

# Collierville Main Post Office in Collierville, TN: Delivery Unit Operations

## AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 23-100-1-R23 | June 27, 2023



# Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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June 27, 2023

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** OMAR R. COLEMAN  
MANAGER, TENNESSEE 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 – Collierville Main Post Office in Collierville, TN: Delivery Unit Operations (Report Number 23-100-1-R23)

This report presents the results of our audit of mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Collierville Main Post Office, Collierville, TN.

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  
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer & Executive Vice President  
Vice President, Delivery Operations  
Vice President, Retail & Post Office Operations  
Vice President, Southern Area Retail & Delivery Operations  
Director, Retail & Post Office Operations Maintenance  
Corporate Audit and Response Management

# Results

## Background

This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Collierville Main Post Office (MPO) in Collierville, TN (Project Number 23-100-1). The Collierville MPO is in the Tennessee District of the Southern Area and services ZIP Code 38017.<sup>1</sup> This ZIP Code serves about 47,868 people in a predominantly urban area.<sup>2</sup> This delivery unit has 19 rural routes and 15 city routes. We judgmentally selected the Collierville MPO based on the number of Customer 360<sup>3</sup> inquiries, Informed Delivery<sup>4</sup> contacts, undelivered route information, and stop-the-clock (STC)<sup>5</sup> scans performed at the unit.

## Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Collierville MPO in Collierville, TN.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on five audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, truck arrival scans, arrow keys,<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> During our site visit we reviewed mail conditions; package and truck arrival scanning procedures; arrow key security 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” area<sup>8</sup> and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 1 with

management on June 8, 2023, and included their comments, where appropriate.

The Collierville MPO is one of five delivery units<sup>9</sup> the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed during the week of May 1, 2023, that are serviced by the Memphis Processing and Distribution Center and Memphis Processing Annex. We are issuing this interim report to provide the U.S. Postal Service with timely information regarding conditions we identified at the Collierville MPO. We will issue a separate report<sup>10</sup> that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all five 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 Collierville MPO. Specifically, we found issues with all five 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	
Arrow Keys	X	
Property Conditions	X	

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of May 1, 2023.

1 The unit also provides PO Box service for Zip Code 38027.

2 We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from Esri, which is based on Census Bureau information. Of the people living in this ZIP Code, about 43,969 (91.85 percent) are considered living in urban communities and about 3,899 (8.15 percent) are considered living in rural communities.

3 A cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.

4 Informed Delivery is a free and optional notification service that gives residential customers the ability to digitally preview their letter-sized mail and submit inquiries for mailpieces that were expected for delivery but have not arrived.

5 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.”

6 A distinctively shaped key carriers use to open mail-receiving receptacles such as street collection boxes and panels of apartment house mailboxes equipped with an arrow lock. Arrow keys are accountable property and are subject to strict controls.

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

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

9 The other four units were the Cordova Main Post Office, Cordova, TN (Project Number 23-100-2); Desoto Carrier Annex, Memphis, TN (Project Number 23-100-3);

Germantown Main Post Office, Germantown, TN (Project Number 23-100-4); and Hickory Hill Station, Memphis, TN (Project Number 23-100-5).

10 Project Number 23-100.

# Finding #1: Delayed Mail

## What We Found

On the morning of May 2, 2023, we identified about 24,211<sup>11</sup> delayed mailpieces at 11 carrier cases and the hot case<sup>12</sup> area. Specifically, we identified about 20,091 pieces at the hot case area and about 4,120 pieces at the carrier cases. In addition, management did not report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)<sup>13</sup> system. See Table 2 for the number of pieces for each mail type and Figure 1 for examples of delayed mail found at carrier cases and the workroom floor.

Table 2. Type of Delayed Mail

Type of Mail	Carrier Cases	Hot Case Area	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	3,787	10,248	14,035
Flats	333	9,843	10,176
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,120</b>	<b>20,091</b>	<b>24,211</b>

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit on May 2, 2023.

Figure 1. Examples of Delayed Mail in the Carrier Cases and Workroom Floor



Source: OIG photo taken on May 2, 2023.



