

Address Management System for Rural Routes

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 22-200-R23 | September 22, 2023



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Highlights

Background

The U.S. Postal Service utilizes Address Management System (AMS) data to correctly deliver mail to approximately 49 million rural addresses nationwide. The nation relies on the Postal Service to maintain accurate addresses to enable effective commerce and ensure customers receive quality service. It is critical to have correct and current address information so mail can be processed through automation to reduce delivery costs and to ensure rural carriers are provided with accurate route information to expedite the delivery of mail to customers. Carriers help maintain address quality by observing address changes on their routes, noting them in their edit books, and submitting them to delivery unit management for verification.

What We Did

Our objective was to assess the Postal Service management of AMS for rural routes. Specifically, we determined whether the process for maintaining delivery points and other route information is timely and accurate. We limited our review to rural routes due to the recent implementation of the Rural Route Evaluation Compensation System, which relies on delivery point data from AMS.

What We Found

We found delivery unit management did not ensure edit books were submitted timely for maintaining delivery points and other route information. However, edit book submissions improved since updated policy was issued in December 2022. Additionally, we found rural carriers were not adequately trained on the edit book process. Further, delivery units did not conduct annual route inspections, which are critical to the accuracy of edit books and AMS. Finally, we noted limited use of the electronic edit book submission application and other automated edit book processes, which have the potential to reduce the amount of time it takes for address information to be updated in the AMS. The timely submission of address changes is critical to the success of maintaining the AMS and enables accurate mail sorting and efficient delivery of mail to customers.

Recommendations

We recommended management (1) develop an oversight process to hold unit management accountable for timely edit books and revise policy as needed; (2) develop comprehensive edit book training for new rural carriers and periodic refresher training for all rural carriers; (3) develop an oversight process for unit management to complete route inspections annually; (4) develop a plan and update policy to require electronic submission of edit book updates, and; (5) determine the feasibility of developing an all-electronic edit book and develop a plan and update policy to require the use of the electronic edit book, if feasible.

Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

September 22, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR: ANGELA CURTIS, VICE PRESIDENT
DELIVERY OPERATIONS

Mary H. Lloyd

FROM: Mary Lloyd
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Mission Operations

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Address Management System for Rural Routes (Report
Number 22-200-R23)

This report presents the results of our audit of Address Management System for Rural Routes.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit Response Management

Results

Introduction/Objective

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of the Address Management System (AMS) for Rural Routes (Project Number 22-200). Our objective was to assess the U.S. Postal Service management of the AMS for rural routes. Specifically, we determined whether the process for maintaining delivery points and other route information was timely and accurate. We limited our review of AMS data to rural routes due to the reliance on this data by the Rural Route Evaluation Compensation System (RRECS), launched in May 2023. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about this audit.

Background

The Postal Service utilizes AMS data to deliver mail to approximately 49 million rural delivery points¹ nationwide. The system is the repository for all ZIP Code data and provides a unified official address resource that is essential to automated sortation of mail and supports the Postal Service's strategy to improve operational efficiency as outlined in its 10-year plan.² It is critical to have correct and current address information so that mail can be processed through automation to reduce delivery costs. Without accurate address data, Postal Service processing equipment can not accurately sort mail, thus requiring manual sortation resulting in delayed, missent, or returned mail marked as undeliverable for customers.

Another purpose of the system is to provide rural carriers with accurate route information to expedite the delivery of mail to customers on their routes. Carriers help maintain address quality by observing address changes on their routes, noting them in their edit books,³ and providing them to delivery unit management who reviews and verifies these changes and submits them to the District AMS Office⁴ monthly. The nation relies on the Postal Service to maintain accurate addresses to enable effective commerce and ensure customers receive quality service.

Letter carriers perform a vital function serving thousands of residences and businesses in rural and suburban areas while collectively traveling millions of miles daily. In October 2022, the Postal Service delivered mail on more than 81,000 rural routes (see Table 1).

Table 1. Nationwide Total of Rural Routes

Areas	Rural Routes
Atlantic	18,807
Central	22,706
Southern	29,987
WestPac	10,066
Total	81,566

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of Postal Service data from Addressing Technology.

AMS Edit Book Policies

Postal Service policies and procedures guide the life cycle of delivery points, including addition, maintenance, and removal. Policies for establishing new delivery points outline a localized process involving coordination between local managers, district personnel, and real estate developers.⁵ Once delivery points are established and mail delivery begins, carriers use edit books to record changes such as a vacated residence or adding an active delivery point, when a resident moves into a newly built home, on the Postal Service (PS) Form 6558-R, Route Listing Report within the edit book (see [Figure 1](#)).

¹ A single mailbox or other place to which mail is delivered.

² *Delivering for America: Our Vision and Ten-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Sustainability and Service Excellence*, March 23, 2021.

³ Edit books are physical books produced from the current data in the AMS used to report new growth, additions, deletions, and changes of a delivery route. Each route has a physical edit book associated with the route.

⁴ An AMS office responsible for maintaining data for specific ZIP codes within a district of the Postal Service.

⁵ PO-631, *Growth and Delivery Point Management Program*, April 2021 and PO-632, *National Delivery Planning Standards – A Guide for Builders and Developers*, May 2020.

