

# Dockweiler Station in Los Angeles, CA: Delivery Operations

## AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 24-027-1-R24 | January 29, 2024



# Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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January 29, 2024

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** ABRAHAM P. COOPER  
DISTRICT MANAGER, CALIFORNIA 5 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 and WestPac

**SUBJECT:** Audit Report – Dockweiler Station in Los Angeles, CA: Delivery  
Operations (Report Number 24-027-1-R24)

This report presents the results of our audit of mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Dockweiler Station in Los Angeles, CA.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Monica Brym, 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

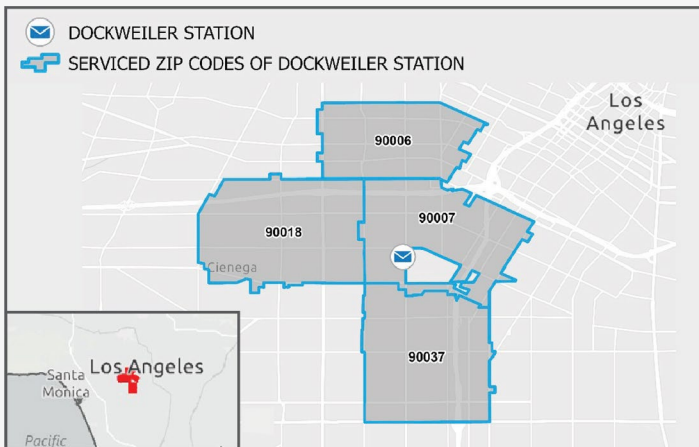
# Results

## 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 Dockweiler Station (also known as the Marvin Gaye Post Office)<sup>1</sup> in Los Angeles, CA (Project Number 24-027-1). The Dockweiler Station is in the California 5 District of the Westpac Area and services ZIP Codes 90006, 90007, 90018, and 90037 (see Figure 1). These ZIP Codes serve about 210,829 people in an urban area. Specifically, all of the people in these ZIP Codes are considered to live in urban communities.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1. ZIP Codes Served by the Dockweiler Station**



Source: OIG.

This delivery unit has 80 city routes. The Dockweiler Station is one of three delivery units<sup>3</sup> the OIG reviewed during the week of November 13, 2023 that are serviced by the Los Angeles Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC).

We assessed all units serviced by the Los Angeles P&DC based on the number of Customer 360<sup>4</sup> (C360) delivery-related inquiries,<sup>5</sup> Informed Delivery<sup>6</sup> contacts, and Stop-the-Clock (STC)<sup>7</sup> scans performed away from the delivery point. We also reviewed first and last mile failures<sup>8</sup> and undelivered route information between July 1 and September 30, 2023.

We judgmentally selected the Dockweiler Station primarily based on the number of C360 inquiries related to delivery, Informed Delivery contacts, and STC scans performed over 1,000 feet from the delivery point. The unit was also chosen based on last mile failures and undelivered routes. See Table 1 for a comparison of some of these metrics between the unit and the rest of the district.

**Table 1. Delivery Metric Comparison Between July 1 and September 30, 2023**

Delivery Metric	Unit Average per Route	District Average per Route
C360: Package Inquiries	9.7	5.9
Informed Delivery Contacts	25.4	14.0
STC Scans Performed Over 1,000 Feet from the Delivery Point	5.4	2.7

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service’s C360, Informed Delivery, Facility Database, and Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data extracted on October 11, 2023. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

- 1 Dockweiler Station was re-dedicated as the Marvin Gaye Post Office in 2019, but in Postal Service systems, it is still referred to as Dockweiler Station.
- 2 We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from 2020 Census Bureau information.
- 3 The other two units were the Downtown Long Beach Station in Long Beach, CA (Project Number 24-027-2) and the Inglewood Carrier Annex in Inglewood, CA (Project Number 24-027-3).
- 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 mail piece. Examples of STC scans include “Delivered,” “Available for Pick-up,” and “No Access.”
- 8 First mile failures occurs 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.

## Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Dockweiler Station in Los Angeles, CA.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on five audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,<sup>9</sup> carrier complement and timekeeping, and property conditions. Specifically, we reviewed delivery metrics, including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, carrier complement and timekeeping, and distribution up-time.<sup>10</sup> During our site visit we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; timekeeping documentation; and unit safety, security, and maintenance conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and in the “Notice Left” area<sup>11</sup> and interviewed unit management and employees.

