



AUDIT REPORT

Delivery Scanning Issues – Stafford Post Office Stafford, TX

September 20, 2019





Report Number DRT-AR-19-022



September 20, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHENISE R. LEDOUX
MANAGER, HOUSTON DISTRICT

Janet Sorensen 



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

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Delivery Scanning Issues – Stafford Post
Office, Stafford, TX
(Report Number DRT-AR-19-022)

This report presents the results of our audit of Delivery Scanning Issues at the Stafford Post Office, Stafford, TX (Project Number 19-006).

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Vice President, Delivery and Retail Operations
Vice President, Area Operations
Controller, Southern Area
Corporate Audit and Response Management

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of delivery scanning issues at the Stafford Post Office in Stafford, TX (Project Number 19-006). We conducted the audit to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential operational risks at the Stafford Post Office.

The Stafford Post Office is in the Houston District of the Southern Area. The Stafford Post Office has 18 regular city routes delivered by 25 city carriers (21 Full-Time Regular city carriers and four City Carrier Assistants). We selected Stafford Post Office based on our analysis of stop-the-clock (STC) scan data from the Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) system.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate the package delivery scanning process on select routes at the Stafford Post Office in Stafford, TX.

To accomplish our objective, we analyzed delivery metrics that included scan data with STC scans that occurred at the delivery unit, mail arrival times, distribution up time, delayed mail, and carriers return to office time. We also conducted observations at the unit on August 29, 2019, and analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and in the “notice left” package area. We also interviewed delivery unit personnel and unit management to verify data and identify causes for STC scans at the delivery unit and reviewed arrow lock key security procedures.

We relied on computer-generated data from the PTR system. We did not test the validity of controls over this system; however, we verified the accuracy of the data by performing various tests and using reasonableness assertions. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We conducted this audit from August through September 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 discussed our observations and conclusions with management on September 9, 2019 and included their comments where appropriate.

Finding # 1: Package Delivery Scanning

We determined unit employees were improperly scanning mail pieces at the unit and were not following scanning and handling policies. Specifically, we used geolocation data to identify units with stop-the-clock (STC) scans that occurred at the delivery unit property instead of the intended delivery address. The unit had 13,169 STC scans at the delivery unit between May and July 2019 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Stop-The-Clock Scans at Delivery Unit

May	June	July	Total
3,339	4,674	5,156	13,169

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of PTR system data.

Carriers stated that packages are scanned at the delivery unit for convenience since it would take more time to scan them at the delivery points when they arrived.

In addition, during our observation on August 29, 2019, we judgmentally selected 43 mail pieces that were in the unit before the carriers arrived for the day to review the scanning and tracking data. Of the 43 mailpieces, 23 were located at the carrier cases and 20 were in the notice left area. We identified 24 (56 percent) mailpieces with missing scans or had improper scans or handling. Specifically:

- Thirteen were scanned as “Delivered, In/At Mailbox.” Nine of these were found in carrier cases and four were at the notice left area.
- Five did not have an STC scan indicating why it had not been delivered.
- Four showed a “Delivered” scan but were at the unit.
- Two were scanned as “No Authorized Recipient Available” but were physically at the facility for more than 30 days.

The package scanning issues occurred because local management did not adequately enforce scanning procedures. The Postal Service’s goal is to make sure mail is delivered to the correct address with proper service, which includes scanning every mail piece ensuring 100 percent visibility throughout the process.¹

Customers rely on accurate scan data to track their packages in real time. When employees do not scan mail pieces 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, enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the Manager, Houston District, instruct unit management to ensure staff follow delivery standard operating procedures for scanning mailpieces.

¹ Scanning at a Glance – Delivering 100 percent Visibility, August 2011 and Delivery Done Right initiative.

Finding # 2 Arrow Key Records

Unit management had not updated its master Arrow key inventory list. Specifically, the Arrow key inventory list included a key that had been removed from unit's inventory because a route had been abolished during a recent route inspection. In addition, the unit had replaced two arrow keys, but the inventory list had not been updated to reflect the new Arrow key numbers.

This condition occurred because management did not ensure the Arrow key records were updated, as required.² Arrow keys are accountable property³ and an updated and accurate Arrow key inventory protects against potential loss. When there is insufficient oversight and supervision of accountable items such as arrow lock keys, there is an increased risk of mail theft. Management took corrective action during our audit by updating the Arrow key list and dates on August 29, 2019. As a result, we will not make a recommendation.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the finding and recommendation. See [Appendix A](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Regarding recommendation 1, management will ensure staff follow scanning standard operating procedures for scanning mail pieces. The target implementation date is September 30, 2019.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

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

The recommendation requires OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. Recommendation 1 should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendation can be closed.

² *Postal Operations Manual*, Issue 9, 633.52a, Keys Assigned to Carriers, July 2002 (updated with revisions through April 30, 2019).

³ U. S. Court of Appeals 9th Circuit Case #95-50133, 03-12-1996.

APPENDIX A. MANAGEMENT’S COMMENTS

DISTRICT MANAGER
HOUSTON DISTRICT



September 16, 2019

LAZERICK POLAND
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Draft Audit Report – Delivery Scanning Issues –
Stafford Post Office, Stafford TX (Report Number DRT-AR-19)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) draft audit report “Delivery Scanning Issues at the Stafford Post Office (Report Number DRT-AR-19-DRAFT).”

Management agrees with the findings and recommendations of the OIG pertaining to the delivery scanning issues at the Stafford Post Office. Upon further investigation by unit management, we found that the majority of the pieces were from firm sheets being scanned in the office. After scanning the firm sheet in the office, the carrier would deliver the pieces on the street. Management agrees to immediately stop this practice in Stafford.

Recommendation #1:

We recommend the Manager, Houston District, instruct unit management to ensure the staff follow delivery standard operating procedures for scanning mail pieces.

Management Response/Action Plan:

District Manager Chenise LeDoux directed [REDACTED] on September 16, 2019 to ensure the staff follow delivery standard operating procedures for scanning mail pieces.

Target Implementation Date:

September 30, 2019

Responsible Official:

[REDACTED] is the responsible official.

Chenise LeDoux

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