



Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Property Condition Reviews – Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley Post Offices in South Carolina

Report Number 21-091-R21 | March 29, 2021



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Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

March 29, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: JUNE M. MARTINDALE
DISTRICT MANAGER, SOUTH CAROLINA DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lazerick C. Poland", is centered below the recipient information.

FROM: Lazerick C. Poland
Director, Property Condition Review

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Property Condition Reviews – Greenville
Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley Post Offices
in South Carolina (Report Number 21-091-R21)

This report presents the results of Property Condition Reviews at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley Post Offices in South Carolina.

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, Southern
Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations
Vice President, Facilities
Corporate Audit Response Management

Results

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of property conditions at the Greenville Station A (leased), Simpsonville (owned), and Easley (owned) post offices in the South Carolina District (Project Number 21-091). 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 Greenville Station A Post Office based on interior square footage, the number of maintenance requests, and repair and maintenance spending. We selected the Simpsonville and Easley post offices based on their proximity to the Greenville Station A Post Office. In addition, we reviewed Postal Service systems to identify maintenance issues and analyzed documentation for deficiencies. We conducted site visits from January 26-28, 2021, and 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 January through March 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 March 11, 2021 and included their comments where appropriate.

We found that building maintenance, safety, and security at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley post offices did not meet prescribed standards. We identified 49 deficiencies at the three facilities that ranged from minor to more serious violations (see [Appendix A](#)).

Building Maintenance

At the Greenville Station A Post Office, we identified missing and stained ceiling tiles in the men's restroom (see [Figure 1](#)). We also found stained ceiling tiles in the utility room (see [Figure 2](#)), offices, and lobby. In addition, there were dirty vents in the ladies' restroom, a partially detached baseboard strip in the workroom (see [Figure 3](#)), and a semi-operable urinal in the men's restroom that retains water after flushing (see [Figure 4](#)). We also found burned out light bulbs in the rear customer parking lot.

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

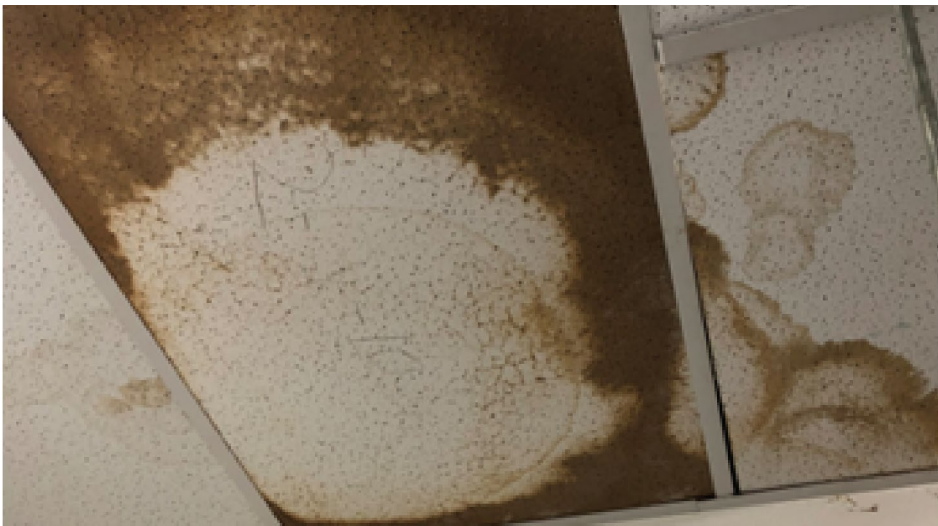
² OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

Figure 1. Missing and Stained Ceiling Tiles in Men's Restroom



Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) photograph taken January 26, 2021.

Figure 2. Stained Ceiling Tiles in Utility Room



Source: OIG photograph taken January 26, 2021.

Figure 3. Partially Detached Baseboard Strip in Workroom



Source: OIG photograph taken January 26, 2021.

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



Source: OIG photograph taken January 26, 2021.

At the Simpsonville Post Office, we identified several issues relating to ceiling tiles throughout the facility (see Table 1 and Figures 5 through 7).

Table 1. Ceiling Tile Issues

Issue	Breakroom	Lobby	Loading Dock	Maintenance Room	Men's Restroom	Workroom
Bulging Tiles	✓		✓		✓	✓
Damaged Tiles						✓
Hanging Tiles			✓			
Missing Tiles		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Misaligned Tiles						✓
Stained Tiles						✓

Source: OIG analysis.

