

Efficiency of Operations at the Macon Local Processing Center, Macon, GA

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 25-014-R25 | February 12, 2025



Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

February 12, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: SHARON YOUNG
DIVISION DIRECTOR PROCESSING OPERATIONS,
SOUTHEAST DIVISION

BARBARA MURPH
DIVISION DIRECTOR LOGISTICS, SOUTHEAST DIVISION

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is centered below the memorandum text.

FROM: Sean Balduff
Director, Field Operations, Central & Southern

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Efficiency of Operations at the Macon Local Processing
Center, Macon, GA (Report Number 25-014-R25)

This report presents the results of our audit of the Efficiency of Operations at the Macon Local Processing Center.

All recommendations require U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (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.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Jennifer Schneider, Audit Manager, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Chief Processing and Distribution Officer and Executive Vice President
Chief Logistics and Infrastructure Officer and Executive Vice President
Vice President, Processing and Maintenance Operations
Vice President, Logistics
Vice President, Eastern Regional Processing Operations
Southern Regional Director, Logistics
Corporate Audit Response Management

Results

Background

The U.S. Postal Service needs effective and productive operations to fulfill its mission of providing prompt, reliable, and affordable mail service to the American public. It has a vast transportation network that moves mail and equipment among approximately 315 processing facilities and 31,200 post offices, stations, and branches. The Postal Service is transforming its processing and logistics networks to become more scalable, reliable, visible, efficient, automated, and digitally integrated. This includes modernizing operating plans and aligning the workforce; leveraging emerging technologies to provide world-class visibility and tracking of mail and packages in near real time; and optimizing the surface and air transportation network. It further includes plans to create a modernized network based around regional processing and distribution centers (RPDC), local processing centers (LPC), and sorting and delivery centers (S&DC).¹ RPDCs are multi-purpose distribution centers with common designs, layouts, and processing equipment. Generally, each RPDC processes mail and packages originating in its service area and have one or more associated LPCs to sort letters and flats for delivery carriers.² The goal of an RPDC is to merge mail processing into a central facility within a region to reduce transportation costs and improve service reliability. The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews the efficiency of mail processing operations at facilities across the country and provides management with timely feedback to further the Postal Service’s mission.

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of the efficiency of operations at the Macon LPC in Macon, GA (Project Number 25-014). We

judgmentally selected the Macon, GA, LPC based on a review of first and last mile failures;³ workhours; scanning compliance;⁴ and late, canceled, and extra trips. The Macon LPC is in the Southeast Division and is serviced by the Atlanta RPDC. The Macon LPC processes letters and flats and services multiple 3-digit ZIP Codes in urban and rural communities⁵ (see Table 1).

Table 1. Population Demographics

3-Digit ZIP Codes	Urban Population	Rural Population	Total Population
304	65,448	167,013	232,461
310	244,788	299,031	543,819
312	142,415	27,425	169,840
318-319	208,450	80,652	289,102

Source: Postal Service National Distribution Labeling List and Census Bureau data.

As of October 9, 2024, the Macon LPC’s employee availability⁶ was 81.9 percent for processing and 94.6 percent for logistics. The Postal Service’s Employee Availability goal for FY 2024 was 89 percent for processing and 92.9 percent for logistics, meaning the Macon LPC was under the goal for processing and exceeded the goal for logistics.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate the efficiency of operations at the Macon LPC. To accomplish our objective, we focused on five audit areas: mail clearance times;⁷ delayed mail; late, canceled, and extra outbound trips; dock scanning; and security of registry items. We reviewed Surface Visibility Web (SVWeb)⁸ data for late, canceled, and extra trips, as

