Delivery and Customer Service Issues – Silverado Station, Las Vegas, NV

June 11, 2019

Report Number DRT-AR-19-002

June 11, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: TRACIE HILL-SANDIFER
ACTING MANAGER, NEVADA-SIERRA DISTRICT

E-Signed by Hilderbrand, Sherry
ERIFY authenticity with eSign Deskto

FROM: Sherry A. Hilderbrand
Director, Delivery and Retail Response Team

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Delivery and Customer Service Issues –
Silverado Station, Las Vegas, NV
(Report Number DRT-AR-19-002)

This report presents the results of our Silverado Station, Las Vegas, NV Delivery and
Customer Service audit (Project Number 19RG019DRT000).

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any
questions or need additional information, please contact please contact Byron Bustos,
Operational Manager, at bbustos@uspsoig.gov or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Corporate Audit and Response Management
    Kevin L. McAdams
    Greg Graves

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of Delivery and Customer Service Issues – Silverado Station, Las Vegas, NV (Project Number 19RG019DRT000). Our objective was to assess retail and mail delivery service on selected routes at the Silverado Station – Las Vegas, Nevada. This audit was designed to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential delivery and customer service risks at Silverago Station.

The Silverado Station is in the Nevada-Sierra District of the Western Area. The Silverado Station had 57 city routes and 13 rural routes servicing over 51,000 delivery points. Additionally, it provides retail and post office (PO) Box services to customers over four retail counters and 1,174 PO Boxes. We selected the Silverado Station based on our analysis of Enterprise Customer Care[1] (eCC), Carriers Returning After 1800, Retail Customer Experience, and wait-time-in-line (WTIL) data. The Silverado Station had 1,971 eCC customer cases between July 1, 2018 and February 28, 2019. Roughly 88 percent of the eCC customer complaints were related to mail and packages not received or being delivered to the wrong address (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Silverado Complaints from eCC cases
July 1, 2018 – Feb 28, 2019**

	Where is My Package	Where is My Mail	Other	Total
Number of Cases	1,313	415	243	1,971
Percentage of Cases	67%	21%	12%	100%

Source: Application System Reporting.

Objective, Scope and Methodology

The objective was to assess retail and mail delivery service on selected routes at the Silverado Station, Las Vegas, NV. To accomplish our objective, we performed data analysis on retail metrics such as WTIL and In Store Window Operations Survey Earned – Actual Staffing to assess performance of retail operations. In addition, we analyzed eCC case data and reviewed Yelp and Google online reviews for potential issues in specific zones and routes. We observed the delivery unit, office delivery operations, customer service back office and retail operations. We interviewed unit management and employess and analyzed the scan status of mailpieces in the "notice left" area.

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[1] eCC is a Postal Service software program to record and track customer complaints received by letter, phone, email, visit, or through the Postal Service's website.

We relied on computer-generated data from the eCC application, Product Tracking Reporting System, and the Staffing and Scheduling Tool. Although we did not test the validity of 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.

We conducted this audit from April through June 2019, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. 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 13, 2019 and included their comments where appropriate.

Finding # 1: Wait Time in Line

Silverado Station customers were experiencing excessive WTIL. Specifically, we observed customers WTIL exceeding five minutes in both the retail and pick-up lines. The customer service supervisor stated the excessive WTIL occurred because of limited staffing and high customer demand. However, we observed the following which also contributed to the excessive WTIL:

- The clerks and the customer service supervisor were not effectively managing the lines. Specifically, they did not ask customers if they would like to use the self-service kiosk or assist the customers in the pick-up line even when the retail line had no customers. The Postal Service's goal[2] is to provide a level of service that produces a WTIL of less than five minutes.

- Mail delivery had been suspended for several residential cluster mailboxes and PO Boxes for several months due to vandalism or burglary, affecting about 200 addresses (see Exhibits 1, 2, and 3). The unit held the customers' mail for pick-up (see Exhibits 4 and 5) resulting in additional customers in the pick-up line. In addition, management had not submitted work orders to have the broken PO Boxes re-keyed with more secure locks. Postmasters should request corrective action from responsible parties and restore normal service as soon as appropriate, as required.[3]

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[2] PO-209 – Retail Operations Handbook, 13-3 Service in Five Minutes or Less, October 2012.
[3] Postal Operations Manual Section 623.3: Safety or Security, November 2018.

Exhibits 1 & 2. Examples of Damaged Residential Cluster Boxes

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) Photographs of damaged cluster box taken on April 9, 2019 in the Sierra-Nevada District, Silverado Station delivery route.

Exhibit 3. Example of Vandalized PO Box

Source: OIG Photograph of damaged/vandalized PO Boxes at the Silverado Station, picture taken on April 9, 2019.

Exhibits 4 & 5. Mail Held for Customer

Source: OIG Photographs of mail held for pick-up in the Silverado Station Left Notice area and in individual carrier cases, picture taken on April 9, 2019.

Management is required to make all reasonable efforts to help reduce WTIL.[4] A long WTIL can adversely affect the retail customer service experience and harm the Postal Service brand.

> **Recommendation #1: We recommend the Manager, Nevada-Sierra District**, instruct unit management to follow retail operations policy and procedures for effectively managing customer wait-time-in-line.

