

# Fiscal Year 2022 Capping Report - Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews - WestPac Area



## AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 23-030-R23 | March 20, 2023



# Table of Contents

## Cover

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Highlights</b> ..... | 1 |
| Background .....        | 1 |
| What We Did .....       | 1 |
| What We Found .....     | 1 |
| Recommendation .....    | 1 |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Transmittal Letter</b> ..... | 2 |
|---------------------------------|---|

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Results</b> ..... | 3 |
|----------------------|---|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Introduction/Objective.....                                      | 3 |
| Background .....   | 3 |
| Summary of Findings from Fiscal Year 2022 District Reports ..... | 3 |
| Delayed Mail.....  | 4 |
| Package Scanning.....  | 5 |
| Truck Arrival Scanning .....                                     | 5 |
| Property Conditions.....   | 5 |
| Finding #1: Package and Truck Scanning Improvements .....        | 5 |
| Package Scanning.....  | 5 |
| Finding #2: Recurring Property Conditions .....                  | 7 |
| Recommendation #1 .....  | 8 |
| Management’s Comments .....                                      | 8 |
| Evaluation of Management’s Comments.....                         | 8 |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Appendices</b> ..... | 9 |
|-------------------------|---|

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Appendix A: Additional Information..... | 10 |
| Scope and Methodology .....             | 10 |
| Prior Audit Coverage .....              | 10 |
| Appendix B: Management’s Comments ..... | 13 |

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| <b>Contact Information</b> ..... | 14 |
|----------------------------------|----|

# Highlights

## Background

The U. S. Postal Service’s WestPac Area has about 2,996 delivery units to assist in the Postal Service’s universal service obligation to bind the nation together and provide prompt, reliable, and efficient postal services to all communities. As of September 2022, about 64,000 city and rural carriers delivered to about 30 million possible delivery points in the WestPac Area. During fiscal year (FY) 2022, we evaluated mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at 15 delivery units in the WestPac Area.

## What We Did

Our objective was to summarize the audit results of selected Postal Service delivery units in the WestPac Area during FY 2022 and evaluate recent package and truck arrival scanning performance. For this audit, we extracted and analyzed recent package and truck arrival scanning data and compared it to the data used during the initial audits to determine if there were any improvements in scanning performance.

## What We Found

During our FY 2022 audits at 15 delivery units, we found deficiencies with delayed mail at four units, package scanning at 15 units, truck arrival scanning at 12 units, and property conditions at 15 units.

Based on our analysis of recent package and truck arrival scanning data, we found notable improvements in the number of packages scanned at the units and truck arrival scanning. Specifically, 13 of 15 delivery units reduced the number of packages scanned at the unit. Further, 12 delivery units increased the number of truck arrival scans.

In addition, while reviewing property conditions during our FY 2022 audits, we regularly found that portable fire extinguishers were missing monthly and/or annual inspections.

## Recommendation

We recommended management assign personnel at the district level to verify that fire extinguishers are properly inspected and develop a program to monitor the completion of monthly and annual fire extinguisher inspections.



# Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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March 20, 2023

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** EDUARDO H. RUIZ  
VICE PRESIDENT, WESTPAC AREA RETAIL &  
DELIVERY OPERATIONS

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Thresher".

**FROM:** Kelly Thresher  
Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Field Operations

**SUBJECT:** Audit Report – Fiscal Year 2022 Capping Report - Mail Delivery,  
Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews - WestPac Area  
(Report Number 23-030-R23)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews in the WestPac Area.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Sean Balduff, Director, Field Operations, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General  
Corporate Audit Response Management  
Director of Retail and Post Office Operations Maintenance  
Executive Vice President and Chief Retail & Delivery Officer  
Vice President, Delivery Operations  
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations

# Results

## Introduction/Objective

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of mail delivery, customer service, and property condition reviews in the WestPac Area (Project Number 23-030). Our objective was to summarize the audit results of selected U.S. Postal Service delivery units in the WestPac Area during fiscal year (FY) 2022 and evaluate recent package and truck arrival scanning performance. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about this audit.

