

Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District

AUDIT REPORT

Project Number 22-208-R23 | February 15, 2023



Germantown Station

Logan Station

Lancaster Ave Station

North Philadelphia Station

Edgemoor Branch

Marshallton Branch

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Edgemoor Branch

Rendell
Branch

Green City

Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

February 15, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR: EDWARD B. WILLIAMSON
MANAGER (A)
DELAWARE-PENNSYLVANIA 2 DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Wolski", is centered below the recipient information.

FROM: Joseph E. Wolski
Director, Field Operations

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition
Reviews – Select Units, Delaware–Pennsylvania 2 District (Project
Number 22-208-R23)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews – Select Units, Delaware–Pennsylvania 2 District.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ricardo Martinez, Operational Manager, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit and Response Management
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, Atlantic Area Retail & Delivery Operations

Results

Background

This report presents a summary of the results of our self-initiated audits assessing mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at six select delivery units in the Delaware–Pennsylvania 2 District in the Atlantic Area (Project Number 22-208). These delivery units included the Germantown, Logan, and North Philadelphia Stations in Philadelphia, PA; and the Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Branch, and Lancaster Avenue Station in Wilmington, DE.

We selected the Wilmington, DE area based on Congressional interest in Delaware and concerns raised during a recent House Oversight and Reform Committee hearing,¹ and the Philadelphia, PA area based on a request from Senator Robert P. Casey and Representative Dwight Evans that we audit the Germantown Station. We judgmentally selected the other five delivery units within these areas based on the number of Stop-the-Clock (STC)² scans occurring at the units, rather than at the customers' points of delivery, and indicators for undelivered mail.³

We previously issued interim reports⁴ to district management for each of these units regarding the conditions we identified. In addition, we issued a report on the efficiency of operations at the Philadelphia Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC),⁵ which services the Germantown, Logan, and North Philadelphia Stations and at the Delaware P&DC,⁶ which services the Marshallton and Edgemoor Branches, as well as the Lancaster Avenue Station. The delivery units have 277 city routes that serve about 394,117 people in several ZIP Codes (see Table 1), which are considered urban communities.⁷

Table 1. Service Area and Population

Delivery Units	Service Area ZIP	Population	City Routes
Served by Philadelphia P&DC			
Germantown Station	19119, 19144	71,239	58
Logan Station	19126, 19141	48,708	28
North Philadelphia Station	19121, 19132, 19133	99,657	49
Subtotals		219,604	135
Served by Delaware P&DC			
Marshallton Branch	19808	38,296	33
Edgemoor Branch	19703, 19802, 19809, 19810	78,919	63
Lancaster Avenue Station	19805, 19806, 19807	57,298	46
Subtotals		174,513	142
Total		394,117	277

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of Postal Service National Labeling List and Esri data.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Branch, and Lancaster Avenue Station in the Delaware–Pennsylvania 2 District.

We reviewed delivery metrics, including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, number of reported delayed mailpieces, package scanning, and distribution up-time.⁸ In addition, during our

¹ Delivering For Pennsylvania: Examining Postal Service Delivery and Operations from the Cradle of Liberty, September 7, 2022.

² A scan event that indicates the U.S. 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."

³ The undelivered mail metrics include Customer 360 (C360) inquiries, Informed Delivery inquiries, and non-delivered routes.

⁴ *Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Germantown Station* (Report Number 22-208-1-R23, dated January 10, 2023); *Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Review – Logan Station* (Report Number 22-208-2-R23, dated January 2023); *Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – North Philadelphia Station* (Report Number 22-208-3-R23, dated January 10, 2023); *Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Marshallton Branch* (Report Number 22-208-4-R23, dated January 10, 2023); *Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Edgemoor Branch* (Report Number 22-208-5-R23, dated January 10, 2023); and *Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Lancaster Avenue Station* (Report Number 22-208-6-R23, dated January 10, 2023).

⁵ *Efficiency of Operations at the Philadelphia Processing and Distribution Center, Philadelphia, PA* (Report Number 22-207-R23, dated January 10, 2023).

⁶ *Efficiency of Operations at the Delaware Processing and Distribution Center, Wilmington, DE* (Report Number 22-206-R23, dated January 10, 2023).

⁷ We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from Esri, which is based on 2010 Census Bureau information.

⁸ Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

site visits the week of October 24, 2022, we reviewed mail conditions; package and truck arrival scanning procedures; arrow key⁹ security procedures; and property safety, security, and maintenance conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at and around carrier cases and in the “Notice Left” area.¹⁰ Finally, we interviewed unit management and employees.

We conducted this audit from October through February 2023 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls as we considered necessary under the circumstances. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on January 25, 2023, and included their comments where appropriate.

