

Kansas-Missouri District: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 24-107-R24 | September 13, 2024



**Robert L. Roberts
Station**



**Shawnee Mission
Post Office**



Hickman Mills Station

Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

September 13, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR: EDDIE L. BANNER
MANAGER, KANSAS-MISSOURI DISTRICT

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

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

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Kansas-Missouri District: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 24-107-R24)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions in the Kansas-Missouri District in the Central Area.

All recommendations require U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. All 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.

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

Results

Background

The U. S. Postal Service’s mission is to provide timely, reliable, secure, and affordable mail and package delivery to more than 160 million residential and business addresses across the country. To fulfill this role, the Postal Service is committed to ensuring that its delivery platform and services are always a trusted, visible, and valued part of America’s social and economic infrastructure. This includes leveraging people, technology, and systems to provide world-class visibility of mail and packages as they move through the Postal Service’s integrated system. 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 report presents a summary of the results of our audits of delivery operations and property conditions at three select delivery units in the Kansas–Missouri (KS–MO) District in the Central Area (Project Number 24–107). These delivery units include the Hickman Mills Station in Missouri, as well as the Robert L. Roberts Station and Shawnee Mission Post Office in Kansas.

We previously issued interim reports¹ to district management for each of the three delivery units regarding the conditions we identified. In addition, we issued a report on the efficiency of operations at the Kansas City Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC),² which service these delivery units.

We judgmentally selected the three delivery units in the KS–MO District based on the number of Customer 360³ (C360) inquiries related to delivery, Informed Delivery⁴ contacts associated with the unit, and stop-the-clock (STC)⁵ scans performed at the unit, compared to the district average. The units were also chosen based on first and last mile failures⁶ and undelivered routes. Additionally, we selected the KS–MO District based on concerns raised by Senators Josh Hawley and Roger Marshall.

The three delivery units had a total of 145 city routes and three rural routes that serve about 162,702 people in multiple ZIP Codes (see Table 1), which are predominantly urban communities.⁷ Specifically, of the people living in these ZIP Codes, 161,472 (99.2 percent) live in urban communities and 1,230 (0.8 percent) live in rural communities.

Table 1. Service Area and Population

Delivery Units	Service Area ZIP Code	Population	City Routes	Rural Routes
Hickman Mills Station	64134 and 64137	32,385	28	2
Robert L. Roberts Post Office	66102 and 66104	58,287	38	1
Shawnee Mission Post Office	66202, 66204, 66205, and 66208	72,030	79	0
Total		162,702	145	3

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service Address Management System and Census data.

1 Hickman Mills Station, Kansas City, MO: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-107-1-R24, dated July 15, 2024); Robert L. Roberts Station, Kansas City, KS: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-107-2-R24, dated July 15, 2024); and Shawnee Mission Post Office, Mission, KS: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-107-3-R24, dated July 15, 2024).

2 Efficiency of Operations at the Kansas City Processing and Distribution Center, Kansas City, MO (Report Number 24-106-R24, dated July 15, 2024).

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

4 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.

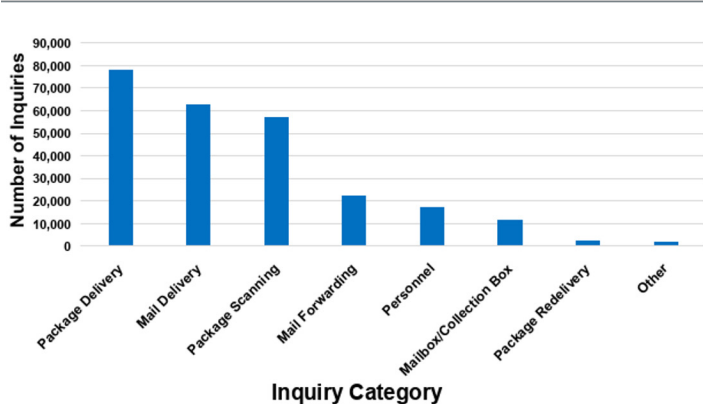
5 A scan event that indicates the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the mailpiece. Examples of STC scans include “Delivered,” “Available for Pick-Up,” and “No Access.”

6 A first mile failure occurs when a mailpiece is collected and does not receive a processing scan at the P&DC on the day that it was intended. A last mile failure occurs 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. First and last mile failures can occur due to processing, transportation, or delivery operations.

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

We conducted text analysis on C360 inquiries for the entire KS-MO District between October 1, 2022, and May 31, 2024. In total, we reviewed and categorized the customer notes for 255,888 inquiries.⁸ See Figure 1 for the results.

Figure 1. C360 Inquiry Analysis



Source: OIG analysis of C360 inquiries.

Package and mail delivery issues and package scanning issues made up the majority of the C360 comments. Examples of customer comments from these categories included:

- Not receiving mail delivery for several days in a row.
- Not receiving all intended mail each delivery day.
- Receiving “delivered” scans for packages that had not been delivered.

We also analyzed the Postal Service’s Triangulation Report⁹ to determine how the KS-MO District performed for mail and package delivery in relation to all 50 Postal Service districts. Each day, the Postal Service provides an opportunity ranking, wherein it ranks all 50 districts from 1 through 50, where 1 indicates the poorest performing district and 50 is the top performing district. For the period from May 1 through July 31, 2024, the KS-MO District had an average opportunity rank of 3.5 for mail delivery and

16.5 for package delivery, placing this district as poor performing in mail and package delivery. See Table 2 for the results of our analysis.

