

Kansas City Delayed Mail

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 23-085-R23 | August 31, 2023



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Highlights

Background

U.S. Senator Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) requested an audit of postal stations in the Kansas City area. Residents in the service area were experiencing significant delays and routinely waiting more than five days to receive mail. We reviewed ten postal stations and the Kansas City, Missouri, Processing and Distribution Center to determine issues impacting the reported delayed mail volume in the Kansas City area.

What We Did

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations at selected locations in the Kansas-Missouri District. We reviewed reported delayed mail and interviewed local management and employees. We conducted site observations at 10 postal stations and one mail processing facility.

What We Found

We found instances of delayed mail at selected sites throughout the Kansas-Missouri District and identified inaccurate reporting of mail conditions at seven of the 10 selected postal stations and the processing and distribution center. Further, we found carriers improperly scanned packages as delivered, packages that we sampled had missing or inaccurate package scans, and packages in the "Notice Left" area were not returned to the sender, as required. Additionally, we found management did not properly manage arrow keys or maintain arrow key inventory lists, as required.

Recommendations

We recommended management re-evaluate staffing levels and implement a plan to hire and retain employees; assess employee absenteeism for common trends and develop a process to reduce truancy; develop and implement a plan to ensure delayed mail is reported daily in the proper systems and monitor the systems for completion; review package scanning performance daily and enforce compliance; and develop and implement a plan to verify arrow key inventories are conducted and arrow keys are secured in accordance with policy.

Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

August 31, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR: EDDIE L. BANNER
DISTRICT MANAGER OF DELIVERY, KS-MO DISTRICT

KATHY HAND
MIDWEST DIVISION DIRECTOR (ACTING)

Mary K. Lloyd

FROM: Mary Lloyd
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Mission Operations

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Kansas City Delayed Mail
(Report Number 23-085-R23)

This report presents the results of our audit of delayed mail at selected locations in the Kansas City, MO, area.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Amy Jones, Director, Delivery, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit Response Management

Results

Introduction/Objective

This report responds to a congressional request to review the delayed mail in the Kansas City area. Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations at selected locations in the Kansas-Missouri District (Project Number 23-085). See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about this audit.

Background

In September 2022, the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) received a congressional request from Senator Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) regarding delayed mail in the Kansas City area. He requested the OIG conduct an audit to determine the cause of delayed mail and stated residents in the service area were experiencing significant delays and routinely waiting more than five days to receive mail.

In response to the congressional request, we conducted this audit to evaluate the delayed mail concerns at 11 postal facilities within the Kansas-Missouri District (see [Table 1](#)). Specifically, we reviewed

“Residents in the service area were experiencing significant delays and routinely waiting more than five days to receive mail.”

ten postal stations¹ and the Kansas City, Missouri, Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) to determine issues that may impact the reported delayed mail volume at the selected postal stations.

The Postal Service strives to deliver each mailpiece successfully to the correct address within service standards. While completing their routes, carriers deliver to individual mailboxes and panels of cluster

boxes, such as those found in apartment buildings. Carriers use arrow keys, which are subject to strict controls, to gain access to the cluster boxes as well as blue collection boxes.

Successful and/or timely delivery is not always feasible for a variety of reasons. Conditions that may prevent a successful and/or timely delivery may include: no authorized recipient available to sign; a blocked mailbox; mail arriving from the P&DC too late to meet the established delivery day; mail arriving at the delivery unit on time, but not made ready prior to the carrier departing for the street; or mail is ready for delivery, but a carrier is not available.

When carriers² attempt, but are unable to complete a delivery, they are required to leave Postal Service Form 3849, *Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt*, scan the undeliverable mailpiece with the appropriate event code,³ and return the undeliverable mailpiece to the post office.

The mailpiece is then stored in the “Notice Left”⁴ area at the post office pending customer pickup. Postal Service procedure⁵ instructs post office personnel to return undeliverable mailpieces to the sender if unclaimed after 15 days for domestic addresses and 30 days for international addresses.

