated he did not complete the PM duties, such as reviewing carrier cases for undelivered mail because of competing priorities such as performing dispatch duties.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail in the Carrier Cases



Source: OIG photos taken November 19, 2024.

¹³ A tool for unit management to manually self-report delayed mail, which provides a snapshot of daily mail conditions at the point in time when carriers have departed for the street.

¹⁴ PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

¹⁵ A standardized framework encompassing manager and carrier responsibilities after carriers return to the delivery unit upon completion of delivery assignments, ensuring that any mail returned from the street is identified with a signed completed PS Form 1571 and that no mail is taken back to the carrier case.

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 policy¹⁶ 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, policy¹⁷ states delivery units must follow the redline process, which includes carriers completing a PS Form 1571 for any undelivered mail brought back to the delivery unit. Further, managers must complete the PM checklist verifying that the unit is free of all outgoing mail. Managers are also required¹⁸ to report all mail in the delivery unit after the carriers have left for their street duties as either delayed or curtailed in DCV. 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, 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.

¹⁶ *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

¹⁷ Standard Operating Procedures, Redline Policy.

¹⁸ DCV Learn and Grow, August 1, 2024.

Finding #2: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Unit management did not properly update the arrow key inventory log. On the morning of November 21, 2024, we reviewed the unit's arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)¹⁹ system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. Unit management reported 26 keys in RADAR as "In-Use" or "In-Vault." Based on our physical review of arrow keys at the unit, 19 of the 26 keys were missing, and an additional 11 "In-Use" keys found were not recorded in RADAR.

Why Did It Occur

The postmaster stated she knew the requirements for updating the arrow key log in RADAR. However, she 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

Management should have verified that arrow key procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,²⁰ 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.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

¹⁹ The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.

²⁰ *Arrow/Modified Arrow Lock (MAL) Key Accountability Standard Work Instruction*, dated May, 2024.

Finding #3: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found property safety issues at the Perry APO, including:

- All six fire extinguishers were missing monthly and annual inspections.
- The Inspection Service and electrical room doors were blocked (see Figure 3).
- Several lights in the front and back parking lots and on the loading dock were inoperable.
- The stop sign leaving the employee parking lot was faded (see Figure 4).

Figure 3. Examples of Blocked Doors

Inspection Service Door



Electrical Room Door



Source: OIG photos taken November 19, 2024.

Figure 4. Example of Faded Stop Sign



Source: OIG photo taken November 19, 2024.

Why Did It Occur

Management stated it was not aware that the extinguishers were missing monthly and annual inspections, and that the Inspection Service door was blocked. However, it was aware of the inoperable lights and stated that maintenance requires a "lift" to replace the bulbs. Management further stated it attempted to replace the stop sign but was having difficulty finding one that was the correct size. In addition, management stated the electrical room door was blocked as a result of making room for morning operations. During our audit, the unit manager took immediate action by performing

monthly inspections on the six fire extinguishers and unblocking the Inspection Service and electrical room doors.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. The Postal Service requires management to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers.²¹

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Management's attention to safety 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.

²¹ Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July 2020.

Finding #4: Contract Delivery Service

What We Found

We determined the CDS carrier who has been at the unit for over a year did not have a photo identification (ID) barcoded badge. A barcoded ID badge indicates that a background check has been completed and that clearance has been granted to enter the facility and access the mail. Instead, the CDS carrier was using the postmaster's ID barcode badge to log into the scanner to deliver the mail.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not follow policy or provide oversight to ensure that the CDS carrier had a valid barcode ID badge. Instead, the postmaster provided her barcode to the carrier to log into the package scanners. The postmaster stated she was not aware of the process to obtain a badge for a CDS carrier.

What Should Have Happened

The Postal Service requires that management obtain screening information from highway transportation suppliers and their contractor personnel to verify their eligibility. Highway transportation suppliers, suppliers' personnel, and subcontractors' personnel

who transport mail or who are allowed access to Postal Service operational areas must receive nonsensitive clearances. Pending clearance, a temporary photo ID badge PS Form 5139, *Non-Postal Service Temporary Employee*, must be obtained, which allows access to mail and mail-processing facilities. A barcode for an ID badge PS Form 5140, *Non-Postal Service Contract Employee*, is provided once the contract driver has been granted a nonsensitive clearance.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When CDS carriers do not have an appropriate contractor Postal ID badge, management is unable to determine if the carrier is allowed access to Postal Service operational areas or deliver mail. In addition, CDS carriers using barcodes from another person causes inaccurate package scanning data, which makes it difficult for management to hold these carriers responsible for inaccurate scanning.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from October 2024 through February 2025 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls as we considered necessary under the circumstances. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

In planning and conducting the audit, we obtained an understanding of the delivery operations internal control structure to help determine the nature, timing, and extent of our audit procedures. We reviewed the management controls for overseeing the program and mitigating associated risks. Additionally, we assessed the internal control components and underlying principles, and we determined that the following three components were significant to our audit objective:

- Control Activities
- Information and Communication
- Monitoring

We developed audit work to ensure 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 Gray Main Post Office, Warner Robins Main Post Office, and the Zebulon Branch, as well as the district.

We assessed the reliability of DCV 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



January 24, 2025

VICTORIA SMITH
ACTING DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Perry Administrative Post Office, Perry, GA: Delivery Operations (Report Number 25-015-2-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Perry Administrative Post Office, Perry, GA: Delivery Operations*.

Management generally agrees with the four findings in the report on delayed mail, arrow keys, property conditions, and contract delivery services.

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* and follow the *Redline process*. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

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

Property Conditions: Management has abated two of the four property conditions related to safety. Management is working to resolve the remaining issue, which requires submission of workorders for assistance from other resources.

Contract Delivery Service: District management will verify that the one Contract Delivery Service carrier at the Perry Administrative Post Office, gets a valid Postal Service photo identification badge.

E-SIGNED by Avinesh.D Kumar
on 2025-01-24 08:35:20 EST

Avinesh D. Kumar
District Manager, Georgia District

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

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