

Mesa Four Peaks Station, Mesa, AZ: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 25-046-2-R25 | April 1, 2025



Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

April 1, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: TINA M. SWEENEY
MANAGER, ARIZONA-NEW MEXICO 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 – Mesa Four Peaks Station, Mesa, AZ: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 25-046-2-R25)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Mesa Four Peaks Station in Mesa, AZ.

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 & Executive Vice President
Vice President, Delivery Operations
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations
Vice President, WestPac Area Retail & Delivery Operations
Director, Retail & Post Office Operations Maintenance
Corporate Audit and Response Management

Results

Background

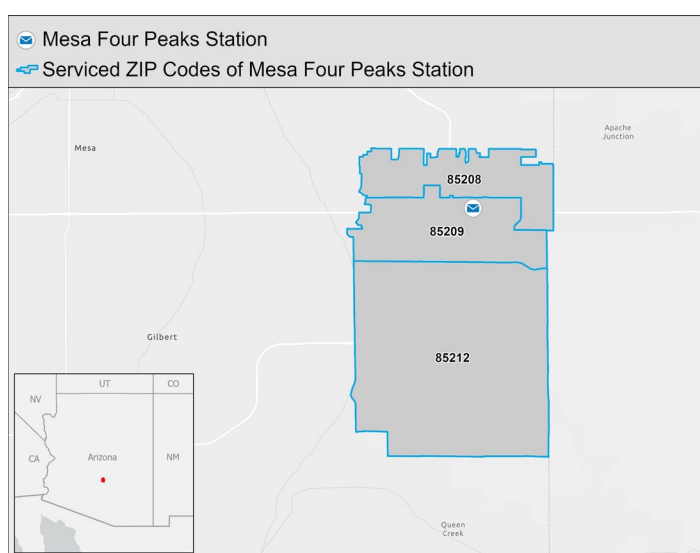
The U.S. Postal Service's mission is to provide timely, reliable, secure, and affordable mail and package delivery to more than 160 million residential and business addresses across the country. The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews delivery operations at facilities across 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 Mesa Four Peaks Station in Mesa, AZ (Project Number 25-046-2). The Mesa Four Peaks Station is in the Arizona-New Mexico (AZ-NM) District of the WestPac Area and serves about 129,269 people in ZIP Codes 85208, 85209, and 85212 which are considered a predominantly urban area (see Figure 1). Specifically, 128,003 (99.0 percent) live in urban communities and 1,266 (1.0 percent) live in rural communities.¹

This delivery unit has 45 rural routes, 17 city routes, and three highway contract routes. From November 2 through November 29, 2024, the delivery unit had three supervisors assigned.² The acting manager is also the Manager Customer Service Operations for the Mesa Main Post Office. The Mesa Four Peaks Station falls under the Mesa Post Office for employee availability measurement. As of November 29, 2024,³ the employee availability rate for the Mesa Post Office was 93.1, which is under the Postal Service's retail and delivery operations employee availability goal of 93.6 percent. The Mesa Four Peaks Station is one of five delivery units⁴ the OIG reviewed during the week of January 13, 2025, that are serviced by the Phoenix Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) and the West Valley P&DC.

We assessed all units serviced by the Phoenix and West Valley P&DCs based on the number of Customer 360⁵ (C360) delivery-related inquiries,⁶ Informed Delivery⁷ contacts, stop-the-clock⁸ (STC) scans performed away from the delivery point and at the unit, undelivered route information, and first and last mile failures between September 1 and November 30, 2024.

Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Mesa Four Peaks Station



Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

We judgmentally selected the Mesa Four Peaks 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's Time and Attendance Collection system (TACS). TACS is the system used by the Postal Service to automate the collection of employee time and attendance information.

³ The last day of Pay Period 25.

⁴ The other four units were the Boulder Hills Station, Phoenix, AZ (Project Number 25-046-1); the Avondale Goodyear Main Post Office (Project Number 25-046-3); the Scottsdale Airport Station, Scottsdale, AZ (Project Number 25-046-4); and the Sunnyslope Carrier Annex, Phoenix, AZ (Project Number 25-046-5).