Source: OIG photo taken on May 3, 2023.

## Why Did It Occur

The postmaster stated the Collierville MPO did not have enough employees to distribute the mail in the hot case area each day due to a shortage of four clerks. Specifically, the unit had a complement of eight clerks, but had three vacancies and one clerk was on extended medical leave. The postmaster stated he requested to borrow clerks from other stations from the Post Office Operations Manager, but he could not provide any supporting documentation for this request. In addition, management stated five routes were not completely delivered on Monday, May 1, 2023, due to unscheduled absences. Unit management stated they did not verify that all mail was delivered and properly reported in the DCV system because other responsibilities took priority, such as scheduling staff and performing tasks normally completed by a PM supervisor who was on extended leave.

## What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy<sup>14</sup> states that managers must review all communications that may affect the day's workload, and be sure replacements are available for unscheduled absences. In addition, management should ensure that all mail is processed and delivered daily, and that the unit has enough resources to deliver all the mail each day. Postal Service policy<sup>15</sup> states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. Further, managers are required<sup>16</sup> to report all mail in the delivery unit after the carriers have left for their street duties as either delayed or curtailed in the DCV system. Management must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

<sup>11</sup> Count of mail included individual piece counts and OIG estimate based on Postal Service conversion factors in Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*, Appendix D and Management Instruction PO-610-2007-1, Piece Count Recording System.

<sup>12</sup> A case designated for final withdrawal of mail as carriers leave the office.

<sup>13</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.

<sup>14</sup> Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, TL-14, Section 111.2, June 2019.

<sup>15</sup> *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

<sup>16</sup> *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, March 23, 2023.

## 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 the DCV system 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.

# Finding #2: Package Scanning

## What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages at the delivery unit. In total, employees scanned 320 packages at the delivery unit between January 1 and March 31, 2023 (see Table 3). Further analysis of the STC scan data for these packages showed that 53.44 percent of them were scanned “Delivered.” This data excluded scans that could properly be made at a delivery unit, such as “Delivered – PO Box” and “Customer (Vacation) Hold” but, rather, represent scans performed at the delivery unit that should routinely be made at the point of delivery.

**Table 3. STC Scans at Delivery Unit**

STC Scan Type	Count	Percentage
Delivered	171	53.44%
Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location	73	22.81%
Receptacle Full / Item Oversized	64	20.00%
Refused	6	1.88%
No Secure Location Available	4	1.25%
Delivery Exception – Animal Interference	1	0.31%
No Authorized Recipient	1	0.31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>100%</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.

In addition, on the morning of May 2, 2023, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 60<sup>17</sup> packages to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 60 sampled packages, 16 (26.67 percent) had missing or improper scans, including:

- Six (four from the carrier cases and two from the “Notice Left” area) were scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location” or

“No Secure Location Available” and were scanned away from the delivery point. These scans occurred between 2.1 and 7.7 miles away from the delivery point.

- Five from the carrier cases were missing STC scans to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- Three (two from the carrier cases and one from the “Notice Left” area) were scanned “Delivered” which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the customer’s delivery address.
- Two from the carrier cases were missing an “Arrival-at-Unit” scan, which is a required scan for performance measurement.

Further, 25 packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned to the sender, as required.<sup>18</sup> These packages ranged from three to 564 days past their return dates.

## Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. Specifically, management stated that new staff (hired in January 2023) were not properly trained. Management further explained that competing responsibilities, such as getting the mail out for delivery, prevented them from consistently reviewing scanning integrity reports and following up with carriers. In addition, one carrier stated he scanned packages that belonged to a school at the unit. He said he arranged with the school to pick up its packages because they were usually bulky and took up a lot of space in his truck.

The packages in the “Notice Left” area were not returned due to inadequate management oversight. Specifically, the postmaster stated he did not assign a clerk to review packages in the “Notice Left” area.

<sup>17</sup> We judgmentally selected and reviewed 30 packages from the carrier cases and 30 packages from the “Notice Left” area.