1 An S&DC consolidates multiple delivery units and package sortation operations into one centrally located facility.
2 LPCs also consolidate mail originating in its region and send it to the RPDC for sorting.
3 First mile failures occur when a mailpiece is collected and does not receive a processing scan at the origin processing facility on the day that it was intended. Last mile failures occur after the mailpiece has been processed at a processing facility on a final processing operation and is not delivered to the customer on the day it was intended.
4 Scans include load, depart, unload, close, assign, and arrive.
5 We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from 2020 Census Bureau information.
6 Data that compares straight workhours to the workhours that would have been recorded if all employees reported to work as scheduled.
7 The latest time committed mail can clear an operation for proper dispatch or delivery.
8 A website dedicated to the Surface Visibility program, which provides real-time transportation updates and reports on the movement of trailers in the surface network. The data captured to identify early, on-time, late, or canceled trips is also used to evaluate and improve transportation schedules.

well as scan compliance for the period from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. Further, we identified mail clearance time goals for the Macon LPC and compared them with operations shown in the Run Plan Generator report.⁹ During our site visit the week of November 18, 2024, we interviewed LPC management and observed mail processing and dock operations.

During this time, the OIG also audited four delivery units¹⁰ serviced by the Macon LPC. We will provide the results of those audits to Georgia District management in separate reports. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified deficiencies with four of the five areas we reviewed that affected the efficiency of operations at the Macon LPC. We also identified issues related to safety and security at the LPC (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Results

Audit Area	Issues Identified	
	Yes	No
Clearance Times		X
Delayed Mail	X	
Late, Canceled, and Extra Outbound Trips	X	
Scan Compliance	X	
Security of Registry Items		X
Other Issues: Safety and Security	X	

Source: Results of OIG data reviewed from fiscal year 2024 and fieldwork conducted from November 19 to 21, 2024.

For the audit areas where issues were not identified, we performed the following:

- Clearance Times – We analyzed mail processing schedules and data to verify the plant was meeting the scheduled clearance times. During our visit, we also observed the timely processing of mail.
- Security of Registry Items – We observed registry cage conditions and interviewed personnel to determine if procedures over the handling and security of registered mail were being followed. We did not find any systemic issues.

⁹ An application mail processing facilities use to plan machine utilization based on volume, clearance times, and other criteria.
¹⁰ The four delivery units were Gray Main Post Office, Gray, GA (project number 25-015-1); Perry Administrative Post Office, Perry, GA (project number 25-015-2); Warner Robins Main Post Office, Warner Robins, GA (project number 25-015-3); and Zebulon Branch, Macon, GA (project number 25-015-4).

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

During our observations at the LPC on November 19 and 20, 2024, we identified about 20,895 delayed letters on the workroom floor and in the manual mail section. Management reported this mail in the Mail Condition Visualization (MCV)¹¹ system during our visit (see Figure 1). We also identified four trays of potentially delayed mail in the manual letter operation during our visit. However, this mail was not labeled, so we could not determine the status.

The Macon LPC is equipped to process only letters and flats. However, during our review we identified five gaylords of mixed flats and packages that arrived from the Atlanta RPDC (see Figure 2). Upon review of scanning data, we determined some of the packages entered the mailstream as far back as October 2, 2024, and moved between both facilities multiple times. Management did not properly report these packages in the MCV system.

Why Did it Occur

Delayed letters were caused from late arriving mail and incorrect placarding. Management stated a large portion of the delayed letters reported was mail arriving from other plants after the Macon LPC had started letter processing operations that day. As mail handlers sorted and staged this mail for further processing, they removed the original identifying date placards from the mail containers that identified when it arrived. As employees sorted this mail, they comingled trays of letters with multiple commitment dates into one container. Once the container was full, employees placarded the entire mail container with a new commitment date for delivery.

