

# Mount Pleasant Post Office, Mount Pleasant, SC: Delivery Operations

## AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 24-117-2-R24 | August 13, 2024



# Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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August 13, 2024

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** COREY D. RICHARDS  
MANAGER, SOUTH CAROLINA DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joseph E. Wolski", is positioned below the memorandum header.

**FROM:** Joseph E. Wolski  
Director, Field Operations Atlantic & WestPac

**SUBJECT:** Audit Report – Mount Pleasant Post Office, Mount Pleasant, SC:  
Delivery Operations (Audit Number 24-117-2-R24)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Mount Pleasant Post Office in Mount Pleasant, SC.

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



# Results

## Background

The U.S. Postal Service’s mission is to provide timely, reliable, secure, and affordable mail and package delivery to more than 160 million residential and business addresses across the country. The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews delivery operations at facilities across the country and provides management with timely feedback in furtherance of this mission.

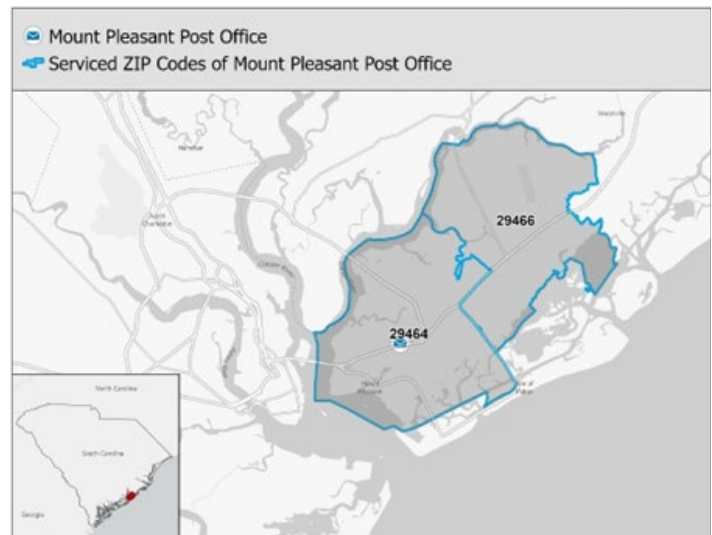
This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Mount Pleasant Post Office in Mount Pleasant, SC (Project Number 24-117-2). The Mount Pleasant Post Office is in the South Carolina District of the Southern Area and services ZIP Codes 29464 and 29466 (see Figure 1). These ZIP Codes serve 93,922 people in a predominantly urban area. Specifically, 93,325 (99 percent) live in urban communities and 597 (1 percent) live in rural communities.<sup>1</sup>

This delivery unit has 50 rural routes and 16 city routes. The Mount Pleasant Post Office is one of three delivery units<sup>2</sup> the OIG reviewed during the week of June 3, 2024, that are serviced by the Charleston Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC).

We assessed all units serviced by the Charleston P&DC based on the number of Customer 360<sup>3</sup> (C360) delivery-related inquiries,<sup>4</sup> Informed Delivery<sup>5</sup> contacts, Stop-the-Clock<sup>6</sup> (STC) scans performed

away from the delivery point, and undelivered route information between February 1 and April 30, 2024. We also reviewed first and last mile failures<sup>7</sup> between February 3 and May 3, 2024.

**Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Mount Pleasant Post Office**



Source: OIG.

We judgmentally selected the Mount Pleasant Post Office primarily based on the number of C360 inquiries related to delivery and Informed Delivery contacts. 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.

<sup>1</sup> We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from 2020 Census Bureau information.

<sup>2</sup> The other two units were the East Bay Station, Charleston, SC (Project Number 24-117-1) and the North Charleston Branch, North Charleston, SC (Project Number 24-117-3).

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

<sup>4</sup> A compilation of package inquiry, package pickup, daily mail service, and hold mail inquiries.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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."

