

## Audit Report

# Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Carmel Main Post Office, Carmel, IN

Report Number 22-086-R22 | May 26, 2022





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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May 26, 2022

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** CHRISTINA M. JOHNSON-KENNEDY  
MANAGER, INDIANA DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Bieda".

**FROM:** Adam Bieda  
Director, Field Operations

**SUBJECT:** Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Carmel Main Post Office, Carmel, IN (Report Number 22-086-R22)

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

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General  
Corporate Audit and Response Management  
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Executive Vice President  
Chief Logistics & Processing Operations Office & Executive Vice President  
Vice President, Delivery Operations  
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations  
Vice President, Central Area

# Results

## Background

This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Carmel Main Post Office in Carmel, IN (Project Number 22-086). The Carmel Main Post Office is in the Indiana District of the Central Area and services ZIP Codes 46032 and 46033, which serves about 76,498 people and is considered an urban community.<sup>1</sup> We judgmentally selected the Carmel Main Post Office based on the number of stop-the-clock<sup>2</sup> (STC) 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 Carmel Main Post Office in Carmel, IN.

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 reported delayed mail, package scanning, and distribution up-time.<sup>3</sup> During our site visit the week of March 14, 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" area<sup>4</sup> and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 1 with management on April 29, 2022, and included their comments where appropriate.

The Carmel Main Post Office is one of three delivery units<sup>5</sup> the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed during the week of March 14, 2022, that are serviced by the Indianapolis Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC). We issued this interim report to provide the U.S. Postal Service with timely information regarding the conditions we identified at the Carmel Main Post Office. We will issue a separate report<sup>6</sup> that provides 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 Carmel Main Post Office. Specifically, we found deficiencies in three 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 our fieldwork during week of Mach 14, 2022.

1 We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from ESRI, which is based on 2010 Census Bureau information.  
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," and "No Access."  
3 Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.  
4 The 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 Plainfield Post Office in Plainfield, IN (Project Number 22-085) and Linwood Station in Indianapolis, IN (Project Number 22-087).  
6 The Project Number for the separate report is 22-091.

# Finding #1: Package Scanning

## What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit. Specifically, employees scanned 2,635 packages at the delivery unit between November 2021 and January 2022 (see Table 2). Further analysis of the scan data for these packages showed that about 71 percent were scanned “Delivered” at the delivery unit. Note that this data excludes scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as “Delivered - PO Box” and “Customer (Vacation) Hold” but, rather, represents scans performed at the delivery unit that should routinely be made at the point of delivery.

**Table 2. STC Scans at Delivery Unit**

STC Scan Type	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	Total	Percentage
Delivered	852	595	428	1,875	71.16%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location <sup>7</sup>	325	230	138	693	26.30%
Receptacle Full/Item Oversized	8	21	4	33	1.25%
No Authorized Recipient Available	7	13	9	29	1.10%
Refused	0	3	0	3	0.11%
No Secure Location Available	1	1	0	2	0.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,193</b>	<b>863</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>2,635</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service’s Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System<sup>8</sup> data.

In addition, on the morning of March 15, 2022, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 33 packages<sup>9</sup> to review and analyze scanning and tracking data. Of the 30 packages sampled from the “Notice Left” area, three had missing or improper scans. These included two packages that were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery and one with a “Delivered” scan, which should only be used when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address.

Further, we found that 19 packages had handling issues. Specifically, 18 packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned to the sender, as required.<sup>10</sup> These packages

ranged from one to 89 days past their return dates. In addition, one package was scanned “no such number”<sup>11</sup> and should have been returned to sender instead of being placed in the “Notice Left” area.

## Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. Some carriers were scanning packages for caller service<sup>12</sup> customers as “Delivered” and then placing them aside for the customer to pick up, even though the packages had the customer’s street address on them. Mail without a box number should be

<sup>7</sup> This scan type includes both “No Access” and “Business Closed” scans and does not differentiate between the two. “Business Closed” scans are often legitimately made at the unit; therefore, some of these scans may have been correct.

<sup>8</sup> A system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

<sup>9</sup> We judgmentally selected 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area and all three packages from the carrier cases. There were no scanning issues related to the three packages from the carrier cases.

<sup>10</sup> *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, dated July 2007, states that domestic packages should be returned to the sender on the 15th calendar day after a notice is left and international packages should be returned to the sender on the 30th calendar day after a notice is left.

<sup>11</sup> An STC event scan code used when the sender writes an address that does not exist.