The Postal Service considers mail to be delayed when it is not processed in time to meet the established delivery day. Delayed mail is reported in two systems, the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)⁶ and the Mail Condition Visualization (MCV).⁷ At postal stations, management is required to manually report delayed mailpieces in DCV each day no later than 11 a.m. (local time). At the P&DC, machines report delayed mail in MCV based on scans, and management is required to manually enter certain items⁸ by 6:59 a.m. (local time) daily. A mailpiece can be counted

1 Postal stations include post offices, finance stations, and carrier annexes.

2 Carriers are Postal Service employees or contractors who deliver and collect mail on foot or by vehicle.

3 An event code is a digit or letter indicating the purpose of the scan (e.g., an acceptance or delivery scan).

4 Delivery employees must use PS Form 3849 to notify customers of the arrival of mail that cannot be delivered. Carriers must check the name and address on the article for accuracy and legibility, since it is stored according to this information. The carrier must then return the item to the delivery unit for processing and storage.

5 Postal Bulletin 22211 dated July 19, 2007.

6 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.

7 An application used by Postal Service management to track and record mail volume in processing operations.

8 MCV Report Notes dated July 6, 2022, lists 47 categories and sub-categories of mail that require daily entry for inventory.

Table 1. Reported Delayed Mailpieces at Selected Postal Facilities from October 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023

Postal Facilities	County	ZIP Codes	Reported Delayed Mailpieces
Barry Woods Annex (includes the Riverside Finance Station)	Clay	64150, 64151, 64153, 64154, 64155, 64163, 64168	1,694,053
Gladstone Station	Clay	64118, 64188	31,956
Hodge Park Carrier Annex (includes the Antioch Finance Station)	Clay	64119, 64156, 64157, 64158	258,714
Kearney Station	Clay	64048, 64060	5,538
Martin City Station	Jackson	64114, 64145, 64148, 64149	80,577
Parkville Station	Platte	64152	471,627
South Troost Station	Jackson	64110, 64131, 64132	1,033,378
James Crews Station ⁹	Jackson	64120, 64123, 64124, 64125, 64126, 64127, 64128	883,986
Total at Selected Postal Stations			4,459,829
Kansas City, MO, P&DC			60,261,874
Total at Selected Sites			64,721,703

Source: DCV and MCV reported delayed mailpieces from October 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023.

as delayed for up to five days in MCV.¹⁰ The delayed mail reported in these systems is intended to provide district, area, and headquarters management a complete and accurate snapshot of the daily mail condition.

The selected postal stations reported 4.5 million delayed mailpieces in DCV from October 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. The Kansas City, MO, P&DC reported 60.3 million delayed mailpieces in MCV for the same time period (see Table 1).

Findings Summary

We found instances of delayed mail at seven of the 10 selected sites throughout the Kansas-Missouri District and identified inaccurate reporting of mail conditions at seven of the 10 selected postal stations and at the P&DC. Further, we found carriers improperly scanned packages as delivered, packages that we sampled had missing or inaccurate package scans, and

“We found instances of delayed mail at seven of the 10 selected sites throughout the Kansas-Missouri District.”

packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned to the sender, as required. Additionally, we found management did not properly manage arrow keys or maintain arrow key inventory lists, as required.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail Identified at Postal Facilities

During site visits, we identified approximately 35,194¹¹ delayed mailpieces¹² at seven of the 10 postal stations¹³ and approximately 67,680 delayed mailpieces at the P&DC (see Table 2). Over 90 percent of the delayed mail identified in the postal

⁹ We added the James Crews Station to the selected postal stations based on the reported volume of delayed mail.

¹⁰ MCV logic assumes if a mailpiece is not processed timely or according to the mail flow, it is still located within the postal facility. A delayed mailpiece will be removed from MCV once it is processed according to the mail flow or at the end of five days.

¹¹ OIG analysis based on Postal Service conversion factors in Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*.

¹² Identified delayed mailpieces included letters, flats, periodicals, and packages.

¹³ The carriers from the Antioch and Riverside Finance Stations were removed prior to our site visits. Therefore, these finance stations no longer have arrow keys, but still could have delayed mail. However, we did not identify any delayed mail during our site observations at these facilities.