<sup>18</sup> *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, dated July 2007, states that domestic packages should be returned to sender on the 15th calendar day after a notice is left and international packages should be returned to sender on the 30th calendar day after a notice is left.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have monitored scan performance daily and enforced compliance. The Postal Service's goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,<sup>19</sup> which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.<sup>20</sup> Packages at the "Notice Left" area should have been reviewed for second notices and returned to sender if they remained after the prescribed number of days.

## 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 the Postal Service brand.

<sup>19</sup> *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

<sup>20</sup> *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

# Finding #3: Truck Arrival Scanning

## What We Found

Employees at the Collierville MPO did not scan all incoming trailer/truck barcodes<sup>21</sup> as required. We reviewed data related to morning truck arrival scans from January 1 to March 31, 2023, and found that employees did not perform a scan for 101 of 156 (64.74 percent) scheduled incoming trucks (see Table 4). However, during our observation on the morning of May 2, 2023, we noted that an employee scanned the incoming truck.

## Why Did It Occur

Management did not monitor scan performance data to verify that all trucks received an arrival scan because they were focused on mail delivery and trying to balance staff shortages. In addition, a clerk and rural carrier responsible for truck scans stated they usually scanned trucks upon arrival, but sometimes the scanners did not work properly. They stated that management was aware of the issue

and submitted a help desk ticket. Management was advised to change the scanner batteries, but this did not resolve the issue, and no further action was taken.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have performed reviews of truck arrival tracking reports to verify that employees were performing all expected truck scans. According to Postal Service Policy,<sup>22</sup> 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.

**Table 4. Truck Arrival Scans from January 1 through March 31, 2023**

Month	Count of Inbound Trips	Count of Missed Scans	Percentage Missing
January	52	28	53.85%
February	49	35	71.43%
March	55	38	69.09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>64.74%</b>

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

<sup>21</sup> The trailer barcode on the back door and inside right and left walls of the trailer.

<sup>22</sup> United States Postal Service Standard Operating Procedure - Subject: Trailer Scans at the Delivery Units (DU).

# Finding #4 Arrow Keys

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## What We Found

Unit management did not properly manage and safeguard three arrow keys. On the morning of May 4, 2023, we reviewed the unit's inventory log for arrow keys and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. We found three of the 25 keys on the log were left at the [REDACTED] and not placed in a secure location. However, the unit maintained an updated arrow key inventory log and kept the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in a locked registry room overnight.

## Why Did It Occur

Management did not properly manage and safeguard the three arrow keys because they prioritized other duties, such as tasks normally completed by a PM supervisor who was out on extended leave.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that arrow key security procedures were properly followed. In addition, Postal Service policy<sup>23</sup> states that arrow keys must remain secured until they are individually assigned to personnel. Upon carriers' return from the street, arrow keys should be deposited in a secure location and a supervisor or clerk must verify all keys have been returned and accounted for daily.

## Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When there is insufficient oversight and supervision of accountable items such as arrow keys, there is increased risk of mail theft. These thefts damage the Postal Service's reputation and diminish public trust in the nation's mail system. Additionally, because arrow keys open mail receptacles, lost or damaged keys can result in undelivered mail.

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<sup>23</sup> Standard Work: Arrow Key Accountability, January 2022 and USPS Arrow Key Standard Work, January 2022.

