

Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Ramona Main Post Office, Ramona, CA

Report Number 22-062-R22 | April 5, 2022





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

April 5, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: JENNIFER VO
MANAGER, CALIFORNIA 6 DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph E. Wolski". The signature is written in a cursive style.

FROM: Joseph E. Wolski
Director, Field Operations

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Ramona Main Post Office, Ramona, CA (Report Number 22-062-R22)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions – Ramona Main Post Office, Ramona, CA.

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: Corporate Audit and Response Management
Vice President, Delivery Operations
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations
Vice President, WestPac Area
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Exec VP
Chief Logistics & Processing Operations Office & Exec VP

Results

Background

This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Ramona Main Post Office (MPO) in Ramona, CA (Project Number 22-062). The Ramona Main Post Office is in the California 6 District of the WestPac Area and services ZIP Code 92065, which serves about 35,349 people and is considered to be an urban community.¹ We judgmentally selected the Ramona MPO based on the number of stop-the-clock (STC)² scans occurring at the delivery unit, rather than at the customer's delivery address.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Ramona MPO in Ramona, CA.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on these four audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, truck arrival scans, and property conditions. Specifically, we reviewed delivery metrics including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of delayed mail reported, package scanning, and distribution up-time.³ During our site visit from February 1-3, 2022, we reviewed mail conditions; package and truck arrival scanning procedures; and unit safety, security, and maintenance conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and in the "Notice Left" area⁴ and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 1 with management on March 21, 2022, and included their comments where appropriate.

The Ramona MPO is one of three delivery units⁵ the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed during the week of January 31, 2022, that are serviced by the Margaret L. Sellers (San Diego, CA) Processing and Distribution Center. We issued this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding the conditions we identified at the Ramona MPO. We will issue a separate report⁶ providing the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all three delivery units. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Ramona MPO. Specifically, we found deficiencies with two of the four areas we reviewed (see Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of Results

Audit Area	Issues Identified	
	Yes	No
Delayed Mail		X
Package Scanning	X	
Truck Arrival Scanning		X
Property Conditions	X	

Source: Results of OIG fieldwork during the week of January 31, 2022.

1 We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from Esri, which is based on 2010 Census Bureau information. Of the people living in this Zip Code, about 26,014 (about 73.6 percent) are considered urban and 9,335 (about 26.4 percent) are considered living in rural communities.
2 A scan event that indicates the 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", "No Access", and "Business Closed".
3 Time of day when clerks have completed distributing mail to carrier routes.
4 Area of a postal facility where letters or packages that carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.
5 The other two units were the Downtown San Diego Station, San Diego, CA (Project Number 22-060) and the Linda Vista Station, San Diego, CA (Project Number 22-059).
6 The project number for the separate report is 22-077.

Finding #1: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit. In total, employees scanned 4,580 packages at the delivery unit between October and December 2021 (see Table 2). Our analysis of the scan data for these packages showed that about 42 percent of these packages were scanned “Receptacle Full/Item Oversized”, 33 percent were scanned “No Secure Location Available”, and 23 percent “Delivered”.

Table 2. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	October	November	December	Total	Percentage
Receptacle Full/Item Oversized	581	529	804	1,914	41.79%
No Secure Location Available	376	432	682	1,490	32.53%
Delivered	439	392	213	1,044	22.79%
Delivery Attempted – No Access	28	19	26	73	1.59%
No Authorized Recipient Available	17	11	19	47	1.03%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	4	5	0	9	0.20%
Refused	1	0	2	3	0.07%
Totals	1,446	1,388	1,746	4,580	100%

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service’s Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System⁷ data.

While there may have been instances where the packages were correctly scanned at the unit, there were also instances where employees improperly scanned the packages. For example, on the morning of February 1, 2022, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 41 packages⁸ for review and analysis of scanning and tracking data. Of the 41 packages, 10 (24 percent) had missing or improper scans. Specifically:

- Four were missing an STC scan to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- Three were scanned “Delivered”. A “Delivered” scan should only be made when a carrier successfully leaves a package at the delivery address.
- Three had an STC scan at a location other than the delivery point. All package delivery attempts should be made at the delivery point.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because management did not monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. The postmaster thought that the current scanning practices were proper because they were in place before he became the postmaster. Specifically, delivery unit employees stated that they were scanning packages “Receptacle Full/Item Oversized” or “No Secure Location Available” at the delivery unit due to a lack of parcel lockers in some neighborhoods on their route.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance. The carriers who delivered the packages should have scanned them at the delivery address when the packages were delivered instead of scanning them at the delivery unit. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,⁹ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.¹⁰

⁷ A system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

⁸ We analyzed all 11 packages from the carrier cases and judgmentally selected 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area.