<sup>12</sup> A premium service available for a fee to customers who receive more mail than can be delivered to the largest post office box offered by the postal facility where the caller’s (customer) mail is addressed.

delivered to the street address if shown on the mailpiece.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned timely due to inadequate management oversight. The clerk responsible for monitoring them stated that she worked the retail counter between 12:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and processed the notice left packages when time was available. She also stated that some carriers improperly placed packages directly in the “Notice Left” area without her knowledge.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance, including ensuring that packages were scanned at the delivery point and not at the delivery unit. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,<sup>14</sup> which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.<sup>15</sup> We did find that STC scans at the unit have decreased since the current officer-in-charge took over in October 2021.

In addition, packages in the “Notice Left” area should have been reviewed timely for second notices and returned to sender if they remained after the prescribed number of days.

## 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 or properly handle packages in the “Notice Left” area, customers are unable to determine the actual status of their packages. By improving scanning and handling operations, management could potentially improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

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<sup>13</sup> *Postal Operations Manual*, 842 Caller Service, November 30, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

<sup>15</sup> *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

## Finding #2: Truck Arrival Scanning

### What We Found

Employees at the Carmel Main Post Office did not scan incoming trailer/truck barcodes<sup>16</sup> as required. We reviewed data related to morning truck arrival scans from November 1, 2021, through January 31, 2022, and found that employees did not perform a scan for 465 of the 494 scheduled inbound trips (about 94 percent).<sup>17</sup> We also verified with several truck drivers who confirmed that the clerks were not performing the scans on a consistent basis.

### Why Did it Occur

Management stated that they did not monitor scan performance data or enforce scan procedures for trailer/truck barcodes because they were primarily focused on getting mail delivered. Some clerks we spoke with acknowledged that they were aware of the requirement to scan the trailer/truck barcodes and had done so prior to November 2021, but subsequently stopped because management did not enforce the requirement.

### What Should Have Happened

Management should have reviewed the Arrive Depart Tracking Report to ensure that all expected truck scans were being performed. They should have also instructed employees to perform appropriate trailer/truck barcode scans and enforced the requirement. According to Postal Service policy,<sup>18</sup> employees must scan the trailer barcode on Postal Service trailer/trucks and highway contract route trucks arriving at the delivery unit during local operating hours.

### Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When employees do not scan trailer/truck barcodes, the Postal Service does not receive timely transportation information and is unable to address issues that may be causing mail delays, which could affect customer service.

<sup>16</sup> The 15-digit trailer barcode on the back door and inside right and left walls of the trailer.

<sup>17</sup> The trips included deliveries from three locations (High School Road Annex, Indianapolis Mail Processing Annex, and Indianapolis P&DC).

<sup>18</sup> United States Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure-Subject: Trailer Scans at the Delivery Units.

## Finding #3: Property Conditions

### What We Found

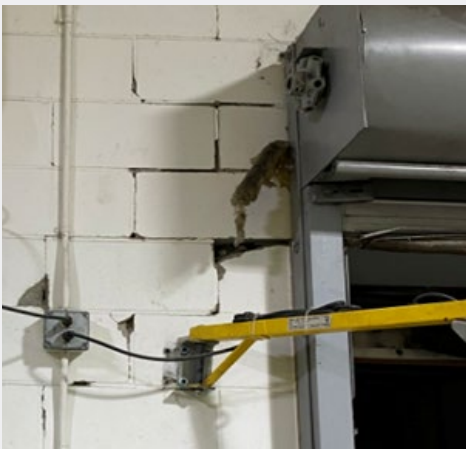
We found maintenance, security, and safety issues at the Carmel Main Post Office, including blocked fire extinguishers<sup>19</sup> on the workroom floor, missing fire extinguisher inspections, worn padding around the dock door (see Figure 1), damaged bricks on the indoor dock wall (see Figure 2), and a hole in the ceiling partially concealed with ceiling tiles near the women's restroom (see Figure 3). We also observed crumbling concrete and a rusted railing outside the dock and business caller services entrance (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). Further, there was no signage posted in the employee parking lots stating that "vehicles may be subject to search".<sup>20</sup> During our audit, the custodian took corrective action and unblocked the fire extinguishers on the workroom floor and performed the monthly inspections.

**Figure 1. Padding Around Dock Door**



Source: OIG photo taken March 15, 2022.

**Figure 2. Indoor Dock Wall Damage**



Source: OIG photo taken March 15, 2022.

