

California 5 District: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 24-027-R24 | March 22, 2024



Dockweiler Station



Inglewood Carrier Annex



Downtown Long Beach Station



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Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

March 22, 2024

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

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

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

SUBJECT: Audit Report – California 5 District: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 24-027-R24)

This report presents the results of our audit of mail delivery operations and property conditions at the California 5 District.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Executive Vice President
Vice President, Delivery Operations
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations
Vice President, WestPac Area Retail & Delivery Operations
Director, Retail & Post Office Operations Maintenance
Corporate Audit and Response Management

Results

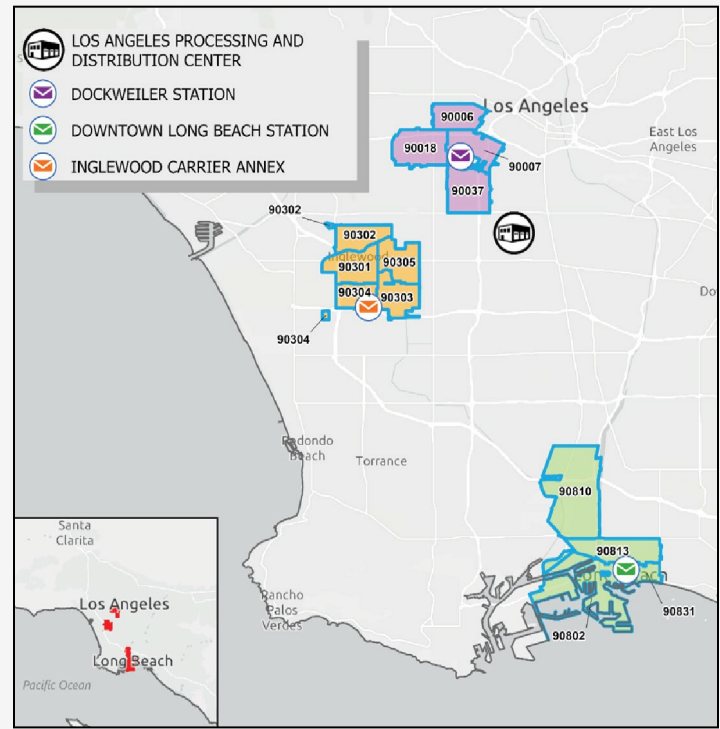
Background

The U.S. Postal Service’s mission is to provide timely, reliable, secure, and affordable mail and package delivery to more than 160 million residential and business addresses across the country. To fulfill this role, the Postal Service is committed to ensuring that its delivery platform and services are always a trusted, visible, and valued part of America’s social and economic infrastructure. This includes leveraging people, technology, and systems to provide world-class visibility of mail and packages as they move through the Postal Service’s integrated system. The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews delivery operations at facilities across the country and provides management with timely feedback in furtherance of this mission.

This report presents a summary of the results of our self-initiated audits of delivery operations and property conditions at three select delivery units in the California 5 District (Project Number 24-027). These delivery units included the Dockweiler Station, Downtown Long Beach Station, and Inglewood Carrier Annex (see Figure 1).

We previously issued interim reports¹ 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 Los Angeles Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC),² which services these three delivery units.

Figure 1. Delivery Units Audited in the California 5 District



Source: OIG.

We judgmentally selected these three delivery units primarily based on the number of Customer C360 (C360)³ inquiries related to delivery, Informed Delivery⁴ contacts associated with the unit, or stop-the-clock (STC)⁵ scans performed at the unit or away from the delivery point. The units were also chosen based on first and last mile failures⁶ and undelivered routes. See [Table 1](#) for a comparison of some of these metrics between the unit and the rest of the district.

1 *Dockweiler Station in Los Angeles, CA: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-027-1-R24)*, dated January 29, 2024; *Downtown Long Beach Station in Long Beach, CA: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-027-2-R24)*, dated January 29, 2024; *Inglewood Carrier Annex in Inglewood, CA: Delivery Operations (Report Number 24-027-3-R24)*, dated January 29, 2024.

2 *Efficiency of Operations at the Los Angeles Processing and Distribution Center, Los Angeles, CA (Report Number 24-026-R24)*, dated January 29, 2024.

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

4 Informed Delivery is a free and optional notification service that gives residential customers the ability to digitally preview their letter-sized mail and submit inquiries for mailpieces that were expected for delivery but have not arrived.