## Background

The Postal Service's WestPac Area has about 2,996 delivery units to assist in the Postal Service's universal service obligation to bind the nation together and provide prompt, reliable, and efficient postal services to all communities. As of September 2022, about 64,000 city and rural carriers delivered to about 30 million possible delivery points in the WestPac Area.

During FY 2022, we evaluated mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at 15 delivery units in the WestPac Area (see Appendix A for list of reports). These delivery units spanned four different districts, had a combined total of 510 city routes and 184 rural routes, and served a total population of about 1.1 million. Staffing at these delivery units during the time of our reviews included 758 city carriers, 289 rural carriers, and 200 clerks.

## Summary of Findings from Fiscal Year 2022 District Reports

We identified issues affecting mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at all 15 delivery units. Specifically, we found deficiencies with delayed mail, package scanning, truck arrival scanning, and property conditions (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Summary of Results**

| Delivery Unit                    | District             | Deficiency Identified - Yes or No |                  |                        |                     |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
|                                  |                      | Delayed Mail                      | Package Scanning | Truck Arrival Scanning | Property Conditions |
| Beaverton Main Post Office (MPO) | Idaho-Montana-Oregon | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Parkrose Station                 | Idaho-Montana-Oregon | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Piedmont Station                 | Idaho-Montana-Oregon | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Vancouver MPO                    | Washington           | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Downtown San Diego Station       | California 6         | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Linda Vista Station              | California 6         | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Ramona MPO                       | California 6         | No                                | Yes              | No                     | Yes                 |
| Kent MPO                         | Washington           | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Lacey Branch                     | Washington           | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |

|  |                    | Deficiency Identified - Yes or No |                  |                        |                     |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Delivery Unit                          | District           | Delayed Mail                      | Package Scanning | Truck Arrival Scanning | Property Conditions |
| Parkland Branch                        | Washington         | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Renton MPO                             | Washington         | No                                | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Coronado Station                       | Arizona-New Mexico | Yes                               | Yes              | No                     | Yes                 |
| Richard J. Pino Station                | Arizona-New Mexico | Yes                               | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Rio Rancho Branch                      | Arizona-New Mexico | Yes                               | Yes              | Yes                    | Yes                 |
| Sante Fe MPO                           | Arizona-New Mexico | Yes                               | Yes              | No                     | Yes                 |
| <b>Total Offices with Deficiencies</b> |                    | <b>4</b>                          | <b>15</b>        | <b>12</b>              | <b>15</b>           |

Source: Results of U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews conducted in the WestPac Area during FY 2022.

### Delayed Mail

We identified delayed mail at four of the 15 delivery units we visited. Specifically, we found a total of about 24,501 delayed letters and flats and 452 delayed packages at the four delivery units.<sup>1</sup> See Table 2 for

a summary of the delayed mail by type at each location. In addition, we found that management did not always accurately report this delayed mail in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV) system.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 2. Delayed Mail**

| Delivery Unit           | Delayed Letters and Flats | Delayed Packages | Total Delayed Mail |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Sante Fe MPO            | 10,924                    | 64               | 10,988             |
| Coronado Station        | 6,733                     | 388              | 7,121              |
| Richard J. Pino Station | 5,996                     | -                | 5,996              |
| Rio Rancho Branch       | 848                       | -                | 848                |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>24,501</b>             | <b>452</b>       | <b>24,953</b>      |

Source: Results of OIG reviews conducted in the WestPac Area during FY 2022.

This delayed mail occurred primarily due to the following reasons:

- Management did not verify that carriers had cleared all mail from the unit and taken it to the street for delivery the previous day.

<sup>1</sup> Count of mail included individual piece counts and OIG estimates based on Postal Service conversion factors in Management Instruction PO-610-2007-1, *Piece Count Recording System* and Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*, Appendix D.

<sup>2</sup> 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. Prior to using the DCV system, delayed mail was recorded in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System.



- Management did not ensure that carriers were checking in with a supervisor upon returning from street deliveries, which prevented them from determining whether all mail was delivered.
- Insufficient staffing and unscheduled leave.

Delayed mail was not properly reported because management was not aware that there was delayed mail or was not aware of the proper procedures for counting delayed mail.