<sup>7</sup> First mile failures occur when a mailpiece is collected and does not receive a processing scan at the P&DC on the day that it was intended. Last mile failures occur after the mailpiece has been processed at the P&DC on a final processing operation and is not delivered to the customer on the day it was intended.

Table 1. Delivery Metric Comparison Between February 1 and April 30, 2024

Delivery Metric	Unit Average per Route	District Average per Route
C360 Delivery Inquiries	7.5	6.5
Informed Delivery Contacts	22.0	20.4

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service's C360, Informed Delivery, and Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data extracted on May 6, 2024. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Mount Pleasant Post Office in Mount Pleasant, SC.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on five audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,<sup>8</sup> inaccurate 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>9</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>10</sup> and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 2 with management on July 25, 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 Mount Pleasant Post Office. We will issue a separate report<sup>11</sup> that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all three delivery units, as well as the district. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Mount Pleasant Post Office. Specifically, we found issues with all five areas we reviewed. We also identified issues related to the separation of packages for dispatch to the processing plant (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Results

Audit Area	Deficiencies 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 June 3, 2024.

We did not identify any issues with carrier complement. However, we did identify issues with timekeeping management (see [Finding 4](#)).

8 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.  
9 Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.  
10 The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.  
11 Project Number 24-117.

# Finding #1: Delayed Mail

## What We Found

On the morning of June 4, 2024, we identified 1,910 delayed mailpieces at 66 carrier cases and various locations in the workroom. Specifically, we identified 1,600 letters, 232 flats, and 78 packages. We also found 20 packages, some dated more than a year ago, in a storage closet that we determined to be mismanaged mail rather than delayed mail.

In addition, management did not report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)<sup>12</sup> system. See Table 3 for the number of pieces for each mail type of delayed mail found at the carrier cases and workroom. See Figure 2 for examples of delayed mail found at the carrier cases. In addition, the carriers did not complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,<sup>13</sup> to document the reason for undelivered mailpieces.

Table 3. Types of Delayed Mail Identified

Type of Mail	Carrier Cases	Workroom Floor	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	1,530	70	1,600
Flats	210	22	232
Packages	70	8	78
Totals	1,810	100	1,910

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit on June 4, 2024.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail at the Carrier Cases



Source: OIG photos taken June 4, 2024.

<sup>12</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.  
<sup>13</sup> PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

## Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide adequate oversight to verify that all mail was cleared from the unit and any delayed mail was reported in the DCV system. Specifically, management did not verify that supervisors and carriers followed the “redline” standard operating procedure (SOP)<sup>14</sup> which identifies the actions to take when returning with mail. Rather than follow the “redline” SOP, carriers incorrectly took mail to their carrier case when returning from delivery. Most carriers that we interviewed stated that they are either unaware, or did not follow, the “redline” SOP. The PM supervisor was also not aware of, and therefore did not monitor and enforce the requirement to adhere to the “redline” SOP. In addition, management stated the unit used substitute carriers to deliver some of the routes the previous day and attributed the delayed mail to those carriers being unfamiliar with the route and the “redline” SOP.

Unit management also acknowledged that it did not ensure carriers were completing PS Forms 1571 documenting the reason why mail or packages could not be delivered. In addition, management did not report delayed mail in the DCV system because they did not conduct a proper sweep of the carrier cases to identify any delayed mail, and they did not receive any PS Forms 1571 from the carriers.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have conducted an adequate walkthrough of the workroom to verify that all mail was delivered, determined the reason the undelivered mail was brought back from the street, and assured it was properly documented on PS Form 1571. Postal Service policy<sup>15</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. In addition, managers are required<sup>16</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. Further, management must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

## Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When mail is delayed, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand. In addition, inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in the DCV system provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with an inaccurate status of mail delays and can result in improper actions taken to address issues.

### Postal Service Response

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

<sup>14</sup> A standardized framework encompassing manager and carrier duties responsibilities after carriers return to the delivery unit upon completion of delivery assignments. Carriers do not cross the red line with any mail in their possession.

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

<sup>16</sup> *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, August 2023.