We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 2 with management on January 3, 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 Dockweiler Station. We will issue a separate report<sup>12</sup> that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all three delivery units. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

## Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Dockweiler Station. Specifically, we found issues with all five areas we reviewed. We also identified issues related to the sortation of packages for dispatch to the P&DC (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Results

Audit Area	Issues Identified	
	Yes	No
Delayed Mail	X	
Package Scanning	X	
Arrow Keys	X	
Carrier Complement and Timekeeping	X	
Property Conditions	X	
Other Issues	X	

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of November 13, 2023.

We did not identify any issues with carrier complement. We determined that all carriers assigned to the unit had reported to work between July 1 and September 29, 2023. However, we did identify issues with timekeeping management (see [Finding #4](#)).

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

<sup>11</sup> The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

<sup>12</sup> Project Number 24-027.



# Finding #1: Delayed Mail

## What We Found

On the morning of November 14, 2023, we identified 20,731 delayed mailpieces<sup>13</sup> at 54 carrier cases, two hot cases, Business Reply Mail (BRM)<sup>14</sup> case, and in the workroom area near supervisors' desks. Specifically, we identified 19,148 letters, 1,494 flats, and 89 packages. This included 472 pieces of BRM that had not been processed and given to carriers to deliver; some of these pieces were dated June 2023. Prior

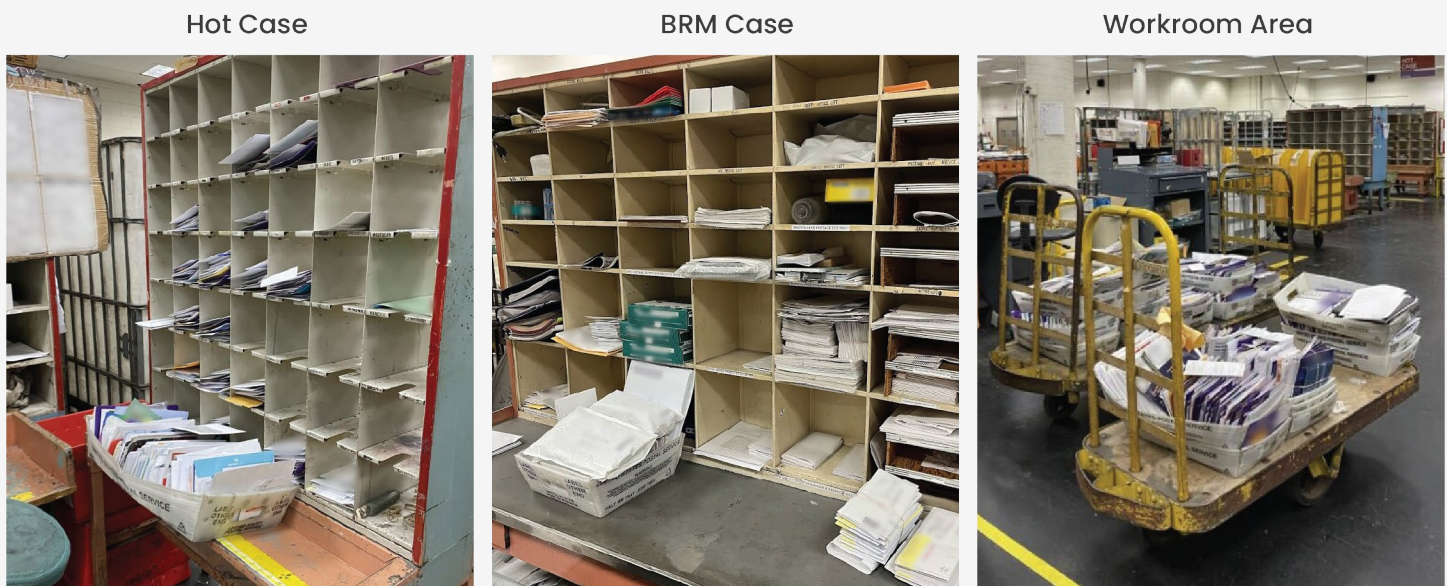
to our visit, we confirmed that management did not report any of this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)<sup>15</sup> system on Monday November 13, 2023, as required. Management later updated their entry and reported 288 pieces of delayed mail and 8,395 pieces of curtailed mail in the DCV system for November 13, 2023. See Table 3 for the number of pieces for each mail type and Figures 2 for examples of delayed mail found at the unit.