Table 2. Identified Delayed Mailpieces from April 17 to April 20, 2023

Postal Facilities	Date of Visit	Identified Delayed Mailpieces
Antioch Finance Station	4/19/23	0
Barry Woods Annex	4/19/23	6,645
Gladstone Station	4/18/23	893
Hodge Park Carrier Annex	4/19/23	6,314
Kearney Station	4/20/23	0
Martin City Station	4/18/23	415
Parkville Station	4/20/23	1,749
Riverside Finance Station	4/19/23	0
South Troost Station	4/18/23	12,394
James Crews Station	4/20/23	6,784
Total at Selected Postal Facilities		35,194
Kansas City, MO, P&DC	4/18/2023 - 4/20/2023	67,680
Total at P&DC		67,680
Total Identified Delayed Mailpieces		102,874

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified from April 17 through April 20, 2023.

stations was found in the carrier cases. This mail should have been delivered to the customers' delivery address or returned to P&DC for further processing. Approximately 92 percent of the delayed mail identified at the P&DC needed a correction to the address to finish processing.¹⁴ During our site visits, the oldest mailpiece we observed on April 20, 2023, was dated April 7, 2023. Postal Service policy¹⁵ states mail¹⁶ arriving to a postal station from a P&DC is to be delivered that same day. The Postal Service considers mail to be delayed when it is not delivered by the established delivery date.

Postal station management attributed delayed mail to staffing challenges. Examples included employee availability and absenteeism, and staffing below authorized levels due to a shortage of applicants

and a long hiring process. The effects of staffing challenges caused routes to not be delivered daily. As of April 10, 2023, a postal system¹⁷ showed the selected postal stations were 40 career carrier

“Postal station management attributed delayed mail to staffing challenges.”

positions below the complement of 391 (10.23 percent). However, during site observations, management at these postal stations estimated being understaffed by 77 carriers.

Management at the P&DC attributed the identified delayed mailpieces to staffing and logistics

¹⁴ These pieces were found at the Low-Cost Reject Encoding Machine (LCREM). This processing machine encodes addresses on letter mail rejected from other equipment due to failed printing of the barcode or ID tag.

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

¹⁶ First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail.

¹⁷ The Workforce system is used to manage staffing levels.

challenges. Examples of these challenges included employee availability and absenteeism, a shortage of available truck drivers, and late arriving mail from the postal stations.

Americans rely on the Postal Service to deliver mail six days a week so they can pay their bills on time, collect their paychecks, and receive vital medications. In his letter to the OIG, Senator Hawley stated residents in the Kansas–Missouri District experienced significant mail delays and started to rely on other mail services. These mail delays lead to customer dissatisfaction and have the potential to diminish goodwill and harm the organization’s brand.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, re-evaluate staffing levels and implement a plan to timely hire and retain employees.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, and the **Midwest Division Director (Acting)**, assess employee absenteeism for common trends and develop a process to reduce truancy.

Finding #2: Inaccurate Reporting of Delayed Mail

We found management did not accurately report delayed mail in the DCV¹⁸ and MCV¹⁹ systems, as

Table 3. Postal Service Reported Versus Identified Delayed Mailpieces From April 17 to April 20, 2023

Postal Facilities	Date of Visit	Postal Service Reported Delayed Mailpieces	OIG Identified Delayed Mailpieces	Difference
Antioch Finance Station*	4/19/23	0	0	0
Barry Woods Annex	4/19/23	4,128	6,645	2,517
Gladstone Station	4/18/23	0	893	893
Hodge Park Carrier Annex	4/19/23	5,720	6,314	594
Kearney Station*	4/20/23	0	0	0
Martin City Station	4/18/23	0	415	415
Parkville Station	4/20/23	1,428	1,749	321
Riverside Finance Station*	4/19/23	0	0	0
South Troost Station	4/18/23	7,825	12,394	4,569
James Crews Station	4/20/23	2,063	6,784	4,721
Total at Selected Postal Stations		21,164	35,194	14,030
Kansas City, MO, P&DC	4/18/2023 - 4/20/2023	45,312	67,680	22,368
Total at P&DC				22,368
Totals		66,476	102,874	36,398

Source: DCV, MCV, and OIG identified delayed mailpieces from April 17 through April 20, 2023.

*No delayed mail was reported or identified at the Antioch Finance, Kearney, or Riverside Finance Stations.

¹⁸ Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide, March 2022.

