



AUDIT REPORT

Property Condition Reviews – Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue Post Offices

December 10, 2020



Report Number 20-320-R21



December 10, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: DARRYL D. MARTIN
DISTRICT MANAGER, BALTIMORE DISTRICT

Lazerick C. Poland

FROM: Lazerick C. Poland
Director, Property Condition Review

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Property Condition Reviews –
Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue Post Offices
(Report Number 20-320-R21)

This report presents the results of Property Condition Reviews at the Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue Post Offices.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit Response Management
Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President
Chief Commerce and Business Solutions Officer and Executive Vice President
Vice President, Area Retail and Delivery Operations, Atlantic
Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations
Vice President, Facilities

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of property conditions at the Annapolis (leased), Columbia (owned), and Legion Avenue (leased) post offices in the Baltimore District (Project Number 20-320). This audit was designed to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential risks related to property conditions. The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe and healthy environment for both employees and customers in accordance with its internal policies and procedures¹ and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)² safety laws.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to determine if Postal Service management is adhering to building maintenance, safety and security standards, and employee working condition requirements at post offices.

To accomplish our objective, we developed a checklist of requirements related to building maintenance, safety, and security. We judgmentally selected the Annapolis Post Office based on interior square footage, the number of maintenance requests, and repair and maintenance spending. We selected the Columbia and Legion Avenue post offices based on their proximity to the Annapolis Post Office. In addition, we reviewed Postal Service systems to identify maintenance issues and analyzed documentation for deficiencies. We conducted site visits from October 7-8, 2020, performed observations, completed the checklists, and briefed local management on the issues identified.

We relied on computer-generated data from the Safety Toolkit and electronic Facilities Management System (eFMS). We assessed the reliability of the extracted data by reviewing the documentation and comparing it to our observations for completeness, validity, and accuracy. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We conducted this performance audit from October through December 2020 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 November 20, 2020 and included their comments where appropriate.

We found that building maintenance, safety, and security at the Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue post offices did not meet prescribed standards. We identified

¹ Handbook MS-47, *Facility Cleaning*, TL-5, June 27, 2014.

² OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

45 deficiencies at the three facilities that ranged from minor to more serious violations (see [Appendix A](#)).

Building Maintenance

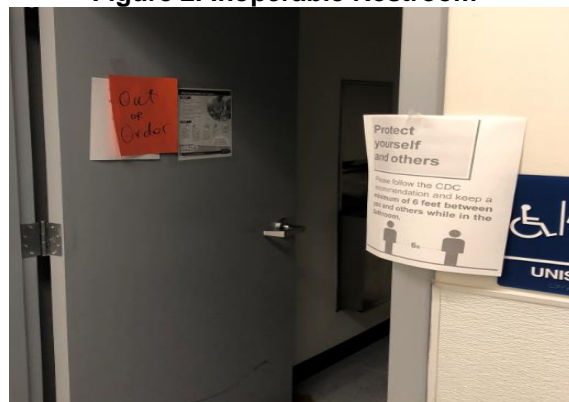
At the Annapolis Post Office, we identified stained ceiling tiles in the lobby and workroom, a damaged wall, and a dusty ceiling vent (see Figure 1). In addition, the only restroom in the facility was inoperable (see Figure 2). The employee on-site stated the toilet overflows when flushed, and it has been unusable for at least nine months. However, the issue was not reported in eFMS. The employee uses another restroom located outside of the Postal Service’s space in the building.

Figure 1. Damaged Wall and Dusty Vent



Source: (OIG) photograph taken October 8, 2020.

Figure 2. Inoperable Restroom



Source: (OIG) photograph taken October 8, 2020.

At the Columbia Post Office, we identified missing ceiling tiles in the lobby, conference room, and passport office (see Figure 3) and stained ceiling tiles in the lobby, conference room, and hallway (see Figure 4). We also identified misaligned or bulging ceiling tiles in the lobby, conference room, and ladies’ locker room that were at risk of falling on employees (see [Figure 5](#)). In addition, there was a cracked sidewalk at the rear of the property, posing a potential trip hazard (see [Figure 6](#)).

Figure 3. Missing Ceiling Tile



Source: (OIG) photograph taken October 7, 2020.

Figure 4. Stained Ceiling Tiles



Source: (OIG) photograph taken October 7, 2020.

Figure 5. Misaligned and Bulging Ceiling Tiles



Source: OIG photographs taken October 7, 2020.

Figure 6. Cracked Sidewalk



Source: OIG photograph taken October 7, 2020.

At the Legion Avenue Post Office, we identified damaged ceiling tiles with evidence of potential mold in the drop box room, stained ceiling tiles in all offices and the locker room (see Figure 7), a stained light fixture in the supervisor's office, and damaged walls in the post office box area and locker room (see Figure 8). In addition, we found potholes and a damaged parking block in the customer parking lot (see Figure 9), inoperable urinals (see Figure 10) and a clogged sink in the men's restroom, and a dock lift that leaks fluid and retains water. Also, there was no hot water in the facility.