To address our delayed mail findings, we made two recommendations to Arizona-New Mexico district management. Management agreed with both recommendations and provided sufficient documentation to the OIG to close them. Although we did not perform any additional work in this area for this audit, we will continue to monitor mail delivery metrics for these districts and may perform additional work in the future.

### Package Scanning

We identified issues with package scanning at all 15 of the delivery units we visited. Specifically, employees improperly performed Stop-The-Clock (STC)<sup>3</sup> scans on packages at the delivery unit, rather than at the delivery point. In total, employees at these 15 units scanned 72,761 packages at the delivery unit during the three-month period prior to our audits. These package scanning issues primarily occurred because management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures.

To address our package scanning findings, we made five recommendations to district management. Management agreed with the recommendations and provided sufficient documentation to the OIG to close them.

### Truck Arrival Scanning

We identified issues with truck arrival scanning at 12 of the 15 delivery units we visited. Specifically, employees did not always scan incoming trailer/truck barcodes<sup>4</sup> as required. In total, employees missed scanning 84.20 percent of the inbound trips. These truck arrival scanning issues primarily occurred because management did not monitor scan

performance data to ensure that all trucks received an arrival scan.

As a result of our truck arrival scanning findings, we made five recommendations to district management. Management agreed with the recommendations and provided sufficient documentation to the OIG to close them.

### Property Conditions

We found safety, security, and maintenance issues at all delivery units we visited. Some of the most common issues we identified were:

- Portable fire extinguishers with expired monthly and/or annual inspections.
- Blocked inspection service and exit route doors.
- Misuse of power cords/surge protectors.

These property condition issues occurred because management did not provide adequate oversight to ensure that property condition issues were corrected. To address our property condition findings, we made five recommendations to district management. Management agreed with the recommendations and provided sufficient documentation to the OIG to close them.

## Finding #1: Package and Truck Scanning Improvements

We reviewed package and truck scanning data for September through November 2022 to determine if improvements had been made compared to the data reviewed during our initial audits. Based on our analysis, we found notable improvements in the number of packages scanned at the unit and an increase in truck arrival scans.

### Package Scanning

Based on our analysis of data from September through November 2022, 13 of the 15 delivery units reduced the number of packages scanned at the unit compared to the period reviewed during the initial audit. Overall, the 15 sites reduced their scans made at the unit by about 65 percent and seven of the sites reduced their scans at the unit by over 50 percent (see [Table 3](#)).

<sup>3</sup> The recorded date and time when a mailpiece is delivered and the Postal Service completes its commitment to service performance. Examples of STC scans include "Delivered," "Available for Pick-up," and "No Access."

<sup>4</sup> The trailer barcode on the back door and inside right and left walls of the trailer.

**Table 3. Packages Scanned at the Unit**

| <b>Delivery Unit</b>       | <b>Scans At the Unit During Initial Review Period</b> | <b>Scans At the Unit From September - November 2022</b> | <b>Percent Change</b> |
|----------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| Beaverton MPO              | 21,719  | 1,678   | -92.27%               |
| Downtown San Diego Station | 5,076   | 438   | -91.37%               |
| Linda Vista Station        | 5,344   | 536   | -89.97%               |
| Sante Fe MPO               | 3,892   | 419   | -89.23%               |
| Piedmont Station           | 12,355  | 1,395   | -88.71%               |
| Coronado Station           | 6,934   | 1,383   | -80.05%               |
| Richard J. Pino Station    | 767   | 353   | -53.98%               |
| Renton MPO                 | 563   | 300   | -46.71%               |
| Vancouver MPO              | 2,024   | 1,327   | -34.44%               |
| Parkland Branch            | 633   | 473   | -25.28%               |
| Rio Rancho Branch          | 359   | 303   | -15.60%               |
| Ramona MPO                 | 4,580   | 4,091   | -10.68%               |
| Lacey Branch               | 665   | 643   | -3.31%                |
| Kent MPO                   | 5,038   | 5,154   | 2.30%                 |
| Parkrose Station*          | 2,812   | 6,812   | 142.25%               |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>72,761</b>   | <b>25,305</b>   | <b>-65.22%</b>        |

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.