Table 2. KS-MO District Average Rank Out of All 50 Districts

Month	Mail Delivery Opportunity Rank	Package Delivery Opportunity Rank
May	2.8	14.7
June	3.5	17.0
July	4.1	17.9
Average	3.5	16.5

Source: Postal Service Triangulation Report.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations in the KS-MO District of the Central Area.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on five audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,¹⁰ 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, and distribution up-time.¹¹ During our site visits 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,¹² and interviewed unit management and employees.

8 We removed 88,063 inquiries, including voice messages and inquiries in which the text description of the ticket was less than 40 characters, and excluded another 8,395 as outliers.

9 The Triangulation Report is designed to provide the health of operations within a delivery unit regarding mail and package delivery. The report includes an analysis of several key performance indicators including C360 inquiries, first and last mile failures, route coverage, employee availability, and scanning integrity.

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

11 Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

12 The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

In addition to summarizing our findings at the three delivery units, we conducted an analysis of service performance scores for First-Class Mail, Marketing Mail, Priority Mail, and Ground Advantage products, and an analysis of carrier and clerk staffing levels within the KS-MO District. We discussed our observations and conclusions, as summarized in Table 3, with management on August 20, 2024, and included their comments, where appropriate. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at all three delivery units. Specifically, we found delayed mail and deficiencies with package scanning, arrow keys, carrier timekeeping, property conditions, and package separation (see Table 3).

We found no issues with carrier complement but did identify issues with timekeeping management at all three units.

Table 3. Summary of Issues Identified

Controls Reviewed	Issues Identified – Yes or No		
	Hickman Mills Station	Robert L. Roberts Station	Shawnee Mission Post Office
Delayed Mail	Yes	Yes	Yes
Package Scanning	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arrow Keys	Yes	Yes	Yes
Carrier Complement and/or Timekeeping	Yes	Yes	Yes
Property Conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other Issues: Separation of Packages for Dispatch	N/A	N/A	Yes

Source: Interim reports for select units.

Finding #1: Service Performance in the KS-MO District

What We Found

We visited three delivery units in the KS-MO district on the morning of May 14, 2024, and identified about 55,767 pieces of delayed mail.¹³ See Table 4 for the number of pieces for each mail type and Figure 2 for examples of delayed mail found at the units. In addition, carriers at the Hickman Mills and Robert L. Roberts Stations did not complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, Undelivered Mail Report,¹⁴ to document undelivered mailpieces.

Table 4. Type of Delayed Mail

Type of Mail	Hickman Mills Station	Robert L. Roberts Station	Shawnee Mission Post Office	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	1,227	35,951	13,701	50,879
Flats	449	2,216	2,215	4,880
Packages	5	0	3	8
Totals	1,681	38,167	15,919	55,767

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our site visits on May 14, 2024.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail at the Units

Delayed Mail at Hickman Mills Station



Delayed Mail at Robert L. Roberts Station



Delayed Mail at Shawnee Mission Post Office



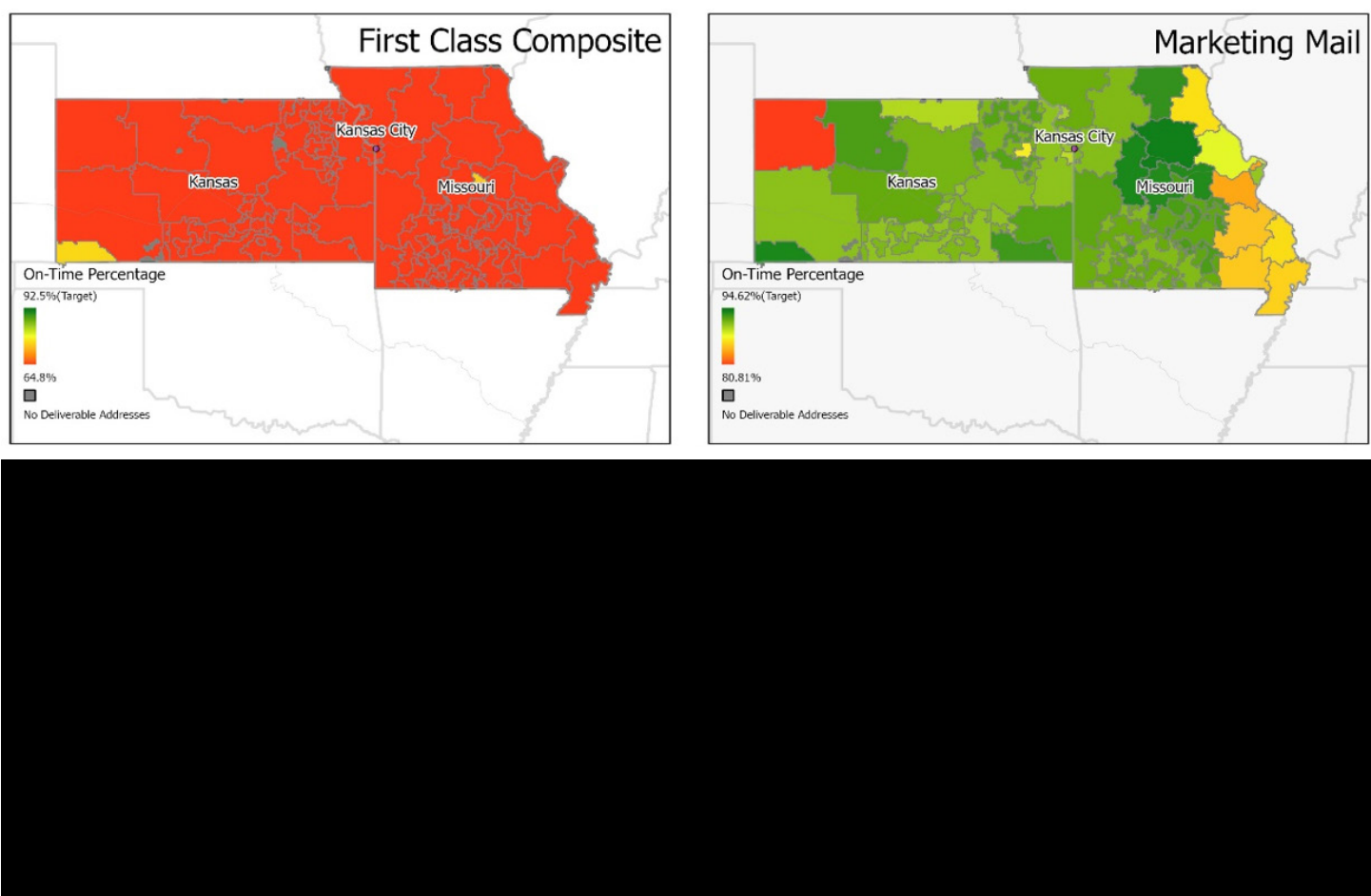
Source: OIG photos taken on May 14, 2024.