**Table 3. Types of Delayed Mail Identified**

Type of Mail	Carrier Cases	Hot Cases	BRM Case	Supervisor's Desk Area	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	2,415	9,156	313	7,264	19,148
Flats	1,108	230	156	0	1,494
Packages	29	0	3	57	89
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,552</b>	<b>9,386</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>7,321</b>	<b>20,731</b>

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit on November 14, 2023.

**Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail Found at the Unit**

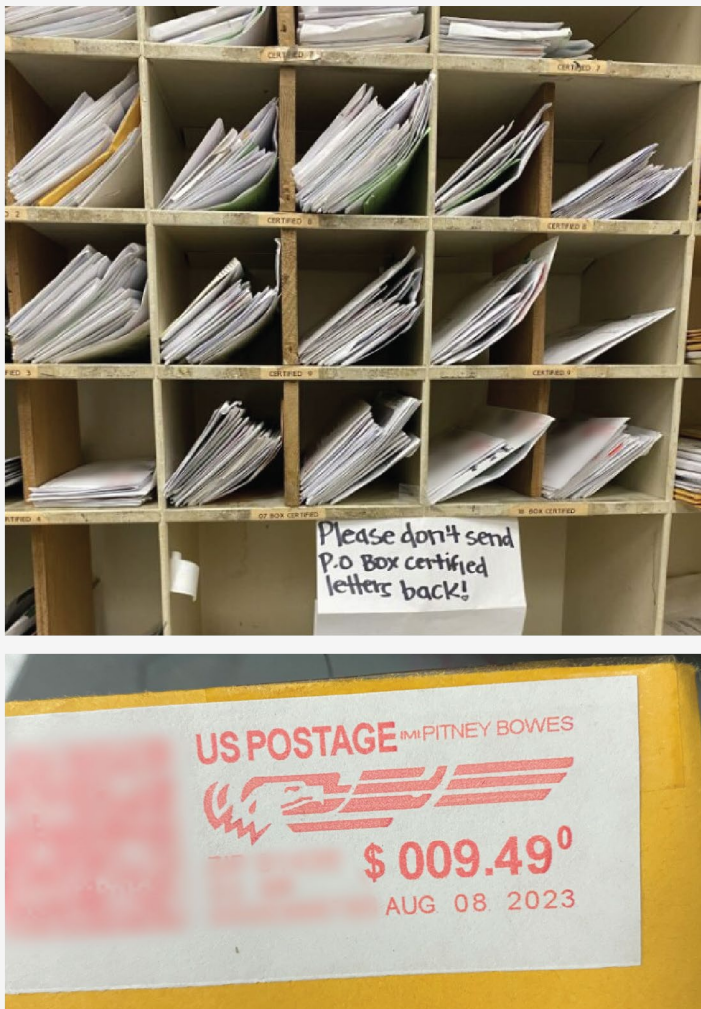


Source: OIG photos taken November 14, 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Count of mail included individual piece counts and OIG estimate based on Postal Service conversion factors in Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*, Appendix D.  
<sup>14</sup> Business Reply Mail service enables qualified mailers to provide a recipient with a convenient, prepaid method for replying to a mailing.  
<sup>15</sup> 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.

In addition, we found 682 pieces of Certified Mail that had not been returned to senders timely. Some of this mail was dated August 8, 2023. We observed a handwritten notice posted at the Certified Mail case stating, "Please don't send P.O. Box certified letters back!" (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Certified Mail Case and Sample**



Source: OIG photos taken on November 14, 2023.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide adequate oversight to verify all mail was delivered. Carriers stated that mail volume was higher than usual on the previous day, Monday, due to Saturday being a federal holiday.

Management did not take necessary mail delivery measures to account for the holiday mail volume.