Figure 5. Hanging Ceiling Tile in Loading Dock



Source: OIG photograph taken January 27, 2021.

Figure 6. Bulging Ceiling Tiles



Source: OIG photograph taken January 27, 2021.

Figure 7. Damaged Ceiling Tile



Source: OIG photograph taken January 27, 2021.

In addition, we found damaged walls in the workroom (see Figure 8) and lobby areas and a damaged door closer at the lobby entrance (see Figure 9).

Figure 8. Damaged Walls in Workroom



Source: OIG photograph taken January 27, 2021.

Figure 9. Damaged Door Closer at Lobby Entrance



Source: OIG photograph taken January 27, 2021.

We also identified the following issues at the Simpsonville Post Office:

- Damaged light fixture in the workroom.
- Dirty vents in the lobby and workroom areas.
- Peeling wallpaper and detached baseboard strips in the lobby.
- Two soft spots in the wooden floors in the carrier section that presented a potential risk of collapsing.

At the Easley Post Office, we found damaged window clerk counters that were reinforced with Priority Mail tape (see Figure 10) and dirty exterior trim at the rear and sides of the building (see Figure 11). In addition, we identified excess equipment such as blue cages, trays, and buckets near the boiler room, electrical room, and dock door, and in the Post Office Box and carrier sections.

Figure 10. Damaged Window Clerk Counters



Source: OIG photograph taken January 28, 2021.

Figure 11. Dirty Exterior Trim at Rear and Sides of Building



Source: OIG photograph taken January 28, 2021.

We also identified the following issues at the Easley Post Office:

- Misaligned ceiling tile near the mechanical room.
- Stained ceiling tiles in the mail sorting area and carrier section.
- Clogged sink in the ladies' restroom.
- Damaged column behind carrier section.
- Damaged wall near fire extinguisher A in the workroom.
- Dirty vents in the workroom area near the mechanical room and in breakroom.
- Faded parking stripes in the customer parking lot.
- Cracked asphalt in employee parking lot causing a potential trip hazard (see Figure 12).
- Faded handrail paint in the lobby (see Figure 13).

Figure 12. Cracked Asphalt



Source: OIG photograph taken January 28, 2021.

Figure 13. Faded Handrail



Source: OIG photograph taken January 28, 2021.

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

Building Safety

At the Greenville Station A Post Office, we identified a blocked electrical panel in the electrical room (see Figure 14), and none of the three fire extinguishers at the facility had been inspected annually – two were last inspected in November 2019 and one in October 2019. We also found that OSHA poster 3167, *Job Safety and Health* (Spanish version), was not displayed as required.

Figure 14. Blocked Electrical Panel



Source: OIG photograph taken January 26, 2021.

In addition, we identified the following expired items in the first-aid kit at the Greenville Station A Post Office:

- One bottle of eyewash, expired November 2016.
- Five tubes of Itch-X gel cream, expired June 2017.
- Two tubes of antibiotic ointment, expired July 2017.
- Eight aspirin packets, expired November 2017.
- One burn cream packet, expired February 2018.

At the Simpsonville Post Office, we found a blocked electrical panel (see Figure 15) and a blocked fire extinguisher in the workroom. None of the seven fire extinguishers at the facility had been inspected monthly since October 2020. We also found that OSHA poster 3165, *Job Safety and Health* (English version), was not displayed as required.

Figure 15. Blocked Electrical Panel



Source: OIG photograph taken January 27, 2021.

At the Easley Post Office, we identified a portable heater in the postmaster's office (see Figure 16) and a fan in the maintenance office that were plugged into a surge protector instead of the wall outlet, excess equipment that blocked the electrical room door (see Figure 17), and a blocked emergency exit door in the Post Office Box area.

Figure 16. Portable Heater Plugged into Surge Protector



Source: OIG photograph taken January 28, 2021.

Figure 17. Excess Equipment Blocked Electrical Room Door



Source: OIG photograph taken January 28, 2021.

We also identified the following expired items in the first-aid kit at the Easley Post Office:

- Two Neosporin packets, expired July 2020 and June 2010.
- One antiseptic spray bottle, expired March 2009.
- One bottle of eyewash, expired May 2009.
- One Neomycin packet, expired December 2009.