¹⁹ Informed Visibility Mail Condition Visualization Report Notes, July 6, 2022.

required. Specifically, we identified inaccurate reporting of mail conditions at seven of the 10 selected postal stations and at the P&DC (see [Table 3](#))

- During observations at the postal stations, April 18 through April 20, 2023, we identified approximately 35,194 delayed mailpieces, but only 21,164 pieces were reported in DCV.
- During observations at the P&DC, April 18 through April 20, 2023, we identified approximately 67,680 delayed mailpieces, but only 45,312 pieces were reported in MCV.

Management at the postal facilities stated the reasons for not recording delayed mail accurately in DCV or MCV included management inexperience, lack of training, and the task being considered low priority. For example, P&DC management was unaware the mail needing a correction to the address must be manually entered into MCV.²⁰ When delayed mail is not accurately reported, management has a distorted view of mail conditions, which has the potential to impact operational decisions such as hiring to meet staffing complement.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, and the **Midwest Division Director (Acting)**, develop and implement a plan to verify delayed mail is accurately reported daily in the Delivery Condition Visualization and Mail Condition Visualization systems and monitor for completion. This plan should include training employees responsible for daily reporting of delayed mail.

Finding #3: Inaccurate Package Scanning

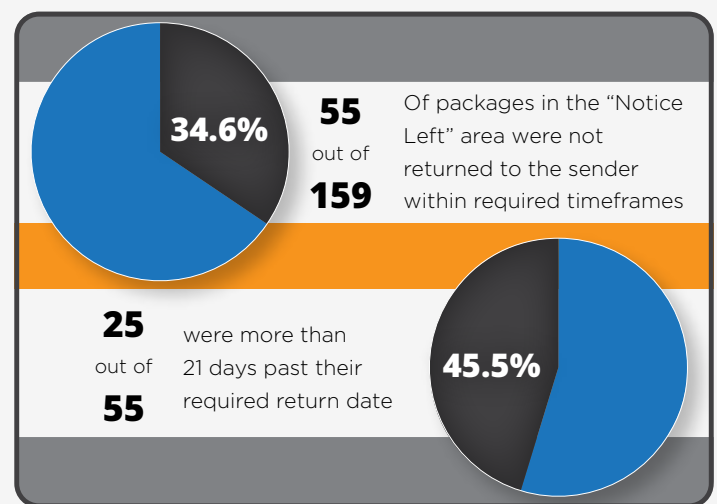
Packages receive multiple scans²¹ as they move through the network. Carriers are instructed to complete a final scan at the time and place delivery occurs. However, between January 1, 2023, through March 31, 2023, at eight of 10 selected postal stations, carriers improperly scanned 2,502 packages at the postal stations instead of at the customers' delivery

address. Further analysis of these packages showed that 1,467 (58.63 percent)²² received a final "Delivered" scan despite the scan being performed 1,000 feet or greater from the customers' delivery address.

In addition, during site visits, we judgmentally selected 156 packages from the carrier cases²³ at the selected postal stations and found 40 (25.6 percent) had missing or inaccurate scans, including:

- Fourteen were missing scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- Twenty-six received a final "Delivered" scan, but the scans were made away from the delivery address, and packages were observed in the carrier case undelivered.

We also reviewed packages in the "Notice Left" area and found 55 out of 159 (34.6 percent) were not returned to the sender within required timeframes.²⁴ These packages ranged from one to 141 days past their required return date. Twenty-five out of 55 (45.5 percent) were more than 21 days past their required return date.



These scanning issues occurred because management did not monitor or enforce package scanning and handling procedures. Accurate scans maintain accountability for a package and provide visibility for the customer as the package moves

²⁰ *Informed Visibility, Mail Condition Visualization Report Notes*, dated July 6, 2022.

²¹ There are 168 potential scans used throughout the network.

²² These scans exclude scans made properly at the delivery unit, such as "Delivered - PO Box," and "Customer (Vacation) Hold." We also included only "Delivery Attempted - No Access to Delivery Location" scans performed Monday through Friday to avoid legitimate scans for businesses that are closed on weekends.

²³ A piece of equipment that contains labeled separations into which clerks or carriers manually sort letters, flats, or irregular parcels.