¹³ Count of mail included individual piece counts and estimates based on conversion factors in Management Instruction PO-610-2007-1, *Piece Count Recording System*.
¹⁴ PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

We found similar results when looking at service performance district-wide. Specifically, we analyzed service performance scores for First-Class Mail, Marketing Mail, Priority Mail, and Ground Advantage products mailed within the KS-MO District between January 1 and June 30, 2024. This analysis showed that the KS-MO District performance scores for First-

Class Mail and Priority Mail did not meet the target score in any area of the district. In addition, Ground Advantage and Marketing Mail performance scores were below the target scores in much of the district. See Figure 3 for heat maps showing the performance for each product in the KS-MO District.

Figure 3. Service Performance Heat Maps By 3-Digit Zip Code in the KS-MO District From January 1 through June 30, 2024



Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service Informed Visibility (IV) and Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) data. IV provides comprehensive and integrated capabilities for data-driven real-time service performance measurement and diagnostics of market-dominant products, mail inventory and predictive workloads of all mail to include packages, and end-to-end tracking and reporting for mail. EDW is a repository intended for all data and the central source for information on retail, financial, and operational performance.

We also analyzed service performance scores from January 1 through June 30, 2024, for mail being sent from the district to any location in the nation and mail coming into the district from any location in the nation. For this type of mail, service performance failures could have been at a plant or delivery unit outside of the district, but these failures may have had a negative impact on customer perceptions within the district. We completed this analysis for the same four products as above. Our analysis showed that none of the four products met the service performance target for mail coming into or out of the district during the scope period.

Why Did It Occur

The delayed mail identified at the three delivery units occurred primarily because of mail arriving late from the Kansas City P&DC the previous day after the carriers had departed for the street. We reported this issue during our simultaneous audit of the Kansas City P&DC.¹⁵

Management at the Shawnee Mission Post Office stated unscheduled absences, combined with ongoing staffing issues also contributed to the delayed mail we identified. Specifically, on the day prior to our arrival, the unit had four vacant routes and seven unscheduled carrier absences. In addition, the unit was short three carriers and two supervisors. Management stated that the district was aware of the staffing issues at the unit and provided assistance when support was available.

Some of the delayed mail we identified at the Hickman Mills and Robert L. Roberts Stations occurred due to management not enforcing the red line process — a standardized clearance process for carriers returning to the office upon completion of delivery assignments that includes the proper disposition of undelivered mail. This enabled carriers to take undelivered mail they brought back from their street duties to their cases without filling out a PS Form 1571.

District Staffing

Based on the results of the individual units, we analyzed staffing data for carriers and clerks in the KS-MO District as of May 31, 2024, and found the district was understaffed. We initially coordinated with the KS-MO District Human Resources department to analyze staffing data and found that overall, carriers¹⁶ were below the authorized complement by 606 (5.2 percent).

However, during subsequent discussions, Postal Service Headquarters Human Resources management provided alternative calculations for rural carriers and clerks, which were based on a different methodology than was used by district personnel.¹⁷ See Table 5 below for a breakdown of staffing totals by position, which takes into consideration the additional information from Postal Service Headquarters. Even using Headquarters Human Resources’ more conservative methodology, the district was still below the authorized complement for carriers by 437 (3.9 percent).