Building Security

At the Greenville Station A Post Office, we found an inoperable security camera in the lobby that has not worked since 2017, according to local management. At the Simpsonville Post Office, we found five unlocked carrier trucks in a fenced parking lot. We did not identify any security issues at the Easley 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 healthy 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, some maintenance and safety issues such as ceiling tile issues, damaged walls, dirty air vents, and blocked electrical panels were not considered a priority. Managers' and supervisors' failure to complete housekeeping inspections at the three facilities indicated their lack of awareness of the policy³ and its requirements.

Management at the Simpsonville Post Office did not ensure that 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.⁴ The policy further requires vehicle doors to be locked, except when loading or unloading the vehicle.

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 10 issues at the three post offices that could potentially result in \$56,860⁵ of risk exposure.

Corrective Actions

Management at the Greenville Station A and Simpsonville post offices took prompt corrective action while we were onsite by displaying OSHA posters 3167 (Greenville Station A) and 3165 (Simpsonville).

In addition, management at the Easley Post Office took immediate corrective action by unblocking the electrical room door and unplugging the portable heater and fan from the surge protector. We appreciate management's prompt attention to these matters.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **Manager, Greater South Carolina District**, address all building maintenance, safety, and security issues identified at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley post offices.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **Manager, Greater South Carolina District**, perform and document fire extinguisher inspections monthly and annually as required at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley post offices.

³ *Custodial Team Cleaning Handbook*, Section 4.6, March 13, 2019.

⁴ Handbook M-41, *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*, Section 822, June 2019.

⁵ Based on average fine amount the Postal Service paid for post office OSHA violations from 2018 to 2020.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **Manager, Greater South Carolina District**, reiterate the policy to perform and document housekeeping inspections and provide necessary training for managers and supervisors at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley post offices and verify that the facilities conduct the inspections at the required frequency.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the report's findings and recommendations and partially agreed 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. Management will provide before and after pictures of each issue under local management's control. In addition, they will provide ticket numbers for work not under local management's purview that is scheduled but not completed. The target implementation date is June 30, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 2, management is requiring local management to perform monthly inspections of all fire extinguishers at the three facilities and will schedule annual inspections. Management will provide copies of the inspection tags for the monthly inspections and invoices for the annual inspections. The target implementation date is April 30, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 3, management is requiring PS Form 4851, Housekeeping Inspection Logs, to be completed at each facility on a semiannual basis. Management will provide copies of the inspection logs for the three facilities reviewed along with HERO training records. The target implementation date is April 30, 2021.

Regarding the other impact amount, management agreed that some of the noted findings could result in a fine. However, management disagreed that the missing posters which were quickly displayed and the missing fire extinguisher inspections would be cited based on previous OSHA audits conducted in the South Carolina District. Management agreed that the other findings, if cited during

an OSHA visit, would amount to \$40,117 in potential financial risk based on the average fine amount.

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 needs to provide supporting documentation of corrective actions taken to address the remaining maintenance, safety, and security deficiencies at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley post offices, including before and after pictures of abated items.

Regarding recommendation 2, management needs to provide evidence of completed monthly and annual fire extinguisher inspections at the three facilities, including copies of the inspection tags.

Regarding recommendation 3, management needs to provide copies of completed PS Form 4851, Housekeeping Inspection Logs, for the three facilities, as well as evidence of completed training on performing the inspections.

Regarding other impact, posters at the Greenville Station A and Simpsonville post offices were not displayed until the team notified management of the requirement. Not displaying the posters could result in a potential fine. In addition, OSHA requires portable fire extinguishers to receive visual monthly inspections and annual maintenance checks. The missing inspections could result in a potential fine.

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. The 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.

Appendix A: Facility Deficiency Summary

Facility		Greenville Station A	Simpsonville	Easley	Total Deficiencies
Building Maintenance Issues					
1	Bulging ceiling tiles	✓	D	✓	1
2	Damaged ceiling tiles in workroom area	✓	D	✓	1
3	Dirty ceiling tiles in the ladies' restroom	D	✓	✓	1
4	Hanging ceiling tile	✓	D	✓	1
5	Misaligned ceiling tiles	✓	D	D	2
6	Missing ceiling tiles	D	D	✓	2
7	Stained ceiling tiles	D	D	D	3
8	Burnt lightbulbs in the rear parking lot	D	D	✓	2
9	Clogged sink in the ladies' restroom	✓	✓	D	1
10	Cracked asphalt in employee parking lot	✓	✓	D	1
11	Damaged column behind carrier section	✓	✓	D	1
12	Damaged wall	✓	D	D	2
13	Damaged door closer at lobby entrance	✓	D	✓	1
14	Damaged window clerk counters	✓	✓	D	1