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."

Table 1. Delivery Metrics Comparison Between September 1 and November 30, 2024

Delivery Metric	Unit Average per Route	District Average per Route
C360s Related to Delivery	15.1	8.4
Informed Delivery Contacts	21.7	14.6

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service’s C360, Informed Delivery, and Informed Visibility data extracted on December 4, 2024.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Mesa Four Peaks Station in Mesa, AZ.

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 March 7, 2025, and included its comments, where appropriate.

We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding conditions we identified at the Mesa Four Peaks Station. We will issue a separate capping report¹⁰ that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all five delivery units, as well as the district. The capping report will include actions taken by management to address the issues identified in this interim report. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Mesa Four Peaks Station. Specifically, we found issues with four of the five areas we reviewed (see Table 2). We also found issues related to Unattempted Deliveries found at the unit.

Table 2. Summary of Results

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

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of January 13, 2025.

We analyzed employee data and did not identify any issues with employee separations and transfers.

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 25-046.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of January 14, 2025, we identified 490 delayed mailpieces at 11 carrier cases. Specifically, we identified 242 letters, 231 flats, and 17 packages. Management only reported 34 mailpieces as delayed in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)¹¹ system. Further, the carriers did not complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,¹² to document undelivered mail.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not verify that all mail was cleared from the unit and delayed mail entered in the DCV system because they were unfamiliar with delayed mail requirements and other duties took priority. Management and carriers stated they were unaware of the Redline process¹³ which identifies the actions to take when carriers return to the unit with undelivered mail. Management also stated they did not always perform a walkthrough of the workroom to check for undelivered mail and to verify if carriers completed PS Form 1571 because other duties took priority, such as ensuring collection mail was properly staged for transport to the plant.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have adhered to the policy¹⁴ stating 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. Postal Service policy¹⁵ also states that all types of First-Class, Priority, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. In addition, managers are required¹⁶ 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.

Postal Service Response

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

¹¹ 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.

¹² PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Standard Operating Procedures, Redline Policy.

¹⁵ *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

¹⁶ *DCV Learn and Grow*, August 1, 2024.

Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees scanned packages improperly at the delivery unit and handled packages incorrectly at the unit.

We reviewed package scanning data for scans that occurred at the unit and removed any potentially accurate scans performed.¹⁷ In total, employees improperly scanned 285 packages at the delivery unit between September and November 2024 (see Table 3). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 40 percent of them were scanned “Delivered.”

Table 3. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	Count	Percent
Delivered	114	40.0
Delivery Attempted - No Access to Delivery Location	70	24.6
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	54	18.9
Return to Sender	19	6.7
No Secure Location Available	15	5.3
Refused	10	3.5
No Authorized Recipient Available	3	1.1
Total	285	100*

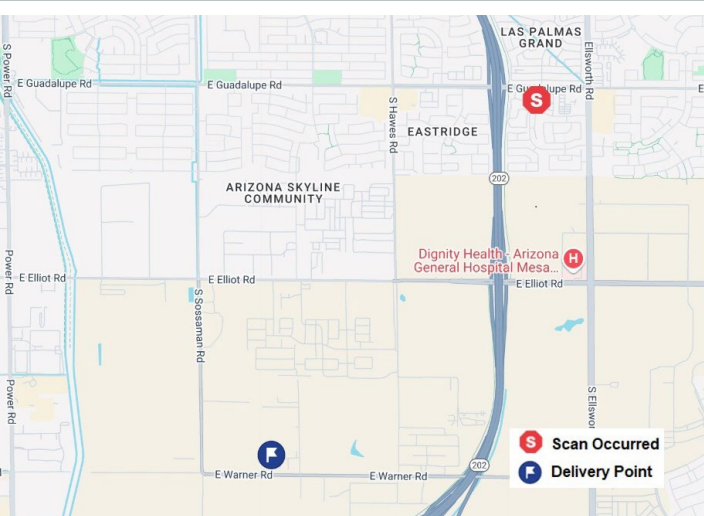
Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service’s Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.
*Total percentage does not equal to 100 percent due to rounding.