Table 5. KS-MO District Staffing as of May 31, 2024

Position	Employees On the Rolls	Authorized Number of Employees	Difference
Full-time City Carriers	4,786	5,045	(259)
Part-time City Carriers	1,310	1,192	118
Full-time Rural Carriers	2,802	2,869	(67)
Part-time Rural Carriers	1,851	2,080	(229)
Total	10,749	11,186	(437)

Source: OIG and Postal Service analysis of Workforce data. Workforce is a centralized hub that links to staff planning, insights, and analytics.

¹⁵ Efficiency of Operations at the Kansas City Processing and Distribution Center, Kansas City, MO (Report Number 24-106-R24, dated July 15, 2024)
¹⁶ This included both part-time and full-time employees.
¹⁷ HR management stated they do not have a consistent methodology to determine a district’s authorized carrier and clerk complement. Management stated each district has unique circumstances they must consider that can influence their calculations.

From June 1, 2023, through May 31, 2024, the KS-MO District hired a total of 3,439 carriers and clerks. Of those hired, 1,474 (42.9 percent) were no longer employed in the district as of June 17, 2024. According to district human resources management, hiring and retaining newly hired employees has been a challenge due to the physical nature of the work and competitors offering the same or higher starting pay.

What Should Have Happened

P&DC management should be prepared for unanticipated circumstances that could impact mail delivery service to Postal Service delivery units. Further, policy¹⁸ states that all mail returned from the street is required to be identified with a PS Form 1571 and signed by the carriers and supervisors.

Management should have addressed issues regarding the availability of resources to deliver all the mail each day. Postal Service policy¹⁹ states that managers must review all communications that may affect the day's workload, be sure that replacements are available for unscheduled absences, and develop contingency plans for situations that may interfere with normal delivery service. Further, Postal Service policy²⁰ states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Carrier staffing shortages impact the Postal Service's ability to deliver mail in accordance with service standards. When mail is delayed, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand. For example, in our analysis of the C360 inquiries detailed in the [Background](#), we found numerous instances of customers stating mail was not delivered for multiple days in a row. Hiring and retaining qualified employees would help the Postal Service deliver mail timely.

Management Actions

During our audit, district management provided documentation showing that they provided training on proper mail delivery practices to management at the Hickman Mills Station, Robert L. Roberts Station, and Shawnee Mission Post Office.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District**, review staffing alignment within the district and provide adequate staff to the Shawnee Mission Post Office to deliver all committed mail daily.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District**, identify and implement additional strategies to fill and retain carrier positions in the Kansas-Missouri District.

¹⁸ Standard Operating Procedures, Redline Policy.

¹⁹ Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, TL-14, Section 111.2, June 2019.

²⁰ *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service generally agreed with this finding and the associated recommendations. Management stated that the C360 data reported was influenced by a significant increase in package volume throughout the district and a mercury spill that resulted in the temporary closing of a post office and other operational impacts.

Regarding recommendation 1, the district will conduct compliance reviews at Shawnee Mission Post Office to ensure adequate staffing is available to deliver all committed mail daily. The target implementation date is October 31, 2024. For recommendation 2, management stated they continue to hold job fairs to fill carrier positions. Headquarters Human Resources and District management will be conducting site visits to high opportunity offices and results will be shared for follow up. The target implementation date is November 30, 2024. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

OIG Evaluation

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations.

Finding #2: Data Validity

What We Found

We identified issues with the accuracy and reliability of reporting delayed mail along with package scanning and handling issues at each of the three delivery units we visited.

Delayed Mail Reporting:

During our reviews at the three delivery units, we determined management did not accurately report delayed mail in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV) system.²¹ Reporting delayed mail in the DCV system is important so that management can monitor operations and make adjustments as needed. Specifically, management at the three units under-reported their delayed mail volumes by 10,758 pieces (19.3 percent). See Table 6.

Table 6. OIG Analysis of Under-Reported Delayed Mailpieces

Delivery Unit	Delayed Mailpieces Identified by OIG	Delayed Mailpieces Reported by Unit	Under-Reported Delayed Mailpieces
Hickman Mills Station	1,681	570	1,111
Robert L. Roberts Station	38,167	36,026	2,141
Shawnee Mission Post Office	15,919	8,413	7,506
Total	55,767	45,009	10,758

Source: OIG analysis of reported delayed mail from DCV and OIG observations on May 14, 2024.

Furthermore, the district had low service performance scores and a poor mail delivery opportunity ranking in the Triangulation Report. Based on this information, we would expect to see a significant amount of reported delayed mail. However, we reviewed DCV data for the entire district for May 14, 2024, and found a low volume of reported delayed mail. Specifically, of the 755 units listed in the DCV system for the district, 19 units (2.5 percent) reported 89,874 total pieces of delayed mail on May 14, 2024. This could indicate that the issues with delayed mail reporting we identified could be more widespread within the district.

Package Scanning and Handling:

During our reviews, we found that employees scanned packages improperly and handled them incorrectly at all three delivery units. In addition, employees scanned packages away from the intended delivery point at two of the three delivery units. In total, employees scanned 945 packages at the delivery units instead of at the recipients' delivery point between January and March 2024 for the three units we visited (see Table 7). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 69.4 percent of them were scanned as "Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location" and 14.6 percent of them were scanned as "Delivered." This data does not include scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as "Delivered – PO Box" and "Customer (Vacation) Hold," but rather, represents scans performed at the delivery unit that should routinely be made at the point of delivery.

