



Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Property Condition Reviews – North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices in Ohio

Report Number 21-138-R21 | June 21, 2021



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Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

June 21, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: SUSAN A. TAYLOR
DISTRICT MANAGER, OHIO 1 DISTRICT

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

FROM: Lazerick C. Poland
Director, Property Condition Review Team

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Property Condition Reviews – North Royalton,
Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices in Ohio
(Report Number 21-138-R21)

This report presents the results of Property Condition Reviews at the North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices in Ohio.

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, Central
Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations
Vice President, Facilities

Results

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of property conditions at the North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens (all owned) Post Offices in the Ohio 1 District (Project Number 21-138). 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 North Royalton Post Office based on interior square footage, the number of maintenance requests, and repair and maintenance spending. We selected the Willoughby and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices based on their proximity to the North Royalton Post Office. In addition, we reviewed Postal Service systems to identify maintenance issues and analyzed documentation for deficiencies. We conducted site visits from March 30 – April 1, 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 March through June 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 May 25, 2021 and included their comments where appropriate.

We found that building maintenance, safety, and security at the North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices did not meet prescribed standards. We identified 39 deficiencies (14 were corrected during our site visits) at the three facilities that ranged from minor to more serious violations (see [Appendix A](#)).

Building Maintenance

At the North Royalton Post Office, we identified damaged walls in the workroom and P.O. Box areas (see [Figure 1](#)) and missing and stained ceiling tiles in the workroom and behind the window clerk counter (see [Figure 2](#)).

Figure 1. Damaged Walls



Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) photographs taken March 31, 2021.

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 2. Missing and Stained Ceiling Tiles



Source: OIG photograph taken March 31, 2021.

At the Willoughby Post Office, we identified rusted exterior trim in the loading dock area (see Figure 3) and excess equipment, such as trays and buckets, in the workroom. In addition, we identified misaligned ceiling tiles in the loading dock area and breakroom (see Figure 4) and stained ceiling tiles in the storage room and hallway near the reception room.

Figure 3. Rusted Exterior Trim



Source: OIG photograph taken April 1, 2021.

Figure 4. Misaligned Ceiling Tile



Source: OIG photograph taken April 1, 2021.

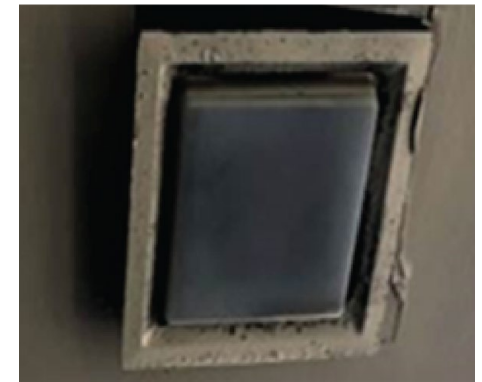
At the Jesse C. Owens Post Office, we identified a damaged wall covered with cardboard at the lobby entrance (see Figure 5), a damaged light fixture hanging from the ceiling near the lobby entrance (see Figure 6), and a cracked window in the retail area (see Figure 7). We also identified damaged ceiling tiles in the lobby, a missing ceiling tile in the storage room, and misaligned ceiling tiles in the lobby and workroom areas.

Figure 5. Damaged Wall



Source: OIG photograph taken March 30, 2021.

Figure 6. Damaged Light



Source: OIG photograph taken March 30, 2021.

Figure 7. Cracked Retail Window



Source: OIG photograph taken March 30, 2021.

Building Safety

At the North Royalton Post Office, we identified an exposed electrical box in the workroom and one exposed electrical outlet in the lobby (see Figure 8). In addition, a microwave was connected to a power strip instead of directly into the wall outlet; two of eight fire extinguishers missed the monthly inspection – one was last inspected in March 2000 and one in January 2021; and one fire extinguisher was not mounted on the wall.