We relied on computer-generated data from the Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR)¹¹ system, Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV),¹² the Surface Visibility web (SVWeb)¹³ database, and the electronic Facilities Management System (eFMS).¹⁴ Although we did not test the validity of the controls over these systems, we assessed the accuracy of the 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.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at all six delivery units. Specifically, we found delayed mail and deficiencies with package scanning, truck arrival scanning, arrow key controls, and property conditions (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Results

Controls Reviewed	Deficiencies Identified					
	Philadelphia			Delaware		
	Germantown Station	Logan Station	North Philadelphia Station	Marshallton Branch	Edgemoor Branch	Lancaster Avenue Station
Delayed Mail	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Package Scanning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Truck Arrival Scanning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arrow Keys	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Property Conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of October 24, 2022.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of October 25, 2022, we identified about 130,529¹⁵ pieces of delayed letter and flat mail at the six delivery units (see Table 3). For each location, management did not accurately report this delayed mail in the DCV system. The Germantown Station reported 2,064 (38.74 percent) of the 5,328 pieces of delayed mail in the DCV system, and the other five stations did not report any delayed mail. See Figure 1 and Figure 2 for examples of delayed mail we found. In addition, the Germantown Station had 779 pieces of delayed collection mail that had not been sent to the mail processing plant the day carriers brought it to the unit or on the first truck the following morning. This mail included 25 pieces of Election Mail, including ballots. The delayed mail at the Logan Station included one piece of Election Mail.

⁹ A distinctively shaped key carriers use to open mail-receiving receptacles such as street collection boxes and panels of apartment house mailboxes equipped with an arrow lock. Arrow keys are accountable property and are subject to strict controls.

¹⁰ The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

¹¹ A system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

¹² 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.

¹³ Surface Visibility collects end-to-end data by linking multiple scans of a single asset to create visibility data to support planning, management, and optimization of the surface network.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Count of mail included individual piece counts and estimates based on conversion factors.

Table 3. Delayed Mail

Type of Mail	Philadelphia			Delaware			Total
	Germantown Station	Logan Station	North Philadelphia Station	Marshallton Branch	Edgemoor Branch	Lancaster Avenue Station	
Letters	3,484	1,647	3,398	1,280	20,319	47,816	77,944
Flats	1,835	830	1,817	7,992	19,217	18,325	50,016
Packages	9	0	68	129	11	2,352	2,569
Total	5,328	2,477	5,283	9,401	39,547	68,493	130,529

Source: OIG count of delayed mail pieces identified during our visit October 25, 2022.

Figure 1. Delayed Mail at the Edgemoor Branch



Source: OIG photo taken on October 25, 2022.

Figure 2. Delayed Mail at the Lancaster Avenue Station



Source: OIG photo taken on October 25, 2022.

Why Did It Occur

Delayed mail occurred for multiple reasons, including lack of arrow keys, lack of experienced staff, and insufficient staffing to accommodate mail volumes. It was not reported because of lack of management oversight. Specifically:

- Management at the Germantown Station stated that carriers brought back mail at the end of the day because the unit did not have enough arrow keys for all carrier routes that required them for delivery. In addition, the PM supervisor was not aware the delayed collection mail must be dispatched to the P&DC on the day it is collected, and the station manager was not aware that the delayed collection mail was there and therefore, did not dispatch it on one of the earlier trucks.
- Management at the Logan Avenue Station stated that the delayed mail was due to Political Mail volume and the district's desire to limit the hours that city carrier assistants¹⁶ are allowed to work. In addition, the day prior to our visit, a carrier had unexpectedly returned to the station early with a truck full of undelivered packages and mail. The PM supervisor stated that competing responsibilities, such as conducting street observations and preparing dispatch mail, prevented them from fully monitoring delivery operations.
- Management at the North Philadelphia Station stated that carriers brought back mail at the end of the day because the unit did not have enough

¹⁶ City Carrier Assistants perform carrier duties, but do not have an assigned route and can be moved to other units as necessary.

arrow keys for all carrier routes that required them for delivery. The unit has 14 arrow keys to share among 49 carrier routes. This obstructed the delivery of mail because carriers use arrow keys to open mail receptacles. Also, the unit did not have experienced delivery personnel. Specifically, 65 percent of the unit's staff have less than one year of experience and did not possess knowledge of the delivery routes. An increase in Political Mail volume worsened the situation. In addition, the delayed mail was not reported in the DCV system because the supervisor responsible for doing so was not aware of the required procedure.