## Finding #2: Package Scanning

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

STC Scan Type	Count	Percentage
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	65	47.1%
No Secure Location Available	39	28.3%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	17	12.3%
Delivered	13	9.4%
No Authorized Recipient	3	2.2%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	1	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

### What We Found

Employees scanned packages improperly at the delivery unit, scanned packages away from the intended delivery point, and handled packages incorrectly at the unit. We also found that supervisors were stopping the clock on packages at the unit in the evening using an in-house scanner.

We reviewed package scanning data for scans that occurred at the unit and removed any potentially accurate scans performed.<sup>17</sup> In total, employees improperly scanned 138 packages at the delivery unit between February and April 2024 (see Table 4).

Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 47.1 percent of them were scanned "Receptacle Full/Item Oversized."

We also reviewed 433 scans occurring away from the delivery unit and over 1,000 feet<sup>18</sup> from the intended delivery point between February and April 2024 (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 98.6 percent of them were scanned "Delivered."

**Table 5. STC Scans Over 1000 Feet Away from the Delivery Point**

STC Scan Type	Count	Percentage
Delivered	427	98.6%
Return To Sender	4	0.9%
Unable To Forward / Forwarding Order Expired	1	0.2%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	1	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>99.9%*</b>

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

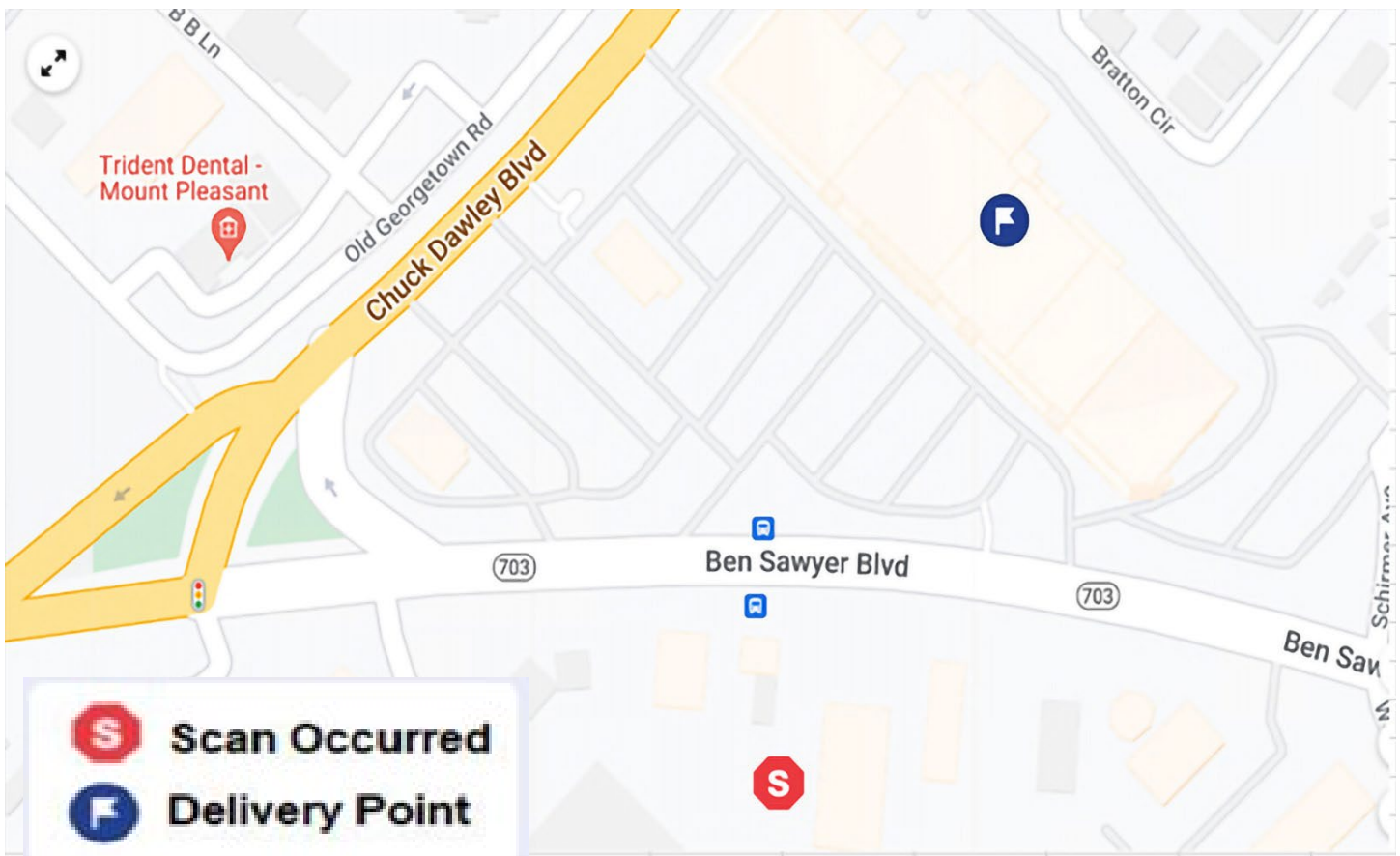
\* Total percentage does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.