Figure 8. Exposed Electrical Box and Outlet

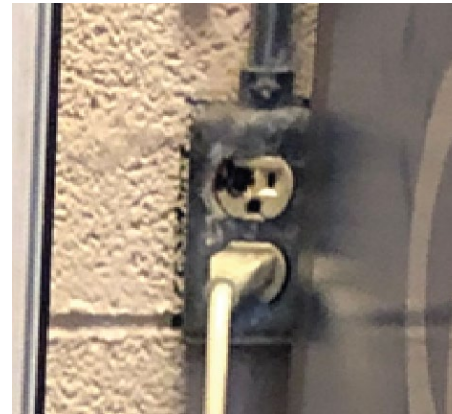


Source: OIG photographs taken March 31, 2021.

We also identified 14 expired items in the first-aid kit such as medi-mecizine, sting relief, non-aspirin, Neomycin antibiotic, first aid cream, Aypanal, and eyewash with expiration dates ranging from 2015 to 2020.

At the Willoughby Post Office, we identified a burned electrical outlet in the breakroom (see Figure 9), two vending machines in the breakroom plugged into a surge protector instead of directly into the wall (see Figure 10), and a blocked inspection service door (see Figure 11).

Figure 9. Burned Electrical Outlet



Source: OIG photograph taken April 1, 2021.

Figure 10. Vending Machines Plugged Into Surge Protector



Source: OIG photograph taken April 1, 2021.

Figure 11. Blocked Inspection Service Door



Source: OIG photograph taken April 1, 2021.

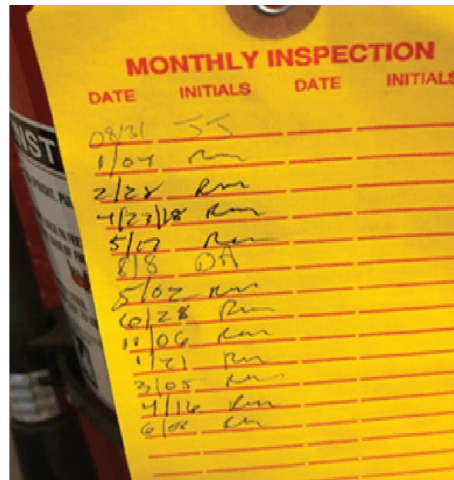
In addition, we identified a blocked fire extinguisher in the workroom (see Figure12), and all 10 fire extinguishers missed monthly inspections. The inspection dates were not consistently entered on the tags for each month and the tags did not list the years the inspections were performed (see Figure13). In addition, seven fire extinguishers were not inspected annually, with the last annual inspection done in October 2019.

Figure 12. Blocked Fire Extinguisher



Source: OIG photograph taken April 1, 2021.

Figure 13. Fire Extinguishers Not Inspected Monthly



Source: OIG photograph taken April 1, 2021.

We also identified 43 expired items in the first-aid kit, including cool and soothe burn and blister relief, providone iodine tropical solution, spray on bandage, ammonia inhalants, burn relief spray, triple antibiotic ointment and quick action bleed control with expiration dates ranging from 2006 to 2016. In addition, the CA-10, *What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work*, OSHA 3165 (English) *Job Safety and Health Protection*, OSHA 3167 (Spanish) *Job Safety and Health Protection and Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures* posters were not displayed.

At the Jesse C. Owens Post Office, we identified an uneven sidewalk in the customer parking lot, which poses a potential trip hazard (see Figure14). Management stated they previously discussed the issue during a Postal Service Facilities Service Office walk-through; however, the issue was not entered into eFMS and no follow-up was performed. In addition, we identified a cracked light switch plate in the vestibule area (see Figure15) that was covered with tape to keep the light switch on at all times, and neither fire extinguisher had been inspected monthly since December 2019.

Figure 14. Uneven Sidewalk



Source: OIG photographs taken March 30, 2021.

Figure 15. Cracked Light Switch Plate



Source: OIG photograph taken March 30, 2021.