\* While scans at this unit increased overall during the three-month period compared to the initial audit period, we noted that there were 440 scans at the unit in November, which was a significant improvement.



## Truck Arrival Scanning

Based on our analysis of data from September through November 2022, all 12 delivery units reduced

the number of missed truck arrival scans, compared to the period reviewed during the audit (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Truck Arrival Scans**

| Delivery Unit              | Percentage of Scans Missed During Initial Review Period | Percentage of Scans Missed From September - November 2022 | Change in Percentage of Missed Scans |
|----------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Rio Rancho Branch          | 100.00%   | 25.27%  | -74.73%                              |
| Lacey Branch               | 100.00%   | 29.43%  | -70.57%                              |
| Vancouver MPO              | 100.00%   | 31.41%  | -68.59%                              |
| Renton MPO                 | 100.00%   | 42.24%  | -57.76%                              |
| Piedmont Station           | 100.00%   | 46.95%  | -53.05%                              |
| Parkrose Station           | 82.05%  | 33.96%  | -48.09%                              |
| Parkland Branch            | 100.00%   | 54.72%  | -45.28%                              |
| Richard J Pino Station     | 94.85%  | 67.23%  | -27.62%                              |
| Beaverton MPO              | 72.44%  | 49.49%  | -22.95%                              |
| Kent MPO                   | 100.00%   | 88.56%  | -11.44%                              |
| Downtown San Diego Station | 19.23%  | 14.47%  | -4.76%                               |
| Linda Vista Station        | 27.17%  | 25.00%  | -2.17%                               |

Source: OIG analysis of data extracted from the Postal Service's Surface Visibility Web (SVWeb) system. The SVWeb system 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.

Based on the overall improved performance, we are not making any additional recommendations related to package or truck arrival scanning procedures at this time. However, we will continue monitoring this activity and may perform additional work in the future.

### Finding #2: Recurring Property Conditions

During our FY 2022 audits, we found that portable fire extinguishers were missing monthly and/or annual inspections at 10 of the 14 delivery units. Based on the number of sites where we observed this issue, it may

be systemic and should be addressed at an area-wide level.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires portable fire extinguishers to be visually inspected monthly and subject to an annual maintenance check.<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 29 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Section 1910.157(E) (2 & 3).

### **Recommendation #1**

We recommend the **Vice President, WestPac Area**, assign personnel at the district level to verify that fire extinguishers are properly inspected and develop a process to monitor the completion of monthly and annual fire extinguisher inspections.

## **Management's Comments**

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

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated that WestPac Area District Managers will be responsible for ensuring delivery units certify fire extinguisher inspections using the fire extinguisher certification checklist in the Safety Health Management Tool. Compliance will be measured monthly and annually by the District Safety Department. The target implementation date is February 29, 2024.

## **Evaluation of Management's Comments**

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendation and corrective actions should resolve the issue identified in the report.

Recommendation 1 requires OIG concurrence before closure. The OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. This recommendation 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.

# Appendices

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Appendix A: Additional Information</b> ..... | 10 |
| Scope and Methodology.....                      | 10 |
| Prior Audit Coverage.....                       | 10 |
| <b>Appendix B: Management's Comments</b> .....  | 13 |



Santa Fe, NM



Albuquerque, NM

# Appendix A: Additional Information

## Scope and Methodology

We selected FY 2022 audit sites based on our analysis of delivery metrics including the number of STC scans occurring at the delivery unit and the number of customer inquiries that the delivery unit received. During these audits, we reviewed additional delivery metrics, including the number of routes and carriers at each unit, mail arrival times, number of reported delayed mailpieces, and package scanning. We also reviewed truck arrival scan compliance and safety, security, and maintenance conditions at each unit.

In addition, we extracted and analyzed data from September through November 2022 to determine recent package and truck arrival scanning performance. Specifically, we extracted and analyzed data from the PTR system for the number of STC scans performed at the unit instead of the delivery address. We also extracted and analyzed data from the SVWeb system to determine the percentage of truck arrival scans not being performed at the delivery units. We compared this data to the data used during the initial audits to determine if there

were any improvements in package and truck arrival scanning performance.

