

Creve Coeur Branch, St. Louis, MO: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 25-100-1-R25 | August 11, 2025



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Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

August 11, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: JEREMIE SIX
MANAGER, KANSAS-MISSOURI DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Wolski", is centered below the memorandum header.

FROM: Joseph E. Wolski
Director, Field Operations, Atlantic & WestPac

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Creve Coeur Branch, St. Louis, MO: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 25-100-1-R25)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Creve Coeur Branch, St. Louis, MO.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesy provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ricardo Martinez, Audit 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, Central Area Retail & Delivery Operations
Director, Retail & Post Office Operations Maintenance
Corporate Audit and Response Management

Results

Background

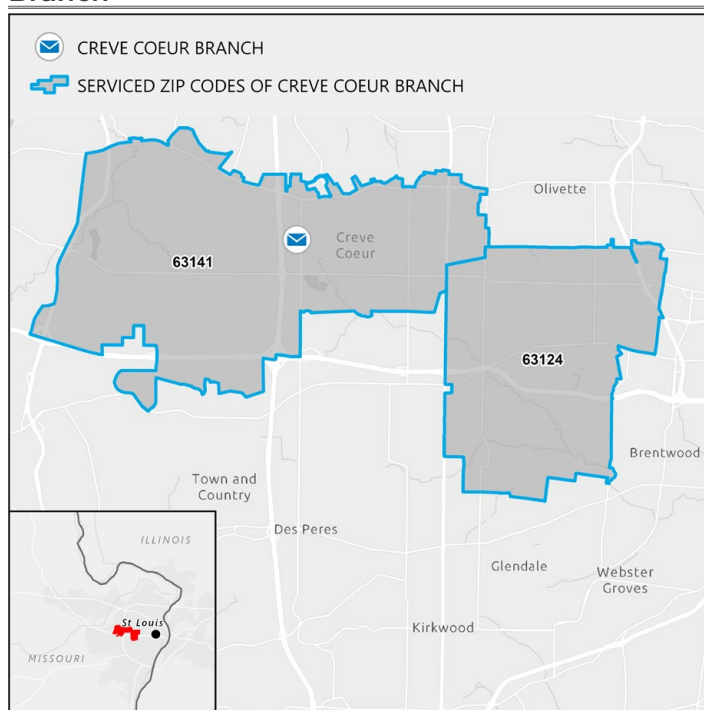
The U.S. Postal Service's mission is to provide timely, reliable, secure, and affordable mail and package delivery to more than 160 million residential and business addresses across the country. The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews delivery operations at facilities across the country and provides management with timely feedback in furtherance of this mission.

This interim report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Creve Coeur Branch in St. Louis, MO (Project Number 25-100-1). We selected the St. Louis area based on a congressional inquiry issued April 1, 2025, from the U.S. senators and representatives from Missouri to conduct an audit of post offices and distribution centers in the St. Louis metro area. The Creve Coeur Branch is in the Kansas-Missouri (KS-MO) District of the Central Area and serves about 33,550 people in ZIP Codes 63124 and 63141 which are considered urban communities (see Figure 1).¹

This delivery unit has 48 city routes. From March 22 through April 18, 2025, the delivery unit had three supervisors assigned.² During our visit, the unit management team working at this facility consisted of the unit manager, two supervisors, and a relief supervisor. The Creve Coeur Branch falls under the St. Louis Main Post Office (MPO) for employee availability measurement. As of May 2, 2025,³ the employee availability rate for the St. Louis MPO was 86.3 percent year to date which is under the Postal Service's retail and delivery operations employee availability goal of 93.7 percent for fiscal year 2025. The Creve

Coeur Branch is one of seven delivery units⁴ the OIG reviewed during the week of June 2, 2025, that are serviced by the St. Louis Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) and the St. Louis Network Distribution Center (NDC).

Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Creve Coeur Branch



Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

We assessed all units serviced by the St. Louis P&DC and NDC based on the number of Customer 360 (C360)⁵ delivery-related inquiries,⁶ Informed Delivery⁷ contacts, stop-the-clock (STC)⁸ scans performed away from the delivery point and at the unit,

¹ We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from 2020 Census Bureau information.

² According to the Postal Service's Time and Attendance Collection system (TACS). TACS is the system used by the Postal Service to automate the collection of employee time and attendance information.

³ The last day of Pay Period 10.

⁴ The other six units are O'Fallon MPO, O'Fallon, MO (Project Number 25-100-2), St. Charles MPO, St. Charles, MO (Project Number 25-100-3), Ballwin MPO, Ballwin, MO (Project Number 25-100-4), Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 25-100-5), Southwest Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 25-100-6), and the Clayton Branch, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 25-100-7).