We also identified six expired items in the first aid kit, to include burn and blister relief, buffered eye and skin solution, and burn spray with expiration dates ranging from 2008 to 2009. In addition, the CA-10, OSHA 3165, OSHA 3167, and *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures* posters were not displayed.

Building Security

At the North Royalton and the Willoughby Post Offices, we found four unlocked postal vehicles at each location in secured parking lots. We did not identify any security issues at the Jesse C. Owens Post Office.

Conditions related to building maintenance, safety, and security occurred due to management not prioritizing some issues; a lack of oversight or awareness of the issues; or lack of knowledge of OSHA requirements. For example, some maintenance issues such as the stained and missing ceiling tiles and damaged walls were not considered a priority. Safety issues such as the exposed electrical box and outlet were not addressed due to lack of management oversight. The vending machines and microwave plugged into a surge protector and the burned electrical socket were not addressed due to management not being aware of the OSHA requirement and potential fire hazard.

In addition, safety issues such as the uneven sidewalk, expired first-aid kit items, and missing fire extinguisher inspections³ were not addressed due to a lack of management oversight. Management at the Jesse C. Owens Post Office was aware of the uneven surface on the sidewalk but did not address or follow-up on the issue in eFMS.

Management at the North Royalton and Willoughby Post Offices 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.

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.

Management's attention to maintenance, safety, and security deficiencies can reduce the risk of injuries to employees and customers; reduce related costs (e.g., workers' compensation claims, lawsuits, and OSHA penalties); and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand. We identified 13 issues at the three post offices that could potentially result in \$73,918⁵ of risk exposure.

Corrective Actions

Management at the Willoughby and Jesse C. Owens post offices took corrective action while we were onsite and displayed CA-10, OSHA 3165, and OSHA 3167 posters. In addition, Jesse C. Owens Post Office displayed the *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures* poster.

After our site visit, management at the North Royalton Post Office took corrective action and replaced the cover on the electrical box and outlet, repaired the damaged walls, and replaced expired first-aid kit items. In addition, management at the Willoughby Post Office took corrective action and repaired the burned electrical outlet, replaced the stained ceiling tiles, and discarded expired first-aid kit items. At the Jesse C. Owens Post Office, management replaced and replenished the first-aid kit. We appreciate management's prompt attention to these matters.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **Manager, Ohio 1 District**, address all building maintenance, safety, and security issues identified at the North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices.

³ Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHA) - 29 CFR 1910.157, Portable Fire Extinguishers.

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 #2

We recommend the **Manager, Ohio 1 District**, perform and document fire extinguisher inspections monthly and annually as required at the North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices.

Management's Comments

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

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated all building maintenance, safety, and security issues have been abated or are in the process of being abated. Management provided before and after photos of items they have addressed and submitted work orders or will work with the Facilities Department to address the remaining deficiencies. The target implementation date to address all remaining deficiencies is July 31, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated District Management will continue to verify that monthly and annual fire extinguisher inspections are performed and that all fire extinguisher inspections are current. Management stated the seven fire extinguishers at the Willoughby Post Office received the annual inspection in February 2021 and provided a photo of an inspection tag showing that date. Management provided documentation indicating completed monthly fire extinguisher inspections at the North Royalton Post Office and stated the fire extinguishers at the Jesse C. Owens Post Office were scheduled for the monthly inspection. The target implementation date is July 31, 2021.

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 address the remaining maintenance deficiencies at the North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens post offices, and provide supporting documentation, including pictures or other evidence of corrective actions taken to address the issues.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated the seven fire extinguishers at the Willoughby Post Office received the annual inspection in February 2021; however, the audit team noted on April 1, 2021 that the tags on seven of the 10 fire extinguishers indicated they were last inspected in October 2019, and only three of the 10 extinguishers had an inspection date of February 2021. Management needs to provide supporting documentation or other evidence showing that all seven extinguishers received a current annual inspection. Management also needs to provide evidence of the completed monthly fire extinguisher inspections at the Jesse C. Owens Post Office, including copies of the inspection tags.