21 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.

Table 7. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	Hickman Mills Station	Robert L. Roberts Station	Shawnee Mission Post Office	Total	Percent
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	490	77	89	656	69.4%
Delivered	71	8	59	138	14.6%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	10	60	2	72	7.6%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	7	52	2	61	6.5%
No Secure Location Available	15	0	0	15	1.6%
Refused	2	0	0	2	0.2%
No Authorized Recipient Available	1	0	0	1	0.1%
Total	596	197	152	945	100%

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service’s Package Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data between January and March 2024 for Kansas and Missouri facilities. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

In addition, employees at the Hickman Mills Station and Shawnee Mission Post Office improperly scanned 206 packages greater than 1,000 feet away from the delivery point,²² with 67 percent scanned as

“Delivered” (see Table 8). We removed scans that could have been performed within policy, such as animal interference and unsafe conditions.

Table 8. Scans Over 1,000 Feet Away From the Delivery Point

STC Scan Type	Hickman Mills Station	Shawnee Mission Post Office	Total	Percent
Delivered	74	64	138	67.0%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	65	0	65	31.6%
Held at Post Office at Customer Request	1	0	1	0.5%
Return to Sender	1	0	1	0.5%
Vacant	1	0	1	0.5%
Total	142	64	206	100%*

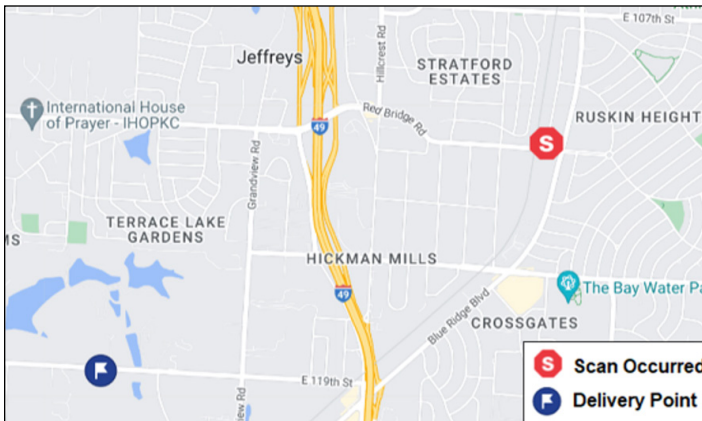
Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service’s PTR System data between January and March 2024.

*Total percentage does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

²² We found a nominal amount of scans for the Robert L. Roberts Station occurring away from the delivery unit and over 1,000 feet from the intended delivery point between January and March 2024.

For example, the map below (see Figure 4) shows an instance where a carrier scanned a package as delivered 2.9 miles away from the delivery point.

Figure 4. Scan Away From the Delivery Point in Kansas City, MO



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

In addition, on the morning of May 14, 2024, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected a total of 148 packages at the three delivery units to review and analyze for scanning and tracking history. We judgmentally selected 63 packages from the carrier cases and 85 packages from the "Notice Left" areas at these units. Of the 148 sampled packages, 42 (28.4 percent) had missing or improper scans or improper handling, including:

- Seventeen packages (six from the carrier cases and 11 from the "Notice Left" area) received an STC scan²³ between 0.4 and 4.4 miles away from the delivery point. These STC scans should have been made at the delivery point.
- Ten packages (four from the carrier cases and six from the "Notice Left" area) were missing STC scans to let customers know the reason for non-delivery.
- Six packages from the carrier cases were scanned "Held at Post Office at Customer Request." Three should have been placed in the "Notice Left" area, two did not have a hold order, and one was in the wrong carrier case.

- Five packages (three from the carrier cases and two 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.
- Two packages from the carrier cases were missing an "Arrival at Unit" scan, which is required for performance measurement.
- One package from the carrier cases was scanned "Delivery Exception, Animal Interference" on May 9, 2024, but was not taken out for a second delivery attempt.
- One package from the carrier cases was not placed in the "Notice Left" area after several delivery attempts. The package was in the unit approximately 54 days.

Further, 26 packages (30.6 percent) in the "Notice Left" area at the three locations should have been returned to sender. These packages ranged from one to 55 days past their return dates.²⁴

Why Did It Occur

Management at the three units we visited did not provide adequate oversight to verify all delayed mail was reported accurately or package scanning and handling was completed according to policy.

Specifically, delayed mail was not always properly reported because:

- Management at the Hickman Mills Station stated the PM supervisor did not have access to the DCV system.
- Management at the Robert L. Roberts Station did not update the delayed mail in the DCV system due to an oversight.
- Management at the Shawnee Mission Post Office stated there was a new PM supervisor on duty the night before our arrival on May 14, 2024, who was not fully aware of his responsibilities for entering mail into the DCV system.

²³ These scans included "Receptacle Full," "Delivery Attempted-No Access," "No Secure Location Available," and "No Authorized Recipient Available."

²⁴ 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 calendar day after a notice is left.