²⁴ Notice Left and Return Guidelines from *Postal Bulletin* PB 22211, dated July 19, 2007, states that domestic packages should be returned to sender on the 15th calendar day after a notice is left, and international packages should be returned to sender on the 30th day after a notice is left.

“Accurate scans maintain accountability for a package and provide visibility for the customer.”

through the network. When a package misses a scan or is scanned inaccurately, the status of that package becomes unknown or inaccurate. For example, customers can opt to receive a notification through Informed Delivery when a package is expected to be delivered at their address. With full compliance of package scanning and handling procedures, visibility of the package for the customer will improve, which has the potential to increase customer satisfaction and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Recommendation #4

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, require management to review package scanning performance daily and enforce compliance at all postal facilities.

Finding #4: Arrow Key Accountability Inventory

Every postal facility must maintain an up-to-date list of all arrow keys and follow proper procedures when dealing with broken and missing keys. Per Postal Service policy,²⁵ an arrow key inventory is required twice a year at each postal facility. During observations at the selected postal stations²⁶ with assigned arrow keys, we found seven of the eight (87.5 percent) were missing keys. Specifically, we were unable to account for a total of forty-nine arrow keys from the inventory lists (see Table 4). In addition, 15 of the 78 (19.23 percent) carriers interviewed stated they have issues delivering mail due to the lack of arrow keys. Postal station management stated employee availability and other tasks taking priority prevented the adequate oversight of arrow keys.

“Carriers interviewed stated they have issues delivering mail due to the lack of arrow keys.”

Table 4. Arrow Key Inventory List

Postal Station	Inventory List	OIG Verified	Difference
Antioch Finance Station	N/A	N/A	N/A
Barry Woods Carrier Annex	44	35	9
Gladstone Station	20	18	2
Hodge Park Carrier Annex	34	21	13
James Crews Station	6	6	0
Kearney Station	11	8	3
Martin City Station	29	26	3
Parkville Station	11	8	3
Riverside Finance Station	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Troost Station	30	14	16
Totals	185	136	49

Source: OIG observations during site visits from April 17 through April 20, 2023.

²⁵ USPS Arrow Key Standard Work dated January 2022.

²⁶ Two of the selected postal stations were finance stations without carriers; therefore, they did not have arrow keys assigned.

Table 5. RADAR Arrow Key Inventory

Postal Station	Certification Date	RADAR	OIG Verified	Difference
Antioch Finance Station	3/23/23	19	0	19
Barry Woods Carrier Annex	4/6/23	51	35	16
Gladstone Station	3/20/23	25	18	7*
Hodge Park Carrier Annex	3/20/23	30	21	9
James Crews Station	4/14/23	24	6	18
Kearney Station	3/23/23	14	8	6
Martin City Station	3/30/23	32	26	6
Parkville Station	3/20/23	14	8	6
Riverside Finance Station	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Troost Station	3/25/23	24	14	10
Totals		233	136	97

Source: RADAR and OIG observations.

*Five of the seven were confirmed by the Postal Service supervisor to be in the district’s possession. However, we were unable to visually verify these five arrow keys.

In addition to the arrow key inventory list, postal station management is required to certify their arrow key inventory in the Retail and Delivery Applications & Reports (RADAR) system bi-annually. According to the RADAR system, nine²⁷ selected postal stations certified their arrow key inventory less than one month prior to our site visits. During site observations, we were unable to verify a total of 97 arrow keys from the nine selected postal stations using the RADAR certification (see Table 5). This occurred because management did not verify their physical arrow key inventory prior to certifying their inventory in the RADAR system.

We also identified 16 arrow keys that were not included on either the postal station inventory list or certified in the RADAR system at four²⁸ of the selected postal stations.

Security Procedures

Managers are required to certify the completion of arrow key inventories and the implementation of security procedures in the RADAR system. These procedures include:

- Carriers sign the arrow keys in and out each day;

- Management secures the arrow keys in a container, which is not easily stolen; and
- Management ensures the arrow keys are never left unsupervised after the container storing them is unlocked.

However, at seven of the eight (87.5 percent) selected postal stations with arrow keys, we found procedures for signing the arrow keys in and out each day were not being followed. In addition, at five of the eight (62.5 percent) selected postal stations, arrow keys were left unsupervised or unsecured.