> **Recommendation #2: We recommend the Manager, Nevada-Sierra District**, instruct unit management to submit work orders to repair post office mail boxes to ensure they are repaired and request corrective action on residential cluster boxes to restore delivery.

Finding # 2: Package Delivery Scanning

We determined unit employees were improperly scanning packages in the unit. We conducted an observation on April 9, 2019, and judgmentally sampled packages in the PO Box section. Specifically, 10 packages sampled in the notice left shelves showed they received improper "Stop the Clock" scans[5] as "Delivered" even though they were not in the customers boxes. Packages that cannot fit into the PO Box or parcel locker should be scanned "Attempted."[6] According to the unit clerks, this occurred because management instructed them to scan all packages intended for the PO Boxes as

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[4] PO-209 – Retail Operations Handbook, 13-3 Service in Five Minutes or Less, October 2012.
[5] When a carrier attempts to deliver a package at the delivery location, it gets a stop-the-clock scan, indicating the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the package.
[6] Scanning at a Glance > Retail Back Office > Priority Mail/First-Class Mail/Package Services/International (Destinating parcels).

"Delivered" even if they were not placed in the customers PO Box or a parcel locker for customer retrieval.

Customers rely on timely and consistent mail delivery service. By improving mail delivery, district management can increase mail visibility, improve customer service, and receive fewer customer complaints related to the location and delivery status of their mail and packages.

> **Recommendation #3: We recommend the Manager, Nevada-Sierra District**, instruct unit management to ensure staff follow delivery and standard operating procedures for scanning mail pieces.

Management's Comments

Management partially disagreed with finding 1, agreed to finding 2 and recommendations 1, 2, and 3.

Regarding finding 1, management stated the WTIL is a national indicator that measures customer wait time in the retail line only. Management stated that the report data did not provide specifics related to actual audit observations for analysis of transaction types and clerk activity.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated they re-issued standard operating procedures (SOP) in accordance with the retail operations policy and procedures as of May 31, 2019.

Regarding recommendation 2, management said they re-issued the Broken and Vandalized Mail Box SOP and validated all boxes identified have been repaired and delivery restored as of May 31, 2019.

Regarding recommendation 3, management stated they reissued the USPS HQ Scanning SOP to all Nevada-Sierra Post Office, Stations and Branches as of May 31, 2019.

See Appendix A for management's comments in their entirety.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations in the report.

Regarding management's partial disagreement with finding 1, we agree that the WTIL measures the retail line only. However, as noted in our report the retail and package pick-up lines experienced long wait times during our observations on April 9, 2019. Despite long wait times, the clerks and customer service supervisor did not assist the pick-up line when there were no retail customers. A long WTIL can adversely affect the retail customer service experience and harm the Postal Service brand.

We consider recommendations 1, 2, and 3 closed with the issuance of this report.

Appendix A: Management's Comments

Nevada-Sierra District

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

Date: June 5, 2019

To: Lazerick C. Poland
     Director Audit Operations

Re: Report Project Number 19RG019DRT000 –Las Vegas, NV
     Delivery and Customer Service Audit

Thank you for the details provided of the findings and observations regarding the Las Vegas, NV Delivery and Customer Service Audit.

Management **partially disagrees** with Finding #1 regarding Wait Time in Line. The reference to WTIL as used by the USPS is a national indicator that measures customers wait time at the retail line only.   Data provided in the report did not provide specifics as it relates to actual times/dates of audit observations for analysis of transaction types and clerk activity.

Management **agrees** with Finding #2 regarding package scanning procedures.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the Manager, Nevada-Sierra District, instruct unit management to follow retail operations policy and procedures for effectively managing customer wait time in line.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management **agrees** with this recommendation. The District re-issued SOP's in accordance with the retail operations policy and procedures.

Target Implementation Date: Completed May 2019
Responsible Official: Las Vegas Postmaster and District Retail Manager

Recommendation #2: We recommend the Manager, Nevada-Sierra District, instruct unit management to submit work orders to repair post office mail boxes to ensure they are repaired and request corrective action on residential cluster boxes to restore delivery.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management **agrees** with this recommendation. The District re-issued Broken and Vandalized Mail Box SOP and validated all boxes identified have been repaired and delivery restored.

Target Implementation Date: Completed May 2019
Responsible Official: Las Vegas Postmaster and District Manager Operations Support

1001 E Sunset RD. Room 2006
Las Vegas NV 89199-1000
702-361-9507

Recommendation #3: **We recommend the Manager, Nevada-Sierra District, instruct unit management to ensure staff follow delivery and standard operating procedures for scanning mail pieces.**

Management Response/Action Plan: Management **agrees** with this recommendation. The District reissued USPS HQ Scanning SOP to all Nevada-Sierra Stations and branches and all CAG offices.

Target Implementation Date: Completed May 2019
Responsible Official: Senior Operations Managers and Manager Operations Support

Sincerely,
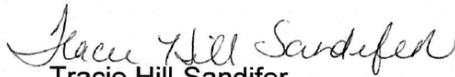
Tracie Hill-Sandifer
A/District Manager
Nevada Sierra District