- Management at the Marshallton Branch stated they did not adequately monitor operations to ensure all mail was cleared from the unit and taken to the street for delivery because they were busy with other tasks, including managing staffing and participating in daily meetings. The acting supervisor stated they also did not perform a thorough walkthrough the previous night and did not see the 129 packages left behind a retail window. In addition, the delayed mail was not reported because the acting supervisor was not aware of the proper procedures for reporting mail in the DCV system.
- Management at the Edgemoor Branch did not verify that all mail was cleared from the unit, delivered, and properly reported in the DCV system. The Post Office Operations manager stated that the supervisors and station manager had been at the unit for less than one year and were not aware of the proper guidelines and reporting policy. In addition, management stated that the unit had multiple carrier vacancies, but they were holding job fairs for recruitment.
- Management at the Lancaster Avenue Station stated that the delayed mail occurred because the unit was short staffed and had several inexperienced employees. Specifically, the station had nine unassigned routes, and several inexperienced carriers that were not familiar with how to properly case their routes. During our site visit we observed one carrier casing five routes in addition to his assigned route. In addition, the delayed mail was not reported in the DCV system due to miscommunication among unit management. Specifically, the supervisor who normally enters delayed mail stated that she did

not receive delayed mail information from the other supervisors.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured that all mail was processed and delivered daily, and that there were enough resources to deliver all the mail each day. Postal Service policy¹⁷ 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 required¹⁸ to report in the DCV system all mail that remains in a unit after the carriers have left for their street duties.

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.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, requires the Germantown and North Philadelphia stations obtain enough arrow keys for all carrier routes that need them for delivery.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, develops and executes a plan so that all committed mail is delivered daily and management conducts a daily sweep to identify delayed mail at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Branch and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, develops and executes a plan that requires all delayed mail volume be entered into the proper system and that management systematically enforces reporting compliance at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Branch and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages at all six delivery units. Specifically, employees scanned

¹⁷ Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail stand-up talk, February 2019.

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

5,337 packages at the delivery units instead of at the customers' delivery points between July and September 2022 (see Table 4). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that about 84.49 percent were scanned "Delivered." This data excludes scans that could properly be made at the unit, such as "Delivered – PO Box" and "Customer (Vacation) Hold", but rather represents scans performed at the delivery unit that should be made at the point of delivery. In addition, we only included "Delivery Attempted – No access to Delivery Location" scans performed Monday through Friday to avoid legitimate scans for businesses closed over the weekend.

In addition, on the morning of October 25, 2022, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 231 packages to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. We judgmentally selected 85 packages from the carrier cases and 146 packages from the "Notice Left" area.

Of the 85 sampled packages at the carrier cases, 46 (54.12 percent) had missing or improper scans, or handling issues, including:

- Twenty-nine packages were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- Nine were scanned "Delivered," which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer's point of delivery.
- Six were scanned "Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location" but were scanned at a location other than the point of delivery.
- One was scanned "Held at Post Office at Customer Request" but was not scanned at the unit or delivery point.
- One was scanned "Insufficient Address" and should have been returned to the sender.

Further, 110 (75.34 percent) of the 146 reviewed packages in the "Notice Left" area had scanning or handling issues. For example, 81 (55.48 percent) were not returned to the sender, as required.¹⁹ Those packages ranged from two to 144 days past their return dates.

Table 4. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

Type of Mail	Philadelphia			Delaware			Total	Percent
	Germantown Station	Logan Station	North Philadelphia Station	Marshallton Branch	Edgemoor Branch	Lancaster Avenue Station		
Delivered	153	1,254	295	767	1,910	130	4,509	84.49%
Delivery Attempted - No Access	185	38	140	105	124	117	709	13.28%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	23	6	10	1	5	11	56	1.05%
Animal Interference	9	0	1	17	1	3	31	0.58%
No Secure Location	1	1	7	3	5	1	18	0.34%
Refused	0	0	0	0	1	7	8	0.15%
No Authorized Recipient	0	0	1	0	5	0	6	0.11%
Total	371	1,299	454	893	2,051	269	5,337	100.00%

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

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

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. Specifically:

- The Germantown Station manager stated that a package tracking tool she uses to monitor STC scan data had not been working for several weeks, but she was not using the most updated version of the tool.
- Management at the Logan Station stated they were unaware of the improper package scans at carrier cases. Additionally, we found that 1,133 (87.22 percent) of the scans at the unit were for a single customer without using a firm sheet.²⁰ Management stated that there had previously been an arrangement to scan packages “Delivered” at the unit for this customer to pick up. The customer ceased its package pick-up, but carriers continued scanning at the unit by habit.
- Management at the North Philadelphia Station stated that most of the scans that occurred at the delivery unit were for a local university that comes to pick up their packages, and management did not know how to set up a caller service for the university. Regarding the packages found at the carrier cases, management did not ensure that carriers were checking in with a supervisor upon return from their street deliveries to determine if all packages were delivered, and management did not ensure that a supervisor conducted a PM walkthrough to identify and review undelivered packages. Finally, management stated that the packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned timely because the unit was understaffed and overlooked that it was not being done.
- Management at the Marshallton Branch stated that they were more focused on monitoring staff and preparing mail to be dispatched to the plant. Additionally, we found that 619 (69.32 percent) of the scans at the unit were for a single customer using firm sheets. Management stated that the standing practice was to scan firm sheets as “Delivered” at the unit for this customer.
- Management at the Edgemoor Branch stated they were aware of the policy to scan packages at the point of delivery but allowed employees to

scan packages in the office for businesses with firm sheets. In addition, management explained that the station manager and supervisors were new to their positions and had not been properly trained to ensure proper scanning procedures were followed.

