



AUDIT REPORT

Property Condition Reviews – Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson Post Offices

January 25, 2021



Report Number 21-044-R21



January 25, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIANE M. INGLAND
DISTRICT MANAGER, APPALACHIAN DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lazerick C. Poland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

FROM: Lazerick C. Poland
Director, Property Condition Review

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Property Condition Reviews –
Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson Post Offices
(Report Number 21-044-R21)

This report presents the results of Property Condition Reviews at the Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson 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
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
Corporate Audit Response Management

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of property conditions at the Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson (all leased) Post Offices in the Appalachian District (Project Number 21-044). 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 Martinsburg Post Office based on interior square footage, the number of maintenance requests, and repair and maintenance spending. We selected the Gerrardstown and Ranson post offices based on their proximity to the Martinsburg Post Office. In addition, we reviewed Postal Service systems to identify maintenance issues and analyzed documentation for deficiencies. We conducted site visits on November 17-18, 2020, performed observations, completed the checklists, and briefed local management on the issues identified.

We relied on computer-generated data from the 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 November 2020 through January 2021 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls as we considered necessary under the circumstances. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on January 14, 2021 and included their comments where appropriate.

Overall, we found that building maintenance, safety, and security at the Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson Post Offices did not meet prescribed standards. We

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

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

identified 35 deficiencies at the three facilities that ranged from minor to more serious violations (see [Appendix A](#)).

Building Maintenance

At the Martinsburg Post Office, we identified stained ceiling tiles in the accountable mail area, outside the Bulk Mail Entry Unit office, and the Post Office Box area in the workroom. We also found missing ceiling tiles in the Post Office Box workroom area (see Figure 1) and misaligned and missing ceiling tiles in the lobby entrance (see Figure 2). In addition, there were dirty vents in the Accountable Mail area and in rooms 117 and 109, a damaged wall in the breakroom (see Figure 3), and a semi-operable urinal in the men's restroom (see Figure 4).

Figure 1. Missing and Stained Ceiling Tiles in Workroom Area



Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) photograph taken November 17, 2020.

Figure 2. Misaligned and Missing Ceiling Tiles In Lobby Entrance



Source: OIG photograph taken November 17, 2020.

Figure 3. Damaged Wall in Breakroom



Source: OIG photograph taken November 17, 2020.

Figure 4. Semi-Operable Urinal in Men's Restroom



Source: OIG photograph taken November 17, 2020.

At the Gerrardstown Post Office, we found stained ceiling tiles in the lobby area (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Stained Ceiling Tiles in Lobby



Source: OIG photograph taken November 17, 2020.



Source: OIG photograph taken November 17, 2020.

At the Ranson Post Office, we identified stained ceiling tiles in the Post Office Box section and misaligned and missing ceiling tiles in the carrier's workroom area, burnt out lightbulbs outside the lobby entrance, and a damaged downspout pipe. We also noticed what appeared to be potential mold on ceiling tiles (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Evidence of Potential Mold;
Missing and Misaligned Ceiling Tiles**



Source: OIG photograph taken November 18, 2020.

None of the three facilities performed required semiannual housekeeping inspections or maintained PS Forms 4851, Housekeeping Inspection.

Building Safety

At the Martinsburg Post Office, we found two blocked fire extinguishers (see Figure 7), one fire extinguisher that had not been inspected monthly since January 2019, a damaged fire extinguisher, an emergency eyewash without a weekly and annual inspection, and no OSHA Poster 3167, *Job Safety and Health* (Spanish versions), displayed.

Figure 7. Blocked Fire Extinguisher



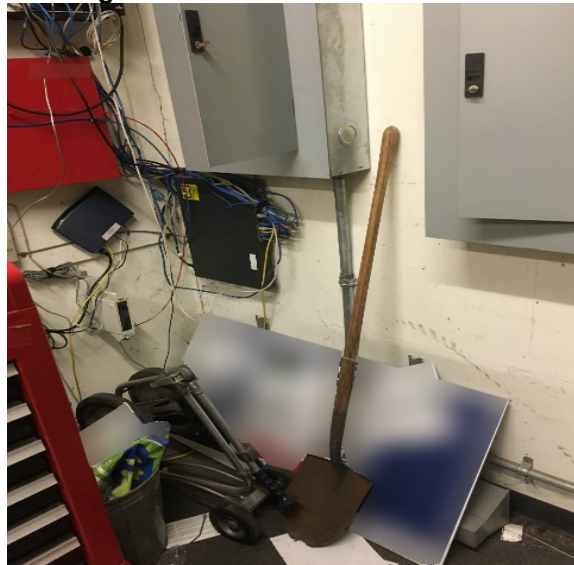
Source: OIG photograph taken November 17, 2020.