⁵ A cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.

⁶ A compilation of package inquiry, package pickup, daily mail service, and hold mail inquiries.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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 Pickup," and "No Access."

undelivered route information, and first and last mile failures⁹ between February 1 through April 30, 2025.

We judgmentally selected the Creve Coeur Branch based on first and last mile failures and the number of undelivered routes.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Creve Coeur Branch in St. Louis, MO.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on the following audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,¹⁰ carrier separations and transfers, and property safety and security conditions. Specifically, we reviewed delivery metrics, including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, and carrier complement. During our site visit from June 3–5, 2025, we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; carrier separation procedures; and unit safety and security conditions. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions as summarized in Table 1 with management on July 18, 2025, and included their comments, where appropriate.

We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding conditions we identified at the Creve Coeur Branch. We will issue a separate capping report¹¹ that

provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all seven delivery units, as well as the district. The capping report will include actions taken by management to address the issues identified in this interim report. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Creve Coeur Branch. Specifically, we found issues with four of the areas we reviewed (see Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of Results

Audit Area	Deficiencies Identified	
	Yes	No
Delayed Mail	X	
Package Scanning	X	
Arrow Keys	X	
Carrier Separations and Transfers		X
Property Conditions	X	

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of June 2, 2025.

We analyzed employee data from March 8 through April 18, 2025. All carriers assigned to the unit either reported to work or were accounted for by management during this time, indicating no issues with employee separations and transfers.

9 First mile failures occur when a mailpiece is collected and does not receive a processing scan at the P&DC on the day that it was intended. Last mile failures occur after the mailpiece has been processed at the P&DC on a final processing operation and is not delivered to the customer on the day it was intended.
10 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.
11 Project Number 25-100.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of June 3, 2025, we identified 1,297 delayed mailpieces¹² at 25 carrier cases (see Figure 2). Specifically, we identified 913 letters and 384 flats. In addition, management did not report this mail as delayed in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)¹³ system. Further, the carriers did not complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,¹⁴ to document undelivered mailpieces.

Figure 2. Example of Delayed Mail in the Carrier Case



Source: OIG photo taken June 3, 2025.

Why Did It Occur

These conditions occurred because management incorrectly thought that mail brought back by carriers was not considered delayed mail, so they did not

follow or enforce required procedures. Management assigned routes to carriers that did not complete their deliveries. For example, the route of a carrier on extended leave was split among other carriers at the unit, and the carriers assigned did not deliver all mail because they were not familiar with the route. When carriers returned from their assigned routes the evening supervisor did not enforce the Redline process,¹⁵ which includes carriers completing PS Form 1571 for any undelivered mail brought back to the delivery unit. Management also did not conduct a walkthrough to verify that all mail was cleared from the unit. Further, unit management did not report this mail in the DCV system because they thought that mail brought back by carriers was not considered delayed mail.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have followed the Redline process,¹⁶ and conducted a walkthrough of the workroom floor to look for undelivered mail. Postal Service policy states that all types of First-Class, Priority, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. Policy states delivery units must follow the Redline process, which includes carriers completing a PS Form 1571 for any undelivered mail brought back to the delivery unit. In addition, managers are required¹⁷ 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. Further, management must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

¹² OIG estimate based on Postal Service conversion factors in Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*, Appendix D.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*, lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

¹⁵ A standardized framework encompassing manager and carrier responsibilities after carriers return to the delivery unit upon completion of delivery assignments, ensuring that any mail returned from the street is identified with a signed completed PS Form 1571 and that no mail is taken back to the carrier case.

¹⁶ Standard Operating Procedures, Redline Policy.

¹⁷ *DCV Learn and Grow*, August 1, 2024.

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.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding. See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

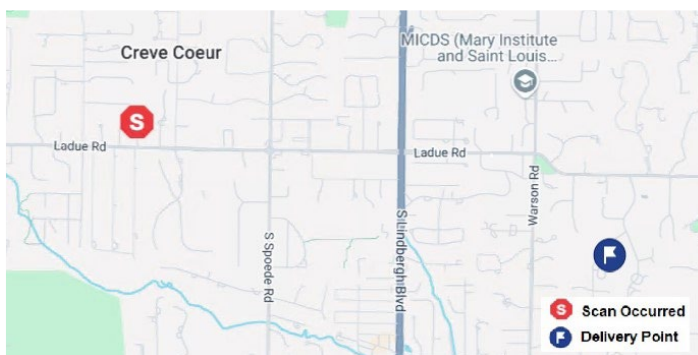
Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees scanned packages away from the intended delivery point and handled packages incorrectly at the unit. Specifically, we found issues with scanning and handling of packages in the unit. On the morning of June 3, 2025, before carriers arrived for the day, we selected 30 packages from the carrier cases to review and analyze scanning and tracking history. Of the 30 sampled packages, 14 (46.6 percent) had improper scans or handling issues, including:

- Thirteen packages scanned “Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location,” were scanned between 1.4 and 2.6 miles away from the delivery point (see Figure 3). Scans should be made as close to the delivery point as possible.
- One package was scanned as Addressee Unknown and should have been returned to the sender.

Figure 3. Scan 2.6 Miles Away From the Delivery Point in St. Louis, MO



Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

Why Did It Occur

These scanning issues occurred because unit management did not adequately monitor and enforce proper package scanning and handling procedures. The manager used a system to monitor package deliveries, but she was not using it for delivery attempted packages and to determine where those scans occurred.

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,¹⁸ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.¹⁹

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 improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and the Postal Service brand.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

¹⁸ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

¹⁹ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

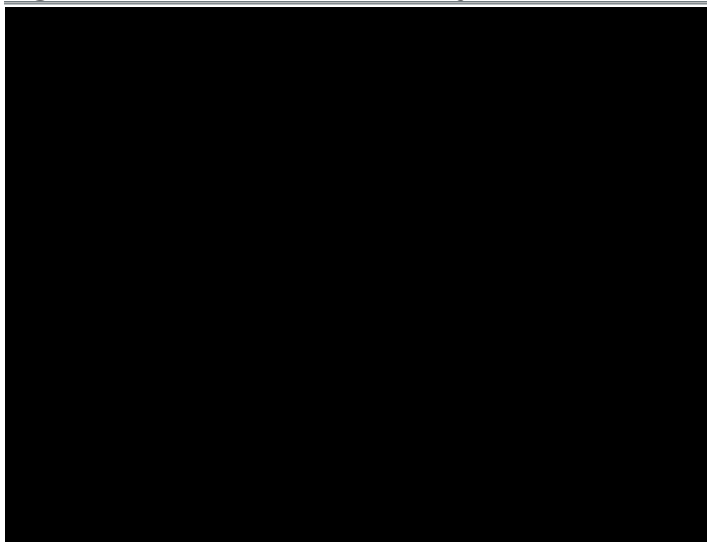
Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Unit management did not properly update the arrow key inventory log and safeguard the arrow keys. On the morning of June 5, 2025, before carriers arrived, we reviewed the unit's arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)²⁰ system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. Unit management reported 37 keys in RADAR as "In-Use" or "In Vault." Based on our physical review of the arrow keys at the unit, three keys in RADAR were missing and had not been reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Of the remaining 34 in RADAR, we found 31 keys and carriers had three keys because they had not returned them the previous night. We also found an additional six keys at the unit that were not recorded in RADAR.

In addition, arrow keys were not always kept secure. Specifically, arrow keys were [REDACTED] which was often left open and unattended outside the supervisor's office (see Figure 4). In the morning, carriers took their own keys [REDACTED], unsupervised.

Figure 4. Unattended Arrow Keys



Source: OIG photo taken on June 5, 2025.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage and safeguard the arrow keys. Specifically, management stated that they certified the arrow key list in RADAR without properly reconciling it to the physical keys on hand. Also, management was not aware there were missing keys, since the supervisor did not verify that all keys had been returned and accounted for daily, because she was new and had not been trained on arrow key procedures.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that the arrow key security procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,²¹ management must keep an accurate inventory of all arrow keys. Any missing keys must be immediately reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. In addition, policy states that arrow keys must remain secured until they are individually assigned to personnel. A supervisor or clerk must supervise employees signing out keys on the inventory log. Upon return, 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 an 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.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

²⁰ The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.

²¹ *Arrow/Modified Arrow Lock (MAL) Key Accountability Standard Work Instruction*, May 2024.