- The Lancaster Avenue Station manager stated that she and three supervisors were recently transferred to the unit and were overwhelmed with failed deliveries and undelivered routes. Therefore, they focused on getting mail delivered and did not have time to strictly enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. In addition, packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned due to inadequate management oversight. Specifically, the station manager stated that no one was assigned to review packages in the “Notice Left” area.

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,²¹ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.²² 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.

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 potentially improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Management Actions

During our audit, management at the Germantown Station took corrective action by obtaining an updated version of the package scanning tool that was being utilized to monitor STC data. At the North Philadelphia Station, on October 26, 2022, management returned to senders all the packages in the “Notice Left” area that exceeded their return dates.

²⁰ A list of packages for delivery to one address documented with a single barcode. Firm sheets are used to link packages sent to one address on a single form.

²¹ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

²² *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

Recommendation #4

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, requires unit management to review package scanning performance data daily and enforce compliance, as well as develops and executes a plan to train all employees on the standard operating procedures for package scanning and handling at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Finding #3: Truck Arrival Scanning

What We Found

Employees did not scan all incoming trailer/truck barcodes²³ at any of the six delivery units as required. We reviewed data related to morning truck arrival scans from July 1 to September 30, 2022, and found that employees did not perform a scan for 1,295 of the 1,810 trips (71.55 percent) arriving from the Philadelphia and Delaware P&DCs (see Table 5).

Table 5. Truck Arrival Scans from July through September 30, 2022

Delivery Units	Inbound AM Trips	Missed Arrive Scans	Missed Scan Percent
Serviced by Philadelphia P&DC			
Germantown Station	211	66	31.28%
Logan Station	218	96	44.04%
North Philadelphia Station	289	289	100.00%
Subtotals	718	451	62.81%
Serviced by Delaware P&DC			
Marshallton Branch	258	111	43.02%
Edgemoor Branch	575	474	82.43%
Lancaster Avenue Station	259	259	100.00%
Subtotals	1,092	844	77.29%
Total	1,810	1,295	71.55%

Source: OIG analysis of data extracted from the Postal Service's SVWeb System.

²³ The trailer barcode on the back door and inside right and left walls of the trailer.

²⁴ RIMS provides near real time mail delivery information to in-office delivery unit staff to help them perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

During our site visits we performed observations of truck arrival scanning procedures. Employees at the Lancaster Avenue Station, Marshallton Branch, and North Philadelphia Station did not scan the truck barcodes upon arrival, while those at the Edgemoor Branch, Germantown Station, and Logan Station did.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not monitor scan performance data to ensure that all trucks received an arrival scan. Specifically:

- Management at Germantown Station stated that they use Regional Intelligent Mail Server (RIMS)²⁴ data to monitor truck scans. However, when we provided the manager a list of missed truck scans from the week of our fieldwork, the manager did not provide RIMS data to support that the unit made the scans.
- The Logan Station manager stated he normally performed the truck arrival scans and thought that other employees scanned the trucks when he was called away for other duties. He was unaware that a management tool existed that allowed him to monitor scanning compliance.
- The North Philadelphia Station manager stated that she occupied the position for only one day and has not had a chance to assess the unit. However, one supervisor stated that they previously scanned trucks but stopped because the barcodes were not scanning correctly. In addition, a lift is required to access the inside of the truck, which prevents clerks from accessing the barcode inside the truck. Further, a seasoned clerk stated that he was not aware that trucks were supposed to be scanned.
- Management at the Marshallton Branch stated that they were not aware of any reports available for monitoring truck scanning performance. We further determined the acting branch manager did not have access to the truck scanning performance reports.

- The Edgemoor Branch manager stated that he was not aware of any reports available for monitoring truck scanning performance and was focused on mail delivery and trying to balance staff shortages. Further, a mail handler stated she scanned trucks upon arrival but sometimes missed them when she was away from the dock.
- Management at Lancaster Avenue Station stated they were not aware of any reports available for monitoring truck scanning performance.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have performed reviews of truck arrival tracking reports to ensure that employees were performing all expected truck scans. According to Postal Service Policy,²⁵ employees must scan the trailer barcode on Postal Service trailer/trucks and Highway Contract Route trucks arriving at the delivery unit during local operating hours.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When employees do not scan the truck barcode, the Postal Service does not receive timely transportation information and is unable to address issues that may be causing mail delays, which could affect customer service.