We also found issues with scanning and handling of packages in the unit. On the morning of January 14, 2025, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 30 packages from the carrier cases to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 30

sampled packages, 17 (56.7 percent) had improper scans or handling issues, including:

- Eight packages, scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location,” were scanned between 0.8 and 4 miles away from the delivery point (see Figure 2).
- Seven packages were scanned delivered, which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address.
- Two packages were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.

Figure 2. Scan Away From the Delivery Point in Mesa, Arizona



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning procedures. The manager stated she was aware of some scanning issues and held stand-up talks with her team. However, she will follow-up with her team on these issues.

¹⁷ 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.

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,¹⁸ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.¹⁹

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 the customer experience and the Postal Service brand.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

¹⁸ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

¹⁹ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Unit management did not properly update the arrow key inventory log and safeguard arrow keys. On the morning of January 16, 2025, we reviewed the unit's arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)²⁰ system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. Based on our physical review of arrow keys at the unit, we found that 41 of the 246 keys reported in RADAR were missing, and an additional 116 keys found at the unit were not recorded in RADAR. Unit management had not reported any of the lost or missing keys to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Further, we counted 136 damaged keys. The unit had not returned these keys to the vendor or updated the inventory log to reflect the correct number of damaged keys. (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Example of Damaged Arrow Keys Found at Unit



Source: OIG photos taken January 16, 2025.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage arrow keys. The supervisor who oversees arrow keys was on medical leave since late November 2024. Further the unit manager resigned in November 2024. The acting unit manager had been acting since December 2024 and had not delegated the task.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that arrow key security procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,²¹ management must keep an accurate inventory of all arrow keys. Any missing keys must be immediately reported to the Postal Inspection Service. Further, damaged keys must be returned to the vendor, and the RADAR inventory log should record the status of the returned keys.²²

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.

²⁰ The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.

²¹ Arrow/Modified Arrow Lock (MAL) Key Accountability Standard Work Instruction, dated May, 2024.

²² Arrow Key Guidebook, Standard Work Instructions, updated August 2023.

Finding #4: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found property safety and security issues at the Mesa Four Peaks Station.

Property Safety:

- Two workroom area electrical room doors exhibited red “Fire Extinguisher Inside” location stickers, but the fire extinguishers were inaccessible because the doors were locked.
- Two damaged fire hydrant protective pylons in customer parking lot.

Property Security

- An overhead security camera in the loading dock area dislodged from its housing and hanging by two wires.
- 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 all property

condition issues were corrected. The unit manager stated she was not aware of the property condition issues we found.

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.²³

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.

Management Action Taken

During the audit, management took immediate action to address the property conditions (see Figures 4, 5, and 6).

Figure 4. Inaccessible Fire Extinguishers

Before



Source: OIG photo taken January 15, 2025.

After



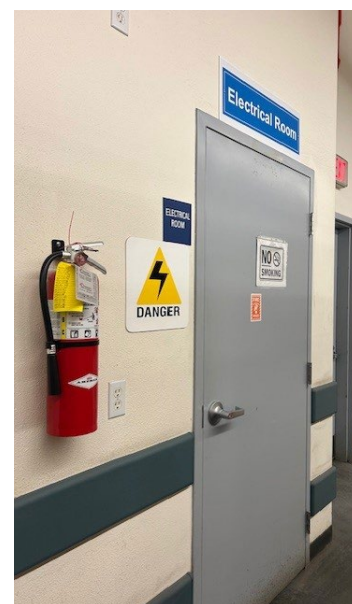
Source: Postal Service, received February 4, 2025.

Before



Source: OIG photo taken January 15, 2025.

After



Source: Postal Service, received February 4, 2025.

²³ Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July 2020.