The Atlanta RPDC erroneously sent the delayed packages, mixed with flats, unsorted to the LPC. Packages arriving from the Atlanta RPDC should be sorted to the five-digit ZIP Code, then cross-docked to trucks traveling to local delivery units. Management at the LPC used other means of communication,

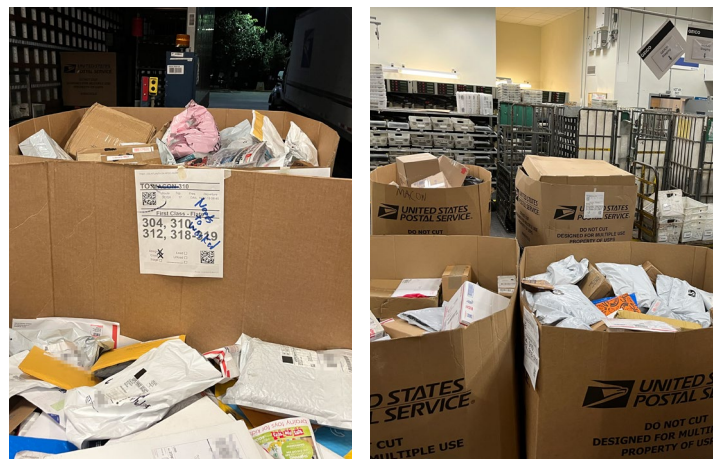
such as email, to report these issues rather than the Mail Arrival Quality/Plant Arrival Quality (MAQ/PAQ)¹² system. The other methods of communication do not enable visibility to all levels of management as the MAQ/PAQ system does, so the issue was not corrected.

Figure 1. Delayed Letter Mail at the Macon LPC



Source: OIG photos taken November 19 and 20, 2024.

Figure 2. Gaylords of Delayed Flats and Packages at the Macon LPC



Source: OIG photos taken November 19 and 20, 2024.

¹¹ MCV provides near real-time visibility of a facility's on-hand volume, delayed processing volume, delayed dispatch volume, and oldest mail date by mail category and processing operation and stores historical trailer information.

¹² The MAQ/PAQ system facilitates communication and resolution of issues with the movement of mail, including collection mail, between postal facilities.

What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy¹³ states that management should continually gauge how well it is managing mail flow and how well it has control over the workload, personnel, and equipment needed for a well-run operation. As part of Postal Service practice, a delayed mail count should be performed and accurately reported in the MCV system daily.¹⁴ In addition, management should use the MAQ/PAQ system to communicate and resolve issues with missent mail. Postal Service policy¹⁵ also states that placards are to be affixed on each container and should be processed in a first in, first out (FIFO) order.¹⁶

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Delayed mail can adversely affect Postal Service customers, harm the brand, send mailers to competitors, and cause the Postal Service to lose revenue. There is also an increased risk of additional overtime used at the LPC when unsorted packages and flats are received from the Atlanta RPDC.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations**, and the **Southeast Division Director, Logistics Operations**, develop a plan with the Atlanta Regional Processing and Distribution Center to better align mail arrival and processing times at the Macon Local Processing Center.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations**, train all mail processing employees at the Macon Local Processing Center on proper handling procedures for mail entering the facility and verify these procedures are consistently followed.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations**, train all management employees how to use the Mail Arrival Quality/Plant Arrival Quality system to report improper package sortation or other mail arrival issues identified at the Macon Local Processing Center.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding and the associated recommendations. Regarding recommendation 1, management stated it is now processing delayed arriving mail at the appropriate levels for the next delivery day. The target implementation date is May 31, 2025. Regarding recommendation 2, management stated it will train dock employees on proper handling of mail entering the facility and monitor for compliance. The target implementation date is April 30, 2025. Regarding recommendation 3, management stated it will reiterate the requirement to record mail arrival issues in MAQ/PAQ. The target implementation date is March 31, 2025. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

OIG Evaluation

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

¹³ Handbook PO-413, *Platform Operations*, Section 2-4.4, dated December 2013.

¹⁴ *Mail Condition Visualization Manual Line Item Entry Job Aid*, updated October 26, 2020.

¹⁵ Handbook PO-413 - *Platform Operations*, section 8-11, December 2013.

¹⁶ Stand-up Talk, *The FIFO Treatment*, January 15, 2022.