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

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

Table 1. Site Selection Data (Per Route)

Delivery Units	Delivery Related C360s	Informed Delivery Contacts	STC Scans at the Unit	STC Scans Away from the Delivery Point
Dockweiler Station	9.7	25.4	20.6	5.4
Downtown Long Beach Station	9.7	28.1	145.3	3.9
Inglewood Carrier Annex	8.0	15.9	16.1	0.7
District Average	5.9	14.0	27.2	2.7

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

Table 2. Service Area and Population

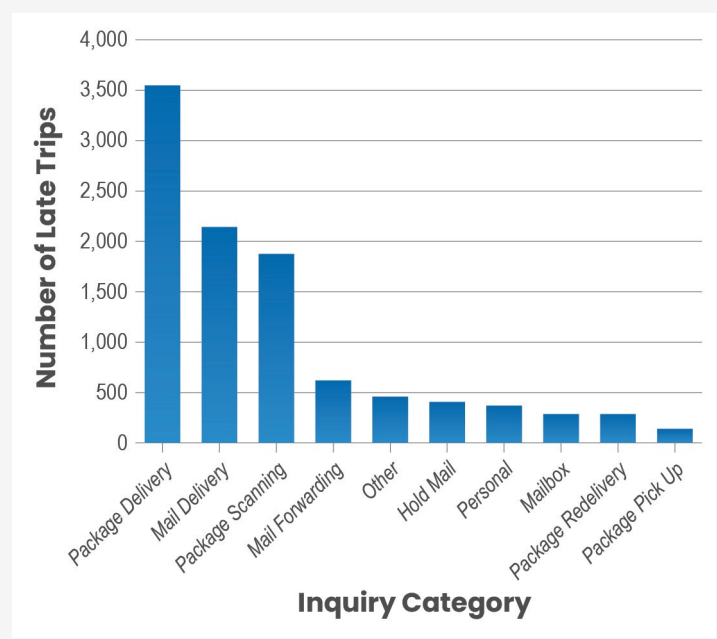
Delivery Units	Service Area ZIP Code	Population	City Routes
Dockweiler Station	90006, 90007, 90018, 90037	210,829	80
Downtown Long Beach Station	90802, 90810, 90813, 90831	134,634	64
Inglewood Carrier Annex	90301, 90302, 90303, 90304, 90305	84,940	76
Total		430,403	220

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service National Labeling List and Census data.

The three delivery units have a combined total of 220 city routes that serve about 430,403 people in several ZIP Codes (see Table 2), which are considered urban communities.⁷

As part of our analysis of these units, we conducted text analysis on all C360 inquiries submitted to the units between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023. In total we reviewed and categorized the customer's description of the inquiry for 10,057 tickets.⁸ See Figure 2 for the results of our analysis.

Figure 2. C360 Inquiry Analysis



Source: OIG analysis of C360 Inquiries.

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

⁸ We excluded 4,438 voice records, 1,225 records of text less than or equal to 40 characters, and 213 records considered outliers.

Package scanning issues and delivery issues for mail and packages made up the majority of the C360 comments. Comments associated with scanning issues included complaints that packages were scanned as delivered and not received. Comments associated with delivery issues included expected packages and mail that were not delivered, and complaints supported by actual monitoring of packages delivery at their residence. For example, there were comments from customers that have security or doorbell cameras installed at property locations regarding packages not delivered, in which they can monitor the delivery of expected packages with camera footage.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Dockweiler Station, Downtown Long Beach Station, and Inglewood Carrier Annex.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on five audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,⁹ 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 work hours and time adjustments, and distribution uptime.¹⁰ During our site visits we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; timekeeping documentation; and unit safety, security, and maintenance conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and in the “Notice Left” area,¹¹ and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 3 with management on March 11, 2024, and included their comments, where appropriate. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at all three delivery units. Specifically, we found delayed mail, deficiencies with package scanning, inaccurate timekeeping, insufficient arrow key controls, and property conditions. We also identified issues with improper separation of packages for dispatch at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations (see Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of Issues Identified

Controls Reviewed	Deficiencies Identified – Yes or No		
	Dockweiler Station	Downtown Long Beach Station	Inglewood Carrier Annex
Delayed Mail	Yes	Yes	Yes
Package Scanning	Yes	Yes	Yes
Carrier Complement and Timekeeping	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arrow Keys	Yes	Yes	Yes
Property Conditions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other Issues – Separation of Packages for Dispatch	Yes	Yes	No

Source: OIG interim reports of the select units.

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

We identified issues with the management of arrow keys at all three delivery units and the safeguarding of arrow keys at the Dockweiler Station and the Inglewood Carrier Annex (see Finding 3). We did not identify issues with carrier complement at any delivery units, but we did identify issues with timekeeping management at all three (see Finding 4). In addition, at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach stations, we found issues with the separation of packages for dispatch to the P&DC (see Finding 6).