The scanning and handling issues occurred because:

- Management at the Hickman Mills Station prioritized other duties, such as scheduling employees and mail delivery. In addition, a clerk handling the “Notice Left” area stated they try to review packages as time permits but do not always have time due to competing priorities, such as distributing mail to carriers and working the retail window.
- Management at the Robert L. Roberts Station experienced an unusually high turnover of employees between October 2023 and April 2024, and they were more focused on mail delivery than performing their scanning oversight responsibilities. Regarding the “Notice Left” area, management stated that their prior “Notice Left” clerk was from another unit, and they did not have a trained replacement. This transition process impacted coverage for the “Notice Left” section while management was seeking a replacement.
- Management at the Shawnee Mission Post Office stated they focus on the integrity and scan failure reports, which are closely monitored by the district. They did not review reports that focus on late-in-the-day scans and missing scans. In addition, management stated that they have spoken with the clerks in the past about reviewing the “Notice Left” area but did not verify that it was completed.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that all supervisors were trained and had system access to accurately enter delayed mail into the DCV system and enforced compliance. Postal Service policy²⁵ states that managers are required 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 and must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

For package scanning and handling, management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance, including verifying all packages were scanned at the delivery point and not at the delivery unit. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,²⁶ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.²⁷ Packages in the “Notice Left” area should have been reviewed for second notices and returned to the sender if they remained after the prescribed number of days.²⁸

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

The inaccurate delayed mail and scanning information provided by each of the units could have a negative impact on both internal tracking of unit success and needs, as well as externally, regarding customer satisfaction. Inaccurate delayed mail reporting provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with an unreliable status of mail delays and can result in improper actions taken to address issues.

For package scanning and handling, 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 text analysis, detailed in the [Background](#), showed that package scanning was one of the more common C360 inquiries submitted by customers in the KS-MO District. By improving scanning operations, management can potentially improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

²⁵ *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, August 2023.

²⁶ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

²⁷ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

²⁸ *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, April 2016.

Management Actions

During our audit, district management provided documentation showing that:

- Management at all three delivery units was provided training on properly reporting delayed mail in the DCV system, including steps for requesting access to the system. Management was also provided training on standard operating procedures for package scanning and handling.
- The district is monitoring for proper reporting of delayed mail and scanning performance at all three delivery units.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District**, train management at all delivery units in the district on the proper procedures for reporting delayed mail.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding and the associated recommendation. Management stated they will train non-bargaining employees in the KS-MO district on the proper procedures for reporting delayed mail. The target implementation date is November 30, 2024

OIG Evaluation

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendation.

Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Unit management did not properly manage and safeguard arrow keys at any of the three units we reviewed.

Specifically, we could not locate a total of 17 keys listed on the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)²⁹ inventory log for the three units we visited. Unit management had not reported any of the missing keys to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. In addition, we identified 23 keys at these

units that were not listed on the inventory log. Further, management did not keep arrow keys secure at the units. Specifically, we observed keys at the Hickman Mills Station left unattended in [REDACTED] on the workroom floor. At the Robert L. Roberts Station, keys were left in [REDACTED], and at the Shawnee Mission Post Office, keys were left in [REDACTED] (see Table 9).

Table 9. Arrow Key Inventory and Security

Delivery Units	Keys Kept Secure	Keys on Inventory Log	Missing Keys	Keys Found at the Unit	
				On Inventory Log	Not Listed on Inventory Log
Hickman Mills Station	No	13	2	11	2
Robert L. Roberts Station	No	43	8	35	12
Shawnee Mission Post Office	No	48	7	41	9
Total		104	17	87	23

Source: OIG analysis of arrow key inventory during our May 16, 2024 site visits.

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

Why Did It Occur

These issues occurred because management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage and safeguard arrow keys. Specifically:

- Management at the Hickman Mills and Robert L. Roberts Stations stated they prioritized other duties, such as mail delivery and managing staff, over managing and safeguarding arrow keys. Management at the Robert L. Roberts Station also stated the inventory and certification completed in May 2024 was performed while carriers were using the arrow keys to perform street duties, so no physical verification was performed. Further, they said they did not know how to add arrow keys to the RADAR certification, which resulted in inaccurate reporting.
- The PM Supervisor at the Shawnee Mission Post Office did a “visual” check of the arrow keys nightly instead of verifying that all keys were returned from carriers because other duties, such as monitoring carriers as they returned from the street, took priority.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that arrow key security procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,³⁰ management must keep an accurate inventory of all keys and missing keys must be immediately reported to the 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.

The proper management of arrow keys at the Shawnee Mission Post Office will be crucial as it transitions to a Sorting and Distribution Center (S&DC) by the end of 2024.³¹ The new facility is expected to have 133 routes — a 68 percent increase — and serve a total population of 128,506.

Management Actions

During our audit, district management provided documentation showing that:

- Management at all three delivery units were provided training on proper arrow key management and security.
- The district is monitoring arrow key procedures, including updating their arrow key log, reporting missing keys to the Postal Inspection Service, and keeping keys secure at all three delivery units.

Due to management taking these corrective actions, we are not making a recommendation for arrow key issues.

³⁰ USPS Arrow Key Guidebook Standard Work Instructions, August 2023.

³¹ S&DCs are a component of the Postal Service’s Delivering for America 10-Year Plan, and they combine multiple delivery units from local post offices into one large facility located in or near mail processing facilities.