Management stated employee availability and other higher priority management tasks led to

“Without accountability of the arrow keys, there is an increased risk the keys will become lost or stolen and have the potential to be used to steal mail.”

²⁷ Antioch Finance Station had no arrow keys assigned. However, they had arrow keys certified in the RADAR system on March 23, 2023.

²⁸ Hodge Park Carrier Annex had 6. Parkville Station had 2. South Troost Station had 4. James Crews Station had 4.

employees not following the policy and procedures for arrow keys. The carriers stated the main reason they did not sign in their keys at the end of the day was because no one was available to secure the key and they wanted to ensure a key was available to them the next day. Without accountability of the arrow keys, there is an increased risk the keys will become lost or stolen and have the potential to be used to steal mail. Mail theft damages the Postal Service's reputation and diminishes public trust. In addition, missing arrow keys may impact operational efficiency. For example, mail may be delayed when arrow keys are unavailable because some customer mailboxes are located in apartment buildings and require an arrow key for access.

Recommendation #5

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, develop and implement a plan to verify arrow key inventories are conducted and certified in the Retail and Delivery Applications & Reports system in accordance with policy. When implemented, communicate to appropriate management.

Recommendation #6

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, develop and implement a plan to verify arrow keys are available and secured in accordance with policy.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with findings 1, 2 and 4 and recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6; neither agreed nor disagreed with finding 3; and disagreed with recommendation 2. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Regarding the findings, although management generally agreed with finding 1, they stated verbiage in the report was misleading and the unreported delayed mail was less than a one-hour machine run time and therefore had little impact on staffing. In addition, management stated they hold business reviews regarding absenteeism. Regarding finding 3, management stated they neither agree nor disagree with inaccurate package scanning at the selected sites given the OIG did not share data they requested to validate the findings in the report.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated they will discuss staffing challenges with human resources weekly and will conduct weekly job fairs, advertise via radio announcements and social media, and encourage employees to invite friends and family to apply for open positions. In addition, management stated training will be provided to managers on employee retention practices. The target implementation date is December 31, 2023.

Regarding recommendation 2, management disagreed with assessing employee absenteeism for common trends and developing a process to reduce truancy. Management stated there is currently an Attendance Control Officer on staff and they hold division level attendance control reviews weekly to ensure appropriate corrective actions are taken.

Regarding recommendation 3, management stated local managers will receive additional training on properly recording delayed mail in the DCV and MCV systems. In addition, management stated they will conduct periodic site visits at processing facilities and delivery units to monitor for compliance. The target implementation date is January 31, 2024.

Regarding recommendation 4, management stated they will require all supervisors, managers, and postmasters to utilize the scanning integrity dashboards daily and take corrective actions as necessary. The target implementation date is January 31, 2024.

Regarding recommendation 5, management stated they will conduct monthly and semi-annual arrow key certifications and report any lost or stolen Arrow Keys to the Inspection Service. The target implementation date is November 30, 2023.

Regarding recommendation 6, management stated they will order key lock boxes for all offices without a secure location for arrow keys. The target implementation date is November 30, 2023.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to recommendations 3, 4, and 5. Corrective actions, when implemented, should resolve the issues identified in the report. We consider management's comments partially responsive to

recommendations 1 and 6 and nonresponsive to recommendation 2.

Regarding management's response to recommendation 1, we consider it partially responsive because they did not include a plan to re-evaluate staffing levels. As of April 10, 2023, a postal system showed the selected postal stations were 40 career carrier positions below the complement of 391 (10.23 percent). However, during site observations, management at these postal stations estimated being understaffed by 77 carriers. While management's plan to hire and retain employees addresses filling vacancies to meet complement, it is necessary to evaluate whether that complement is accurate and sufficient to ensure mail is delivered timely. We view management's response to recommendation 1 as unresolved and will work with management through the formal audit resolution process.

Regarding management's response to recommendation 2, we based our recommendation on the results of site observations where employee absenteeism was cited as one of the causes for delayed mail. Management's response indicated a reactionary approach to managing attendance and taking the appropriate corrective action. Proactively assessing absenteeism for common trends and developing a process to reduce truancy will aid in reducing absenteeism and, in turn, aid in reducing delayed mail. We view management's disagreement with recommendation 2 as unresolved and will work with management through the formal audit resolution process.