Finding #2: Late, Canceled, and Extra Outbound Trips

What We Found

From October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, there was a total of 4,906 outbound late trips, 5,615 outbound canceled trips, and 598 outbound extra trips at the Macon LPC (see Table 3). These trips represent about 46 percent of all trips at the facility.

Table 3. Outbound Transportation Metrics

Transportation Metric	Number	Percentage of Trips
Late Trips	4,906	20.3%
Canceled Trips	5,615	23.3%
Extra Trips	598	2.5%

Source: SVWeb.

Why Did It Occur

Late trips at the Macon LPC were caused by truck parking, route start times, and dock congestion issues. The Macon LPC does not have ample parking on site for the trucks and uses three separate parking lots in the area. Management stated it is working on acquiring one new lot that will accommodate all vehicles. Having detached lots causes timing issues as drivers must report to the LPC to clock in, travel to their truck, and then drive back to the facility. Management stated that this time is not included in the current schedule and causes drivers to run behind each morning. Management also stated that limited dock space and manual lifts cause delays each morning. The small dock staging area becomes congested with mail as it is prepared for transport, and manual lifts make it difficult to get mail in and out of the trucks.

Canceled and extra trips were mostly caused by network changes that took place in February 2024. During this time, the Macon LPC started transferring its transportation operation from Highway Contract Routes (HCR)¹⁷ to Postal Vehicle Service routes. Management stated that this contributed to the

canceled trips as there were still some HCR trips in the system that needed to be eliminated. The number of canceled trips has steadily declined since April 2024.

What Should Have Happened

According to Postal Service policy,¹⁸ key elements to effective dispatch and routing include evaluating transportation performance to planned schedules and ensuring that planned dispatches are compatible with an effective mail arrival profile at the destination.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When there are late, canceled, and extra trips, there is an increased risk of late mail delivery and increased operating costs.

Recommendation #4

We recommend the **Southeast Division Director, Logistics Operations**, complete a review of Postal Vehicle Service transportation schedules that includes updated truck parking information and verify related actions are implemented at the Macon Local Processing Center.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding and the associated recommendation. Management stated it removed underutilized routes and maximized the use of earlier trips to reduce canceled and extra trips. It is also working with headquarters to resolve the offsite parking arrangements and will make schedule adjustments to better reflect travel time. Management’s target implementation date is June 30, 2025.

OIG Evaluation

The OIG considers management’s comments responsive to the recommendation.

¹⁷ Routes serviced by suppliers carrying mail over highways between designated points.
¹⁸ Handbook M-22, *Dispatch and Routing Policies*, dated July 2013.

Finding #3: Scan Compliance

What We Found

From October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024, the average monthly compliance for load and unload scans did not meet the Postal Service’s goal of 93.25 percent in FY 2024 (see Table 4). These scans help the Postal Service track mail as it flows through the network. Load scans are performed when a container is loaded onto a trailer for dispatch. Unload scans are performed when a container is removed from a trailer.

Table 4. Scanning Compliance at the Macon LPC From October 2023 to September 2024

Month	Scan Type	
	Load	Unload
September 2024	73.92	90.29
August 2024	77.93	87.96
July 2024	79.71	83.08
June 2024	78.11	81.95
May 2024	80.84	76.58
April 2024	85.37	69.17
March 2024	79.78	71.54
February 2024	90.51	83.97
January 2024	92.00	83.61
December 2023	91.89	86.71
November 2023	92.03	90.87
October 2023	93.47	92.04

Source: SVWeb.

During our site visit, we identified containers of mail transport equipment (MTE) and recyclable material that came from delivery units with placards destined for the Atlanta RPDC.

Why Did It Occur

Plant management stated that the Macon LPC focused more on clearing the mail each day than monitoring the completion of load and unload scans. The plant manager also stated there were misunderstandings between employees regarding who was responsible to scan the mail containers.

The containers destined for the Atlanta RPDC remained at the Macon LPC for processing and did not receive another load scan or a terminated scan. This impacted the scanning scores because the postal system expected another load scan to the Atlanta RPDC.