**Figure 3. Gaping Hole in Ceiling**



Source: OIG photo taken March 15, 2022.

**Figure 4. Crumbling Concrete and Rusted Railing**



Source: OIG photo taken March 15, 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910.157(c)(1).

<sup>20</sup> Handbook RE-5, *Building and Site Requirements*, 2 Site Security, 2-2.4 Site Signage.

**Figure 5. Damaged Concrete**



Source: OIG photo taken March 15, 2022.

## **Why Did It Occur**

Management did not provide adequate oversight to ensure that all property condition issues were identified timely and then corrected because they were more focused on mail delivery.

## **What Should Have Happened**

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of facility maintenance, reported safety, security, and maintenance issues as they arose, and followed up to ensure the issues were addressed. 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.<sup>21</sup>

## **Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers**

Management's attention to safety, security, and maintenance 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.

## **Management's Comments**

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

<sup>21</sup> OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.



# Appendix A: Additional Information

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We conducted this audit from March through May 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 Visibility<sup>22</sup> database, and the electronic Facilities Management System.<sup>23</sup> 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.

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<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> A custom-built 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



May 10, 2022

JOHN CIHOLTA  
Director, Audit Operations

Subject: Draft Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Carmel Main Post Office, Carmel, IN (22-086)

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 – Select Units, Indiana Region (Project Number 22-086). Indiana District understands the importance of providing visibility to our customers when packages are scanned properly. Lastly, the safety, security and USPS brand are of utmost importance.

Greater Indiana District management conditionally agrees with the report.

## **Finding 1: Package Scanning**

Employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit. Specifically, employees scanned 2,635 packages at the delivery unit between November 2021 and January 2022. Further analysis of the scan data for these packages showed that about 71 percent were scanned "Delivered" at the delivery unit. Note that this data excludes scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as "Delivered - PO Box" and "Customer (Vacation) Hold" but, rather, represents scans performed at the delivery unit that should routinely be made at the point of delivery.

## **Management Response/Action Plan:**

Manager, Greater Indiana District agrees with the finding.

The manager of the Carmel Post Office has conducted training with the clerks, to address the deficiencies identified, see attached copies. The Indiana district MPOO's receive CRDO reports for all offices which identify scanning integrity concerns and are required to report up findings for any office in Indiana that is identified as having a potential issue. The district Integrated Operations Planning Specialist is responsible for daily follow-up and reporting of the consolidated findings summary to the District Manager and Manager Operations Integration for all additional actions.

## **Finding 2: Truck Arrival Scanning**

Employees at the Carmel Main Post Office did not scan incoming trailer/truck barcodes as required. We reviewed data related to morning truck arrival scans from November 1, 2021, through January 31, 2022, and found that employees did not perform a scan for 465 of the 494 scheduled inbound trips (about 94 percent). We also verified with several truck drivers who confirmed that the clerks were not performing the scans on a consistent basis.

**Management Response/Action Plan:**

Manager, Greater Indiana District agrees with the recommendation.

The Carmel Post Office has been instructed to follow applicable Postal Service scanning procedures for all trucks arriving and departing at retail and delivery units.

The manager at the Carmel Post Office conducted training with the clerks to address the deficiencies identified, see attached, copies of the training records.

**Finding 3: Property Conditions**

We found maintenance, security, and safety issues at the Carmel Main Post Office, including blocked fire extinguishers. We also observed crumbling concrete and a rusted railing outside the dock and business caller services entrance. Further, there was no signage posted in the employee parking lots stating that "vehicles may be subject to search" on the workroom floor, missing fire extinguisher inspections, worn padding around the dock door, damaged bricks on the indoor dock wall, and a hole in the ceiling partially concealed with ceiling tiles near the women's restroom. During our audit, the custodian took corrective action and unblocked the fire extinguishers on the workroom floor and performed the monthly inspections.

**Management Response/Action Plan:**

Manager, Greater Indiana District agrees with the finding.

The manager at the Carmel Post Office has been instructed to perform regular housekeeping inspections and provide copies to their MPOO. The Postmaster has been instructed on the proper procedures and schedules for the fire extinguisher inspections. Please see attached the completed Facility Maintenance issues (FSSP) (Item 2), additional missing sign (Item 3).



Christi Johnson-Kennedy  
District Manager  
Indiana District

cc: Chief Retail & Delivery Officer  
Vn Area Retail & Delivery Operations  
Corporate Audit Response Management

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