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of November 14, 2023, we identified about 67,418 pieces¹² of delayed mail at the Dockweiler Station, Downtown Long Beach Station, and Inglewood Carrier Annex. The delayed mail included 427 Business Reply Mail (BRM)¹³ pieces at the Dockweiler Station and 225 BRM pieces at the Downtown Long Beach Station that had not been processed and given to carriers to deliver. Management at the Downtown Long Beach Station did not accurately report this mail as undelivered; and the Dockweiler Station and Inglewood Carrier Annex did not report any of this mail in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)¹⁴ system. See Table 4 for the number of pieces for each mail type and Figure 3 for examples of delayed mail found at the units.

Figure 3. Examples of Delayed Mail at the Delivery Units



Source: OIG photos taken November 14, 2023.

In addition, at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations, we identified about 682 and 213 Certified Mail letters, respectively, that had not been returned to the sender timely. At the Dockweiler Station, a handwritten note was posted at the Certified Mail case stating, "Please don't send PO Box certified letters back!"

Table 4. Type of Delayed Mail

Type of Mail	Dockweiler Station	Downtown Long Beach Station	Inglewood Carrier Annex	Total
Letters	19,148	10,974	25,645	55,767
Flats	1,494	2,259	7,359	11,112
Packages	89	21	429	539
Total	20,731	13,254	33,433	67,418

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

¹² Count of mail included individual piece counts and estimates based on conversion factors in Management Instruction PO-610-2007-1, *Piece Count Recording System*.
¹³ Business Reply Mail service enables qualified mailers to provide a recipient with a convenient, prepaid method for replying to a mailing.
¹⁴ 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.

Why Did It Occur

Delayed mail primarily occurred because management at all three units did not provide adequate oversight to verify that all mail was delivered, nor did they effectively address issues impacting mail delivery. At the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations, management did not take necessary measures to account for the holiday mail volume on the previous day, Monday, due to a federal holiday on Saturday. In addition, management at the Dockweiler Station did not verify that the BRM clerk or AM supervisors were properly trained to process the mail timely and did not provide oversight to verify that BRM was delivered the day it was received at the unit. The Inglewood Carrier Annex had a combination of new staff and many carriers on light duty, where the hours they can work are limited.

Management at all three units did not provide adequate oversight to verify that all delayed mail was entered into the DCV system. At the Dockweiler Station, the PM supervisor was aware of his responsibility to enter delayed mail information, but recently found he could no longer access the DCV system and had not worked to get his access issue resolved. At the Downtown Long Beach Station, the station manager did not provide adequate oversight and follow-up to ensure that the delayed mail amounts were accurately input into the DCV system by the supervisors. The managers at the Inglewood Station were aware of the requirement to report delayed mail in DCV, but the closing supervisor had not been trained on the closing procedures, and the AM supervisors did not conduct a walkthrough to assess mail conditions in the unit. In addition, management at the Inglewood Station acknowledged they did not ensure that carriers complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,¹⁵ and note the reason why mail could not be delivered.

Management at the Dockweiler Station and Downtown Long Beach Station did not provide

adequate oversight to verify that Certified Mail was processed and returned timely. Both units prioritized other duties over returning Certified Mail timely. Unit management at the Dockweiler Station acknowledged that the sign instructing employees not to send the Certified Mail should not be posted.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified the delivery of all committed mail and addressed issues regarding the availability of resources to deliver all the mail each day. Postal Service policy¹⁶ states that managers must review all communications that may affect the day's workload and develop contingency plans for situations that may interfere with normal delivery service. In addition, Postal Service policy¹⁷ states that all types of First-Class Mail and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. This policy also states that Business Reply Mail is due for delivery the day of receipt.

In addition, managers are required¹⁸ 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. Also, management should have instructed and monitored that carriers complete PS Forms 1571.¹⁹ Management should report the mail recorded on PS Form 1571, which includes mail not delivered by the carriers.²⁰

Postal Service policy states that Certified Mail, if not picked up by the customer or redelivered, must be returned to the sender after 15 calendar days.²¹

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When mail is delayed, or not returned to the sender timely, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand. In addition, inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in the DCV system provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with an inaccurate status of mail

¹⁵ *Undelivered Mail Report*, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

¹⁶ Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, TL-14, Section 111.2, June 2019.

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

¹⁸ *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, August 2023.

¹⁹ Handbook M-41, *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*, TL-5, Section 44, June 2019.

²⁰ Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, TL-14, Section 126.2, June 2019.

²¹ *Postal Operations Manual*, Certified Mail Section 813.25 Notice of Arrival, outlines that if Certified Mail is not called for (by the customer) within five calendar days, a final notice should be issued and the mailpiece must be returned after 15 calendar days.

delays and can result in improper actions taken to address issues.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, provide sufficient management oversight of staff at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex to deliver all committed mail daily.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify that management at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex conduct mail sweeps and enter all delayed mail into the Delivery Condition Visualization system accurately.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify that management at the Inglewood Carrier Annex develop a plan to train carriers to complete PS Forms 1571 and supervisors to review and report information included on the forms.