## Finding #5: Property Conditions

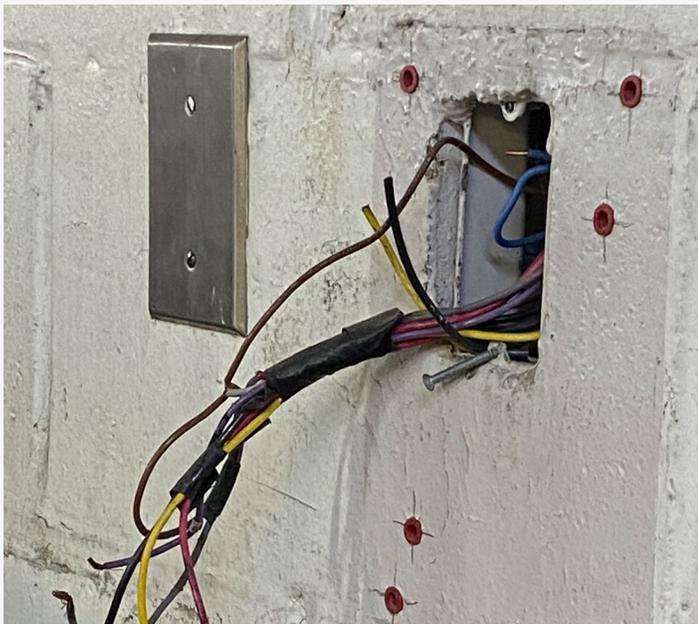
### What We Found

We found safety and maintenance issues at the Collierville MPO, including:

#### Property Safety:

- Exposed wires in the workroom area (see Figure 2).
- Two blocked inspection service doors in the workroom area.
- All eight fire extinguishers were missing monthly inspections, with the last inspection dates ranging from March 14 to September 1, 2022.
- An unsecured ladder in the loading dock area.
- An uneven surface at the loading dock entrance into the facility, posing a potential trip hazard.

**Figure 2. Exposed Wires**



Source: OIG photo taken on May 2, 2023.

#### Property Maintenance:

- An active water leak in the workroom area (see Figure 3). The postmaster stated he called the National Facilities Response Line several times about the roof leak prior to our audit but did not complete a work order for this issue.

- Two damaged walls in the workroom area.

**Figure 3. Active Water Leak in Workroom Area**



Source: OIG photo taken on May 2, 2023.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not take the necessary actions to verify that property condition issues were corrected because other duties, such as getting the mail out for delivery each day impacted the timing of addressing maintenance issues. In addition, the postmaster stated he was not aware of the uninspected fire extinguishers and blocked inspection service doors in the workroom area.

### What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety and maintenance issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. 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.<sup>24</sup>

### **Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers**

Management's attention to maintenance and safety 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 the findings in the report. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

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<sup>24</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

# Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from April through June 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 assessed the reliability of PTR, DCV, SVWeb, and electronic Facilities Management System<sup>25</sup> data by reviewing existing information, comparing data from other sources, observing operations, and interviewing Postal Service officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

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<sup>25</sup> 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.

# Appendix B: Management's Comments



June 21, 2023

JOHN CIHOTA  
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

**SUBJECT:** Management Response: Collierville Main Post Office in Collierville, TN: Delivery Unit Operations (Report Number 23-100-1)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, Collierville Main Post Office in Collierville, TN: Delivery Unit Operations.

Management agrees, in part, with the five findings in the report on delayed mail, package scanning, truck arrival scanning, arrow keys, and property conditions.

Management has begun taking steps to address the five findings.

*Delayed Mail:* Management will retrain local EAS on the Standard Work for properly reporting delayed mail in DCV. Management continues to pursue recruitment activities in the Tennessee District and post career opportunities weekly until all vacancies are filled.

*Package Scanning:* From January 1, 2023, to March 31, 2023, Collierville received 245,504 parcels in total for delivery. The 320 identified in this report by the OIG as scanned in the office represents 0.13% of total parcels delivered. Personnel will be retrained on the proper way to scan parcels for non-delivery due to No Access, Weather Delays, and Integrity Scans. The Standard Work for proper scanning due to Weather Delays or No Access is communicated on a regular basis and always in advance of an expected weather event.

*Truck Arrival Scanning:* Management will retrain personnel on the proper way to scan Truck Arrivals. The Standard Work instructions has also been sent out to all offices and reminders will be sent weekly.

*Arrow Keys:* The office will be retrained on Standard Work and operating procedures for Arrow Key Management including updating key logs, reporting missing arrow keys to the USPS Inspection Service, returning any broken arrow keys to Topeka, and ensuring arrow keys are verified and secured daily. Recent Gemba's were completed and office in full compliance.

*Property Conditions:* Five of the 12 property conditions have been abated. Work orders have been submitted for the remaining 7.



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Omar Coleman  
Manager, Tennessee District

cc: *Vice President, Area Retail & Delivery Operations (Southern)*  
*Manager, Corporate Audit Response Management*

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**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE



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