What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy¹⁹ states that employees are required to perform outbound and inbound scans of mail containers and truck trailers to ensure 100 percent mail visibility. In addition, plant management should have ensured the MTEL system contained accurate information for placards used for MTE and recyclable material destined for the Macon LPC.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Low scanning compliance contributes to inaccurate utilization data, missent mail, and operational inefficiencies. Management uses scanning data to streamline outbound container operations, enhance dispatch quality, and increase efficiency in the use of transportation containers and trailers. When scans are not made, management may not have the information needed to make accurate operational decisions.

Recommendation #5

We recommend the **Southeast Division Director, Logistics Operations**, and the **Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations** develop and implement a plan to verify scanning at the Macon Local Processing Center is consistently completed in accordance with policy.

¹⁹ Surface Visibility Program User booklet, updated January 10, 2023.

Recommendation #6

We recommend the **Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations**, update the Mail Transport Equipment Labeler system to ensure placards used for mail transport equipment and recyclable material are accurate.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding and the associated recommendations. Regarding recommendation 5, management stated service talks were conducted to reiterate policy for completing load and unload scans and will monitor for consistency and compliance. The target implementation date is March 31, 2025. Regarding recommendation 6, management will review the MTEL system periodically to ensure proper placards are available for utilization. Management's target implementation date for recommendation 6 is April 30, 2025.

OIG Evaluation

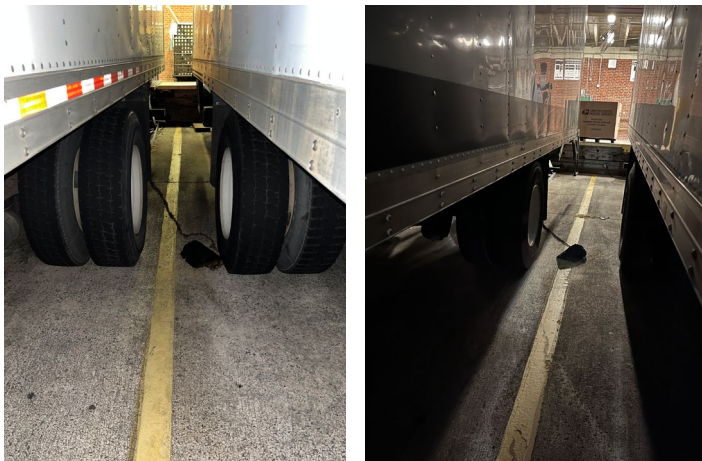
The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations.

Finding #4: Safety and Security

What We Found

During our site observations, we observed trucks and trailers parked at the docks without wheel chocks placed next to the tire to prevent them from rolling away (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Trailer Without Wheel Chocks at the Macon LPC



Source: OIG photos taken November 19, 2024.

Why Did It Occur

The inconsistent use of wheel chocks was due to a lack of management oversight. Specifically, supervisors were not monitoring drivers or enforcing the use of wheel chocks. Management was not aware that the drivers were not using chocks.

What Should Have Happened

Postal Service policy²⁰ states that PVS drivers must prevent trailers from rolling away from docks by using wheel chocks.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When employees do not observe safe working practices and safety rules, there is an increased risk of employee accidents and injuries.

Recommendation #7

We recommend the **Southeast Division Director, Logistics**, reiterate policy and verify all drivers are using wheel chocks at the Macon Local Processing Center.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding and the associated recommendation. Management stated service talks were provided to all PVS drivers on the proper use of wheel chocks and that compliance is monitored daily. Management's target implementation date is March 31, 2025.

OIG Evaluation

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

²⁰ Handbook EL-803, *Maintenance Employee's Guide to Safety*, Section 1, subsection C dated July 2020.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from October 2024 through February 2025, 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 January 21, 2025, and included its comments where appropriate.

In planning and conducting the audit, we obtained an understanding of mail processing operations 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 internal control components and underlying principles, and we determined that the following three components were significant to our audit objective:

- Control Activities
- Information and Communication
- Monitoring

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

We assessed the reliability of MCV and SVWeb 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.

