

## Audit Report

# Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO



Report Number 22-115-2-R22 | July 13, 2022





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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July 13, 2022

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** EDDIE L. BANNER  
MANAGER, KANSAS-MISSOURI DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is positioned above the "FROM:" field.

**FROM:** Sean Balduff  
Director, Delivery and Retail Response Team

**SUBJECT:** Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO (Report Number 22-115-2-R22)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO.

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

Attachment

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

# Results

## Background

This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Maryville Gardens Station in St. Louis, MO (Project Number 22-115-2). The Maryville Gardens Station is in the Kansas-Missouri District of the Central Area and services ZIP Codes 63104, 63111, and 63118<sup>1</sup> which serve about 65,703 people and are all considered urban communities.<sup>2</sup> We judgmentally selected the Maryville Gardens Station based on the number of Stop-the-Clock (STC)<sup>3</sup> 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 Maryville Gardens Station in St. Louis, MO.

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>4</sup> During our site visit 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>5</sup> and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 1 with management on June 22, 2022, and included their comments where appropriate.

The Maryville Gardens Station is one of four delivery units<sup>6</sup> the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed during the week of May 2, 2022, that are serviced by the St. Louis Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC). We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding the conditions we identified at the Maryville Gardens Station. We will issue a separate report<sup>7</sup> that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all four 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 Maryville Gardens Station. Specifically, we found issues with all four of the 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 OIG fieldwork during the week of May 2, 2022.

1 The unit also provides Post Office Box service for ZIP Code 63163.

2 We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from Esri, which is based on 2010 Census Bureau information.

3 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", "No Access", and "Business Closed".

4 Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

5 The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

6 The other three units were Saint Peters Main Post Office, Saint Peters, MO (Project Number 22-115-1); Chouteau Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 22-115-3); and Marian Oldham Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 22-115-4).

7 Project Number 22-115.

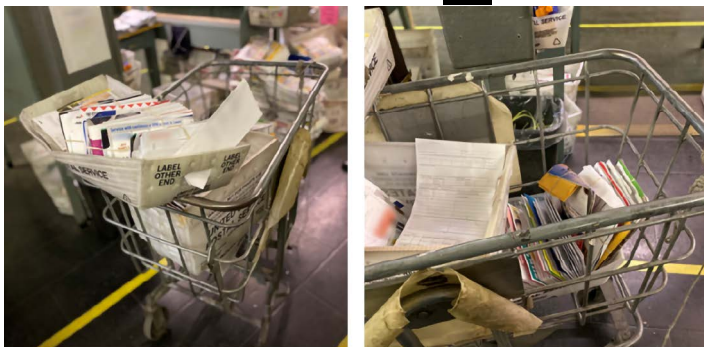
# Finding #1: Delayed Mail

## What We Found

On the morning of May 3, 2022, we identified about 5,145 pieces of delayed letter and flat mail. Although a portion of this mail volume was from an undelivered route, another portion of the delayed mail was attributed to substantial amounts of letter mail that arrived from the St. Louis P&DC that was not sorted in Delivery Point Sequencing<sup>8</sup> order.<sup>9</sup>

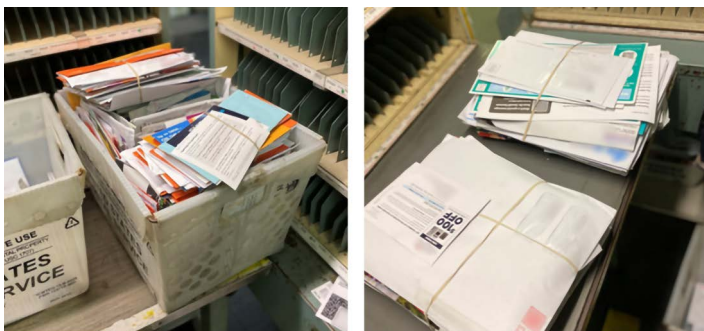
In addition, management did not accurately report this delayed mail in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)<sup>10</sup> system. While they reported 1,631 delayed letters and flats, this only represented about 31.70 percent of the delayed mailpieces we identified at the delivery unit (see Figures 1 and 2).

**Figure 1. Delayed Mail on Route**



Source: OIG photos taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 2. Examples of Delayed First-Class Mail at the Carrier Cases**



Source: OIG photos taken on May 3, 2022.

