



HIGHLIGHTS

IMPACT ON:

First-Class Mail® (FCM) containers on air transportation networks.

WHY THE OIG DID THE AUDIT:

Our objective was to determine whether opportunities exist to increase the container density of FCM transported by air.

WHAT THE OIG FOUND:

The U.S. Postal Service was not always filling up letter trays and flat tub containers when transporting FCM by air. We determined that low mail container density existed, in part, because Postal Service managers were: not always segregating FCM containers in the cancelling or sorting processes to facilitate consolidation; running machines with identical and similar sort programs for mail to the same destinations; not always properly setting flat sorting machine sensors to fill containers; and not always using 1-foot letter trays when practical. Consequently, by not filling some containers bound for the same destination, the Postal Service spent more than \$27.3 million in excess air transportation costs over a 1-year period. We estimate the Postal Service could save an average of about \$24 million a year, or about \$240 million over 10 years by fully utilizing container space.

WHAT THE OIG RECOMMENDED:

We recommended the vice president, Network Operations, continue to develop optimization processes to increase FCM density, establish processes to improve density of mail in containers by separating FCM to be flown during operations, develop targeted secondary sort programs using fewer machines to process FCM to be transported by air; adjust sensors on flat sorting machines to allow mail to reach maximum container capacity, and require the use of 1-foot letter trays during manual outgoing sorting operations when possible.

WHAT MANAGEMENT SAID:

Management agreed with our findings and recommendations. Management stated they will continue to consolidate mail processing operations, use the Sort Program Optimization software, and review of the number of mail sorting machines to maximize container space. Management will also issue policy to adjust sensors on flat sorting machines and require the use of 1-foot letter trays in manual operations.

AUDITORS' COMMENTS:

The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations.

[*Link to review the entire report*](#)