Additionally, management did not provide oversight of DCV reporting, BRM mail, and Certified Mail. The PM supervisor stated that it was his responsibility to enter delayed mail information in the DCV system, but recently found that he could no longer access the DCV system. In addition, unit management did not verify that the BRM clerk or AM supervisors were trained properly to process the mail timely and did not provide oversight to verify that BRM was delivered the day it was received at the unit, as required.

Regarding the Certified Mail, unit management did not provide adequate oversight to ensure that Certified Mail was returned timely. Retail clerks stated that they would only work on the Certified Mail after completing their primary duties. Unit management acknowledged that Certified Mail should be returned in the timeframes established by policy and that the sign instructing employees not to send the Certified Mail should not be posted.

### What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured all mail was delivered daily and any delayed mail was reported in the DCV system. Postal Service policy<sup>16</sup> states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. This policy also includes that BRM is due for delivery the day of receipt. Postal Service policy<sup>17</sup> states that managers must plan for unscheduled absences and situations that may interfere with normal delivery service. In addition, managers are required<sup>18</sup> 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. Management also must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

Postal Service policy states that Certified Mail, if not picked up by the customer or redelivered, must be returned to the sender after 15 calendar days.<sup>19</sup>

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

<sup>17</sup> Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services, TL-14, Section 111.2, June 2019

<sup>18</sup> *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, August 2023.

<sup>19</sup> *Postal Operations Manual*, Certified Mail Section 813.25 Notice of Arrival, outlines that if Certified Mail is not called for (by the customer) within 5 calendar days, a final notice should be issued and the mailpiece must be returned after 15 calendar days.

## 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 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.



# 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 improperly at the unit.

We reviewed package scanning data for scans that occurred at the unit and removed any potentially accurate scans performed.<sup>20</sup> In total, employees improperly scanned 1,644 packages at the delivery unit between July and September 2023 (see Table 4). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 60.5 percent of them were scanned “Delivered.”

**Table 4. STC Scans at Delivery Unit**

STC Scan Type	Count	Percentage
Delivered	994	60.5%
Delivery Attempted - No Access to Delivery Location	516	31.4%
Refused	52	3.2%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	30	1.8%
No Secure Location Available	27	1.6%
Delivery Exception - Animal Interference	21	1.3%
No Authorized Recipient Available	4	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1644</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

We also reviewed 365 scans occurring away from the delivery unit and over 1,000 feet<sup>21</sup> from the intended delivery point between July and September 2023 (see Table 5). We removed scans that could have been performed within policy, such as animal interference and unsafe conditions. Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 94.3 percent of them were scanned “Delivered.”

20 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.  
 21 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.  
 22 We selected all 29 packages found at the carrier cases and all 27 packages from the “Notice Left” area.

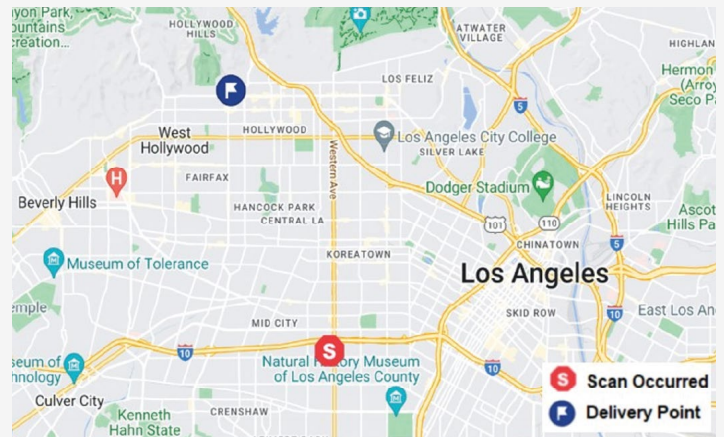
**Table 5. STC Scans Over 1,000 Feet Away From the Delivery Point**

STC Scan Type	Count	Percentage
Delivered	344	94.3%
Delivery Attempted - No Access to Delivery Location	13	3.6%
Held at Post Office at Customer Request	6	1.6%
No Such Number	1	0.3%
Receptacle Full/Item Oversized	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>100%*</b>

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service’s PTR System data.  
 \*Total percentage does not equal to 100 percent due to rounding.

For example, the map below (see Figure 4) shows an instance where a carrier scanned a package as delivered 2.2 miles away from the delivery point.

