

Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Marian Oldham Station, St. Louis, MO

Report Number 22-115-4-R22 | July 13, 2022





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

July 13, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: EDDIE L. BANNER
MANAGER (A), KANSAS-MISSOURI DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is centered below the memorandum header.

FROM: Sean Balduff
Director, Field Operations

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Marian Oldham Station, St. Louis, MO (Report Number 22-115-4-R22)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Marian Oldham 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 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 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 Marian Oldham Station in St. Louis, MO (Project Number 22-115-4). The Marian Oldham Station is in the Kansas-Missouri District of the Central Area and services ZIP Codes 63106 and 63108,¹ which serve about 32,922 people and are considered to be urban.² We judgmentally selected the Marian Oldham Station based on the number of customer inquiries per route that the unit received. From December 1, 2021 through February 28, 2022, the unit received 13.03 inquiries per route, which was more than the average of 7.02 inquiries per route for all sites serviced by the St. Louis Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC).

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Marian Oldham 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.³ 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” area⁴ 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 Marian Oldham Station is one of four delivery units⁵ 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 P&DC. We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding the conditions we identified at the Marian Oldham Station. We will issue a separate report⁶ 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 Marian Oldham Station. Specifically, we found deficiencies in two 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 the week of May 2, 2022.

¹ The unit also provides Post Office Box service for ZIP Code 63156.

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

³ Time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

⁴ The area of a delivery unit where letters or packages that carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

⁵ The other three units were the St. Peters Main Post Office, St. Peters, MO (Project Number 22-115-1); Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 22-115-2); and Chouteau Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 22-115-3).

⁶ Project Number 22-115.

Finding #1: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees scanned 566 packages at the delivery unit between January and March 2022 (see Table 2). Further analysis of the Stop-the-Clock (STC)⁷ scan data for these packages showed that 50 percent were scanned “Delivered.” This data excludes scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as “Delivered - PO Box” and “Customer (Vacation) Hold” and, 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
Delivered	101	92	90	283	50.00%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location*	134	95	23	252	44.52%
Receptacle Full/Item Oversized	6	10	2	18	3.18%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	3	4	2	9	1.59%
No Secure Location Available	3	0	0	3	0.53%
Refused	1	0	0	1	0.18%
Total	248	201	117	566	100%

*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, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 41 packages⁸ to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 41 sampled packages, seven had missing or improper scans, including:

- Four (two from the carrier cases and two from the “Notice Left” area) with a “Delivered” scan, which should only be used when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address. Each of these four packages were scanned either “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” or “No Secure Location Available” within thirty seconds after the initial “Delivered” scan, which is an indication that carriers were scanning them “Delivered” prior to verifying that they could actually deliver the packages.
- Three from the “Notice Left” area scanned away from the delivery point (two of these three packages were scanned at the unit). All packages are required to be scanned at the delivery point.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because management did not adequately monitor package scanning procedures and enforce compliance. While the station manager said he was monitoring a scan integrity report provided by the district, he did not adequately monitor other reports, such as those in the Delivery Management System, to ensure scanning accuracy. Some carriers also thought they should scan packages for caller service⁹ customers as “Delivered” and place them aside for the customer to pick up, even though the packages had the customer’s street address on them.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily, including ensuring that packages were scanned at the delivery point and not at the delivery unit. Caller service mail without a box number should have been delivered to the street address if shown on the mailpiece.¹⁰ The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts

⁷ A scan event that indicates the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the mailpiece. Examples of STC scans include “Delivered,” “Available for Pick-up,” and “No Access.”

⁸ We judgmentally selected 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area and all 11 packages from the carrier cases.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ *Postal Operations Manual*, 842 Caller Service, November 30, 2021.

for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,¹¹ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.¹²

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.

¹¹ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

¹² *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

Finding #2: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found building safety and maintenance issues at the Marian Oldham Station, including all seven fire extinguishers missing both monthly and annual inspections. Monthly inspections were last completed on March 10, 2022, and annual inspections were last completed in March 2021 (see Figure 1).¹³ We also found a space heater plugged into a surge protector rather than directly into the wall outlet in the sales associate's area (see Figure 2), five dirty vents in the customer lobby (see Figure 3), and one large pothole (approximately two inches deep) in the employee parking lot (see Figure 4).

Figure 1. Example of Fire Extinguisher Missing Inspections



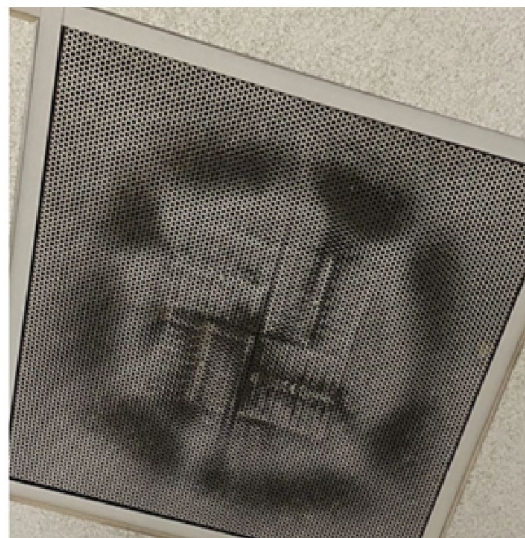
Source: OIG photo taken on May 4, 2022.

Figure 2. Space Heater Plugged into Surge Protector



Source: OIG photo taken on May 4, 2022.

Figure 3. Example of Dirty Vent in Customer Lobby



Source: OIG photo taken on May 4, 2022.

¹³ Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 29 CFR 1910.157(e)(2) and 29 CFR 1910.157(e)(3) requires that fire extinguishers be inspected monthly and annually.

Figure 4. Pothole in Employee Parking Lot



Source: OIG photo taken on May 4, 2022.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide adequate oversight to ensure all property condition issues were identified timely. Specifically, the station manager was not aware of any of the issues we identified. For the annual fire extinguisher inspections, the station manager stated that he usually receives an alert from the company that does the inspections when they are due, but he had not received one this year.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of facility maintenance, reported safety 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.¹⁴

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.

¹⁴ OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

Appendix A: Additional Information

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 system. Although we did not test the validity of the controls over this system, 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

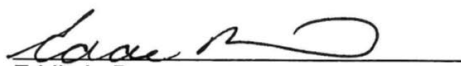
JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property
Conditions Review – Marian Oldham, St. Louis, Mo (Report Number 22-
115-4-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 – Marian Oldham, St. Louis Mo.*

Management agrees with the two findings in the report on package scanning and property conditions.

Management has begun taking steps to address the two 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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