Regarding management's response to recommendation 6, ordering key lock boxes alone will not ensure that arrow keys are secured in accordance with policy. In addition to securing arrow keys in a container that is not easily stolen, policy also states arrow keys must be signed in and out each day and must never be left unsupervised in an unlocked container. During interviews, carriers stated keys were not signed in at the end of their workday because no one was available to secure the keys. The carriers also wanted to ensure a key was available the next workday. Based on our review, further action is necessary to develop and implement

a plan to verify arrow keys are available and secured in accordance with policy. Therefore, we view management's response to recommendation 6 as unresolved and will work with management through the formal audit resolution process.

Regarding management's response to finding 1, as stated in the report, management was unaware the observed delayed mail must be manually entered into the MCV system. We understand the unreported delayed mail may have taken less than a one-hour machine run time to process; however, we found the same unreported delayed mail on consecutive days of our site observations.

Regarding management's response to finding 3, our analysis was conducted using Postal Service data for final "Delivered" scans despite the scans being performed 1,000 feet or greater from the customers' delivery address. The criteria, including the Structured Query Language for our analysis, were provided to the Postal Service on June 8, 2023, so they could use their own data to validate the finding in the report.

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

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Appendix A: Additional Information

Scope and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations at selected locations in the Kansas-Missouri District. To accomplish our objective, we:

- Reviewed applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- Selected postal stations based on a congressional request from U.S. Senator Josh Hawley (R-Missouri).
- Judgmentally selected a postal station based on reported delayed mail volume and the servicing mail processing facility to determine if processing issues impacted reported delayed mail volume at selected postal stations.
- Obtained and analyzed delivery, processing, logistics, and facilities data from data systems for the selected locations to identify issues causing mail delays.
- Conducted unannounced site observations to:
 - Identify delayed mail and document its location.
 - Determine if delayed mail was appropriately reported in DCV and MCV.
 - Identify packages at carrier cases, in the Notice Left area, and other areas of the delivery units, and analyze scanning history to identify missing or incorrect scans.
 - Reconcile arrow key inventory and observe procedures for securing arrow keys.
 - Observe mail processing operations to determine if mail is processed timely and if outbound trips to the delivery units meet the dispatch times.
 - Interview Postal Service station employees and management to determine the reason for delayed mail, incorrect or missing scans, and arrow key mismanagement.
- Interview mail processing and delivery management to determine the causes for untimely mail processing and transportation, to include corrective actions planned or taken to mitigate delayed mail and determine how they monitor and address delayed mail issues throughout the district.

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

- Control environment
- Risk assessment
- 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 that were significant within the context of our objectives. Our recommendations, if implemented, should correct the weaknesses we identified.

We conducted this performance audit from March 2023 through August 2023 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 objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions

based on our audit objective. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on August 8, 2023, and included their comments where appropriate.

We assessed the reliability of volume data by performing tests for data completeness, reasonableness, accuracy, and validity. We determined that the data was sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Prior Audit Coverage

Report Title	Objective	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact
<i>Capping Report of Mail Operations and Delayed Mail at Select Processing and Distribution Centers</i>	To summarize the results of U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General issued reports that evaluated mail operations and delayed mail at select P&DCs and identify any systemic operational issues.	21-222-R22	12/10/2021	N/A
<i>Delayed Mail at the Santa Ana, CA, Processing and Distribution Center</i>	To determine the cause of delayed mail at the Santa Ana, CA, P&DC.	21-119-R21	5/24/2021	N/A
<i>Delayed Mail at the Phoenix, AZ, Processing and Distribution Center</i>	To determine the cause of delayed mail at the Phoenix, AZ, P&DC.	21-114-R21	5/12/2021	N/A
<i>Delayed Mail at the North Houston, TX, Processing and Distribution Center</i>	To determine the cause of delayed mail at the North Houston, TX, P&DC.	21-074-R21	4/13/2021	N/A
<i>Delayed Mail at the Lehigh Valley, PA, Processing and Distribution Center</i>	To determine the cause of delayed mail at the Lehigh Valley, PA, P&DC.	20-272-R21	4/12/2021	N/A
<i>Delivery Delays - Richmond District</i>	To evaluate mail delivery delays in selected delivery units in the Richmond District.	DR-AR-19-005	4/12/2019	\$7,298,972
<i>Delayed Mail at the Denver, CO, Processing and Distribution Center</i>	To determine the cause of mail processing delays reported at the Denver, CO, P&DC.	NO-AR-19-002	11/21/2018	\$231,575

Appendix B: Management's Comments



August 22, 2023

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Kansas City Delayed Mail (Report Number 23-085-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the draft audit report, *Kansas City Delayed Mail*.