**Figure 4. Scan Away From the Delivery Point in Los Angeles, CA**



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

We also found issues with scanning and handling of packages in the unit. On the morning of November 14, 2023, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 56 packages<sup>22</sup> to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 56 sampled



packages, 21 (37.5 percent) had improper scans or handling issues, including:

- Seven packages from the carrier cases were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- Five packages (four from the carrier cases and 1 from the “Notice Left” area) were scanned “Delivered,” which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address.
- Five packages from the carrier cases were scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” from .3 to 2.2 miles away from delivery point.
- Four packages from the carrier cases were scanned “Delivery Attempted” or “Insufficient Address” up to 13 days prior to our visit and should have been returned to sender.

Further, 16 of the 27 packages (59.3 percent) selected from the “Notice Left” area were not returned to the sender, as required. These packages ranged from 2 to 49 days past their scheduled return dates.

### Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. Management was not aware of the high number of improper scans made by employees at the unit. The station manager explained that one of the routes is 85 percent business customers that are closed on weekends and do not accept deliveries. He stated that carriers on that route were instructed to scan those packages as “Business Closed” or similar STC scans and deliver them on the next open business day. However, management acknowledged they did not ensure that the carriers scanned those packages as instructed.

In addition, management did not ensure that a clerk was assigned to the “Notice Left” section to regularly monitor the area for packages that should

be returned. Retail clerks stated that they would work on the notice left returns when they can, after completing their primary duties.

### 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,<sup>23</sup> which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.<sup>24</sup> Packages in the “Notice Left” area should have been reviewed for second notices and returned to sender if they remained after the prescribed number of days.<sup>25</sup>

### 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. Our C360 and Informed Delivery data analysis, detailed in the [background](#), demonstrated that package delivery and tracking information were the most common inquiries submitted by customers at the unit. By improving scanning operations, management can improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and the Postal Service brand.

<sup>23</sup> *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

<sup>24</sup> *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

<sup>25</sup> *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, April 2016.