Figure 7. Damaged and Stained Ceiling Tiles



Source: OIG photographs taken October 8, 2020.

Figure 8. Damaged Walls



Source: OIG photographs taken October 8, 2020.

Figure 9. Damaged Parking Block



Source: OIG photograph taken October 8, 2020.

Figure 10. Inoperable Urinals



Source: OIG photographs taken October 8, 2020.

None of the three facilities performed semi-annual housekeeping inspections or maintained Postal Service (PS) Form 4851, Housekeeping Inspection Logs, as required.

Building Safety

At the Annapolis Post Office, there were blocked electrical panels and an unsecured ladder in the workroom closet (see Figure 11). We identified expired items in the first-aid kit, including 19 Neosporin packets that expired August 2018; three Neomycin antibiotic packets that expired January 2018; and six first-aid cream packets that expired November 2017. In addition, electrical appliances, including a microwave and toaster oven in the breakroom were connected to a power strip instead of directly into the wall outlets (see Figure 12).

Figure 11. Blocked Electrical Panel and Unsecured Ladder



Source: OIG photograph taken October 8, 2020.

Figure 12. Appliances Improperly Connected



Source: OIG photograph taken October 8, 2020.

At the Columbia Post Office, there was a blocked sprinkler system panel (see Figure 13) and the plumbed eyewash was not inspected weekly since March 2020. In addition, there was a blocked flammable cabinet in the boiler room and a cracked window near the passport office.

Figure 13. Blocked Sprinkler System Panel



Source: OIG photographs taken October 7, 2020.

At the Legion Avenue Post Office, we found two exposed electrical outlets near the dock area, blocked electrical panels (see Figures 14 and 15), and an unsecured ladder in the workroom area. A portable heater was connected to a power strip instead of directly into the electrical wall outlet (see Figure 16). In addition, there were expired items in the first-aid kit, including three cans of blood clotting spray that expired in 2007 and 2016; two bottles of eye wash solution that expired in June 2007 and June 2018; eye and skin buffered flushing solution that expired in June 2016; instant cold spray that expired in June 2016; and nine packets of Blistex lip ointment that expired in May 2015.

Figure 14. Exposed Electrical Outlet Panel



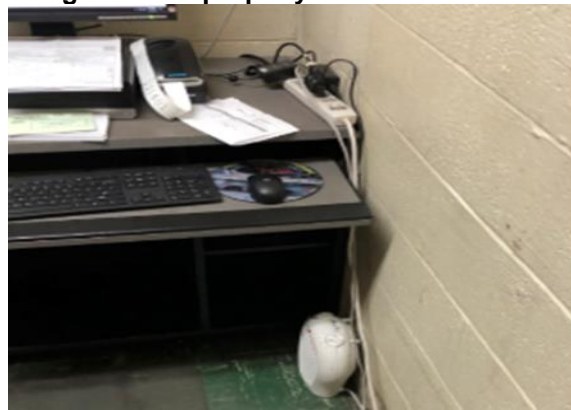
Source: OIG photograph taken October 8, 2020.

Figure 15. Blocked Electrical Panel



Source: OIG photograph taken October 8, 2020.

Figure 16. Improperly Connected Heater



Source: OIG photograph taken October 8, 2020.

The Annapolis and Legion Avenue post offices did not display OSHA posters 3165 and 3167, *Job Safety and Health* (English and Spanish versions); poster CA-10, *What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work*; or the *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures* poster as required by the Postal Service.

Building Security

We did not identify any security concerns at the Annapolis Post Office. At the Columbia Post Office, we found 73 of 88 postal carrier trucks unlocked in the secured Postal Service parking lot (see [Figure 17](#)).

Figure 17. Unlocked Carrier Truck



Source: OIG photograph taken October 7, 2020.

At the Legion Avenue Post Office, we identified an inoperable security camera in the workroom area. In addition, employees raised security concerns related to homeless individuals sleeping in the lobby and suspicious individuals at the rear of the building.

The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe environment for both employees and customers. In addition, OSHA requires employers to provide a safe and healthful workplace free of recognized hazards. More importantly, these issues could jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of Postal Service employees and customers. Further, it could create an environment that dissuades customers from doing business in these offices. If management does not address workplace hazards, the Postal Service could potentially incur fines.

Conditions related to building maintenance, safety, and security occurred due to management not prioritizing issues or lack of oversight. For example, some maintenance and safety issues such as stained and missing ceiling tiles, damaged walls, dirty air vents, blocked electrical panels,³ and exposed electrical wires⁴ were simply not considered a priority. In addition, housekeeping inspections were not conducted semi-annually⁵ in the three facilities due to lack of management oversight.