Recommendation #4

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify that management monitors the timely return of Certified Mail to senders at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations.

Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages away from the intended delivery point and handled packages incorrectly at all three delivery units.

In total, employees improperly scanned 12,170 packages at the delivery units instead of at the customers’ delivery points between July and September 2023 (see Table 5). In addition, analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 87 percent of them were scanned as “Delivered,” and nine percent were scanned as “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location.”

Table 5. Stop-The-Clock Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	Delivery Units			Total	Percent
	Dockweiler Station	Downtown Long Beach Station	Inglewood Carrier Annex		
Delivered	994	9,174	452	10,620	87.3%
Delivery Attempted - No Access	516	118	455	1,089	8.9%
Refused	52	0	190	242	2.0%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	30	1	83	114	0.9%
Delivery Exception - Animal Interference	21	3	35	59	0.5%
No Secure Location Available	27	0	7	34	0.3%
No Authorized Recipient	4	4	4	12	0.1%
Total	1,644	9,300	1,226	12,170	100%*

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service’s Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

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

Table 6. Scans Over 1,000 Feet Away From the Delivery Point

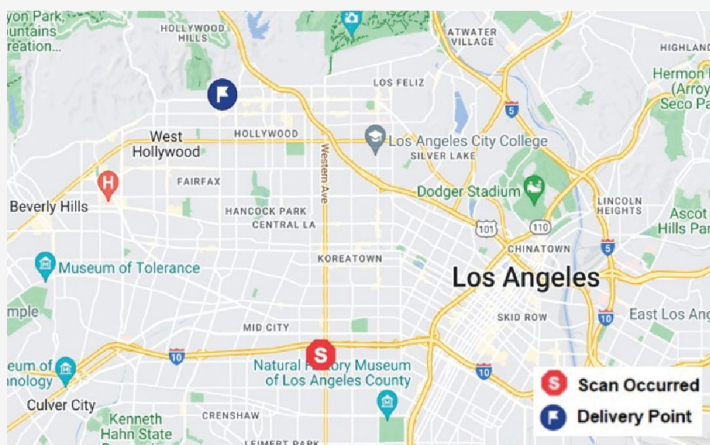
STC Scan Type	Delivery Units			Total	Percent
	Dockweiler Station	Downtown Long Beach Station	Inglewood Carrier Annex		
Delivered	344	212	28	584	92.3%
Delivery Attempted - No Access	13	21	5	39	6.2%
Held at Post Office at Customer Request	6	0	0	6	0.9%
Vacant	0	1	1	2	0.3%
Receptacle Full	1	0	0	1	0.2%
No Such Number	1	0	0	1	0.2%
Total	365	234	34	633	100%*

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

In addition, employees at all three delivery units improperly scanned 633 packages greater than 1,000 feet away from the delivery point between July and September 2023 (see Table 6). We removed scans that could have been performed within policy, such as “Unsafe Conditions.” The STC scan data for the packages we assessed showed that 92.3 percent of them were scanned “Delivered.”

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

Figure 4. Scan Away From the Delivery Point



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

We also found issues with scanning and handling of packages at the units. On the morning of November 14, 2023, before carriers arrived, we selected a total of 176 packages at the three delivery units to review and analyze for scanning and tracking history. We judgmentally selected 89 packages from the carrier cases and 87 packages from the “Notice Left” areas at these units.²²

- Of the 89 sampled packages at the carrier cases, 53 (60 percent) had missing or improper scans, or improper handling. Specifically, 23 packages were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery; 11 packages were scanned “Delivery Attempted-No Access to Delivery Location”; eight packages were scanned “Delivered,” which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address; five packages were scanned away from the delivery point; four packages were scanned “Delivery Attempted” or “Insufficient Address” and should have been returned to sender; and two packages did not include an “Arrival at Unit” scan.
- Of the 87 packages sampled from the “Notice Left” area, 25 (29 percent) had missing or improper scans, or improper handling. Specifically, seven

²² We selected 89 packages found at the carrier cases and 87 packages from the “Notice Left” area.

packages were scanned away from the delivery point; six packages were missing an STC scan to let the customer know the status of their package; three packages were scanned “Delivered”; three packages did not include an “Arrival at Unit” scan; two packages were scanned “Delivery Attempted—No Access to Delivery Location”; two packages were scanned “Receptable Full/Item Oversize” but were scanned away from the delivery point; one package was scanned “No Authorized Recipient,” but had been held for 41 days at the unit; and one package was scanned “No Such Number.”