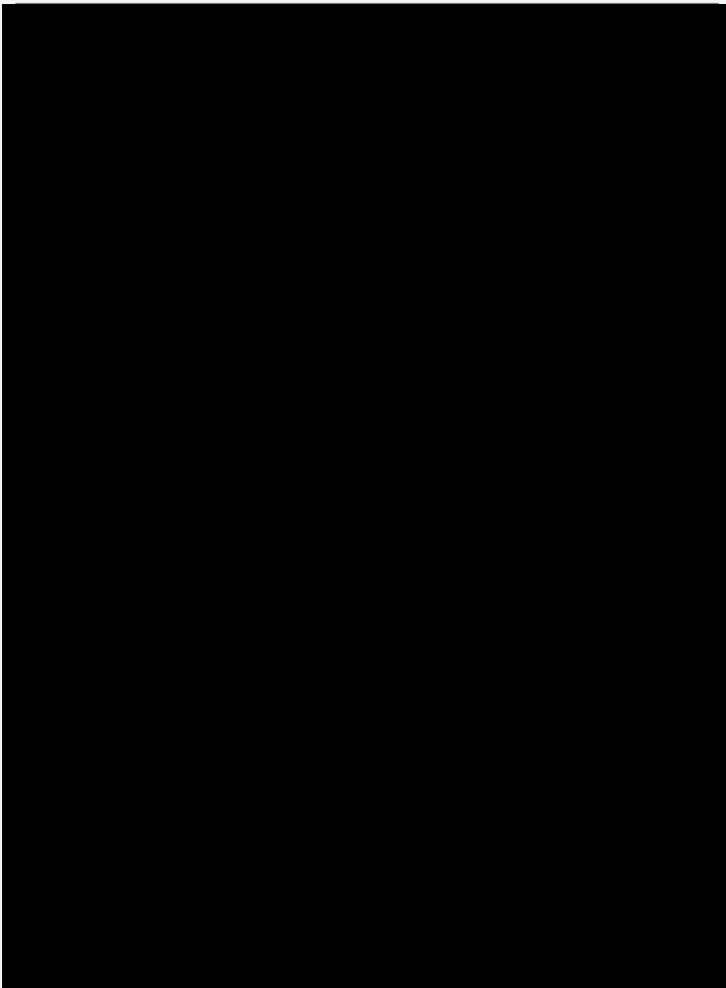
## Finding #3: Arrow Keys

### What We Found

Unit management did not properly manage and safeguard arrow keys.<sup>26</sup> On the morning of November 16, 2023, we reviewed the unit's most recent inventory from the Postal Retail and Delivery Application Report (RADAR)<sup>27</sup> for arrow keys and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. Unit management certified, on October 14, 2023, a total of 216 keys (72 assigned to carrier routes and 144 not assigned to a route) on the unit's arrow key inventory. We could not locate 19 of the 216 keys, including 11 of the 72 assigned keys and eight of the 144 non-assigned keys. In addition, we found a total of 84 keys not listed on the inventory log, including 30 keys in the [REDACTED] and another 54 keys secured in the [REDACTED]. We observed that 25 of those 54 keys were broken. Unit management had not reported any of the missing or broken keys to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and had not updated the arrow key inventory log to include the additional and missing keys.

Lastly, the arrow keys were not always kept secure. Specifically, we observed that the [REDACTED], where keys in use were stored, was left unlocked and unattended throughout our visit (see Figure 5). We also found that unit management did not have a daily log sheet or accountability report for carriers to document their receipt and return of their assigned keys.

Figure 5. [REDACTED] Left Opened and Unattended



Source: OIG photo taken on November 14, 2023.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage and safeguard arrow keys. Specifically, unit management was not aware that the inventory list was inaccurate and could not provide an explanation for the missing and extra keys we found. Management stated that the unit received extra keys recently and had not added those keys to the inventory list, because they had prioritized managing mail and package deliveries. Management was also unaware of arrow key security procedures.

<sup>26</sup> At this delivery unit, arrow keys consisted of the regular arrow keys and the Modified Arrow Lock (MAL) keys, which were made to be more secure.

<sup>27</sup> The Arrow Key Certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that arrow key security procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,<sup>28</sup> management must keep an accurate inventory of all arrow keys. Any missing keys must be immediately reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. In addition, policy states that arrow keys must remain secured until they are individually assigned to personnel. A supervisor or clerk must supervise employees signing out keys on the inventory log. Upon return, arrow keys should be deposited in a secure location and a supervisor or clerk must verify all keys have been returned and accounted for daily.

## 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.

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<sup>28</sup> USPS Arrow Key Standard Work Instructions, updated August 2023.



# Finding # 4: Timekeeping Management

## What We Found

Between July 1 through September 30, 2023, the unit had 47 disallowed time occurrences. Unit management did not complete the records in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS)<sup>29</sup> for all 47 occurrences, nor retain hard copies of Postal Service (PS) Forms 1017-A, *Time Disallowance Record*<sup>30</sup> for these occurrences. Additionally, unit management did not maintain a binder or any file system in which to securely retain printed copies of PS Forms 1017-A. Unit management had a binder to maintain printed hard copies of PS Forms 1017-B, *Unauthorized Overtime Record*.<sup>31</sup> However, the binder was located on a workroom desk and not secured.

## Why Did It Occur

Management stated that he was not aware of any instances of disallowed time at the unit and believed that the disallowed time activities we identified were corrections of employees' time entries. Therefore, he was unaware they needed to complete these records in TACS and retain hard copies of the forms. Further, unit management was not aware that the PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B hard copies needed to be secured.

## What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy<sup>32</sup> states unit personnel must complete PS Form 1017-A and PS Form 1017-B entries and place hard copies of the forms in a notebook binder that is secured from unauthorized access, documenting the reason for the disallowed time. Postal guidance<sup>33</sup> provides instructions on how to complete the entries in TACS.

## Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When proper documentation of time disallowance is not completed, management could incur excess administrative time. In addition, the Postal Service risks violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act<sup>34</sup> when unit management does not maintain documentation that shows a justifiable reason and employee notification for disallowed time.

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

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

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

32 Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance*, Section 146 - Approving Entries, February 2016.

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

34 29 USC § 201-219.