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. Recommendations 1 and 2 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.

Appendix A: Facility Deficiency Summary

Facility	North Royalton	Willoughby	Jesse C Owens	Total Deficiencies
Building Maintenance Issues				
1 Cracked retail window	✓	✓	D	1
2 Damaged ceiling tiles in lobby entrance	✓	✓	D	1
3 Misaligned ceiling tiles	✓	D	D	2
4 Missing ceiling tiles	D	✓	D	2
5 Stained ceiling tiles	D	D*	✓	2
6 Damaged wall	D*	✓	D	2
7 Damaged front light fixture (outside)	✓	✓	D	1
8 Excess equipment in workroom	✓	D	✓	1
9 Rusty exterior trim in loading dock area	✓	D	✓	1
10 Uneven sidewalk in customer parking lot	✓	✓	D	1
Building Safety Issues				
11 Cracked light switch cover plate in the vestibule	✓	✓	D	1
12 Blocked fire extinguisher in workroom area	✓	D	✓	1
13 Blocked Inspection Service door	✓	D	✓	1
14 Burned electrical socket	✓	D*	✓	1
15 Expired first aid kit items	D*	D*	D*	3
16 Fire extinguisher not mounted on the wall	D	✓	✓	1

Facility	North Royalton	Willoughby	Jesse C Owens	Total Deficiencies
17 Fire extinguishers not inspected monthly	D	D	D	3
18 Fire extinguisher not inspected annually	✓	D	✓	1
19 Microwave plugged into surge protector in breakroom	D	✓	✓	1
20 Vending machines plugged into surge protector	✓	D	✓	1
21 Uncovered electrical cases in workroom and lobby areas	D*	✓	✓	1
22 No Poster CA-10, What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work displayed	✓	D*	D*	2
23 No OSHA poster 3167 (Spanish version), Job Safety and Health displayed	✓	D*	D*	2
24 No OSHA poster 3165 (English version), Job Safety and Health displayed	✓	D*	D*	2
25 No Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures poster displayed	✓	D	D*	2
Building Security Issues				
26 Unlocked Postal Service trucks	D	D	✓	2
Total Deficiencies	9	16	14	39

Source: OIG analysis based on property reviews
 ✓ – No deficiency; D – Deficiency; D* – Corrected Deficiency

Appendix B: Management's Comments

 UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE
June 10th, 2021

JOSEPH WOLSKI
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Property Condition Reviews – North Royalton, Willoughby, and
Jesse C. Owens Post Offices in Ohio (Project No. 21-138)

Address the Findings and Recommendations:

Management agrees with the findings of the OIG and have taken immediate corrective action to address the deficiencies. Manager, Ohio 1 District recognizes the recommendations as listed in the OIG's report and have ensured that the issues were addressed or are in the process of being abated. Management agrees with the monetary costs.

Recommendation #1:

We recommend the Manager, Ohio 1 District, address all building maintenance, safety, and security issues identified at the North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices.

Recommendation #2:

We recommend the Manager, Ohio 1 District, perform and document fire extinguisher inspections monthly and annually as required at the North Royalton, Willoughby, and Jesse C. Owens Post Offices.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with the findings/recommendations. Below are the individual responses:

Recommendation #1 – All issues have been abated or are in the process of being abated. Please see the attached supporting documentation.

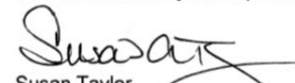
Recommendation #2 – District Management will continue to verify that the monthly and annual fire extinguisher verifications are being performed. At this time, all extinguishers are current. Please see attached supporting documentation.

Implementation Date:

The latest implementation date is July 31st, 2021. Please see the attached documentation for individual abatement dates.

Responsible Official:

Manager, Ohio 1 District is the responsible official, and has verified that all issues are abated or will be by the implementation date.


Susan Taylor
District Manager, Ohio 1 District

cc: Corporate Audit Response Management

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UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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1735 North Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209-2020
(703) 248-2100

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