⁹ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

¹⁰ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

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.

Finding #2: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found building safety and maintenance issues at the Ramona MPO. Specifically, we identified:

- A large broken tree branch was tangled within other branches and hanging over the customer parking lot and sidewalk (see Figure 1).
- A hole in a wall near the PO Box area in the retail lobby (see Figure 2).
- Missing floor tiles and a large hole in the workroom floor near an exit door (see Figure 3).

Figure 1. Large Broken Tree Branch Tangled With Other Branches Hanging Over Customer Parking Lot

Tree Overview Photo



Source: OIG photo taken February 2, 2022.

Closeup of Hanging Branch



Source: OIG photo taken February 2, 2022.

Figure 2. Hole in Wall Near PO Box Section of the Retail Lobby



Source: OIG photo taken February 2, 2022.

Figure 3. Workroom Floor

Missing Floor Tiles



Source: OIG photo taken February 2, 2022.

Large Hole



Source: OIG photo taken February 2, 2022.

Why Did It Occur

The building safety and maintenance issues occurred due to lack of management oversight and because unit employees did not think some of the issues were significant. Specifically:

- According to the unit maintenance employee, the nearby maintenance/facility office did not have a lift high enough to reach the hanging branch. Around September 2020, unit management attempted to contract the removal effort, but they did not get the required number of bids and did not pursue the effort.
- The maintenance employee did not see this hole in the wall as a high priority issue for repair and the postmaster stated that he was not aware of the hole.
- The maintenance employee stated that he did not report the workroom floor missing tiles because he did not consider it a high priority issue and equipment covered the missing tile area. Unit maintenance also explained that the pipe that was found slightly sticking up has not been shaved down or repaired because it is not in a high traffic area of the facility; therefore, they considered it a lower priority maintenance item. Unit management was not aware of the missing floor tiles and the large hole in the workroom floor near an exit door.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of facility maintenance, reported safety and maintenance issues as they arose, and followed up to ensure resolution. The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers. In addition, OSHA requires employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace free of recognized hazards.¹¹

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Management's attention to safety and maintenance deficiencies can reduce the risk of injury 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's Comments

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

¹¹ OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from January through April 2022 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 relied on computer-generated data from the PTR system, the Surface Visibility¹² database, and electronic Facilities Management System.¹³ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ A 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 30, 2022

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review –
Ramona Main Post Office, Ramona Project Number 22-062-DRAFT

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Ramona Main Post Office, Ramona

Following are our comments on each of the two findings.

Finding #1:

Employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit between October and December 2021. While there may have been instances where the packages were correctly scanned at the unit, there were also instances where employees improperly scanned the packages.

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

Delivery scans were performed in the delivery unit between October and December 2021. Many of Ramona's deliveries are considered out of bounds. POM 642.3 states that deliveries not along the carriers' line of travel and more than 3 blocks is considered out of bounds. While the majority of these were proper scans there were incidents where employees improperly scanned the package. Employees has been retrained properly and continuous communication will be given regarding scanning standard work instructions.

Finding #2:

We found building safety and maintenance issues at the Ramona MPO. Specifically, we identified:

- A large broken tree branch was tangled within other branches and hanging over the customer parking lot and sidewalk.

- 2 -

- A hole in a wall near the PO Box area in the retail lobby.
- Missing floor tiles and a large hole in the workroom floor near an exit door

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this finding.

Work orders in place for both the tree branch and hole near PO Box wall. Ceiling tiles have been received and replaced.

E-SIGNED by Jennifer T Vo
on 2022-03-30 15:00:58 CDT

Jennifer Vo
District Manager, California 6 District

cc: Vice President, Delivery Operations
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations
Vice President, WestPac Area
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Exec VP
Chief Logistics & Processing Operations Office & Exec VP
Corporate Audit Response Management

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