Further, 35 of 87 packages (40 percent) in the “Notice Left” area at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations should have been returned to sender. These packages ranged from two to 54 days past their return dates.

Why Did It Occur

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

- Management at the Dockweiler Station acknowledged they did not ensure that the carriers scanned those packages as instructed or ensure that a clerk was assigned to the “Notice Left” section to regularly monitor the area for packages that should be returned.
- Management at the Downtown Long Beach Station attributed the large number of “Delivered” scans at the unit to one route having a business that frequently receives large volumes of packages delivered to a warehouse. Management instructed the carrier to scan those packages as “Delivered” in the office rather than on the street, to reduce time and potential safety issues for the carrier. The unit has a firm sheet²³ for that business; however, the unit is not using the firm sheet correctly. In addition, the AM supervisor did not follow up to ensure that the 19 packages in the “Notice Left” section were returned within the

prescribed time frames due to a local practice of holding packages for 30 days.

- Management at the Inglewood Carrier Annex did not review scanning history reports regularly, and supervisors were not properly reviewing undelivered mail returned by carriers after they completed their street duties. Management was more focused on other priorities such as delivering mail and monitoring employee leave.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced scanning compliance, including verifying all packages were properly scanned at the delivery point and not at the delivery unit. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,²⁴ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.²⁵ Postal policy²⁶ also states that leveraging the use of a firm sheet for a delivery point that receives 25 or more packages a day would result in increased efficiency. 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.²⁷

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 the Postal Service brand.

Recommendation #5

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify unit management review package scanning performance data daily and enforce compliance at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and Inglewood Carrier Annex.

²³ A firm sheet combines deliveries for a single address on one form so a carrier can scan just one barcode when delivering multiple packages to a single address.

²⁴ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

²⁵ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

²⁶ Handbook PO-610-2.3 *Firm Sheet Scanning Procedures*, dated November 2014.

²⁷ *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, April 2016.

Recommendation #6

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify carriers use firm sheets for all delivery points that receive 25 or more packages a day at the Downtown Long Beach Station.

Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Management at all three delivery units did not properly manage arrow keys. Specifically, unit management could not locate 107 arrow keys that were listed on their facilities' inventory logs and could not provide any documentation showing these keys had been reported as missing to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. In addition, we found 499 keys that were not listed on the inventory logs at the Dockweiler Station and Inglewood Carrier Annex. Management at the Downtown Long Beach Station said they had several extra arrow keys that they did not add to the inventory log. (See Table 7).

Additionally, unit management did not safeguard arrow keys at the Dockweiler Station and the Inglewood Carrier Annex. Specifically, we observed that the arrow keys were not always stored in secured locations at the facilities and found keys that were left in [REDACTED]

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage arrow keys at all three delivery units. Unit management at Dockweiler Station was

not aware that the inventory list was inaccurate and could not provide an explanation for the missing and extra keys we found. The unit received extra keys recently and had not added those keys to the inventory list because they had prioritized other duties. Management at the Downtown Long Beach Station did not update their arrow key inventory because they prioritized other duties. Inglewood Carrier Annex management said they were instructed by district management to complete the arrow key certification without physically inventorying the keys.

At the Dockweiler Station and Inglewood Carrier Annex, management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly safeguard arrow keys. Management at both units were unaware of proper arrow key security procedures.

What Should Have Happened

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

Table 7. Arrow Key Inventory

Delivery Units	Keys on Inventory Log	Missing Keys	Keys Found at the Unit	
			Listed on Log	Not Listed on Log
Dockweiler Station	216	19	197	84
Downtown Long Beach Station	88	0	88	several
Inglewood Carrier Annex	130	88	42	415
Total	434	107	327	499

Source: OIG analysis of arrow key inventory during our visit the week of November 13, 2023.

28 USPS Arrow Key Standard Work Instructions, updated August 2023.

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.

Recommendation #7

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, develop and execute a plan to verify arrow keys are properly accounted for and managed, and confirm missing keys are reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and Inglewood Carrier Annex.

Recommendation #8

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, provide training to managers and clerks responsible for arrow key security at the Dockweiler Station and Inglewood Carrier Annex.

Finding #4: Timekeeping Management

What We Found

We identified timekeeping management issues at the Dockweiler Station, Downtown Long Beach Station, and Inglewood Carrier Annex for the period between July 1 and September 29, 2023. Specifically:

- Unit management at all three units did not complete the records in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS)²⁹ for 119 of 122 (97.5 percent) occurrences of disallowed time nor print and retain copies of Postal Service (PS) Forms 1017-A, *Time Disallowance Record*³⁰ for these occurrences.
- Unit management at Downtown Long Beach Station and Inglewood Carrier Annex did not complete the records in TACS for 516 of 558 (92.5 percent) occurrences of unauthorized overtime nor print and retain copies of PS Forms 1017-B, *Unauthorized Overtime Record*³¹ for these occurrences.