Figure 1. PS Form 6558-R, Route Listing Report

Quick Reference Guide - RURAL/HIGHWAY CONTRACT ROUTES - Updating the Route Listing Report

- To ADD a delivery point:** draw an arrow where the delivery will be inserted. Submit a DMR (Delivery Management Report) that will show the delivery type, secondary usage and designation, cell site, and parcel/lot information.
- To DELETE a delivery point:** draw a line through the entire address and write DELETE. List the reason for the deletion.
- To CHANGE any item:** draw a line through just the item (do not obliterate) and write the correction next to it.
- To REVERSE delivery points:** draw a bracket next to the addresses and print REVERSE.
- To MOVE delivery points:** draw a line around the address(es) to move and continue a line between the correct addresses to insert. Complete by writing MOVE. For complex moves, draw a line around the address(es) to move and indicate the line number that they should follow. Then draw an arrow after the target address and indicate which line numbers are to be inserted. **DO NOT** use ADD nor DELETE on MOVE addresses. Use the Line of Travel Worksheet for difficult or multiple moves.

VERIFY AND UPDATE DELIVERY POINT ATTRIBUTES: To update, insert the correct information in the blank space or draw a red line through the incorrect information and insert the correct information.

DELIVERY TYPE: OTH-Other, CENT-Consolidated, CBU-NON/USC/BU/CRU, CURB-Curb.

USG CODE: R = Residential, B = Business, RC = Residential Combined, BC = Business Combined.

RC STAT: Enter C-NO STAT to indicate known addresses that have never received delivery or delivery points which have had a single change such as observed by another address, converted to through, vacant lot, etc. Enter C-YES STAT to indicate PO Box or secondary address delivery point delivered as part of a drop.

VAC INC: DO NOT use VAC INC on RC or BC routes! Use C-NO STAT to indicate vacant.

ADDR SORT: Enter T to indicate ALL mail is delivered to a PO Box and NO mail is delivered to the street. PO Box information should be included in the Additional Info column.

ALWAYS USE RED PENCIL!

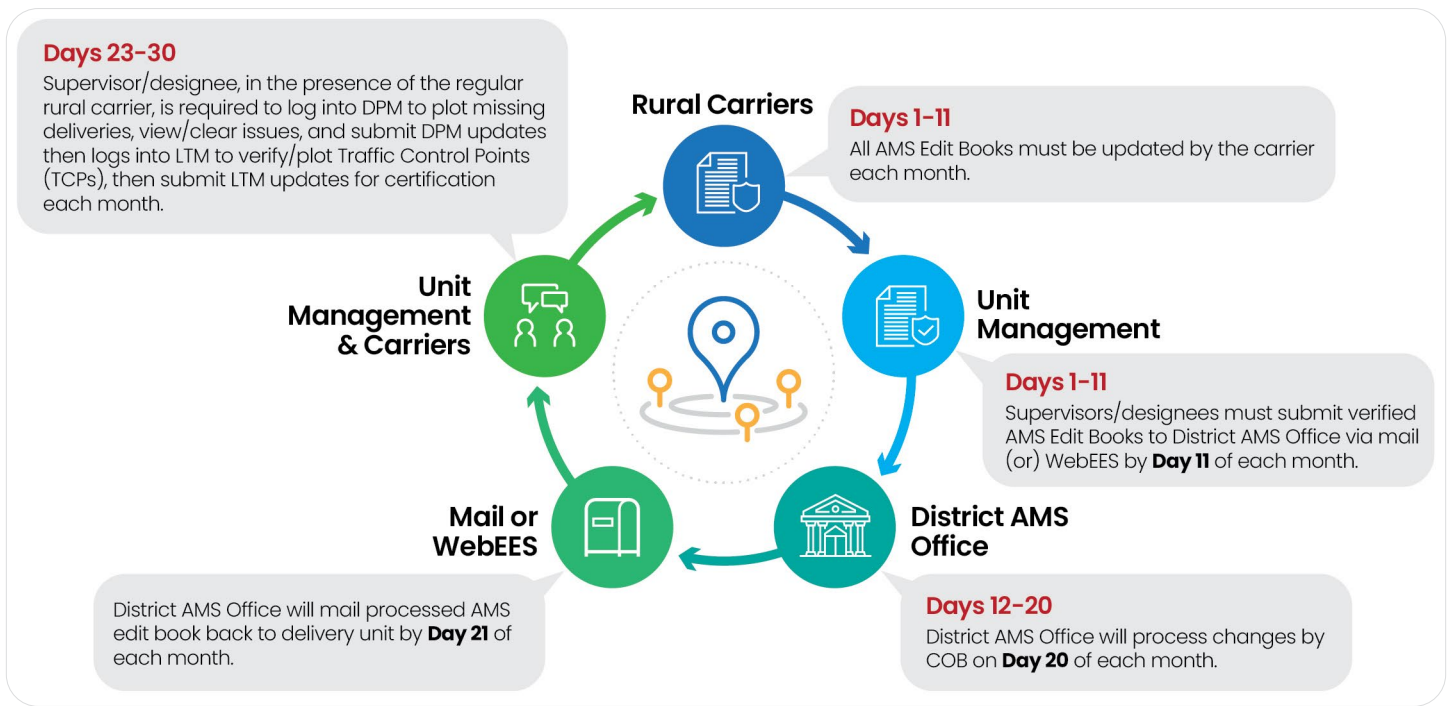
Source: Photo obtained by the OIG from a carrier edit book at a Postal Service delivery unit on January 18, 2023.