At the Gerrardstown Post Office, we found the only fire extinguisher in the facility did not have an annual inspection and no OSHA Poster 3167 (Spanish version) was displayed. We also found that Poster CA-10, *What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work*; the *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures* poster; and Poster 7, *Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Property* were not displayed as required.

At the Ranson Post Office, we identified blocked electrical panels³ (see [Figure 8](#)) and two fire extinguishers not inspected monthly; one had the last monthly inspection performed on February 19, 2019, and the second one did not have a monthly inspection tag. In addition, we found an extension cord on the floor in the traffic area that could cause a trip hazard and a burn relief spray that expired June 2019 in the first aid kit. In addition, OSHA Posters 3167 (Spanish version) and CA-10 were not displayed.

³ OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.303 (g) (1).

Figure 8. Blocked Electrical Panels



Source: OIG photograph taken November 18, 2020.

Building Security

At the Martinsburg Post Office, we found nine unlocked Postal Service vehicles and the monitors for the closed-circuit televisions (CCTV) were not working.

At the Ranson Post Office, we found five unlocked carrier trucks with two containing mail in an unsecured parking lot (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Unlocked Trucks with Mail



Source: OIG photograph taken November 18, 2020.

We did not identify any security issues at the Gerrardstown Post Office and the postmaster did not express any security concerns.

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 and awareness. For example, management did not consider maintenance and safety issues such as stained, misaligned, and missing ceiling tiles, damaged walls, dirty air vents, and blocked electrical panels to be a priority. In addition, housekeeping inspections were not conducted semiannually⁴ at the three facilities due to lack of management oversight or awareness.

Management at the Martinsburg and Ranson Post Offices did not ensure carrier trucks were locked due to lack of oversight. Postal Service policy requires carriers to lock vehicle doors if they will be out of direct sight of the vehicle.⁵ The policy further requires vehicle doors to be locked, except when employees are loading or unloading it.

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 six issues at the three post offices that could potentially result in \$32,760 of risk⁶ exposure.

Corrective Actions

Management at the Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson Post Offices took corrective action while we were onsite by displaying OSHA Posters 3167 (Spanish version) and CA-10.

After our site visit, management at the Ranson Post Office took corrective action by removing the ceiling tile with potential mold, correcting the misaligned ceiling tiles, unblocking the electrical panels, performing monthly inspections on the two fire extinguishers, and removing the expired burn relief spray from the first-aid cabinet.

⁴ *Custodial Team Cleaning Handbook*, Section 4.6, March 13, 2019.

⁵ Handbook M-41, *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*, Section 822, June 2019.

⁶ Based on average fine amount the Postal Service paid for post office OSHA violations from 2017 to 2019.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the **Manager, Appalachian District**, address all building maintenance, safety, and security issues identified at the Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson Post Offices.

Recommendation #2: We recommend the **Manager, Appalachian District**, perform and document housekeeping inspections as required at the Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson Post Offices.

Management's Comments

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

Regarding recommendation 1, the Manager, Post Office Operations, worked with the maintenance managers and Information Technology (IT) to abate the issues cited at each unit. Management stated that all items were abated as of January 21, 2021 except those associated with the non-functional CCTV monitors. Management provided photos of corrective actions taken to address most issues. Regarding the inoperable CCTV monitors at the Martinsburg Post Office, the IT manager will order new cameras and installation will be scheduled upon receipt. The target implementation date is February 22, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated that local management will perform housekeeping inspections as required with validation by the Manager, Post Office Operations. Management also provided photos of completed Forms 4851, Housekeeping Inspection, for the three facilities showing inspections completed.

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 taken or planned should resolve the issues identified in the report.

Regarding recommendation 1, management took corrective action and abated most issues and provided photos of the completed items for each post office. Management needs to address the inoperable CCTV monitor and provide supporting documentation of the repair.

Regarding recommendation 2, management provided copies of PS Forms 4851, showing that inspections were completed at the Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson Post Offices. We view management's corrective action taken to be sufficient to satisfy the intent of our recommendation.

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. We consider recommendation 2 closed with the issuance of this report.