Finding 1: Delayed Mail Identified at Postal Facilities

Management generally agrees with this finding. However, the statement "*When delayed mail is not accurately reported, management has a distorted view of mail conditions, which has the potential to impact operational decisions such as hiring to meet staffing complement*" is misleading. The mail delayed at the Kansas City Processing & Distribution Center was only about twenty-two thousand more than reporting. This is less than one hour run time which has very little impact on staffing. We also hold business reviews and telecon's regarding absenteeism.

Finding 2: Inaccurate Reporting of Delayed Mail

Management agrees with the finding.

Finding 3: Inaccurate Package Scanning

Management can neither agree nor disagree with this finding, given the data requested from the OIG to validate the findings in the report was not shared.

Finding 4: Arrow Key Accountability

Management agrees with the finding.

Following are our comments on each of the six recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, re-evaluate staffing levels and implement a plan to timely hire and retain employees.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Management will continue to conduct weekly cadences with Human Resources to discuss staffing challenges. Management will continue to conduct weekly job fairs in cities, and neighboring cities, that are understaffed. Management will also recruit new hires via radio announcements and social media platforms, as well as encourage all current employees to invite friends and family to attend. Additionally, management in the KS-MO district will receive training on retention techniques.

Target Implementation Date: 12/31/2023

Responsible Official: District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District

Recommendation 2:

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, and the **Midwest Division Director (Acting)**, assess employee absenteeism for common trends and develop a process to reduce truancy.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management disagrees with this recommendation. There is an Attendance Control Officer on staff that manages attendance in accordance with the Employee Labor Relations Manual. Additionally, management holds division level attendance control reviews weekly to appropriate corrective action is being taken.

Target Implementation Date: N/A

Responsible Official: N/A

Recommendation 3:

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, and the **Midwest Division Director (Acting)**, develop and implement a plan to verify delayed mail is accurately reported daily in the Delivery Condition Visualization and Mail Condition Visualization systems and monitor for completion. This plan should include training employees responsible for daily reporting of delayed mail.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Management will be retrained on how to properly record delayed mail in Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV) and Mail Condition Visualization (MCV). Management will conduct periodic site visits at the processing plant and select delivery units in Kansas City to monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 1/31/2024

Responsible Official: District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District, and the Midwest Division Director (Acting)

Recommendation 4:

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, require management to review package scanning performance daily and enforce compliance at all postal facilities.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Management will require that all supervisors, managers, and Postmasters utilize the scanning integrity dashboards daily and take corrective action to address non-compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 1/31/2024

Responsible Official: Manager of Post Office Operations

Recommendation 5:

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, develop and implement a plan to verify arrow key inventories are conducted and certified in the Retail and Delivery Applications & Reports system in accordance with policy. When implemented, communicate to appropriate management.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. In accordance with policy, management will conduct monthly and semi-annual arrow key certifications and report any lost and/or stolen Arrow keys to the Inspection Service.

Target Implementation Date: 11/30/2023

Responsible Official: District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District

Recommendation 6:

We recommend the **District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District**, develop and implement a plan to verify arrow keys are available and secured in accordance with policy.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Key lock boxes will be ordered for all offices without a secure location for arrow keys.

Target Implementation Date: 11/30/2023

Responsible Official: District Manager of Delivery, Kansas-Missouri District

E-SIGNED by EDDIE L BANNER
on 2023-08-22 11:15:43 CDT

Eddie L. Banner
Manager, Kansas City-Missouri District

E-SIGNED by Kathy J Hand
on 2023-08-22 13:27:19 CDT

Kathy Hand
Midwest Division Director (Acting)

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

UNITED STATES



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