Postal Service policy requires delivery unit management to verify changes prior to submitting the edit books to the District AMS Office monthly via U.S. mail or electronically through Web Electronic Edit

Sheets (WebEES).⁶ The District AMS Office reviews, approves, and processes edit book changes in the AMS. When applicable, the District AMS Office returns physical edit books back to the delivery units.

In December 2022, the Postal Service released an updated policy to improve structure for the edit book process in preparation for the implementation of RRECS⁷ (see Figure 2). Rural carriers must provide updates to a route to ensure RRECS properly credits the carrier for the route. This updated policy provided deadlines for the submission of edit books by delivery units and return of reviewed edit books from the District AMS Office. Once edit books are returned, delivery unit management, in the presence of the rural carrier assigned to the route, must review and finalize route updates in the Delivery Point Manager (DPM)⁸ and Line of Travel Manager (LTM)⁹ web applications. Edit books are the primary source for providing changes to the AMS.

Figure 2. AMS Edit Book - Monthly Process Summary



Source: Postal Service policy and instructions.¹⁰

6 A web-based application used to manage address data and create sort programs.
 7 RRECS establishes standards to be utilized in rural route evaluations and is dependent on up-to-date edit books to create accurate and responsive route evaluations for each rural route.
 8 In DPM, facilitators work with carriers to plot the mailstop, mailbox, direct door delivery, and door location or the delivery point for each address.
 9 LTM applies the aggregate of the delivery points and displays them as delivery stops. Facilitators work with carriers to review and confirm the delivery stops, travel paths between delivery stops, and traffic control points to complete mapping.
 10 *Address Management System (AMS) Edit Book - Monthly Process Memorandum*, December 22, 2022, and *Rural Route AMS Edit Book Maintenance Standard Work Instructions (SWI)*, March 16, 2023.

Annual Rural Route Inspections

All delivery units are required to conduct annual route inspections¹¹ to verify current and accurate data, including (but not limited to) route and delivery conditions; number and types of boxes served; minimum stops necessary to serve all boxes on the route; and location, time, and frequency of authorized departures to and from a Postal Service vehicle. The route layout is also reviewed by management to identify potential line of travel changes to improve efficiency and economy of service.

Rural Route Evaluation Compensation System

The Postal Service and National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) entered a Memorandum of Understanding in October 2011 to resolve their 2010 collective bargaining¹² dispute, which included negotiations for wages and benefits. In July 2012, both parties further agreed to submit Pre-Hearing Briefs to the Board of Arbitration, which later resulted in the Clarke arbitration decision. The arbitration decision directed both parties to conduct a joint study to revise the previous compensation system by evaluating standards that made up the evaluation of a rural route. The result of this study was RRECS, which established new standards to be utilized in rural route evaluations. This new system leverages automated and manually entered data such as mail volumes, scan activity, and digital route information, which is dependent on up-to-date edit books to create accurate and responsive route evaluations for each rural route. Full implementation of RRECS, including a new pay structure for rural carriers was scheduled to begin on October 8, 2022.

“All delivery units are required to conduct annual route inspections to verify current and accurate data.”

However, starting in September 2022 through April 2023, the NRLCA and Postal Service agreed to postpone the implementation of the RRECS until the union could validate the RRECS' data collection and route evaluation

calculations, system issues, and the finalization of a dispute resolution process specific to rural route

evaluation data. RRECS officially launched on May 6, 2023.

Findings Summary

We found delivery unit management did not always submit edit books timely for maintaining delivery points and other route information as required; however, compliance improved since the policy update. Additionally, we found rural carriers were not adequately trained on the edit book process. Further, delivery units did not always conduct annual route inspections or utilize the WebEES application.

Finding #1: Edit Books Were Not Submitted Timely

Delivery unit management did not always ensure edit books were submitted timely for maintaining delivery points and other route information. However, edit book submission improved since the Postal Service issued updated policies in December 2022.

We conducted an analysis of edit books from October 2022 to June 2023, and found rural route edit books were not always submitted to the AMS as required. As of October 2022, we found 47,621 of 85,880 (55 percent) rural routes nationwide did not submit edit books to District AMS Offices timely. During our audit, we judgmentally selected 14 delivery units nationwide with the highest number of unsubmitted edit books to conduct visits and observations. We found 12 of the 14 (86 percent) delivery units did not submit rural route edit books to District AMS Offices timely. Specifically, 251 of 314 (80 percent) rural routes did not submit edit books within 30 days as required by policy (see [Appendix B](#)).

As of October 2022, Postal Service policy¹³ required all edit books be reviewed, signed, and dated by the regular carrier, then reviewed by the unit manager or postmaster. The unit manager or postmaster was required to sign, date, and enter the changes via WebEES or submit physical edit books to the District AMS Office every 30 days. In December 2022, the Postal Service issued updated edit book policy¹⁴ providing additional instruction of the edit book process and specific deadlines for the submission, approval, and return of edit books. Between February 25 and March 10, 2023, the Postal Service conducted a mini-mail survey for all rural routes in preparation for the implementation of RRECS and

¹¹ The inspection of a rural route is the physical inspection of a route and route conditions made by the postmaster or a designee while accompanying the carrier on the route.