Figure 3. Scan Away from the Delivery Point in Mount Pleasant, SC



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

For example, the map above (see Figure 3) shows an instance where a carrier scanned a package as “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” 0.7 miles away from the delivery point.

We also found issues with scanning and handling of packages in the unit. On the morning of June 4, 2024, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 60 packages<sup>19</sup> to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 60 sampled packages, 25 (41.7 percent) had improper scans or handling issues, including:

- Nine packages (three from the carrier cases and six 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.
- Seven packages (six from the carrier cases and one from the “Notice Left” area) were scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location”, “Delivered, In/At Mailbox”, or “Receptacle Full/Item Oversized”; and were scanned over 1,000 feet away from the delivery address. These scans ranged from 0.3 to 1.9 miles away from the point of delivery.
- Three packages from the carrier cases were scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access” away from the point of delivery.
- Two packages at the carrier cases were scanned “Forward Expired” but were not processed.
- Two packages found at the carrier case were scanned “Held at Post Office at Customer Request.” One package was dated April 3, 2024,

<sup>19</sup> We judgmentally selected 30 packages from the carrier cases and 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area.



and the other was dated May 25, 2024, with no record of a "Vacation Hold" for either package.

- One package from the "Notice Left" area was scanned "Return to Sender" dated May 29, 2024, but was not processed.
- One package at the carrier case was scanned "Insufficient Address" dated April 1, 2024, but was not processed.

Further, 15 packages in the "Notice Left" area were not returned to the sender, as required. These packages ranged from 20 to 201 days past their scheduled return dates.

In addition, we found that supervisors entered STC scans on some packages the evening of June 3, 2024. Specifically, we found 22 "Insufficient Address" scans made after 5:00 PM at the unit by the PM supervisor using a delivery unit scanner.

#### Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. They were not aware of the high number of improper scans made by employees at the unit. In addition, the packages in the "Notice Left" section were not returned within the prescribed number of days due to inadequate management oversight. The "Notice Left" clerk was unaware of the return policy and the packages remained in the unit.

Supervisors scanned the packages at the unit to avoid scanning failures. A supervisor stated they were informed by district management that any package found in the delivery unit at the end of the day is required to have an STC scan. The postmaster was unaware that supervisors were entering STC scans on packages at the unit in the evening.

#### 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>20</sup> which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.<sup>21</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>22</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. By improving scanning operations, management can improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance both the customer experience and the Postal Service brand.

#### Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

<sup>20</sup> *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

<sup>21</sup> *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

<sup>22</sup> *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, April 2016. 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.