Appendix B: Management's Comments



January 31, 2025

VICTORIA SMITH
ACTING DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Efficiency of Operations at the Macon Local Processing Center, Macon, GA. (Report Number 25-014-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report *Efficiency of Operations at the Macon Local Processing Center, Macon GA*.

Management generally agrees with the findings related to delayed mail, late, canceled, and extra outbound trips, scan compliance, and safety and security issues.

Following are our comments on each of the seven recommendations.

Recommendation 1: We recommend the Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations, and the Southeast Division Director, Logistics Operations, develop a plan with the Atlanta Regional Processing and Distribution Center to better align mail arrival and processing times at the Macon Local Processing Center.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management is processing delayed arriving volume on the DBCS machine at the 5-digit level to capture in DPS for the next morning's delivery.

Target Implementation Date: 05/31/2025

Responsible Official:
Southeast Division Director, Processing
Southeast Division Director, Logistics

Recommendation 2: We recommend the Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations, train all mail processing employees at the Macon Local Processing Center on proper handling procedures for mail entering the facility and verify these procedures are consistently followed.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management will train the inbound dock employees on the proper handling of mail entering the Macon LPC and monitor for compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2025

Responsible Official:
Southeast Division Director, Processing

Recommendation 3: We recommend the Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations, train all management employees how to use the Mail Arrival Quality/Plant Arrival Quality system to report improper package sortation or other mail arrival issues identified at the Macon Local Processing Center.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

The requirement to record mail arrival issues in MAQ/PAQ will be reiterated.

Target Implementation Date: 03/31/2025

Responsible Official:
Southeast Division Director, Processing

Recommendation 4: We recommend the Southeast Division Director, Logistics Operations, complete a review of Postal Vehicle Service transportation schedules that includes updated truck parking information and verify related actions are implemented at Macon Local Processing Center.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Logistics has eliminated under-utilized routes which has reduced trip cancellations. Extra trips are for overflow/downflow mail. Management is maximizing the use of pre-DOV to help reduce extra trips.

HQ FSO is working to resolve the offsite parking issues. Once parking is finalized, schedules will be adjusted to reflect appropriate travel time to and from parking site.

Target Implementation Date: 06/30/2025

Responsible Official:
Southeast Division Director, Logistics

Recommendation 5: We recommend the Southeast Division Director, Logistics Operations, develop and implement a plan to verify scanning at the Macon Local Processing Center is consistently completed in accordance with policy.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Service talks have been conducted to reiterate the requirement to consistently perform all load and unload scans. Management will conduct reviews to monitor for consistency and compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 03/31/2025

Responsible Official:

Southeast Division Director, Processing
Southeast Division Director, Logistics

Recommendation 6: We recommend the Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations, update the Mail Transport Equipment Labeler system to ensure placards used for mail transport equipment and recyclable material are accurate.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management will review the MTEL system periodically to ensure proper placards are in the bull pin.

Target Implementation Date: 04/30/2025

Responsible Official:

Southeast Division Director, Processing

Recommendation 7: We recommend the Southeast Division Director, Logistics, reiterate policy and verify all drivers are using wheel chocks at the Macon Local Processing Center.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation.

Service talks and have been conducted with all PVS drivers on the requirement to use wheel chocks. In addition, all logistics supervisors and managers perform daily Gemba walks to monitor compliance.

Target Implementation Date: 03/31/2025

Responsible Official:

Southeast Division Director, Logistics

E-SIGNED by SHARON M YOUNG
on 2025-01-31 16:55:31 EST

Sharon Young
Southeast Division Director, Processing Operations

E-SIGNED by BARBARA F MURPH
on 2025-01-31 17:02:13 EST

Barbara Murph
Southeast Division Director, Logistics Operations

Cc: Vice President, Regional Processing Operations (Eastern)

Regional Director, (Atlantic)

Corporate Audit Response Management

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