¹² Negotiations with unions which cover wages, many benefits, and more.

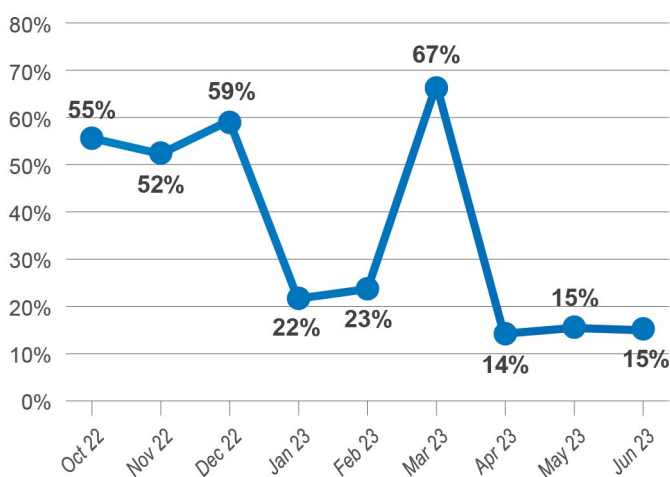
¹³ *Address Management System (AMS) Edit Book Process Memorandum*, October 9, 2021.

¹⁴ *Address Management System (AMS) Edit Book - Monthly Process Memorandum*, December 22, 2022.

revised edit book work instructions.¹⁵ During the mini-mail survey, delivery units were not required to submit edit books.¹⁶ Additionally, the Postal Service created reporting tools¹⁷ to assist delivery unit management with planning and monitoring the edit book maintenance process.

The Postal Service improved compliance with edit book submissions since updating the policy in December 2022 and implementing reporting tools within Retail and Delivery Applications & Reports (RADAR).¹⁸ For example, the Postal Service implemented the RRECS Status Trend Report in June 2023, which identifies the number of edit books that require final processing. Additionally, Postal Service management sends notifications to Rural Delivery Managers reminding them to update and certify address data, in order to complete the monthly edit book process. Specifically, our data analysis showed by June 2023, the Postal Service reduced the number of unsubmitted edit books nationwide to 12,724 of 85,949 (15 percent) (see Figure 3). We found 5 of the 14 (36 percent) judgmentally selected delivery units did not submit rural route edit books to District AMS Offices timely. Additionally, at those same five delivery units, the number of rural routes with unsubmitted edit books declined to 27 of 314 (9 percent) (see Appendix B).

Figure 3. Nationwide Percentage of Unsubmitted Rural Route Edit Books¹⁹



Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service data in RADAR from October 2022 through June 2023.

¹⁵ Rural Route AMS Edit Book Maintenance SWI, March 16, 2023.

¹⁶ The mini-mail survey required certain data be collected manually to include in the route evaluations established under RRECS.

¹⁷ Tools include a calendar to remind delivery units of the edit book submission timelines, and a dashboard to monitor the progress of monthly edit book submissions.

¹⁸ A Postal Service system which contains performance indicators and actionable metrics for delivery and other postal operations.

¹⁹ Postal Service Headquarters instructed delivery units not to submit edit books during the month of March 2023 due to the mini-mail survey initiated on February 25, 2023.

²⁰ The Postal Service's online training and career development platform.

Edit books were not submitted timely due to lack of management oversight. According to delivery unit management, they focused their limited time and resources primarily on operations supporting mail delivery to customers rather than ensuring edit books were submitted.

Although the Postal Service took steps to increase timely submission of edit books, delivery units continue to delay edit book submissions. Unsubmitted edit books can negatively impact AMS accuracy by preventing the timely update of addresses. Further, unsubmitted edit books could potentially increase cost to the Postal Service by reducing the amount of mail that is automation compatible and result in undeliverable or delayed mail due to manual sortation and additional handlings when returning mail to the senders if not properly addressed.

Recommendation #1

We recommend, the **Vice President of Delivery Operations**, develop an oversight process to hold delivery unit management accountable for submitting edit books timely and revise policy as needed.

Finding #2: Rural Carriers Not Adequately Trained on Edit Book Process

Rural carriers did not receive formal training of the edit book process. Specifically, we identified 31 of 36 (86 percent) rural carriers interviewed did not receive formal training of the edit book process. According to carriers, edit book maintenance was discussed in the Rural Carrier Training Academy; however, it was only covered during a high-level brief. Additionally, rural carriers stated they relied on other carriers for guidance on how to update edit books or for unit management or a designee to update their edit books.

According to District AMS Offices and delivery unit management, there is no formal edit book training readily available for rural carriers. The Postal Service does have a computer-based edit book training within the HERO system;²⁰ however, rural carriers are not granted user access to the system and are therefore unable to access this training.