## Finding #3: Arrow Keys

### What We Found

Unit management did not properly manage and safeguard arrow keys. On the morning of June 5, 2024, we reviewed the unit's arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)<sup>23</sup> system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. We determined two of the 70 keys located at the unit were not on the certification list. Additionally, one of the two keys was damaged, which was not reported in RADAR. Unit management had updated the arrow inventory key log in May 2024, but the two keys were not included in this update.

In addition, arrow keys were not always kept secure. Specifically, on June 5, 2024, we observed [REDACTED], which contained arrow keys, left unattended on the workroom floor prior to and during the carriers return to the unit. Management was not present to accept the arrow keys from returning carriers or monitor the [REDACTED] containing the returned arrow keys.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage and safeguard arrow keys. The recently received Modified Arrow Lock (MAL) key<sup>24</sup> was not added to the inventory list in RADAR because other duties took priority. The damaged arrow key was still on the carrier route key ring and not reported to the Inspection Service, as required. In addition, the supervisor responsible for monitoring the [REDACTED] and arrow keys left the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] on the workroom floor during the time when carriers were returning to the unit. The carriers placed their key in the designated [REDACTED] slot but did not sign a log when returning the key.

### What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that arrow key security procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,<sup>25</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. Further, broken keys must be updated on the RADAR inventory log.

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.

### Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

<sup>23</sup> The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.

<sup>24</sup> Modified Arrow Locks are made to be more secure and used in collection boxes, mail receptacles, and mail delivery units. MAL keys are an accountable item.

<sup>25</sup> USPS Arrow Key Guidebook Standard Work Instructions, updated August 2023.

## Finding # 4: Timekeeping Management

### What We Found

The station had nine unresolved disallowed time occurrences and seven instances of unresolved, unauthorized overtime between February 10 and May 10, 2024.<sup>26</sup> Management did not complete PS Forms 1017-A, *Time Disallowance Record*, or 1017-B, *Unauthorized Overtime Record* entries in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS).<sup>27</sup> Further, management did not print and retain PS Forms 1017-A<sup>28</sup> or PS Forms 1017-B<sup>29</sup> in a binder kept in a secure location for any of these occurrences.

### Why Did It Occur

The postmaster was unaware of the requirement to resolve the records in TACS. She believed that when clock rings were adjusted by the lead sales service associate, the disallowance and unauthorized overtime instances would be resolved. In addition, management was not aware of the requirement to print and retain all PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B.

### What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy<sup>30</sup> states unit personnel must complete PS Form 1017-A and PS Form 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 for three years. Postal Service guidance<sup>31</sup> also provides instructions on how to complete the entries in TACS.

### Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When proper documentation of 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 Act<sup>32</sup> when unit management does not maintain documentation that shows the justifiable reason and employee notification for disallowed time.

### Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

<sup>26</sup> We did not have any issues with the PS Form 2240 *Pay, Leave, or Other Hours Adjustment Request*.

<sup>27</sup> The system used by the Postal Service to automate the collection of employee time and attendance information.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance*, Section 146 - Approving Entries, February 2016.

<sup>31</sup> TACS Training Page. Training Video 1017-A 1017-B Enhancement Demo.

<sup>32</sup> 29 USC § 201-219.



## Finding # 5: Property Conditions

### What We Found

We found safety, security, and maintenance issues at the Mount Pleasant Post Office.

#### Property Safety:

- A blocked manual fire alarm in workroom (see Figure 4).
- Four US Postal Inspection Service gallery doors blocked.
- Vestibule doors blocked by three broken pallet jacks (see Figure 5).
- Two blocked doors in dock area.
- Three blocked fire extinguishers.

**Figure 4. Blocked Manual Fire Alarm Pull**



Source: OIG photo taken June 5, 2024.

**Figure 5. Vestibule Doors Blocked**



Source: OIG photo taken June 4, 2024.

#### Property Security:

- Missing "All Vehicles Subject to Search" sign in employee parking lot.