## Finding # 5: Property Conditions

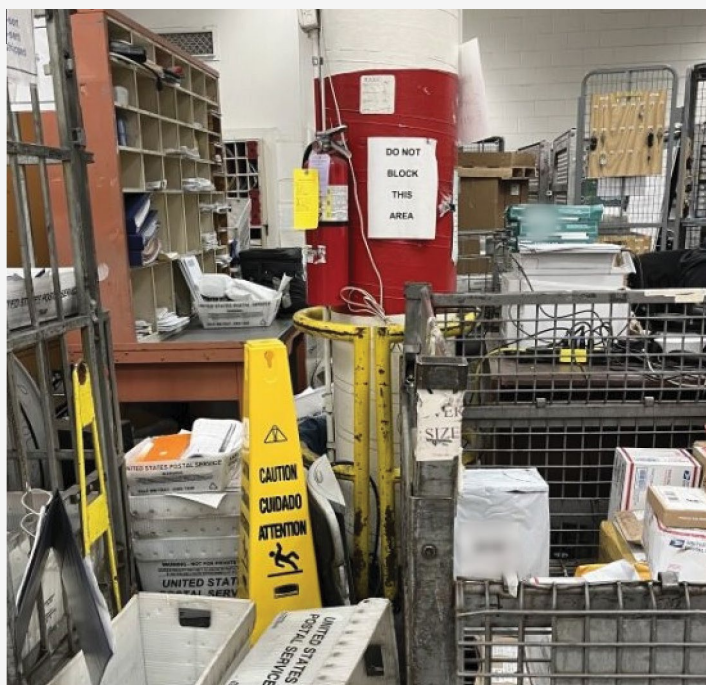
### What We Found

We found safety, security, and maintenance issues at the Dockweiler Station.

Regarding property safety, we observed:

- Three outlets without cover plate and three electric junction boxes with exposed wires.
- One of 10 fire extinguishers did not have monthly inspection and three were blocked by various mail equipment and office supplies (see Figure 6).
- A ladder on the workroom area was not secured.
- A plastic gas can, containing gasoline, located on the floor at a carrier case.
- A damaged half-wall at the loading dock.
- A portion of cracked and damaged concrete sidewalk in the customer parking lot.
- Low hanging wires in the workroom area and outside the unit.
- Electrical panels blocked by miscellaneous supplies in an electrical room (see Figure 7).

**Figure 6. Blocked Fire Extinguisher**



Source: OIG photo taken on November 15, 2023.

**Figure 7. Blocked Electrical panels**

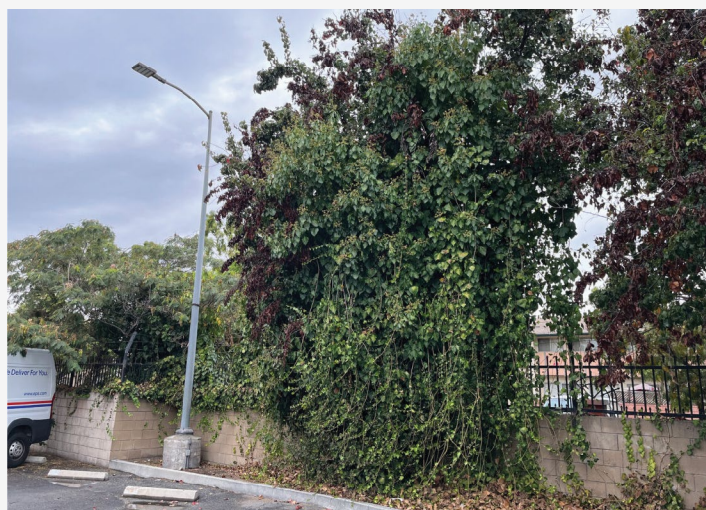


Source: OIG photo taken on November 15, 2023.

Regarding property security, we observed:

- The employee parking lot did not have a posted sign stating the vehicles may be subject to search.
- Both security gates to the employee parking lot were not functional.
- Overgrown branches covering several areas of the unit's fence (see Figure 8).
- Several areas of the exterior without lighting or with inoperable light fixtures.

**Figure 8. Unit's Fence Covered With Overgrown Branches**



Source: OIG photo taken on November 15, 2023.

Regarding property maintenance, we observed:

- Damaged drywall in several areas of the workroom.
- Missing floor tiles and damaged floor in workroom area.
- A damaged ceiling in the women's locker room.
- One of two sinks was inoperable and taped off in the women's locker room and the floor tiles were excessively dirty.
- A glass panel missing on the men's locker room door and a damaged breakroom door.