Postal Service standard operating procedure²¹ states that to ensure AMS is accurate, carriers and delivery unit managers' report route changes via the edit book or WebEES to the District AMS Office. If the route change information is unclear or incomplete when the edit book reaches the District AMS Office, the necessary changes cannot be made, and AMS data may be inaccurate. Without proper training, the Postal Service does not have reasonable assurance that rural carriers are properly updating edit books, which is critical to the success of maintaining the accuracy of the AMS and ensuring a seamless process for the delivery of mail to customers.

Recommendation #2

We recommend, the **Vice President Delivery Operations**, develop a comprehensive training on the edit book process for new rural carriers. Additionally, develop refresher training and implement a plan for all rural carriers to complete the training periodically.

Finding #3: Annual Rural Route Inspections Not Conducted

Delivery unit managers did not always conduct annual route inspections as required by policy. Specifically, as of June 2023, only 6,046 of 81,603 (7 percent) rural route fiscal year 2023 annual inspections were conducted at delivery units nationwide. Further, managers at all 14 delivery units we visited did not conduct an annual rural route inspection.

Postal Service policy²² requires management to conduct at least one annual route inspection of all rural routes. Additionally, policy²³ states to achieve and maintain an appropriate daily workload for delivery units and routes, management will conduct at least annual route and unit reviews consisting of an analysis of workhours, volumes, and possible deliveries.²⁴ These reviews will be utilized to verify adjustments that have been, or need to be taken by management, to maintain efficient service.

Annual route inspections were not conducted due to a lack of management oversight. Management at delivery units stated they were unaware of whether they could resume annual route inspections due to impacts from COVID, RRECS implementation, and the mini-mail survey. Further, some unit

management stated they did not receive guidance on how to conduct annual route inspections. Annual inspections of rural routes are a critical control to ensure the AMS and edit book accuracy. Without route inspections, delivery unit management cannot effectively review and validate the accuracy of carrier changes in edit books or ensure carriers are utilizing the safest and most efficient line of travel while completing their routes.

“Annual inspections of rural routes are a critical control to ensure the AMS and edit book accuracy.”

Recommendation #3

We recommend, the **Vice President of Delivery Operations**, develop an oversight process for unit management to complete rural route inspections at least annually, to validate the accuracy of edit book activity in accordance with Postal Service policy.

Finding #4: AMS Edit Book Process Needs Modernization

The edit book process includes manual processes for both rural carriers on their routes and delivery unit management for edit book submissions to the District AMS Office.

Under the current policy, delivery unit management have the option to physically mail hard copy edit books to the District AMS Office or process edit book updates electronically through WebEES. We identified only 11,161 of 38,259 (29 percent) of edit books submitted nationwide in October 2022 were submitted through WebEES (see [Figure 4](#)).

In June 2023, a second analysis of edit book submissions identified no improvement in the number of edit books submitted via WebEES. Specifically, only 19,858 of 73,225 (27 percent) of edit books nationwide were submitted through WebEES.

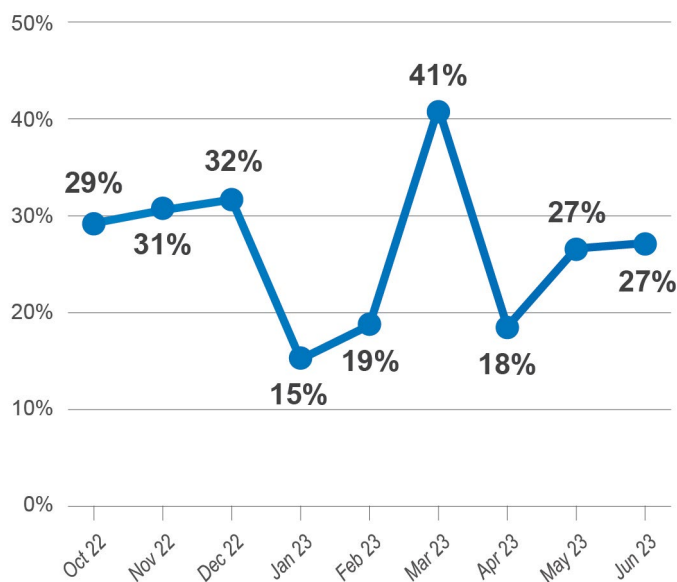
²¹ *Address Management, NCSC, Memphis TN - Proven Practices*, December 2019.

²² Handbook PO-603, *Rural Carrier Duties and Responsibilities*, Section 52, Rural Route Inspections, September 2013.

²³ Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, Section 211, Selecting Period for Mail Counts and Route Inspections, March 1998 with updates in March 2004.

²⁴ A physical location on the letter carrier's route where mail may be delivered.

Figure 4. Nationwide Percentage of Edit Books Submitted via WebEES²⁵



Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service data in RADAR.

Ten of 12 (83 percent) District AMS managers interviewed stated they prefer delivery units submit edit books through WebEES compared to mailing physical edit books as it is more efficient. The manual process of mailing physical edit books occurred because management did not prioritize the use of WebEES, when feasible. According to Postal Service senior leadership, the goal is to have edit book updates submitted completely electronically into AMS; however, this will require policy change and additional updates to electronic systems.