Recommendation #5

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, develops and executes a plan that requires management to review truck/trailer arrival scanning performance data daily and enforce compliance at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Finding #4 Arrow Keys

What We Found

Management did not properly manage and safeguard arrow keys at all six delivery units. Specifically, the delivery units did not maintain updated arrow key logs. We found 157 of the 338 keys listed in the logs, and an additional 51 keys that were not listed on the logs (see Table 6). In addition, all the units did not adequately track arrow keys issued to employees and five of the six delivery units did not keep arrow keys secured.

Table 6. Arrow Key Inventory

Delivery Units	Keys on Inventory Log	Keys Found	
		Listed on Log	Not Listed on Log
Germantown Station	80	31	9
Logan Station	64	19	23
North Philadelphia Station	60	3	11
Marshallton Branch	35	33	0
Edgemoor Branch	54	33	8
Lancaster Avenue Station	45	38	0
Total	338	157	51

Source: OIG analysis of the Arrow Key inventory during our visit week of October 24, 2022.

Why Did It Occur

These issues occurred because unit management did not properly manage and safeguard arrow keys. Specifically:

- Management at the Germantown Station stated they did not have proper oversight of their inventory. Specifically, management had carriers share the keys and did not have them sign in and out for the keys as accountability was transferred from one carrier to another. Instead, the keys were gathered at the end of the night to see if they were all there. If not, they would wait until the following day and ask the carrier if they had the key.
- Management at the Logan Station stated they were not familiar with the arrow key inventory process. Specifically, the PM supervisor stated that he focused on the route numbers when managing arrow key distribution and collection and did not prioritize review of the serial numbers of individuals' keys.

²⁵ United States Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure - Subject: Trailer Scans at the Delivery Units.

- Management at the North Philadelphia Station stated they did not have a process in place or provide oversight of their arrow key inventory. Instead, the unit had 14 arrow keys to share among 49 carrier routes. Management allowed carriers to share the keys and did not have them sign in and out for the keys as accountability was transferred from one carrier to another. In addition, management did not have a process to ensure the keys were signed back in and accounted for after carriers returned from the street.
- Management at the Marshallton Branch stated they did not prioritize the proper accountability and security of arrow keys. Specifically, the acting branch manager stated he had only been at the unit for about two weeks and was more focused on mail delivery. The acting supervisor stated that he prioritized preparing mail and packages for dispatch to the plant. Unit management stated that they reported the missing keys to the district as instructed by district management, but district management stated there were no reports of missing keys from the Marshallton Branch. Further, the door to the [REDACTED] where the keys were kept was missing, and unit management was not able to explain why or how long it had been missing.
- Management at the Edgemoor Branch stated they were not aware of the policy related to arrow key accountability. The PM supervisor stated that he did not know that he should be managing the arrow keys. In addition, the AM supervisors stated they were short-staffed and did not have support employees to ensure carriers sign the keys in when they return from the street.
- Management at the Lancaster Avenue Station stated the station manager and three supervisors had been at the unit for less than one month and were more focused on mail delivery. In addition, we observed the PM supervisor did not always keep the [REDACTED] secured because he was busy with other tasks, such as sorting and delivering mail. Therefore, he sometimes left the [REDACTED] unsecured for carriers to return their arrow keys. The station manager stated that she requested a Postal Support Employee to assist the PM supervisor.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured that arrow key security procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,²⁶ management must keep an accurate inventory of all keys and conduct semiannually a physical survey of all building keys. In addition, policy²⁷ 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 are used to open mail receptacles, lost or misplaced keys could impact mail delivery.

Recommendation #6

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, develops and executes a training plan that instructs management on the proper arrow key inventory procedures at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Recommendation #7

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, establish a schedule to periodically review arrow keys to verify they are properly logged and accounted for at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Finding # 5: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found safety, security, and maintenance issues at all six delivery units.

At the Germantown Station, we identified issues including all fire extinguishers missing monthly inspections, a blocked exit door, a ladder on the workroom floor not properly secured to prevent falling, wood flooring in poor condition throughout the building, an inoperable toilet in the women's

²⁶ Administrative Support Manual Issue 13, Sections 273.461, 273.464, and 273.471, July 1999 – updated through March 31, 2022.

²⁷ *Standard Work: Arrow Key Accountability*, January 2022 and *USPS Arrow Key Standard Work*, January 2022.

restroom, and a front entrance door that does not close properly (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Entrance Door Does Not Close Properly



Source: OIG photo taken October 25, 2022.

At the Logan Station, we identified issues including missing floor tiles in the men's locker room, a damaged dock staircase with multiple tripping hazards (see Figure 4), large opening in roof above the dock (see Figure 5), missing monthly fire extinguisher inspections, a blocked internal Postal Inspection Service door, no signage posted stating that employee vehicles may be subject to search, evidence of potential mold on the men's locker room floor, non-operational light fixtures inside the men's locker room floor, dirty air vents in the customer lobby, damaged wall near workroom exit, and missing ceiling tiles in the basement.