Management at the Columbia Post Office did not ensure carrier trucks were locked due to lack of oversight. During our site visit, the trucks were left unlocked by the contractor that sanitized the trucks overnight to protect against potential coronavirus infection. Postal Service policy requires carriers to lock vehicle doors if they will be out of direct sight of the vehicle.⁶ The policy further requires vehicle doors to be locked, except when loading or unloading the vehicle.⁷

³ OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.303 (b) (1).

⁴ OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.303 (h) (2).

⁵ *Custodial Team Cleaning Handbook*, Section 4.6, March 13, 2019.

⁶ Handbook M-41, *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*, Section 822, June 2019.

⁷ Handbook M-41, *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*, Section 821, June 2019.

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. We identified 11 issues at two post offices that could potentially result in \$60,060⁸ of risk exposure.

Corrective Actions

Management at the Annapolis and Legion Avenue post offices took corrective action while we were onsite by downloading and displaying OSHA posters 3165 and 3167, poster CA-10, and the *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures* poster.

After our site visit, management took action at the Annapolis Post Office by replacing the stained ceiling tiles in the lobby and workroom; repairing the damaged wall; cleaning the dusty ceiling vent in the lobby; and unblocking the electrical panel. Management stated the restroom was operational as of November 5, 2020.

At the Columbia Post Office, management took corrective action after our site visit and replaced the missing, stained, and bulging ceiling tiles; unblocked the flammable cabinet; and inspected the emergency plumbed eyewash.

At the Legion Avenue Post Office, management took corrective action after our site visit and replaced the stained and damaged ceiling tiles in the offices and locker room, repaired the damaged wall in the post office box area, and repaired the inoperable urinals in the men's restroom. In addition, management unblocked the electrical panel, installed a cover over the exposed electrical outlet, secured the ladder, and removed the portable heater from the power strip. We appreciate management's prompt attention to these matters.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the **Manager, Baltimore District**, address all building maintenance, safety, and security issues identified at the Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue Post Offices.

Recommendation #2: We recommend the **Manager, Baltimore District**, perform and document housekeeping inspections as required at the Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue Post Offices.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the report's findings and recommendations but disagreed with the other impact amount.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated they will address each finding by taking action locally or requesting assistance from the Facilities Services Organization

⁸ Based on average fine amount the Postal Service paid for post office OSHA violations from 2017 to 2019.

and will notify the Inspection Service of security camera issues. Management will provide a PowerPoint presentation showing before and after pictures of the remaining issues to be addressed, ticket numbers of work scheduled but not completed, and emails regarding security concerns with the Inspection Service. The target implementation date is January 2021.

Regarding recommendation 2, management provided copies of PS Forms 4851, Housekeeping Inspection Logs, for the Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue Post Offices showing inspections were completed in November 2020. The target implementation date was December 3, 2020.

Regarding the other impact amount, management disagreed that five of the deficiencies would result in fines. Specifically, management disagrees that the unsecured ladders and lack of hot water would be cited as violations based on OSHA requirements and previous OSHA audits in the Baltimore District. They stated that the unsecured ladders were not in a working environment and hot water is not a requirement per OSHA guidelines. Management also disagrees that the missing posters would result in a citation because they were replaced upon request. Accordingly, management believes we should use the average fine amount to revise the potential other impact to \$32,760.

See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

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

Regarding recommendation 1, management took corrective action and addressed some deficiencies prior to issuance of the report. Management needs to address the remaining deficiencies at each post office and provide supporting documentation and/or photos of corrective actions taken to address the issues.

Regarding recommendation 2, we view management's corrective action taken in completing the housekeeping inspections for the three post offices as sufficient to satisfy the intent of our recommendation. Accordingly, we consider recommendation 2 closed with the issuance of this report.

Regarding the other impact, we found unsecured ladders in multiple locations, including the workroom floor. In addition, OSHA requires each lavatory to be provided with hot and cold running water, or tepid running water.⁹ At the Legion Avenue Post Office, we tested the water temperature in the ladies' and men's restrooms and the break room and determined the facility had only cold water. Finally, the posters at the Annapolis and Legion Avenue Post Offices were not displayed until the team notified management of the requirement. Not displaying the posters could result in a potential fine.

⁹ OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.141 (d)(2)(ii).

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. Recommendation 1 should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendation can be closed. Based on the information provided by Postal Service management, we consider recommendation 2 closed with the issuance of this report.