## Why Did It Occur

Management did not verify that all mail was cleared from the unit and taken to the street for delivery. In addition, the closing manager stated that carriers brought the undelivered mail back in the evening without management's knowledge.

Additionally, management stated that they did not accurately report the delayed mail in DCV because management believed the delayed mail was not committed for delivery.

## What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy<sup>11</sup> states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. In addition, managers are required<sup>12</sup> to report all mail in DCV that remains in a unit after the carriers have left for their street duties.

## Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When mail is delayed, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand. In addition, inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in DCV provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with an inaccurate status of mail delays and can result in improper actions taken to address issues.

8 Mail that arrives at a unit in sequential order and is ready to be taken directly to the street for delivery.

9 We conducted an efficiency of operations review at the St. Louis Processing and Distribution Center (Report Number 22-112-R22) during the same week we visited this unit. We identified and reported an issue related to unsorted machinable mail found at the plant in a separate report.

10 A tool for unit management to manually self-report delayed mail, which provides a snapshot of daily mail conditions at the point in time when carriers have departed for the street.

11 *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

12 *Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, March 2022.

## Finding #2: Package Scanning

### What We Found

Employees scanned 563 packages at the delivery unit between January and March 2022 (see Table 2). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that about 264 (46.89 percent) of these packages were scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location.” This data excludes scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as “Delivered – PO Box” and “Customer (Vacation) Hold” but, instead, 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	January	February	March	Total	Percentage
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location*	104	98	62	264	46.89%
Delivered	85	85	67	237	42.10%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	7	11	23	41	7.28%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	3	0	8	11	1.95%
No Secure Location Available	1	1	6	8	1.42%
No Authorized Recipient	0	0	1	1	0.18%
Refused	0	0	1	1	0.18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* For this STC scan type, we only included scans performed Monday through Friday to avoid legitimate scans for businesses closed over the weekend.

Source: OIG analysis of the Postal Service’s Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data. PTR is the system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

In addition, on the morning of May 3, 2022, we judgmentally selected 54<sup>13</sup> packages found at the unit to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 30 sampled packages from the “Notice Left” area, we did not find any

issues. However, 13 packages from the carrier cases had improper scans or were improperly handled, including:

- Five from the carrier cases had a scan that should have initiated “Return to Sender” activity but instead were left at the carrier’s case. These packages were scanned “No Such Number,” “Vacant,” or “Addressee Unknown.”
- Five from the carrier cases that had an STC scan performed at a location other than the intended delivery address. All package delivery attempts should be made at the delivery point.
- Three from the carrier cases were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.

### Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because management did not enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. Management provided documentation showing they held disciplinary discussions with carriers regarding the scanning issues. In addition, unit management submitted discipline requests to district management for approval. However, formal corrective action was not issued to the carriers because unit management did not adequately follow-up on the discipline requests.

### What Should Have Happened

Management should have followed up on the discipline requests to ensure carriers were held accountable for improper scans. 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>

### 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, customers are unable to determine the actual status of their packages. By improving scanning operations, management can potentially improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

<sup>13</sup> We selected all 24 packages from the carrier cases and judgmentally selected 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area.

<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 #3: Truck Arrival Scanning

## What We Found

Employees at the Maryville Gardens Station did not scan all incoming trailer/truck barcodes<sup>16</sup> as required. We reviewed data related to morning truck arrival scans from January through March 2022, and found that employees did not perform scans for 49 of the 154 scheduled trucks (about 31.82 percent) arriving at the station (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Truck Arrival Scans from January through March 2022**

Month	Count of Inbound Trips	Count of Missed Scans	Percentage Missing
January	57	14	24.56%
February	47	14	29.79%
March	50	21	42.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>31.82%</b>

Source: OIG analysis of data extracted from the Postal Service's Surface Visibility (SV) System. SV 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.

## Why Did It Occur

Management did not monitor incoming trailer/truck scan performance data to ensure that all trucks received an arrival scan. Employees were aware of the process to properly scan the truck trailer barcode; however, management was not aware of a report that would provide proper data for them to review employees scan performance.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored trailer/truck scanning data to ensure that all expected truck scans were being performed. According to Postal Service policy,<sup>17</sup> employees must scan the trailer barcodes 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> *United States Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure* – Subject: Trailer Scans at the Delivery Units (DU).