Furthermore, the use of physical edit books can increase the margin of error for submitting accurate updates to AMS. During interviews with District AMS managers and delivery unit management, they identified issues with lost edit books and errors in the AMS due to misinterpretation of edit book annotations made by carriers on their routes, which delayed updates to the AMS. In addition, according to carriers, the manual submission of edit books delays route updates while they wait for edit books to be returned.

Although supervisors or designees are not required to electronically submit rural route data, it can streamline the edit book process, reduce the amount of time it takes for changes to be entered into AMS, and avoid the physical collection and mailing

of edit books to and from the District AMS Office. Furthermore, while the Postal Service does not have plans to make the entire edit book process electronic, prioritizing the modernization of the edit book process can increase compliance with policy, reduce the cost of mailing physical edit books, and improve operational precision to provide the most efficient, consistent, and affordable last mile delivery services.

Recommendation #4

We recommend, the **Vice President of Delivery Operations**, develop a plan and update policy to require the use of the electronic system when submitting edit book updates.

Recommendation #5

We recommend, the **Vice President of Delivery Operations**, determine the feasibility of developing an all-electronic edit book to replace current physical edit books. If feasible, develop a plan and implement policy requiring the use of electronic edit books.

Management’s Comments

Management agreed with the findings and recommendations. See [Appendix C](#) for management’s comments in their entirety.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated they implemented an oversight process by tracking unsubmitted edit books and sending notification to the accountable field managers daily for follow up action during the open edit book submission period each month. Management also noted that compliance has improved since they began requiring edit book submissions every 30 days. The target implementation date is November 30, 2023.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated headquarters Rural Delivery is developing a best practice, web-based, refresher training plan for all rural carriers to complete periodically. Additionally, management will use existing training materials to implement group instruction with managers/ rural groups and will create a tailored training specifically for individual rural carriers. The target implementation date is July 31, 2024.

Regarding recommendation 3, management stated they began using the new RRECS process to accurately measure and evaluate the routes through twice a year Mini-Mail Surveys. They also stated route maintenance is completed monthly through

²⁵ Postal Service headquarters instructed delivery units not to submit edit books during the month of March 2023 due to the mini-mail survey initiated on February 25, 2023.

edit book compliance and is recorded, tracked, and validated using DPM/LTM breadcrumbs. The target implementation date is July 31, 2024.

Regarding recommendation 4, management stated they will train field personnel on WebEES with the goal of 75 percent compliance by the end of FY 2024 and will explore the feasibility of rural carriers completing edit book activities through scanners. The target implementation date is August 31, 2024.

Regarding recommendation 5, management stated the USPS is exploring the feasibility of DPM sending information to AMS for automatic updates, which will allow near live updates while unit management and carriers update the route monthly. Additionally, USPS is targeting September 30, 2024, to meet with DPM and AMS teams to develop the capability within their programs for this to replace current physical edit books with an all-electronic edit book system. USPS Rural Delivery will work with AMS to expand WebEES as one of the electronic tools to achieve timely edit book submissions. The target implementation date is August 31, 2024.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

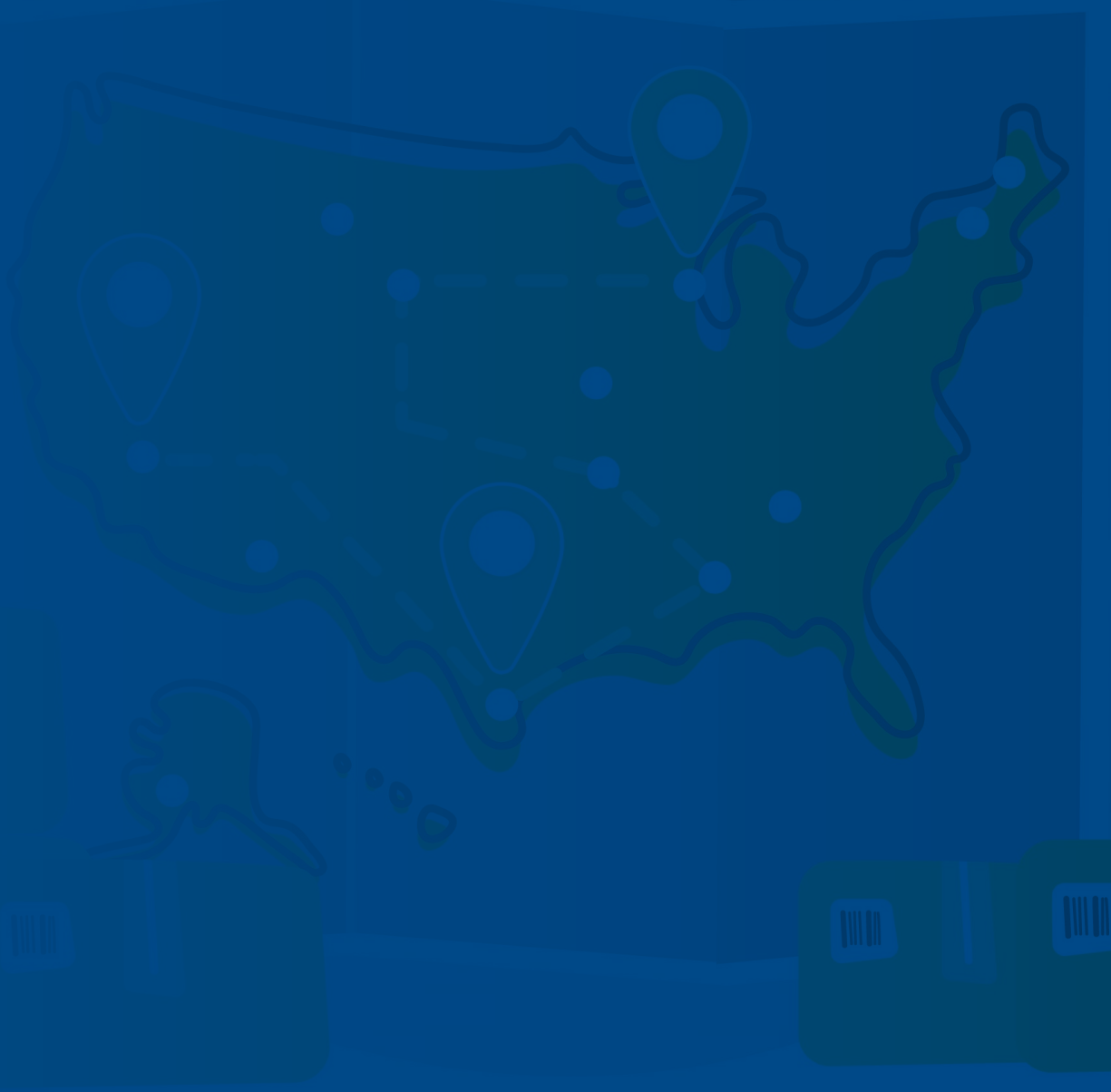
The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations in the report and corrective actions should resolve the issues identified.