Appendix A: Facility Deficiency Summary

	Facility	Martinsburg	Gerrardstown	Ranson	Total Deficiencies
Building Maintenance Issues					
1	Damaged wall in the breakroom	D	✓	✓	1
2	Dirty vent in Accountable mail area and rooms 109 and 117	D	✓	✓	1
3	Evidence of potential mold	✓	✓	D	1
4	Misaligned ceiling tiles	D	✓	D	2
5	Missing ceiling tiles	D	✓	D	2
6	Stained ceiling tiles	D	D	D	3
7	Semi-operable urinal in men's restroom	D	✓	✓	1
8	Burnt lightbulbs outside the lobby entrance	✓	✓	D	1
9	A damaged downspout pipe	✓	✓	D	1
10	No Housekeeping Inspection (PS Form 4851)	D	D	D	3
Building Safety Issues					
11	Blocked electrical panel	✓	✓	D	1
12	Blocked fire extinguisher in workroom area	D	✓	✓	1
13	Damaged fire extinguisher in the lower part	D	✓	✓	1
14	Fire extinguisher not inspected monthly	D	✓	D	2
15	Fire extinguisher not inspected yearly	✓	D	✓	1
16	Expired item in first aid kit	✓	✓	D	1
17	No weekly or annual inspection on Emergency Eyewash in workroom area	D	✓	✓	1
18	Extension cord on floor - Potential trip hazard	✓	✓	D	1
19	CA-10 - What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work	✓	D	D	2
20	No poster 7, Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Property displayed	✓	D	✓	1
21	No Spanish version 3167 – OSHA poster, Job Safety and Health	D	D	D	3
22	No Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures poster displayed	✓	D	✓	1
Building Security Issues					
23	Non-functional CCTV monitors	D	✓	✓	1
24	Unlocked Postal Service trucks	D	✓	D	2
Total Deficiencies		14	7	14	35

Source: OIG analysis based on property reviews.

✓ – No deficiency; D – Deficiency

Appendix B: Management's Comments

APPALACHIAN DISTRICT
DISTRICT MANAGER



January 22, 2021

JOSEPH E. WOLSKI
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Property Condition Reviews: Martinsburg, Gerrardstown and Ranson
Project # 21-044 DRAFT

Management Response Summary:

I agree with the OIG audit findings and or observations identified by the in the three offices in the Appalachian District: Martinsburg, Ranson, and Gerrardstown.

I do not dispute the impact amount or potential liability for the six potentially fineable OSHA violations.

Management Response Detail:

Recommendation #1:

Address all building maintenance, safety, and security issues identified at the Martinsburg, Gerrardstown, and Ranson Post Offices

Management Response/Action Plan:

I agree with Recommendation #1

Immediately upon notification of the identified issues, Manager, Post Office Operations D, worked with the appropriate managers, maintenance, and IT to abate cited items in each unit.

Target Implementation Date:

All issues have been abated as of January 21, 2021 except for Item 23, Non-functional CCTV monitors. IT Manager was on-site January 20, 2021 to determine if the system could be repaired or replaced locally. CCTV is non-functional. The cameras need replaced. IT Manager will order new cameras for the Martinsburg office. Installation will be scheduled upon receipt of replacements. We anticipate repairs to be completed no later than February 22, 2021.

Responsible Official:

Manager, Post Office Operations D

Recommendation #2:

Perform and document housekeeping inspections as required at Martinsburg, Gerrardstown and Ranson

Management Response/Action Plan:

I agree with Recommendation #2

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CHARLESTON WV 25350-9802

APPALACHIAN DISTRICT
DISTRICT MANAGER



Local management will perform housekeeping inspections as required with validation by Manager, Post Office Operations. In addition, upon notification of the identified issues, on December 4, 2020, District Manager issued instructions/information via email to all offices in the Appalachian District regarding:

- Fire Extinguishers Inspected Monthly – PS Form 4705 (In-House)
- Fire Extinguishers Inspected Annually (Qualified Outside Agency)
- Emergency Lights and Exit Signs Tested Monthly
- Ladder Inspections Monthly
- Eye Wash Station Inspections Monthly
- OSHA Poster 3165 (English) and OSHA Poster 3167 (Spanish)
- Zero Tolerance Policy Statement
- Poster 159 – Workplace Harassment
- CA-10 – What A Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work
- Inspection Service Poster 7 – Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Service Property

Target Implementation Date:

All issues cited have been abated as of January 21, 2021.

Responsible Official:

Manager, Post Office Operations D

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Diane M. Inghand".

Diane M Inghand
District Manager, Appalachian District

cc:

Atlantic, Vice President Retail and Delivery, Sal Vacca
Atlantic, Finance Manager, Eric Faber
Atlantic, A/Facilities Customer Relations Manager, [REDACTED]