Finding #4: Timekeeping

What We Found

We identified timekeeping management issues at all three delivery units between January 6 and March 29, 2024. Specifically:

- Management at the Hickman Mills Station and the Shawnee Mission Post Office did not complete, print, and retain in a notebook binder PS Forms 2240, *Pay, Leave, or Other Hours Adjustment Request*.³² The Hickman Mills Station had 41 pay adjustments and the Shawnee Mission Post Office had 10 pay adjustments.
- Management at all three delivery units did not complete entries in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS),³³ or print and retain PS Forms 1017-A, *Time Disallowance Record*,³⁴ for any of the disallowed time occurrences. The Hickman Mills Station had 29 unresolved disallowed time occurrences, the Robert L. Roberts Station had 14 occurrences, and the Shawnee Mission Post Office had 19 occurrences.
- Management at the Hickman Mills Station and the Shawnee Mission Post Office did not complete entries in TACS or print and retain in a notebook binder PS Forms 1017-B, *Unauthorized Overtime Record*,³⁵ for any of the unauthorized overtime occurrences. The Hickman Mills Station had 30 unresolved unauthorized overtime occurrences and the Shawnee Mission Post Office had one unresolved occurrence.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide adequate oversight for employee pay adjustments and overtime. For example:

- The Kansas City, MO postmaster stated that the Hickman Mills Station had been without a manager since March 21, 2024. During this time, the two supervisors did not fully perform their timekeeping duties because they prioritized daily mail delivery operations.
- A unit supervisor at the Robert L. Roberts Station stated they had received TACS training prior to having access to TACS. However, they did not recall receiving training related to the PS Form 1017-A process or the requirement to print and retain hard copies.
- Management at the Shawnee Mission Post Office did not resolve payroll adjustments, disallowed time, and unauthorized overtime transactions due to a lack of oversight. The unit did not have a process established to verify the completion of unresolved TACS entries. In addition, other duties, such as getting the mail delivered, took priority over monitoring timekeeping adjustments and maintaining PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B.

What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy³⁶ states that pay adjustment certifications are to be kept on file and attached to supporting documentation for the current calendar year plus the three previous years. Policy³⁷ further states unit personnel must complete PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B entries and place them in a notebook binder that is secured from unauthorized access documenting the reason for the disallowed time or unauthorized overtime.

³² Form used to adjust either an employee's pay or to adjust timecard data that has been incorrectly reported to the postal data center.

³³ The system used by the Postal Service to automate the collection of employee time and attendance information.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ Managers and supervisors are required to complete a PS Form 1017-B the first time a non-exempt employee incurs unauthorized overtime. These forms serve as a cumulative record of unauthorized overtime.

³⁶ *AdjustPay User Guide*, Course No. 31202-25, updated February 9, 2017.

³⁷ Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance*, Section 146 - Approving Entries, February 2016.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When proper documentation of pay adjustments, time disallowance, and unauthorized overtime is not completed, management could incur additional managerial workhours. In addition, the Postal Service risks violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act³⁸ when unit management does not maintain documentation that shows the justifiable reason and employee notification for disallowed time.

Management Actions

During our audit, district management provided documentation showing that:

- Management at all three delivery units were provided training on timekeeping record requirements.
- The district is monitoring timekeeping record requirements at all three delivery units.

Due to management taking these corrective actions, we are not making a recommendation for these timekeeping issues.

³⁸ 29 USC § 201-219.

Finding #5: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found property safety, security, and maintenance issues at the delivery units.

Property Safety:

- At the Hickman Mills Station, we found four fire extinguishers that were missing annual and monthly inspections; a light cover in the retail lobby was sagging and not secure; cracked concrete on two steps leading up to the dock, causing a potential tripping hazard; and an electrical panel in the maintenance room was blocked.
- At the Robert L. Roberts Station, we found an internal Postal Inspection Service door was blocked; all four fire extinguishers were missing annual inspections, and two had expired monthly inspections. We also observed multiple concrete cracks (two inches deep) around the postal vehicle parking lot, dock area, and building causing a potential tripping hazard (see Figure 5).
- At the Shawnee Mission Station, we found 20 fire extinguishers were missing annual inspections and two were missing monthly inspections.³⁹ We also found one fire extinguisher was not mounted on the wall, and there was an electrical outlet hanging from the wall in the basement area.

Figure 5. Concrete Cracks in Employee Parking Lot At Robert L. Roberts Station



Source: OIG photo taken on May 15, 2024.

Property Security:

- At the Robert L. Roberts and Shawnee Mission stations, there were no signs posted in the employee parking lot stating that vehicles may be subject to search. We did not identify any property security issues at the Hickman Mills Station.

Property Maintenance:

- At the Hickman Mills Station, we found the fence in the employee parking lot was leaning. In addition, lightbulbs needed to be replaced throughout the facility. For example, only half of the light bulbs worked in the employee break room.

³⁹ This unit is being converted to a S&DC and is under construction. Fire extinguishers identified were located in the facility outside of the construction area.

- At the Robert L. Roberts Station, there were missing ceiling tiles in the customer lobby, overgrown bushes in the parking lot against the surrounding fences, and a damaged awning on the northwest corner of the carrier loading zone. In addition, we identified broken wall tiles in the women's restroom.
- At the Shawnee Mission Post Office, there was a corroded pipe in the women's restroom and missing ceiling tiles in the office passageway.