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed.

All recommendations should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendations can be closed.

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Appendix A: Additional Information

Scope and Methodology

Our objective was to assess the Postal Service management of the AMS for rural routes. Specifically, we determined whether the process for maintaining delivery points and other route information was timely and accurate. We limited our review of AMS data to rural routes in this audit due to the planned implementation of the RRECS in May 2023.

To accomplish our audit objective, we:

- Reviewed applicable laws, policies, procedures, and relevant guidance related to rural routes, including carrier edit books, annual route inspections, and data impacting the AMS.
- Identified delivery units for site visits based on highest number of edit books not submitted to the AMS within 30 days or more and tier levels assigned by the Postal Service. We selected two sites during survey and 12 sites during fieldwork.
- Interviewed Postal Service managers responsible for the AMS and rural mail operations at Postal Service Headquarters, district offices, and delivery units to obtain an understanding of policies, procedures, and processes for ensuring timeliness and accuracy when adding, maintaining, and removing delivery points and line of travel information for rural routes.
- Evaluated rural route edit books and analyzed data from October 2022 to June 2023 to determine if:
 - Edit books complied with the edit book policy and standard work instructions.
 - Annual street observations were performed to confirm the accuracy of the edit books.
- Conducted site visits at judgmentally selected delivery units and interviewed key delivery unit management and rural route carriers to understand the process to update and submit edit book changes to the AMS and determine what is needed (carriers/supervisors, edit book training, and/or equipment) to achieve timely updates and the AMS data accuracy.
- Judgmentally selected rural route edit books at the selected delivery units to verify whether rural carriers annotated changes on the Route Listing Report and supervisors approved edit book changes and submitted to the District AMS Office as required.
- Identified Postal Service plans and strategy for updating rural route edit books in the AMS prior to the implementation of RRECS.
- Obtained edit book performance reports from Address Management Scan²⁶ application and Power BI dashboards from RADAR to determine if the rural route edit books were submitted timely by comparing the reports to data in a sample of edit books.

We conducted this performance audit from October 2022 through September 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(s). We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective(s). We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on August 29, 2023, and included their comments where appropriate.

In planning and conducting the audit, we obtained an understanding of the AMS internal control structure to help determine the nature, timing, and extent of our audit procedures. We reviewed the management controls for overseeing the program and mitigating associated risks. Additionally, we assessed the

²⁶ The AMScan application gives AMS the ability to record the type of maintenance contained in each edit book, the date received, and types of changes and the return of the edit book to the delivery unit.

internal control components and underlying principles, and we determined that the following five components were significant to our audit objective:

- Control Environment
- Risk assessment
- Control activities
- Information and Communication
- Monitoring Activities

We developed audit work to ensure that we assessed these controls. Based on the work performed, we identified internal control deficiencies that were significant within the context of our objective. Our recommendations, if implemented, should correct the weaknesses we identified.

We assessed the reliability of Address Management Scan application, RADAR, and Rural Management Support System data by performing tests for data completeness, reasonableness, accuracy, and validity, and interviewing agency officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Prior Audit Coverage

The OIG did not identify any prior audits or reviews related to the objective of this audit within the last five years.