Facility		Greenville Station A	Simpsonville	Easley	Total Deficiencies
15	Damaged light fixture in the workroom	✓	D	✓	1
16	Dirty exterior trim on sides and rear of the facility	✓	✓	D	1
17	Dirty vents	✓	D	D	2
18	Excess equipment throughout workroom	✓	✓	D	1
19	Faded handrail in the lobby - needs paint	✓	✓	D	1
20	Faded parking stripes in customer parking lot	✓	✓	D	1
21	Detached baseboard strips	D	D	✓	2
22	Peeling wallpaper in the lobby	✓	D	✓	1
23	Semi-operable urinal in men's restroom	D	✓	✓	1
24	Soft spot in wooden floor in the carrier section	✓	D	✓	1
25	No Housekeeping Inspection (PS Form 4851)	D	D	D	3
Building Safety Issues					
26	Blocked electrical panel	D	D	D	3
27	Blocked emergency exit door	✓	✓	D	1
28	Blocked fire extinguisher in workroom area	✓	D	✓	1


Facility		Greenville Station A	Simpsonville	Easley	Total Deficiencies
29	Expired first aid kit items	D	✓	D	2
30	Fire extinguisher not inspected monthly	✓	D	✓	1
31	Fire extinguisher not inspected annually	D	✓	✓	1
32	Electrical fan and portable heater plugged into surge protector	✓	✓	D	1
33	No OSHA poster 3167, <i>Job Safety and Health</i> (Spanish version)	D	✓	✓	1
34	No OSHA poster 3165, <i>Job Safety and Health</i> (English version)	✓	D	✓	1
Building Security Issues					
35	Non-functional security camera in the lobby	D	✓	✓	1
36	Unlocked Postal Service trucks	✓	D	✓	1
Total Deficiencies		12	20	17	49

Source: OIG analysis based on property reviews.

✓ – No deficiency; D – Deficiency

Appendix B: Management's Comments

Mar/19/2021 11:25:23 AM USPS - West Columbia, SC 803-926-6470 3/5

 UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

March 22, 2021

JOSEPH E. WOLSKI
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Response to Draft Audit Report – Property Condition Reviews – Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley Post Offices in South Carolina Project Number 21-091-DRAFT

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) draft audit report, "Property Condition Reviews – Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley Post Offices in South Carolina Project".

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 \$57,310, we agree that some of the noted findings could result in a fine. Management disagrees that three of those listed would be cited based on previous OSHA audits conducted in the Greater South District. These would include the missing posters which were quickly replaced and missing fire extinguisher inspections. 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 \$40,117 in potential financial risk.

Recommendation #1
We recommend the Manager, Greater South Carolina District, address all building maintenance, safety, and security issues identified at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley post offices.

Management Response/Action Plan
Management agrees with this recommendation and will implement by addressing each finding from the audit by either taking action locally or requesting assistance from Facilities Services Organization. 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 will include ticket numbers for work not under the purview of local management that has been scheduled but not completed.

PAGE 3/5 * RCVD AT 3/19/2021 11:24:57 AM (Eastern Daylight Time) * SVR:MANRFA002/4 * DNIG:6513066368 * CSID:803-926-6470 * DURATION (mm-ss):01-13

- 2 -

Target Implementation Date

June 30, 2021

Responsible Official

Manager, Safety

Recommendation #2

We recommend the Manager, Greater South Carolina District, perform and document fire extinguisher inspections monthly and annually as required at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley post offices.

Management Response/Action Plan

Management agrees with this recommendation and has implemented by requiring monthly inspections of all fire extinguishers at each of the three facilities by local management. Annual inspections will be scheduled. To request closure of this recommendation copies of the monthly inspection tags and invoices for the annual inspections will be submitted.

Target Implementation Date

April 30, 2021

Responsible Official

Manager, Safety

Recommendation #3

We recommend the Manager, Greater South Carolina District, reiterate the policy to perform and document housekeeping inspections and provide necessary training for managers and supervisors at the Greenville Station A, Simpsonville, and Easley post offices and verify that the facilities conduct the inspections at the required frequency.

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 along with HERO training records to request closure of this recommendation.

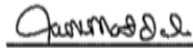
Target Implementation Date

April 30, 2021

Responsible Official

Manager, Safety

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June Martindale
Greater South Carolina District Manager

cc: Manager, Corporate Audit & Response Management

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