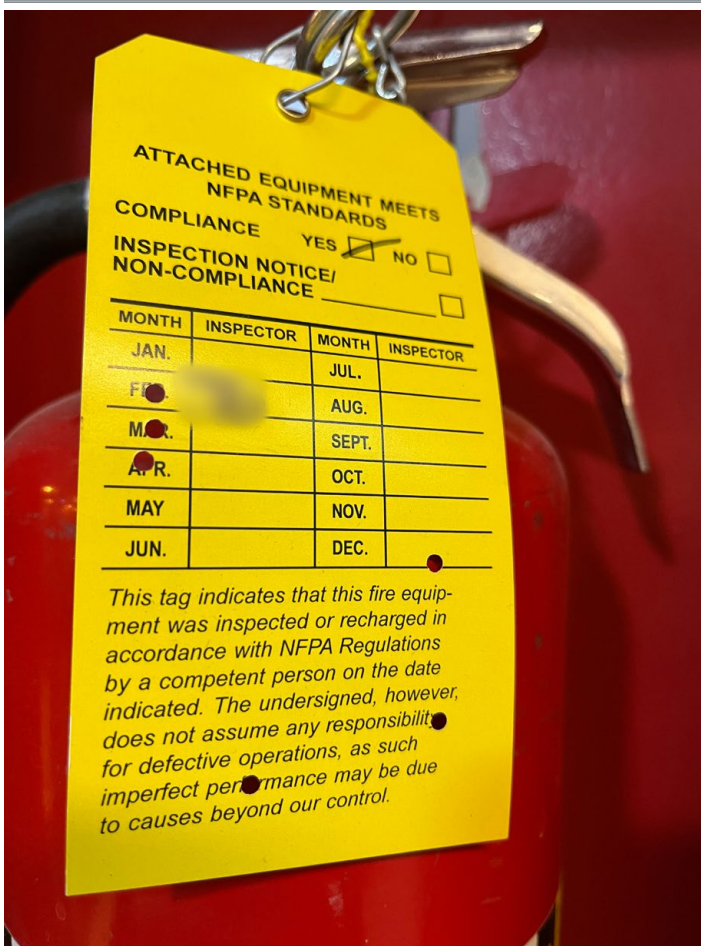
Finding #4: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found property safety and security issues at the Creve Coeur Branch.

- All five fire extinguishers missed the monthly inspection for the month of May (See Figure 5).
- Three out of eight lights on the dock did not work (see Figure 6).
- There was no sign posted entering the employee parking area stating that vehicles may be subject to search.

Figure 5. Fire Extinguishers Missing Monthly Inspection



Source: OIG photo taken June 4, 2025.

Figure 6. Lights in the Dock Area Not Working



Source: OIG photo taken June 4, 2025.

Why Did It Occur

Management overlooked the monthly fire extinguisher inspections during the month of May. Management reported the non-working lights in the RADAR system on April 2, 2025, but did not follow-up with maintenance. In addition, management stated they were unaware of the requirement to have a “subject to search” sign posted in the employee parking lot.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported safety and security issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. The Postal Service requires management to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers.²²

²² Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July 2020.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Management's attention to safety and security deficiencies can reduce the risk of injuries to employees and customers; reduce related costs, such as workers' compensation claims, lawsuits, and penalties; and enhance customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from May through August 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.

In planning and conducting the audit, we obtained an understanding of the Creve Coeur Branch 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 all three components that were significant within the context of our objectives. We will issue a separate report that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for the O'Fallon MPO, St. Charles MPO, Ballwin MPO, Maryville Gardens Station, Southwest Station, and the Clayton Branch, as well as the district.

We assessed the reliability of Product Tracking and Reporting and DCV 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



July 18, 2025

VICTORIA SMITH
ACTING DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Creve Coeur Branch, St. Louis, MO: Delivery Operations
(Report Number 25-100-1-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Creve Coeur Branch, St. Louis, MO: Delivery Operations*.

Management generally agrees with the findings related to delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys, and property conditions.

Management has begun taking steps to address the four findings.

Delayed Mail: Management will conduct a service talk on proper handling and recording of delayed mail in DCV. Management will also reiterate the requirement to use PS Form 1571 *Undelivered Mail Report* and follow the *Redline process*. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

Package Scanning: Management will provide a service talk on proper scanning procedures and conduct reviews to monitor compliance.

Arrow Keys: Management will update the inventory log to reflect all arrow keys on hand. Management will also conduct training on proper management and security of arrow keys. Additionally, reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

Property Conditions: Management abated two of the safety-related property conditions identified in the audit. Management is working to resolve the remaining safety and security issue, which requires the submission of workorders for assistance from other resources.

E-SIGNED by JEREMIE SIX
on 2025-07-18 17:19:25 EDT

Jeremie Six
District Manager, KS-MO District

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

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE



This document contains sensitive information that has been redacted for public release. These redactions were coordinated with USPS and agreed to by the OIG.

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