- Unit management at the Inglewood Carrier Annex did not complete, print, and retain PS Forms 2240, *Pay, Leave, or Other Hours Adjustment Request* for 17 pay adjustments.
- Unit management at the Inglewood Carrier Annex had binders to retain copies of PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B. Management at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations only had a binder to retain PS Forms 1017-B. The binders at all three units were unsecured on the workroom floor.

Why Did It Occur

Management at all three units did not provide sufficient oversight of timekeeping records or processes. Other factors also contributed to their poor timekeeping management, including:

- Management at Dockweiler Station were unaware that records of disallowed time need to be completed in TACS; and copies of PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B needed to be printed, stored in a binder, and kept in a secure location.
- Management at Downtown Long Beach Station stated that due to competing priorities, supervisors did not complete records of disallowed time in TACS or print and store copies of PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B in a binder kept in a secure location.
- The postmaster at the Inglewood Carrier Annex was on leave, and the officer-in-charge (OIC) did not have access to the timekeeping records, including PS Forms 2240, 1017-A, and 1017-B.

What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy³² states that pay adjustment certifications are to be kept on file and attached to supporting documentation for the current calendar year plus the three previous years. Policy³³ further 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

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

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

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

³² *AdjustPay User Guide*, Course No. 31202-25, updated February 9, 2017.

³³ Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance*, February 2016.

time or unauthorized overtime. Postal guidance³⁴ provides instructions on how to complete the entries in TACS.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When proper documentation of pay adjustments, time disallowance, and unauthorized overtime are not completed, management could incur excess administrative time. In addition, the Postal Service risks violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act³⁵ when unit management do not maintain documentation that shows the justifiable reason and employee notification for disallowed time.

Recommendation #9

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify that management complete records of disallowed time and unauthorized overtime in TACS at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex.

Recommendation #10

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify that management establish and secure files for documenting timekeeping records at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex.

Recommendation #11

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify that pay adjustment certifications are attached to payroll adjustment support documentation at the Inglewood Carrier Annex.

Finding # 5: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found safety and maintenance issues at all three delivery units; and security issues at two of the delivery units.

Property Safety:

- At the Dockweiler Station, we found one of 10 fire extinguishers missing a monthly inspection and three blocked by mail transport equipment. In the workroom were exposed and low hanging wires, an unsecured ladder, improperly stored container of flammable liquid, and blocked electrical panels (see Figure 5). In addition, we identified a damaged sidewalk in the customer parking

lot and a damaged concrete wall at the loading dock.

- At the Downtown Long Beach Station, we found two blocked fire extinguishers (see Figure 6), an uncovered lobby fire alarm, one blocked manual fire alarm, and an automatic handicap-use lobby door that was inoperable.
- At the Inglewood Carrier Annex, we found one blocked fire extinguisher, 17 missing annual inspections, three missing monthly inspections, and a faded location sign. Also, there was a broken dock camera, several missing “This is Not an Exit” signs, a hanging electrical cord (see Figure 7), improperly stored cleaning solutions, a broken dock lift, and a large hole in the ground adjacent to a dock area foot path.

Property Maintenance:

- At the Dockweiler Station, we found damaged drywall, missing floor tiles, and a damaged workroom floor. The women’s locker room had a damaged ceiling, one of two sinks was inoperable, and the floor tiles were excessively dirty. Also, a men’s locker room door glass panel was missing, and the breakroom door was damaged.
- At the Downtown Long Beach Station, we found two stained ceiling tiles in the manager’s office. In the workroom, there were dirty air vent covers and several non-working lights, including a cracked light fixture, as well as an entire row of non-working lights at the PO Box mail sorting area. There were dirty blinds and an out-of-service stall in the men’s restroom and a broken hot water faucet in the women’s restroom. In the customer lobby, one of two main light fixtures was not working and the handle to the self-service package receptacle was broken. In addition, the doorbell at the dock entrance was inoperative.
- At the Inglewood Carrier Annex, we found dirty air vent covers and multiple stained ceiling tiles throughout the unit. In the women’s restroom, there was a loose faucet, a broken door latch, and a toilet needing re-caulking at the upper seal. There was also an inoperable urinal in the men’s

³⁴ TACS Training Page, *Training Video 1017-A 1017-B Enhancement Demo*.

³⁵ 29 United States Code, Chapter 8 § 211.

restroom. In addition, lights in the breakroom were not functioning properly and there was trash scattered around the grounds and dock area.