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. For example,

- Management at the Hickman Mills Station stated duties, such as managing delivery operations, took priority over identifying and addressing maintenance issues. In addition, the AM supervisor stated she was unaware of all the safety and maintenance issues identified.
- Management at the Robert L. Roberts Station stated that the unit maintenance staff was terminated in October 2023, without replacement, prior to his arrival at the unit in January 2024. No one has since been assigned monitoring responsibilities for property conditions at the unit. The station manager also stated that other competing responsibilities, such as mail delivery operations and route evaluations, were given higher priority. This consumed most of his time and impacted his ability to effectively manage property conditions at the unit.
- Management at the Shawnee Mission Post Office was not aware that two extinguishers were missing a monthly inspection but was aware of the missing and stained ceiling tiles. Further, they did not prioritize other issues, such as the broken outlet and unmounted extinguisher due to the pending S&DC construction within the facility. Regarding the subject to search signage, there were signs posted at two entrances, but

management had overlooked posting signage at the third entrance.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, 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.⁴⁰

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Management's attention to safety, security, and maintenance 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 Actions

During our audit, management addressed all property condition issues we identified at the Hickman Mills and Robert L. Roberts Stations, as well as the Shawnee Mills Post Office. Due to management taking these corrective actions, we are not making a recommendation for the property issues we identified.

⁴⁰ Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July, 2020.

Finding #6: Other Issues – Separation of Packages for Dispatch

What We Found

Employees at the Shawnee Mission Post Office did not properly separate packages destined for the Kansas City P&DC. Specifically, on May 15, 2024, during the unit's evening operations, we observed that Priority Mail⁴¹ was commingled with non-priority mail in the containers going to the plant.

Why Did It Occur

Management at the Shawnee Mission Post Office did not provide oversight to ensure that employees properly separated packages for dispatch to the P&DC. Unit management was aware of the requirement to separate the packages (they were using proper placards); however, they did not monitor and enforce compliance because they were focused on mail delivery.

What Should Have Happened

In fiscal year 2023, the Postal Service implemented changes⁴² for the preparation and dispatch of packages to processing facilities by delivery units of a specified level.⁴³ The Postal Service requires these units to separate certain classes of packages when dispatching this mail to the processing facility and identify the placards to be used for the proper separation.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Proper mail preparation is required for visibility throughout the Postal Service 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. Furthermore, this can result in delays and service failures and an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand.

Management Actions

During our audit, district management provided documentation showing that they are verifying management at the Shawnee Mission Post Office is properly separating packages when dispatching mail to the processing facility. Due to management taking this corrective action, we are not making a recommendation for the package separation issue.

41 An expedited service that may contain any mailable matter weighing no more than 70 pounds.

42 *Mail Preparation (MTEL) Changes Level 22 and Above Only*, September 2023.

43 All level – 22 units and higher are required to follow these package separation requirements.

Appendix A: Additional Information

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

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

- Control Activities
- Information and Communication
- Monitoring

We developed audit work to ensure that we assessed these controls. Based on the work performed, we identified internal control deficiencies in all three components that were significant within the context of our objective. Our recommendations, if implemented, should correct the weaknesses we identified.

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

Appendix B: Management's Comments



August 26, 2024

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Kansas-Missouri District: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 24-107-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit capping report *Kansas-Missouri District: Delivery Operations*.

Management generally agrees with the findings in the report but take exception with the lack of context when discussing the C360 data reported on page two. The report fails to discuss abnormal conditions and unplanned package volume that influenced the number of C360 comments received in the Kansas-Missouri District. The district experienced a significant increase in package volume as well as being impacted by a mercury spill in St. Louis, MO area resulting in the temporary closing of a post office and other operation impacts. Still, the Postal Service was able to adjust quickly to the unplanned events and provide service to their customers.

Following are our comments on each of the three recommendations.

Recommendation 1: We recommend the District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District, review staffing alignment within the district and provide adequate staff to the Shawnee Mission Post Office to deliver all committed mail daily.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Headquarters Human Resources complement group conducts weekly meetings with District leadership to review staffing. The district will conduct compliance reviews at Shawnee Mission Post Office to ensure adequate staffing is available to deliver all committed mail daily.

Target Implementation Date: 10/31/2024

Responsible Official: District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District

Recommendation 2: We recommend the District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District, identify and implement additional strategies to fill and retain carrier positions in the Kansas-Missouri District

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management continues to hold job fairs to fill carrier positions. Headquarters Human Resources and District management will be conducting site visits to high opportunity offices and results will be shared for follow up.

Target Implementation Date: 11/30/2024

Responsible Official: District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District

Recommendation 3: We recommend the District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District, train management at all delivery units in the district on the proper procedures for reporting delayed mail.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Non-bargaining employees in the Kansas-Missouri district will be trained on the proper procedures for reporting delayed mail.

Target Implementation Date: 11/30/2024

Responsible Official: District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District

E-SIGNED by EDDIE L BANNER
on 2024-08-27 12:23:02 EDT

Eddie L. Banner
Manager, Kansas-Missouri District

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

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