We did not find any open repair requests in the electronic Facilities Management System (eFMS)<sup>35</sup> for the deficiencies we identified.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight and take the necessary actions to verify that property condition issues were identified and corrected. Unit management was unaware of the issues we identified because they did not routinely look for property conditions. Unit management stated that they will address the issues we raised as soon as possible.

### What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining the facility, reported safety and maintenance issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. The Postal Service requires management to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers.<sup>36</sup>

### Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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

<sup>35</sup> A custom-built Postal Service system used to manage work orders, contracts, and payments for facility construction, repairs, and alteration contracts, along with real estate contracts.

<sup>36</sup> Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July 2020.



# Finding # 6: Sortation of Packages for Dispatch

## What We Found

Employees at the Dockweiler Station did not properly separate packages destined for the Los Angeles P&DC. Specifically, on November 15, 2023, we observed that Ground Advantage<sup>37</sup> and Priority Mail<sup>38</sup> were commingled in a container designated to contain only Priority Mail for processing by the P&DC. The container was on the loading dock waiting to be transported to the P&DC that evening.

## Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide oversight to ensure that employees properly separated packages for dispatch to the plant. Unit management did not review the contents of the carts prior to moving them from the unit to the truck.

## What Should Have Happened

In July 2023, the Postal Service made significant changes to its parcel processing operations. Specifically, delivery and retail units changed the way they separated packages dispatched to facilitate the introduction of a new package service. On September 26, 2023, the Postal Service implemented<sup>39</sup> additional changes for the preparation and dispatch of packages to processing facilities by delivery units of a certain level.<sup>40</sup> Postal Service requires these units to separate packages with certain service standards when dispatching this mail to the processing facility.

## Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Proper mail preparation is required for visibility throughout the Postal Service's network. When mail is not properly separated for dispatch to the processing facility, in accordance with procedures, there is an increased likelihood that mail will require additional processing steps. This can result in delays and service failures and an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand.

## Management's Comments

Management agreed with all of the findings in the report. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

<sup>37</sup> A service providing an affordable and reliable way to send parcels inside the U.S. Parcels under 70 pounds arrive in 2-5 business days.

<sup>38</sup> An expedited service and may contain any mailable matter weighing no more than 70 pounds.

<sup>39</sup> *Mail Preparation (MTEL) Changes Level 22 and Above Only*, September 2023.

<sup>40</sup> All level-22 units and higher are required to follow these package separation requirements.

# Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from November 2023 through January 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 this/these control(s). 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 assessed the reliability of data from the PTR system, the DCV system, TACS, and the eFMS 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 9, 2024

JOHN CIHOTA  
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Dockweiler Station, Los Angeles, CA: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-027-1-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Dockweiler Station, Los Angeles, CA: Delivery Operations*.

Management agrees with the six findings in the report on delayed mail, arrow keys, package scanning, arrow keys, carrier complement and timekeeping, property conditions, and sortation of packages for dispatch.

Management has begun taking steps to address the six findings.

*Delayed Mail:* District level management will conduct reviews to ensure proper oversight and compliance with DCV reporting, committed mail policies, and the timely return of certified mail. Additionally, local management will ensure required personnel have the necessary access and training to process the mail timely.

*Arrow Keys:* The office will be trained on Standard Work and operating procedures for Arrow Key Management including updating key logs, reporting missing arrow keys to the USPS Inspection Service, and properly securing arrow keys. Additionally, District level Management will conduct reviews to verify compliance with arrow key policy.

*Package Scanning:* District level management conduct reviews to ensure proper oversight and compliance with package scanning and handling procedures.

*Timekeeping Management:* Local management will be retrained on record keeping procedures when processing pay adjustments, disallowing time, recording unauthorized overtime, and securing 1017A&B hard copies from unauthorized access.

*Property Conditions:* Eleven property condition issues have been abated and the remaining 10 have work orders submitted.

*Sortation of Packages for Dispatch:* Local management will provide service talks to reinforce newly implemented package separation practices to ensure Priority Mail and Ground Advantage are not commingled.



E-SIGNED by Abraham.P Cooper  
on 2024-01-11 20:55:20 EST

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Abraham Cooper  
Manager, California 5 District

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

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UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE



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