Figure 4. Damaged Dock Staircase with Multiple Tripping Hazards



Source: OIG photo taken October 26, 2022.

Figure 5. Large Opening in Roof Above Dock



Source: OIG photo taken October 26, 2022.

At the North Philadelphia Station, we identified issues including a blocked electrical panel and fire extinguisher (see Figure 6), three electrical outlets (see Figure 7) and one thermostat not securely mounted, damaged walls, light switches in the conference room with missing switch plates, all seven

fire extinguishers were missing required monthly and annual inspections, two leaking faucets, one inoperable toilet, a closet overflowing with clutter and trash in the men's restroom, and inoperable toilets in the women's restroom.

Figure 6. Blocked Fire Extinguisher



Source: OIG photo taken October 25, 2022.

Figure 7. Electrical Outlet Not Securely Mounted and Damaged Walls



Source: OIG photo taken October 25, 2022.

At the Marshallton Branch, we identified issues including a blocked electrical panel (see Figure 8), missing required monthly inspections for all five portable fire extinguishers at the facility, no signage posted stating that employee vehicles may be subject to search, a hole in the breakroom wall by a vending machine, damaged walls at the custodian sink, damaged ramp railing and broken concrete at the rear dock areas (see Figure 9), dirty air vents in men's and women's bathrooms, and a missing vent cover in women's locker room.

Figure 8. Blocked Electrical Panel



Source: OIG photo taken October 25, 2022.

Figure 9. Damaged Ramp Railing and Broken Concrete at Rear Dock Areas



Source: OIG photo taken October 25, 2022.

At the Edgemoor Branch, we identified issues including non-completion of annual fire extinguisher inspections since May 2021, a blocked electrical panel in the workroom (see Figure 10), a blocked Postal Inspection Service door in the workroom area, an uneven surface at the dock door entrance causing a potential trip hazard, stained ceiling tiles, a dirty wall in the lobby, and cracked concrete around the railing outside the dock entrance (see Figure 11).

Figure 10. Blocked Electrical Panel



Source: OIG photo taken October 25, 2022.

Figure 11. Cracked Concrete



Source: OIG photo taken October 25, 2022.

At the Lancaster Avenue Station, we identified that all five fire extinguishers were missing annual inspections. The most recent annual inspections were completed in September 2021.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not take the necessary actions to ensure that property conditions were corrected because other duties, such as addressing customer inquiries and getting the mail out for delivery each day, took priority. Furthermore, management indicated that they were not aware of the safety hazards at their units Specifically:

- Management at the Germantown Station stated other duties, such as getting the mail out for delivery each day, took priority. This impacted the timing of addressing maintenance issues.
- Management at the Logan Station stated that they were unaware of some issues, such as missing floor tiles in the men's locker room, potential mold, and the required employee parking lot signage. In addition, management overlooked reassigning the responsibility when the unit custodian responsible for overseeing facility safety and maintenance issues was on medical leave.
- Management at the North Philadelphia Stations stated they were not aware of the issues.
- Management at the Marshallton Branch stated the acting branch manager had only been at the unit for about two weeks and was not aware of the issues we identified, including the issues with the fire extinguishers, the damaged dock areas, and the dirty air vents.
- The Edgemoor Branch manager stated he was not aware of the uninspected fire extinguishers, blocked electrical panel, blocked inspection service doors, and cracked concrete.
- Management at the Lancaster Avenue Station stated other duties took priority, such as staffing and getting the mail out for delivery each day.

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 is required to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers. In addition, the Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA) requires employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace free of recognized hazards.²⁸

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 OSHA penalties; and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Management Actions

During our audit, management provided support for the following actions taken:

- At the Germantown Station, management took corrective action by performing the required monthly inspections on all fire extinguishers, unblocking the exit door, secured the ladder to the wall, and repairing the inoperable toilet.
- At the Logan Station, management took corrective action by repairing the large opening in the roof above the dock, performing the required monthly inspections on all fire extinguishers, unblocking the Postal Inspection Service door, remediating the mold on the men's locker room floor.
- At the North Philadelphia Station, management took corrective action by unblocking the electrical panel and fire extinguisher, repairing the electrical outlets and damaged walls, installing switch plates, performing the required monthly and annual inspections on all fire extinguishers, and clearing the clutter and trash in the men's restroom closet.
- At the Marshallton Branch, management took corrective action by unblocking the electrical panel, performing the required monthly inspections on all fire extinguishers, and cleaning the dirty air vents in the bathrooms.
- At the Edgemoor Branch management remediated all property conditions identified in the report.