Appendix B: Tables

Table 2. Edit Book Submissions as of October 2022

Facility Names	Area	District	Total Rural Route Edit Books	Rural Route Edit Books Submitted for October 2022	Rural Route Edit Books Unsubmitted for October 2022
Keene	Atlantic	ME-NH-VT	10	1	9
Wilmington-Magnolia	Atlantic	North Carolina	27	0	27
Rapid City	Central	IA-NE-SD	25	18	7
Fort Wayne-Northwood	WestPac	Indiana	7	4	3
Massillon	Central	Ohio 1	15	15	0
Tomahawk	Central	Wisconsin	5	1	4
Clinton	Southern	AL-MS	5	1	4
Melbourne-West Melbourne	Southern	Florida 2	5	2	3
Lewisville-Flower Mound	Southern	Texas 1	43	3	40
McKinney	Southern	Texas 1	125	1	124
Fort Worth-Polytechnic	Southern	Texas 1	8	8	0
Chowchilla	WestPac	California 3	6	1	5
San Juan Capistrano	WestPac	California 4	20	0	20
San Diego-Otay Mesa	WestPac	California 6	13	8	5
Totals			314	63	251

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service data obtained from RADAR.

Table 3. Edit Book Submissions as of June 2023

Facility Names	Area	District	Total Rural Route Edit Books	Rural Route Edit Books Submitted for June 2023	Rural Route Edit Books Unsubmitted for June 2023
Keene	Atlantic	ME-NH-VT	10	10	0
Wilmington-Magnolia	Atlantic	North Carolina	27	11	16
Rapid City	Central	IA-NE-SD	25	24	1
Fort Wayne-Northwood	WestPac	Indiana	7	4	3
Massillon	Central	Ohio 1	15	15	0
Tomahawk	Central	Wisconsin	5	5	0
Clinton	Southern	AL-MS	5	1	4
Melbourne-West Melbourne	Southern	Florida 2	5	2	3
Lewisville-Flower Mound	Southern	Texas 1	43	43	0
McKinney	Southern	Texas 1	125	125	0
Fort Worth-Polytechnic	Southern	Texas 1	8	8	0
Chowchilla	WestPac	California 3	6	6	0
San Juan Capistrano	WestPac	California 4	20	20	0
San Diego-Otay Mesa	WestPac	California 6	13	13	0
Totals			314	287	27

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service data obtained from RADAR.

Appendix C: Management's Comments



September 18, 2023

JOHN CIHOTA
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Address Management System for Rural Routes
(22-200-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the draft report – *Address Management System for Rural Routes*.

Management agrees that edit books were not always submitted timely but has issued updated requirements facilitating improvement.

Following are our comment on the five recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

We recommend, the **Vice President of Delivery Operations**, develop an oversight process to hold delivery unit management accountable for submitting edit books timely and revise policy as needed.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

We have developed and implemented an oversight process; tracking with accountability is sent to field managers for follow up action daily during the open period for each month. Compliance has markedly improved since the establishment of requiring the edit book submission every 30 days.

Target Implementation Date: 11/30/2023

Responsible Official: Director Delivery Strategy & Policy

Recommendation 2:

We recommend the **VP Delivery Operations**, develop a comprehensive training on the edit book process for new rural carriers. Additionally, develop refresher training and implement a plan for all rural carriers to complete the training periodically.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Training on the edit book process for new rural carriers currently exists in the carrier academy. HQ Rural Delivery is developing a best practice, web-based, refresher training plan for all rural carriers to complete periodically. We will continue to utilize existing training material to implement group instruction with our manager/rural group and will work to create a tailored training specifically for individual rural carriers.

Target Implementation Date: 07/31/2024

Responsible Official: Director Delivery Strategy & Policy

Recommendation 3:

We recommend, the **Vice President of Delivery Operations**, develop an oversight process for unit management to complete rural route inspections at least annually, to validate the accuracy of edit book activity in accordance with Postal Service policy.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

USPS utilizes the new RRECS process to accurately measure and evaluate the routes evaluation. This process is already being completed twice a year through the Mini Mail Survey. Route maintenance is being completed monthly through the edit book compliance and is being recorded, tracked and validated using DPM/LTM breadcrumbs.

Target Implementation Date: 07/31/2024

Responsible Official: Director Delivery Strategy & Policy

Recommendation 4:

We recommend, the **Vice President of Delivery Operations**, develop a plan and update policy to require the use of the electronic system when submitting edit book updates.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

USPS will train field personnel on WebEES with the goal of 75% compliance by the end of FY24 and will explore the feasibility of having rural carriers complete edit book activities through their scanners.

Target Implementation Date: 08/31/2024

Responsible Official: Director Delivery Strategy & Policy

Recommendation 5:

We recommend, the **Vice President of Delivery Operations**, determine the feasibility of developing an all-electronic edit book to replace current physical edit books. If feasible, develop a plan and implement policy requiring the use of electronic edit books.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

USPS is exploring using Delivery Point Manager (DPM) to send information to AMS for automatic updates. This will allow near live updates while the manager and carrier update the route monthly. USPS is targeting September 30th, 2024, to meet with the DPM and AMS teams to develop the capability within their programs for this.

USPS Rural Delivery will work with AMS to expand WebEES as one of the electronic tools achieve timely edit book submissions.

Target Implementation Date: 08/31/2024

Responsible Official: Director Delivery Strategy & Policy

E-SIGNED by ANGELA.H CURTIS
on 2023-09-19 09:34:28 CDT

Angela H. Curtis
Vice President, Delivery Operations

cc: *Corporate Audit & Response Management*

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

UNITED STATES



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