Property Security:

- At the Dockweiler Station, the employee parking lot did not have a posted sign stating that the vehicles may be subject to search; and, both security gates to the lot were not operational. Regarding the exterior of the unit, there were overgrown branches covering a section of the unit’s border fence, as well as several areas with inoperable or missing light fixtures.
- At the Inglewood Carrier Annex, we found an entrance gate that was not functioning, and a section of the employee parking lot fence was damaged.

Why Did It Occur

Management at all three offices did not provide sufficient oversight and take the necessary actions to verify that property condition issues were identified, reported, and corrected due to other duties taking priority. Management at the Dockweiler Station were unaware of the issues we identified because they did not routinely assess property conditions. Management at the Downtown Long Beach Station and the Inglewood Carrier Annex stated that they were unaware of, or had overlooked some of the issues we identified, and for the ones that they were aware of, other duties took priority.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety, security, and maintenance issues as they arose, and monitored them for completion. The Postal Service requires management

to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers.³⁶

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, district management provided documentation showing that they have addressed all property condition issues identified at the three delivery units. Therefore, we will not be making any recommendations for this finding. See the figures below as examples of issues abated at the three units.

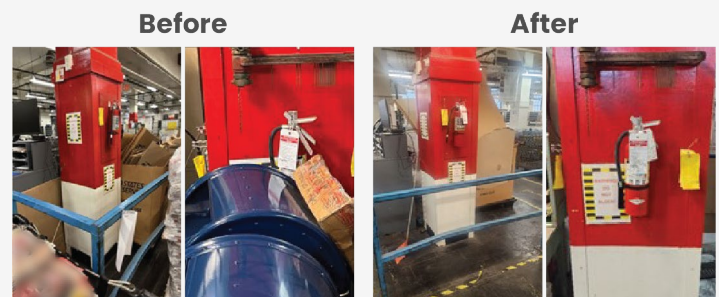
Figure 5. Blocked Electrical Panels at the Dockweiler Station



Source: OIG photo taken November 15, 2023.

Source: USPS photo taken January 5, 2024.

Figure 6. Two blocked Fire Extinguishers at Downtown Long Beach Station

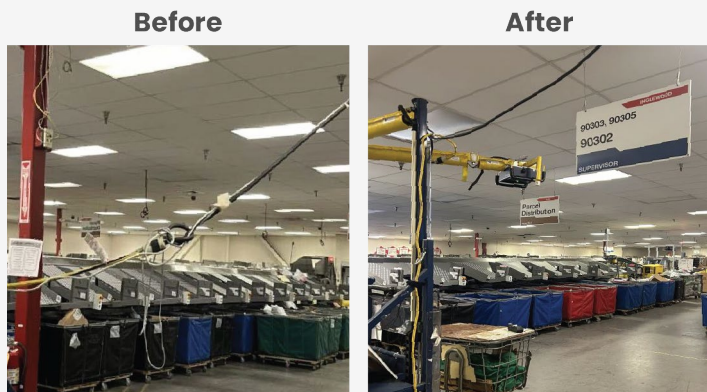


Source: OIG photo taken November 15, 2023.

Source: USPS photo taken January 2, 2024.

36 Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor’s Safety Handbook*, July 2020.

Figure 7. An Electrical Cord Hanging Across Workroom Floor at Inglewood Carrier Annex



Source: OIG photo taken November 15, 2023.

Source: USPS photo taken January 8, 2024.

Finding # 6: Separation of Packages for Dispatch

What We Found

Management at two of the three delivery units did not properly manage the separation of packages for dispatch to the P&DC. Specifically, unit employees at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations did not properly separate packages destined for the Los Angeles P&DC. On November 15, 2023, during the units' evening operations, we observed that Ground Advantage³⁷ and Priority Mail³⁸ were commingled in a container designated to contain only Priority Mail for processing by the P&DC. The container was on the loading dock waiting to be transported to the P&DC that evening.

Why Did It Occur

Management at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations did not provide oversight to ensure that employees properly separated packages for dispatch to the P&DC. Unit management at Dockweiler did not review the contents of the carts prior to moving them from the unit to the truck. The closing clerk at the Downtown Long Beach Station stated that she did not know that the Priority Mail and the Ground Advantage packages should have been separated. Additionally, she indicated they did not have the ability to print the placards that would identify the proper separation of packages.

What Should Have Happened

In July 2023, the Postal Service made significant changes to its parcel processing operations. Specifically, delivery and retail units changed the way they separated packages dispatched to facilitate the introduction of a new package service. On September 26, 2023, the Postal Service implemented³⁹ additional changes for the preparation and dispatch of packages to processing facilities by delivery units of a specific size. Postal Service requires these units to separate certain classes of packages when dispatching this mail to the processing facility and identifies the placards to be used for the proper separation.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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

Recommendation #12

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify management at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations instruct employees to properly separate, as required, certain classes of packages when dispatching this mail to the processing facility.

