

Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Richard J. Pino Station, Albuquerque, NM

Report Number 22-132-2-R22 | August 5, 2022





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

August 5, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN S. MORGAN
DISTRICT MANAGER, ARIZONA-NEW MEXICO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph E. Wolski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

FROM: Joseph E. Wolski
Director, Field Operations 2

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review –
Richard J. Pino Station, Albuquerque, NM (Report Number 22-132-2-R22)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition – Richard J. Pino Station, Albuquerque, NM.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit and Response Management
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Executive Vice President
Vice President, Delivery Operations
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations
Vice President, WestPac 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 Richard J. Pino Station in Albuquerque, NM (Project Number 22-132-2). The Richard J. Pino Station is in the Arizona-New Mexico District of the Westpac Area and services ZIP Codes 87114 and 87120.¹ These ZIP Codes serve about 119,707 people and are considered to be urban communities.² We judgmentally selected the Richard J. Pino Station based on the number of customer inquiries the unit received related to package tracking and mail delivery delays. From January through March 2022, the station received 17.15 inquiries per route, which was more than the average of 9.76 inquiries per route for all sites serviced by the Albuquerque Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC).

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Richard J. Pino Station in Albuquerque, NM.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on 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 July 19, 2022, and included their comments where appropriate.

The Richard J. Pino Station is one of four delivery units⁵ the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed during the week of June 6, 2022, that are serviced by the Albuquerque P&DC. We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding the conditions we identified at the Richard J. Pino 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 Richard J. Pino 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 our fieldwork during the week of June 6, 2022.

¹ The unit also services ZIP code 87193, which is used for PO Boxes and business customers.

² We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from Esri, which is based on 2010 Census Bureau information. Of the 119,707 people living in these ZIP Codes, about 117,885 (about 98.48 percent) are considered urban and 1,822 (about 1.52 percent) are considered living in rural communities. Consequently, we considered the population urban.

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 the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

⁵ The other three units were Rio Rancho Branch, Rio Rancho, NM (Project Number 22-132-1); Santa Fe Main Post Office, Santa Fe, NM (Project Number 22-132-3); and Coronado Station, Santa Fe, NM (Project Number 22-132-4).

⁶ Project Number 22-132.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of June 7, 2022, we identified about 5,996 pieces of delayed mail in the hot case⁷ distribution area (see Figure 1) and 13 carrier cases (see Figure 2). Specifically, we identified approximately 4,540 letters in the hot case area and about 678 letters and 778 flats in the carrier cases. This delayed mail was not reported as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)⁸ system.

Figure 1. Delayed Mail in the Hot Case Distribution Area



Source: OIG photos taken on June 7, 2022.

Figure 2. Example of Delayed Mail at Carrier Case



Source: OIG photos taken on June 7, 2022.

Why Did It Occur

Management stated that they were unaware of the undistributed mail in the hot case area. In addition, management did not ensure that carriers were checking in with a supervisor upon return from their street deliveries, preventing management from determining whether all mail was delivered. The acting PM supervisor stated that responsibilities in the customer service area prevented them from greeting each carrier as they returned.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured the mail was distributed timely and all delayed mail reported. Management should also have enforced PM unit review procedures, ensuring that no deliverable mail was returned without appropriate documentation.⁹ Postal Service policy¹⁰ 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 required¹¹ 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.

⁷ A case designated for final withdrawal of mail as carriers leave the office.

⁸ 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.

⁹ *PM Unit Review*, May 2010.

¹⁰ *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

¹¹ *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization*, March 2022.

Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit. In total, employees scanned 767 packages at the delivery unit between February and April 2022 (see Table 2). Further analysis of Stop-the-Clock (STC)¹² scan data for these packages showed that about 54.63 percent were scanned “Delivered”. Note that this data exclude 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. In addition, we only included “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” scans performed Monday through Friday to avoid legitimate scans for businesses closed on weekends.

In addition, on June 7, 2022, we selected 60 packages¹³ to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 60 sampled packages, 18 (30 percent) had missing or improper scans, including:

- Twelve (10 from the carrier cases and two from the “Notice Left” area) with “Delivery Attempted - No Access to Delivery Location” scans with location data showing that scans were not made at the delivery point. All packages are required to be scanned at the point of the delivery attempt.
- Four (three from the carrier cases and one from the “Notice Left” area) that were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- Two (one from the carrier cases and one from the “Notice Left” area) with “Delivered” scans, which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package

scanning procedures. Specifically, the acting PM supervisor stated that they routinely scan all undelivered packages with an STC scan such as “Held at Post Office at Customer Request” or “Delivery Attempted - No Access to Delivery Location” when they find packages that do not appear to have an STC scan. The acting PM supervisor cited fear of disciplinary action if they did not clear the End of Day Report,¹⁴ indicating that there was an STC scan for each package. Unit management stated that they were unaware of the acting PM supervisor’s improper scanning.

Table 2. STC Scans at Delivery Unit

STC Scan Type	February	March	April	Total	Percentage
Delivered	154	107	158	419	54.63%
Delivery Attempted - No Access to Delivery Location	63	87	66	216	28.16%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	24	18	13	55	7.17%
Delivery Exception - Local Weather Delayed	38	0	0	38	4.95%
No Secure Location Available	8	10	10	28	3.65%
Delivery Exception - Animal Interference	3	1	4	8	1.04%
Refused	1	1	1	3	0.39%
Total	291	224	252	767	100%*

* Total percentage does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.
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.