Recommendation #8

We recommend the **District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2 District**, periodically review property conditions and address all outstanding building safety, security and maintenance issues identified at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the findings and recommendations in the report. See [Appendix A](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated that they will order the appropriate number of arrow keys at the Germantown and North Philadelphia stations so that all carriers can complete delivery daily. Management's target implementation date is February 28, 2023.

Regarding recommendations 2 and 3, management stated that the District Manager will issue a memorandum to all postmasters, managers, and supervisors outlining the expectations regarding daily mail delivery, properly reporting delays, and sweeping the facility to ensure all outgoing mail is dispatched. In addition, the Manager of Post Office Operations for Marshallton, Edgemoor, and Lancaster, and the Postmaster for Germantown, Logan, and North Philadelphia will certify that they reviewed the memo with management staff. Management's target implementation date for the memorandum issuance is no later than February 20, 2023, and the management certification review will be provided no later than February 28, 2023.

Regarding recommendation 4, management stated that they will issue the "Scan Where you Stand" service talk to the entire district. The managers of the six sites will be required to certify that all employees were given the service talk, and to provide the corresponding TACS report to confirm that employees have received the talk. Finally, the district will review scan performance of the six units daily. Management stated the daily cadence for service talks would begin no later than February 1, 2023, with a target implementation date for completion of no later than February 13, 2023.

Regarding recommendation 5, management stated that they will re-issue the standard work instructions to all applicable employees at the six units and require management to certify that all applicable employees were given a copy of the standard work instructions. Also, the district will train local management staff at the six units on the standard work instruction and on how to pull performance reports and monitor performance. Finally, the district will review scan performance daily with management at the six units. Management stated that the daily cadence for training will begin no later than

²⁸ OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

February 1, 2023, and the target implementation date for completion is no later than February 13, 2023.

Regarding recommendations 6 and 7, management stated that they will implement the Arrow Key Standard Work Instructions prescribed by the U. S. Postal Inspection Service to ensure accountability in protection of Arrow Keys. The Manager of Post Office Operations or Manager of Customer Service Operations will conduct bi-weekly audits to ensure that arrow keys are secure and that the proper procedures are in place. Management's target implementation date is that by March 10, 2023, they will have the control process for the arrow keys in place. The review of procedures and activities for the arrow keys will be completed no later than March 31, 2023.

Regarding recommendation 8, management stated local management will continue to make repairs and provide "before and after" photos for what is determined to be in their control. For larger projects, management will provide workorders and approval from the Facilities Service Office. Management's target implementation date for repairs of all items within the local units' control and workorders for bigger scope items is February 28, 2023.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations and their planned actions should resolve the issues identified in the report.

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

Appendix A: Management's Comments



February 3, 2023

JOSEPH E. WOLSKI
DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Draft Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews –
Select Units, Delaware – Pennsylvania 2 District (Project Number 22-208-DRAFT)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above-mentioned draft audit report (Draft Report). We agree with the conclusions of the Draft Report that six select units have opportunity to improve mail delivery, customer service and property conditions.

Management responds to the recommendations contained in the Draft Report as follows:

Recommendation #1:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware - Pennsylvania 2 District, require the Germantown and North Philadelphia stations to obtain enough arrow keys for all carrier routes that need them for delivery.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Management at the Germantown and North Philadelphia Stations will submit an order for the appropriate number of arrow keys so that all Carriers can effectively complete delivery daily.

Target Implementation Date:

Keys to be ordered by February 28, 2023

Responsible Official:

Philadelphia Postmaster
Manager Customer Service Operations-Area Central
Manager Customer Service Operations (A)-Area West

Recommendation #2:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware – Pennsylvania 2 District, develops and executes a plan so that all committed mail is delivered daily, and management conducts a daily sweep to identify delayed mail at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Branch and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. The District Manager will issue a memorandum to all Postmasters, Managers and Supervisors. The memo will outline expectations regarding ensuring daily mail delivery, properly reporting delays, and sweeping the facility to ensure all outgoing mail is dispatched. MPOO Najimi (Marshallton, Edgemoor & Lancaster) & Postmaster Middleton (Germantown, Logan & North Philadelphia) will also be required to submit certification that they have personally reviewed the memo with the management staff at the six select offices.

Target Implementation Date:

Memorandum will be issued no later than February 20, 2023. Certification of review to be provided no later than February 28, 2023

Responsible Official:

A/District Manager
Philadelphia Postmaster
Manager Post Office Operation
Manager Customer Service Operations- Area Central
Manager Customer Service Operations (A)- Area West

Recommendation #3:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware – Pennsylvania 2 District, develops and executes a plan that requires all delayed mail volume be entered into the proper system and that management systematically enforces compliance at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Branch and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. The District Manager will issue a memorandum to all Postmasters, Managers and Supervisors. The memo will outline expectations regarding ensuring daily mail delivery, properly reporting delays, and sweeping the facility to ensure all outgoing mail is dispatched. MPOO H (Marshallton, Edgemoor & Lancaster) and Philadelphia Postmaster (Germantown, Logan & North Philadelphia) will also be required to submit certification that they have personally reviewed the memo with the management staff at the six select offices.