Appendix A: Facility Deficiency Summary

	Facility	Annapolis	Columbia	Legion Avenue	Total Deficiencies
	Building Maintenance Issues				
1	Stained ceiling tiles	D	D	D	3
2	Damaged ceiling tiles in drop box room	✓	✓	D	1
3	Potential mold in drop box room	✓	✓	D	1
4	Missing ceiling tile (conference room, passport office, and mailbox area)	✓	D	✓	1
5	Misaligned or bulging ceiling tiles (lobby, conference room, and ladies' locker room)	✓	D	✓	1
6	Damaged walls	D	✓	D	2
7	Non-functioning restroom	D	✓	✓	1
8	Inoperable urinals in men's restroom	✓	✓	D	1
9	Clogged sink in men's restroom	✓	✓	D	1
10	Damaged parking block in customer parking lot	✓	✓	D	1
11	Potholes in customer parking lot	✓	✓	D	1
12	Dock lift leaks fluid and retains water	✓	✓	D	1
13	No hot water throughout the facility	✓	✓	D	1
14	Cracked sidewalk at the rear of the property	✓	D	✓	1
15	Missing housekeeping inspection (PS Form 4851)	D	D	D	3
	Building Safety Issues				
16	Blocked flammable cabinet	✓	D	✓	1
17	Blocked sprinkler system panel	✓	D	✓	1
18	Cracked window near the passport office	✓	D	✓	1
19	Exposed electrical outlets with wires near dock area	✓	✓	D	1
20	Blocked electrical panels in the workroom area	D	✓	D	2
21	Expired first-aid kit items	D	✓	D	2
22	Portable heater connected to power strip	✓	✓	D	1
23	Appliances (microwave and toaster oven) connected to power strip	D	✓	✓	1
24	Unsecured ladder	D	✓	D	2
25	Emergency eyewash station not inspected weekly	✓	D	✓	1
26	No English OSHA poster (3165), <i>Job Safety and Health</i> displayed	D	✓	D	2
27	No Spanish OSHA poster (3167), <i>Job Safety and Health</i> displayed	D	✓	D	2

	Facility	Annapolis	Columbia	Legion Avenue	Total Deficiencies
28	No CA-10, <i>What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work</i> poster displayed	D	✓	D	2
29	No Poster 7, <i>Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Property</i> displayed	D	✓	D	2
30	No <i>Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures</i> poster displayed	D	✓	D	2
Building Security Issues					
31	Inoperable security cameras in the workroom	✓	✓	D	1
32	Unlocked carrier trucks	✓	D	✓	1
Total Deficiencies		13	10	22	45

Source: OIG analysis based on property reviews.

✓ – No deficiency; D – Deficiency

Appendix B: Management's Comments

DARRYL MARTIN
DISTRICT MANAGER
BALTIMORE DISTRICT



December 3 , 2020

JOSEPH E. WOLSKI
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Response to Draft Audit Report –Property Condition Reviews- Annapolis,
Columbia and Legion Avenue Post Offices (Project Number 20-320-DRAFT)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) draft audit report, " Property Condition Reviews- Annapolis, Columbia and Legion Avenue Post Offices".

Management agrees with the findings noted in the audit report.

Management does agree with the recommendations as outlined in the audit per the responses below.

Regarding the other impact listed as risk exposure related to potential OSHA violations in the amount of \$60,060, we agree that some of the noted findings could result in a fine. Management disagrees that five of those listed would be cited based on previous OSHA audits conducted in the Baltimore District. These would include the unsecured ladders as they were not located in a working environment; the lack of hot water as it is not a requirement per OSHA guidelines; and the missing posters which were expeditiously replaced upon request. We do agree that the other findings, if cited during an OSHA visit, and based upon the average cost of fines as computed by the OIG, would amount to \$32,760 in potential financial risk.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the Manager, Baltimore District, address all building maintenance, safety, and security issues identified at the Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue post offices

Management Response/Action Plan

Management agrees with this recommendation and has implemented by addressing each finding from the audit by either taking action locally or requesting assistance from Facilities Services Organization. The local inspection service was also notified to investigate the security camera issues. To request closure of this recommendation a PowerPoint presentation showing before and after pictures of each issue under local management's control will be submitted. The document also includes ticket numbers

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BALTIMORE, MD 21233

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for work not under the purview of local management that has been scheduled but not completed. Emails regarding the security concerns with the Inspection Service will also be submitted.

Target Implementation Date

January 2021

Responsible Official

Manager, Safety

Recommendation #2

We recommend the Manager, Baltimore District, perform and document housekeeping inspections as required at the Annapolis, Columbia, and Legion Avenue post offices.

Management Response/Action Plan

Management agrees with this recommendation and has implemented by requiring PS Form 4851, Housekeeping Inspection Logs, in each facility reviewed during the audit on a semi-annual basis. Copies of the inspection logs for the three facilities reviewed will be submitted to request closure of this recommendation.

Target Implementation Date

December 2020

Responsible Official

Manager, Safety



Darryl Martin
Baltimore District Manager

cc: Manager, Corporate Audit & Response Management