Recommendation #13

We recommend the **District Manager, California 5 District**, verify unit management at Downtown Long Beach Station has access to and uses the proper placards for separating packages for dispatch to the processing facility.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with all findings and recommendations in the report and has begun to take actions to address the findings. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety. The target implementation date for all recommendations is April 30, 2024.

³⁷ 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.

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

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

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations in the report. All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed.

The Postal Service provided documentation supporting the closure of several recommendations included in this report. Based on our review of the support provided, we consider recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 closed upon issuance of this report. Recommendations 7, 12, and 13 require OIG concurrence before closure. These 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.

Appendices

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Dockweiler
Station



Inglewood
Carrier Annex



Downtown Long
Beach Station



Appendix A: Additional Information

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

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

- Control Activities
- Information and Communication
- Monitoring

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

We assessed the reliability of data from the PTR system, the DCV system, TACS, and the electronic Facilities Management System⁴⁰ 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.

⁴⁰ 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.

Appendix B: Management's Comments



March 11, 2024

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Capping Report - California 5 District: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 24-027-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Capping Report - California 5 District: Delivery Operations*.

Management generally agrees with the findings on Delayed Mail, Package Scanning, Timekeeping, Arrow Keys, Property Conditions, and Separation of Packages for Dispatch.

Following are our comments on each of the thirteen recommendations.

Recommendation 1: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, provide sufficient management oversight of staff at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex to deliver all committed mail daily.

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

Management will give a service talk on the proper handling of delayed mail and conduct reviews to monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 2: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify that management at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex conduct mail sweeps and enter all delayed mail into the Delivery Condition Visualization system accurately.

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

Management will conduct service talks on proper recording of delayed mail in DCV and monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 3: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify that management at the Inglewood Carrier Annex develop a plan to train carriers to complete PS Forms 1571 and supervisors to review and report information included on the forms.

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

Management will conduct service talks with carriers at the Inglewood Carrier Annex on proper use of PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*, and train supervisors on how to review and report information included on the forms. Additionally, management will conduct reviews to monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 4: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify that management monitors the timely return of Certified Mail to senders at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations.

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

Management will instruct responsible employees to return certified mail to senders timely and monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 5: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify unit management review package scanning performance data daily and enforce compliance at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and Inglewood Carrier Annex.

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

Management will conduct a service talk on proper scanning procedures and monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 6: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify carriers use firm sheets for all delivery points that receive 25 or more packages a day at the Downtown Long Beach Station.

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

Management at the Downtown Long Beach Station will reiterate to requirement to use firm sheets for delivery points that receive twenty-five or more packages a day.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 7: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, develop and execute a plan to verify arrow keys are properly accounted for and managed, and confirm missing keys are reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and Inglewood Carrier Annex.

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

Management will update inventory logs to account of all arrow keys on hand and report missing keys to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Additionally, a service talk will be given on proper arrow key management.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 8: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, provide training to managers and clerks responsible for arrow key security at the Dockweiler Station and Inglewood Carrier Annex.

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

Management at the Dockweiler Station has two security carts to secure arrow keys. Arrow keys at the Inglewood Carrier are secured in the registry cage. Additionally, management will conduct a service talk with responsible employees on proper arrow key security.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 9: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify that management complete records of disallowed time and unauthorized overtime in TACS at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management will conduct a service on proper handling and recording of disallowed time and unauthorized overtime. Reviews are also conducted for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 10: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify that management establish and secure files for documenting timekeeping records at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations and the Inglewood Carrier Annex have binders to store documents to support timekeeping records. The records are kept in a secure location.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 11: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify that pay adjustment certifications are attached to payroll adjustment support documentation at the Inglewood Carrier Annex.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management at the Inglewood Carrier Annex will ensure proper support documentation is maintained for pay adjustments.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 12: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify management at the Dockweiler and Downtown Long Beach Stations instruct employees to properly separate, as required, certain classes of packages when dispatching this mail to the processing facility.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management will conduct a service talk on proper separation of packages and monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

Recommendation 13: We recommend the District Manager, California 5 District, verify unit management at Downtown Long Beach Station has access to and uses the proper placards for separating packages for dispatch to the processing facility.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management will conduct service talk on use of proper placards for package separations and monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2024

Responsible Official: Manager, California 5 District

E-SIGNED by Abraham P Cooper
on 2024-03-12 14:00:20 EDT

Abraham Cooper
Manager, California 5 District

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

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

UNITED STATES



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