Figure 5. Damaged Protective Pylons

Before



Source: OIG photo taken January 15, 2025.

After



Source: Postal Service, received February 4, 2025.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

Figure 6. Damaged Security Camera

Before



Source: OIG photo taken January 15, 2025.

After



Source: Postal Service, received January 16, 2025.

Finding #5: Unattempted Delivery

What We Found

Unit management did not properly ensure that Marketing Mail²⁴ was delivered to customers. We found that mail carriers were discarding deliverable mail in Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) containers destined for recycling at the Phoenix P&DC. On the same day we found UBBM containers already sent to the plant for recycling with similar

mail. The mailpieces were in sequential address order, the order in which a mail carrier delivers mail for a route. In total we found 1,248 mailpieces later confirmed as deliverable mail for 31 different carrier routes (see Figure 7). The date printed on these mailpieces indicated they were to be delivered to customers during the week of our visit (see Figure 8).

Figure 7. Undelivered Advertisement Mail Found in Containers



Source: OIG photos taken January 14, 2025.

Figure 8. Example of Date on Mailpieces



Source: OIG photo taken January 14, 2025.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not check the contents of the UBBM container for deliverable mail prior to carriers leaving for the street and before sending it to the plant for recycling.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have checked²⁵ the UBBM container for deliverable mail and enforced delivery of all deliverable items.²⁶

²⁴ Marketing Mail is mail matter not required to be mailed as First-Class Mail or Periodicals, which mailers can use to send specific types of mail such as flyers, circulars and advertisements.

²⁵ Standard Work Instruction: *Backhaul Recycling UMM and Paper*.

²⁶ Standard Work Instruction: *Saturation Mailings*, updated December 20, 2022.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When mail is not delivered, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand. Also, there is a risk that the mailer may discontinue using the Postal Service for such mailings, which would result in lost revenue. Additionally, recycling deliverable mail is against the Postal Service's mission to service the American people through providing frequent, reliable, safe and secure delivery of mail, packages and other communications to all Americans.

Management Action Taken

When we brought this to management's attention, they immediately sorted through the UBBM containers and identified 1,248 deliverable pieces of mail. They distributed them to the carriers for delivery that week (see Figure 9). Management also developed a new placard to be placed on the UBBM container after it is reviewed by a supervisor for deliverable mail. Finally, training was provided to help enforce the proper delivery of all marketing mail.

Figure 9. Tubs of Mail Provided to Carriers for Delivery



Source: OIG photos taken January 15, 2025.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from January through March 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 Mesa Four Peaks Station internal control structure to help determine the nature, timing, and extent of our audit procedures. We reviewed the management controls for overseeing the program and mitigating associated risks. Additionally, we assessed the internal control components and underlying principles, and we determined that the following three components were significant to our audit objective:

- Control Activities
- Information and Communication
- Monitoring

We developed audit work to ensure that we assessed these controls. Based on the work performed, we identified internal control deficiencies related to control activities, information and communication, and monitoring 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 Boulder Hills Station, Mesa Four Peaks Station, Avondale Goodyear Main Post Office, Scottsdale Airpark Station, and Sunnyslope Carrier Annex, as well as the district.

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

Appendix B: Management's Comments



March 14, 2025

BRIAN NEWMAN
ACTING DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: *Mesa Four Peaks Station, Mesa, AZ: Delivery Operations*
(Report Number 25-046-2-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Mesa Four Peaks Station, Mesa, AZ: Delivery Operations*.

Management generally agrees with the five findings in the report on delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys, and property conditions and unattempted delivery.

Management has begun taking steps to address the five findings.

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

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

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

Property Conditions: Management has abated the four safety and security related property conditions identified in the audit.

Unattempted Delivery: Management has reiterated the requirement to discard UBBM (Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail). Clerks or supervisors check UBBM before discarding to ensure it does not contain live mail. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

E-SIGNED by TINA.M SWEENEY
on 2025-03-14 16:43:26 EDT

Tina M. Sweeney
a/District Manager, AZ-NM District

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

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