¹² 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”.

¹³ We judgmentally selected 30 packages from the carrier cases in the morning, before carriers arrived for the day, and 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area in the afternoon.

¹⁴ The End of Day report displays the number of Arrival at Unit (AAU) scans, the number of STC scans, and the percentage of AAU scans with a corresponding STC scan for each facility in the user’s area or district.

What Should Have Happened

Unit management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance, ensuring that all packages are scanned at the delivery point. The Postal Service's goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,¹⁵ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.¹⁶

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.

¹⁵ *Postal Service Poster 621: Delivery Done Right*, January 2015.

¹⁶ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

Finding #3: Truck Arrival Scanning

What We Found

Employees at the Richard J. Pino Station did not scan all incoming trailer/truck barcodes as required. We reviewed data related to morning truck arrival scans from February 1 through April 30, 2022, and found that employees did not perform a scan for 126 of 133 scheduled trucks (about 94.74 percent) arriving from the Albuquerque, NM P&DC (see Table 3). Employees were not making scans of the inbound mail trucks upon arrival during our observations.

Table 3. Truck Arrival Scans from February 1 through April 30, 2022

Month	Count of Inbound Trips	Count of Missed Scans	Percentage Missing
February	35	34	97.14%
March	50	45	90.00%
April	48	47	97.92%
Total	133	126	

Source: OIG analysis of data extracted from the Postal Service's Surface Visibility System. Surface Visibility is a mobile scanning application that enables the Postal Service personnel to track the mail across the surface transportation network.

Why Did It Occur

Unit management stated that they did not monitor scan performance data because they were unaware of the Arrive Depart Tracking Report and did not enforce scan procedures for trailer/truck barcodes due to competing priorities, such as retail and delivery operations. During our interviews, the AM supervisor stated that they were unaware of the scan requirement because they had not received training.

What Should Have Happened

Unit management should have performed reviews to ensure that all expected truck scans were being performed. They should also have instructed employees to perform appropriate trailer/truck barcodes scans and enforced the requirement. According to Postal Service policy,¹⁷ 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 the truck barcode, 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.

¹⁷ United States Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure – Subject: Trailer Scans at the Delivery Units (DU).

Finding # 4: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found safety and maintenance issues at the Richard J. Pino Station, including fire extinguishers that had not been inspected (see Figure 3), two broken dock lifts (see Figure 4), non-working dock lights (see Figure 5), and light fixtures attached to thermostats (see Figure 6).

Figure 3. Fire Extinguishers Missing Annual or Monthly Inspections



Source: OIG photos taken June 7, 2022.

Figure 4. Broken Dock Lifts



Source: OIG photos taken June 7 and 10, 2022.

Figure 5. Non-Working Dock Lights



Source: OIG photos taken June 7, 2022.

Figure 6. Thermostats



Source: OIG photos taken June 7, 2022.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not take the necessary actions to ensure that facility conditions issues were corrected because they were not aware of most of the issues due to lack of oversight and competing priorities, such as retail and delivery operations. In addition, management believed the dock lift reported in the electronic Facilities Management System (eFMS)¹⁸ was fixed, stating that local maintenance was on-

¹⁸ 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.

site to repair the broken dock lift the week prior to our visit. However, during our visit, we observed that the dock lift was not fully repaired and had become unusable.

During our visit, management took corrective actions to address some of the issues identified, removing the lamps from the thermostats and submitting a repair request for the non-working dock lights.

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 of repairs. 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.¹⁹

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Management's attention to safety 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 findings 2, 3, and 4, and partially agreed with finding 1. Specifically, management disagreed with the number of pieces of delayed mail the OIG reported. Management stated that some of the mail identified as delayed at the hot case was 3M mail²⁰ that had not been separated from the delayed mail.

Management stated they have begun taking steps to address all four findings. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

Regarding management's disagreement with the number of pieces the OIG reported as delayed, we acknowledge that some of this mail may have been 3M mail. However, without separation or clear labeling, it was not possible to verify the number of pieces that were 3M mail. Consequently, we believe that our assessment of delayed mail was appropriate.

¹⁹ OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

²⁰ Mail that is missorted, missequenced, or missent.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from June through August 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 PTR, DCV, the Surface Visibility²¹ database, and eFMS. 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.

²¹ 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.

Appendix B: Management's Comments



July 27, 2022

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review – Richard J. Pino Station, Albuquerque, NM - Project Number 22-132-2-DRAFT

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 – Richard J. Pino Station, Albuquerque, NM*.

Management agrees with finding #2: Package Scanning, finding #3: Truck Arrival Scanning, and finding #4: Property Conditions.

As for finding #1: Delayed Mail, management disagrees, in part, with the number of pieces reported by the OIG as delayed. The mail identified at the hot case was a mixture of 3M mail and delayed mail. Some of what the OIG identified as delayed mail was 3M mail that had not been separated from the hot case mail.

Management has begun taking steps to address the four findings.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Morgan".

John Morgan
District Manager, Arizona-New Mexico

cc: Vice President, Area Retail & Delivery Operations (Western-Pacific)
Corporate Audit & Response Management

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