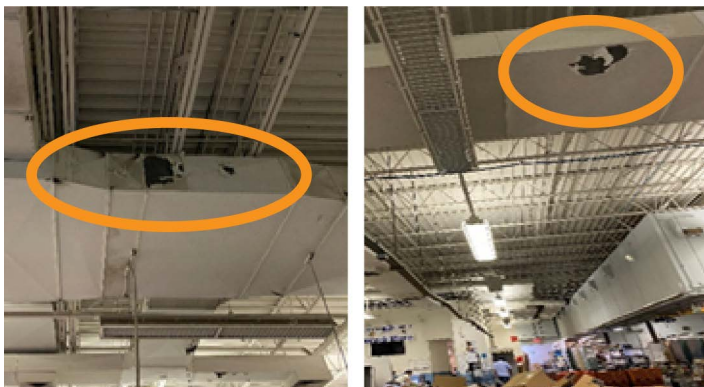
## Finding #4: Property Conditions

### What We Found

We found building safety and maintenance issues at the Maryville Gardens Station. Specifically, we identified:

- Paint along several parts of the air vents in the workroom floor area was peeling and falling to the floor (see Figure 3).
- Two ceiling tiles in the customer lobby showed signs of water damage and another tile was missing (see Figure 4).
- Dirty air vents (see Figure 5).
- An inoperable urinal in the men's bathroom (see Figure 6).
- Nearly 40 percent of the lights in the workroom floor area and in the customer lobby needed to be repaired or replaced (see Figure 7).
- A blocked internal Postal Inspection door (see Figure 8).
- Portable fire extinguishers that were not current on the monthly and annual inspections (see Figure 9).
- A newly installed drinking fountain in the employee breakroom that was leaking (see Figure 10). During our audit, the delivery unit staff unplugged the water fountain, stopped the leaking, and completed the needed repair (see Figure 11).

**Figure 3. Peeling Paint Above Workroom Floor Area**



Source: OIG photos taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 4. Damaged or Missing Ceiling Tiles**



Source: OIG photos taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 5. Dirty Air Vents**



Source: OIG photos taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 6. Inoperable Urinal**



Source: OIG photo taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 7. Lighting in Employee Work Area and Customer Lobby**



Source: OIG photos taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 8. Blocked Inspection Service Door**



Source: OIG photo taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 9. Examples of Expired Fire Extinguisher Inspections**

**Expired Monthly Inspection      Expired Annual Inspection**



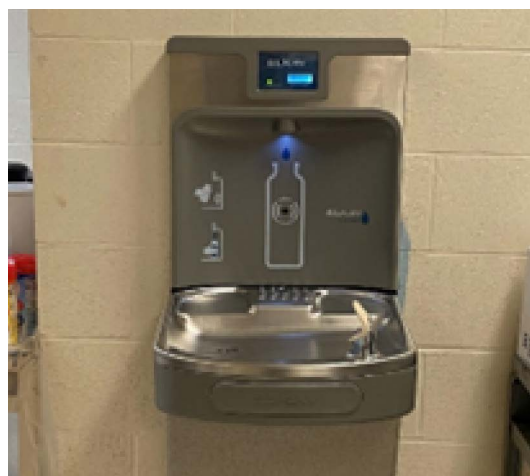
Source: OIG photos taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 10. Water Fountain in Breakroom**



Source: OIG photo taken on May 3, 2022.

**Figure 11. Repaired Water Fountain**



Source: OIG photo taken on May 16, 2022.

## Why Did It Occur

Management did not take the necessary actions to ensure that facility condition issues were corrected because they were not aware of an electronic system that allows them to determine the status of submitted work orders and repair requests. In addition, local management was not aware of the process to request fire extinguisher inspections because this process was managed by another department in the past.



## What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight to personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety and maintenance issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers. In addition, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace free of recognized hazards.<sup>18</sup>

## Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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.

## Management's Comments

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

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<sup>18</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 April through July 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, DCV, and the SV database. 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.

# Appendix B: Management's Comments



June 27, 2022

JOHN CIHOTA  
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property  
Conditions Review – Maryville Gardens, St. Louis, Mo (Report Number 22-  
115-2-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the draft audit report, *Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Maryville Gardens, St. Louis Mo.*

Management agrees with the four findings in the report on delayed mail, package scanning, truck arrival scanning, and property conditions.

Management has begun taking steps to address the four findings.

  
Eddie L. Banner  
District Manager, Kansas-Missouri District

cc: Vice President, Area Retail and Delivery Operations (Central)  
- Manager, Corporate Audit Response Management

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