We conducted this performance audit from January through March 2023 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 discussed our observations and conclusions with management on February 22, 2023, and included their comments where appropriate.

We assessed the reliability of PTR and SVWeb data by reviewing it for completeness, reasonableness, accuracy, and validity. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

## Prior Audit Coverage

| Report Title   | Objective   | Report Number | Final Report Date | Monetary Impact |
|--|---|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Select Units, Albuquerque and Santa Fe, NM Region</i> | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at delivery units in the Albuquerque and Santa Fe, NM region. | 22-132-R22    | 9/20/22           | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Rio Rancho Branch, Rio Rancho, NM</i>                 | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.  | 22-132-1-R22  | 8/5/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Richard J. Pino Station, Albuquerque, NM</i>          | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.  | 22-132-2-R22  | 8/5/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Santa Fe Main Post Office, Santa Fe, NM</i>           | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.  | 22-132-3-R22  | 8/5/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Coronado Station, Santa Fe, NM</i>                    | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.  | 22-132-4-R22  | 8/5/22            | None            |

| Report Title   | Objective  | Report Number | Final Report Date | Monetary Impact |
|--|--|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews - Select Units, Seattle, WA Region</i>          | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at delivery units in the Seattle, WA region.   | 22-101-R22    | 7/28/22           | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Parkland Branch, Tacoma, WA</i>               | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-095-R22    | 6/7/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Kent Main Post Office, Kent, WA</i>           | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-096-R22    | 6/7/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Renton Main Post Office, Renton, WA</i>       | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-097-R22    | 6/7/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Lacey Branch, Lacey, WA</i>                   | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-098-R22    | 6/7/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Reviews - Select Units, San Diego, CA Region</i>       | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at delivery units in the San Diego, CA region. | 22-077-R22    | 5/16/22           | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Linda Vista Station, San Diego, CA</i>        | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-059-R22    | 4/5/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Downtown San Diego Station, San Diego, CA</i> | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-060-R22    | 4/5/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Ramona Main Post Office, Ramona, CA</i>       | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-062-R22    | 4/5/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews - Select Units, Portland, OR Region</i>         | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at delivery units in the Portland, OR region.  | 22-001-R22    | 3/22/22           | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions - Beaverton Main Post Office, Beaverton, OR</i>        | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-031-R22    | 2/8/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions - Review Vancouver Main Post Office, Vancouver, WA</i> | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions.   | 22-032-R22    | 2/3/22            | None            |

| Report Title  | Objective  | Report Number | Final Report Date | Monetary Impact |
|---|--|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions Review - Parkrose Station, Portland, OR</i> | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions. | 22-029-R22    | 2/2/22            | None            |
| <i>Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Conditions - Piedmont Station, Portland, OR</i>        | Evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions. | 22-030-R22    | 2/2/22            | None            |

# Appendix B: Management's Comments



March 8, 2023

JOHN CIHOTA  
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Fiscal Year 2022 Capping Report - Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews - WestPac Area (Report Number 23-030-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the draft audit report, *Fiscal Year 2022 Capping Report - Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews - WestPac Area*.

Management agrees with the two findings in the report: (1) Package and Truck Scanning Improvements, and (2) Recurring Property Conditions.

Following is our comment on the one recommendation.

Recommendation 1:

We recommend the **Vice President, WestPac Area**, assign personnel at the district level to verify that fire extinguishers are properly inspected and develop a process to monitor the completion of monthly and annual fire extinguisher inspections.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

The Vice President, WestPac Area will instruct the WestPac Area District Managers to ensure delivery units in the WestPac Area certify fire extinguisher inspections using the fire extinguisher certification checklist in the Safety Health Management Tool.

Compliance will be measured by the District Safety Department to include monthly and annual inspections.

Target Implementation Date: 02/29/2024

Responsible Official: Vice President, Area Retail & Delivery Operations (WestPac)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eduardo H. Ruiz".

Eduardo H. Ruiz  
Vice President, Retail & Delivery Operations  
WestPac Area

cc: *Corporate Audit & Response Management*



# OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

UNITED STATES



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