#### Property Maintenance:

- Damaged countertops in the customer PO Box area (see Figure 6).
- Dirty, damaged, and blocked air vent in the workroom.
- Ceiling light fixtures missing covers in customer PO Box area.
- Cracked baseboard tile molding in customer PO Box area.
- Rusted / damaged stalls in men's and women's restrooms.
- Damaged / stained ceiling tiles in workroom.
- Damaged walls in workroom, custodian closet, and vestibule (see Figure 7).
- Damaged equipment stored on delivery unit grounds (see Figure 8).



**Figure 6. Damaged Countertops in Customer PO Box Area**



Source: OIG photos taken June 5, 2024.

**Figure 7. Damaged Wall in Workroom**



Source: OIG photo taken June 5, 2024.

**Figure 8. Damaged Equipment Stored On Delivery Unit's Grounds**



Source: OIG photo taken June 5, 2024.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight and take the necessary actions to identify and follow-up on property condition issues because other duties, such as getting the mail out for delivery each day and ensuring carriers returned on time every day, took priority over addressing property conditions.

### 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.<sup>33</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.

#### Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

<sup>33</sup> Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July, 2020.



## Finding # 6: Separation of Packages for Dispatch

### What We Found

Employees at the Mount Pleasant Post Office did not properly separate packages destined for the Charleston P&DC. Specifically, on June 5, 2024, during the unit's evening operations, we observed that Ground Advantage<sup>34</sup> packages and Priority Mail<sup>35</sup> were comingled in the same containers (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9. Example of Comingled Priority Mail and Ground Advantage Packages**



Source: OIG photo taken June 5, 2024.

### Why Did It Occur

Unit management did not provide oversight to ensure that employees properly separated packages for dispatch to the P&DC. The closing supervisor acknowledged that the carriers do not always drop the Priority Mail and the Ground Advantage packages into the appropriate containers upon returning to the unit and they did not enforce compliance.

### What Should Have Happened

In fiscal year 2023, the Postal Service implemented changes<sup>36</sup> for the preparation and dispatch of packages to processing facilities by delivery units of a certain level.<sup>37</sup> The Postal Service requires these units to separate certain classes of packages 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 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 increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand.

### Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

<sup>34</sup> A service providing an affordable and reliable way to send parcels inside the U.S. Parcels under 70 pounds arrive in two to five business days.

<sup>35</sup> An expedited service that may contain any mailable matter weighing no more than 70 pounds.

<sup>36</sup> Mail Preparation (MTEL) Changes Level 22 and Above Only, September 2023.

<sup>37</sup> All level-22 units and higher are required to follow these package separation requirements.

# Appendix A: Additional Information

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We conducted this audit from May through August 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 related to control activities, information and communication, and monitoring that were significant within the context of our objectives. We will issue a separate report that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for the Mount Pleasant Post Office, East Bay Station, and the North Charleston Branch, as well as the district. Our recommendations, if implemented, should correct the weaknesses we identified.

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

# Appendix B: Management's Comments



July 30, 2024

JOHN CIHOTA  
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Mount Pleasant Post Office, Mount Pleasant, SC: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-117-2-DRAFT)

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

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

Management has begun taking steps to address the six findings.

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

*Package Scanning:* Management will provide a service talk on proper scanning procedures and conduct reviews to monitor compliance. Management has verified all packages in Notice Left Area were returned.

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

*Timekeeping Management:* Local management will be retrained on proper record keeping for disallowed time, and unauthorized overtime. Management will create and accurately maintain logbooks for PS Forms 1017-A *Time Disallowance Record* and PS Forms 1017-B *Unauthorized Overtime Record*. Additionally, reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

*Property Conditions:* Management has abated seven of the fifteen property conditions related to safety, security, and maintenance. Management is working to resolve the remaining issues, in which some may require submission of workorders for assistance from other resources.

*Sortation of Packages for Dispatch:* Management will provide service talks to reinforce package separation practices to ensure Priority Mail is not comingled with non-priority mail. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.



E-SIGNED by COREY D RICHARDS  
on 2024-07-30 20:10:32 EDT

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Corey D. Richards  
District Manager, South Carolina District

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

# OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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