Target Implementation Date:

Memorandum will be issued no later than February 20, 2023. Certification of review to be provided no later than February 28, 2023

Responsible Official:

A/District Manager
Philadelphia Postmaster
Manager Post Office Operation
Manager Customer Service Operations-Area Central
Manager Customer Service Operations (A)-Area West

Recommendation #4:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware - Pennsylvania 2 District, requires unit management to review package scanning performance data daily and enforce compliance, as well as develops and executes a plan to train all employees on the standard operating procedures for package scanning and handling at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. The District Manager will issue the "Scan Where you Stand" Service talk to the entire district. The Managers of the six select sites will be required to provide certification that all available employees within the scope of their authority have been

given the service talk. Additionally, they will be required to provide corresponding TACS report to demonstrate the employees that received the talk. District will conduct daily cadence to review scan performance with leadership of the six select sites.

Target Implementation Date:

Service talk to be issued and disseminated no later than February 13, 2023.
Daily cadence to begin no later than February 1, 2023

Responsible Official:

A/District Manager
Philadelphia Postmaster
Manager Post Office Operation
Manager Customer Service Operations-Area Central
Manager Customer Service Operations (A)-Area West

Recommendation #5:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware - Pennsylvania 2 District, develops and executes a plan that requires management to review truck/trailer arrival scanning performance data daily and enforce compliance at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. The Standard Work Instructions will be re-issued to all applicable employees at the six select sites. Managers of the six select sites will be required to provide certification that all applicable employees within the scope of their authority have been given a copy of the Standard Work Instruction. Additionally, District staff will provide training to the local management staff at the six select sites on the Standard Work Instruction and how to pull the performance reports and monitor performance. District will conduct daily cadence to review scan performance with leadership of the six select sites.

Target Implementation Date:

Training to be conducted no later than February 13, 2023.
Daily cadence to begin no later than February 1, 2023

Responsible Official:

A/District Manager
Philadelphia Postmaster
Manager Post Office Operation
Manager Customer Service Operations-Area Central
Manager Customer Service Operations (A)-Area West

Recommendation #6:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware - Pennsylvania 2 District, develops and executes a training plan that instructs management on the proper arrow key inventory procedures at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Local Management will implement the Arrow Key Standard Work Instructions as prescribed by the United States Postal Inspection Service to ensure accountability in protecting Arrow Keys. MPOO/MCSO will conduct bi-weekly audits to ensure that arrow keys are secure and that the proper procedures are in place.

Target Implementation Date:

Control process for Arrow Keys to be in place no later than March 10, 2023
Review of procedures and activities to be completed no later than March 31, 2023

Responsible Official:

Philadelphia Postmaster
Manager Post Office Operation
Manager Customer Service Operations-Area Central
Manager Customer Service Operations (A)-Area West

Recommendation #7:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware – Pennsylvania 2 District, establish a schedule to periodically review arrow keys to verify they are properly logged and accounted for at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Local Management will implement the Arrow Key Standard Work Instructions as prescribed by the United States Postal Inspection Service to ensure accountability in protecting Arrow Keys. MPOO/MCSO will conduct bi-weekly audits to ensure that arrow keys are secure and that the proper procedures are in place.

Target Implementation Date:

Control process for Arrow Keys to be in place no later than March 10, 2023
Review of procedures and activities to be completed no later than March 31, 2023

Responsible Official:

Philadelphia Postmaster
Manager Post Office Operation
Manager Customer Service Operations-Area Central
Manager Customer Service Operations (A)-Area West

Recommendation #8:

We recommend the District Manager, Delaware - Pennsylvania 2 District, periodically review property conditions and address all outstanding building safety, security and maintenance issues identified at the Germantown Station, Logan Station, North Philadelphia Station, Marshallton Branch, Edgemoor Station, and Lancaster Avenue Station.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Local Management will continue to make repairs and provide "Before and After" photos for what is determined to be in their control. Proof of larger projects will be substantiated with submission of workorders and approval from FSO.

Target Implementation Date:

Repairs to be complete on all items within the local units' control by February 28, 2023

Workorders to be provided for all items of a bigger scope to be completed by February 28, 2023

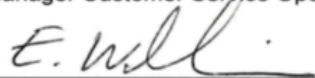
Responsible Official:

Philadelphia Postmaster

Manager Post Office Operation

Manager Customer Service Operations-Area Central

Manager Customer Service Operations (A)-Area West



Edward Williamson

A/District Manager, Delaware-Pennsylvania 2

cc:

[REDACTED]

Leroy Middleton

[REDACTED]

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UNITED STATES



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