Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT
Report Number 25-100-5-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

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

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO: Delivery Operations (Report Number 25-100-5-R25)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Maryville Gardens Station in St. Louis, MO.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesy 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 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 Maryville Gardens Station in St. Louis, MO (Project Number 25-100-5). We selected the St. Louis area based on a congressional inquiry issued April 1, 2025, from U.S. senators and representatives from Missouri to conduct an audit of post offices and distribution centers in the St. Louis metro area. The Maryville Gardens Station is in the Kansas-Missouri (KS-MO) District of the Central Area and serves ZIP Codes 63104, 63111, and 63118 (see Figure 1). These ZIP Codes serve about 63,912 people in predominantly urban communities.[1]

This delivery unit has 56 city routes. From March 22 through April 18, 2025, the delivery unit had four supervisors assigned.[2] During our visit, the management team consisted of an acting station manager, three unit supervisors, and two relief supervisors.[3] The station manager and a supervisor were out on extended leave. The Maryville Gardens Station falls under the St. Louis Post Office for employee availability measurement. As of May 2, 2025,[4] the year-to-date employee availability rate for the St. Louis Post Office was 86.3 percent, which is under the Postal Service's retail and delivery operations employee availability goal of 93.7 percent for fiscal year 2025. The Maryville Gardens Station is one of seven delivery units[5] the OIG reviewed during the week of June 2, 2025, that are serviced by the St. Louis Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) and St. Louis Network Distribution Center (NDC).

Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Maryville Gardens Station
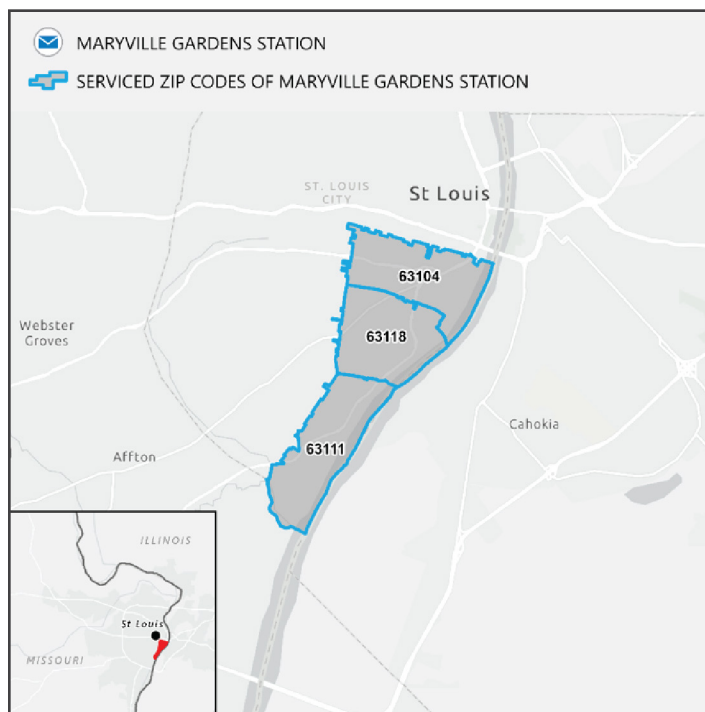
Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

We assessed all units serviced by the St. Louis P&DC and St. Louis NDC based on the number of Customer 360 (C360)[6] delivery-related inquiries,[7] Informed Delivery[8] contacts, stop-the-clock[9] (STC) scans performed away from the delivery point and at the

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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   Relief supervisors work a non-standard, flexible schedule to cover tours and facilities within a designated commuting distance, all with potential minimal advance notice.
4   The last day of Pay Period 10.
5   The other six units are Creve Coeur Branch, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 25-100-1), O'Fallon Main Post Office (MPO), O'Fallon, MO (Project Number 25-100-2), Saint Charles MPO, St. Charles, MO (Project Number 25-100-3), Ballwin MPO, Ballwin, MO (Project Number 25-100-4), Southwest Station, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 25-100-6), and the Clayton Branch, St. Louis, MO (Project Number 25-100-7).
6   A cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.
7   A compilation of package inquiry, package pickup, daily mail service, and hold mail inquiries.
8   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.
9   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."

unit, undelivered route information, and first and last mile failures[10] between February 1 and April 30, 2025.

We judgmentally selected the Maryville Gardens Station primarily based on the number of C360 inquiries related to delivery and Informed Delivery contacts. The unit was also chosen based on first and last mile failures and undelivered routes. See Table 1 for a comparison of some of these metrics between the unit and the rest of the district.

Table 1. Delivery Metric Comparison Between February 1 and April 30, 2025

Delivery Metric	Unit Average per Route	District Average per Route
C360 Delivery Inquiries	9.3	5.0
Informed Delivery Contacts	62.1	38.7

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service's C360 and Informed Delivery data extracted May 8, 2025.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Maryville Gardens Station in St. Louis, MO.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on the following audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,[11] carrier separations and transfers, property safety and security conditions, and package separations. 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 we observed mail conditions; package scanning procedures; arrow key security procedures; carrier separation procedures; package 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 2 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 Maryville Gardens Station. We will issue a separate capping report[12] 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 Maryville Gardens Station. Specifically, we found issues with five of the areas we reviewed (see Table 2).

Table 2. 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	
Package Separations	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.

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10 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.

11 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.

12 Project Number 25-100.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of June 3, 2025, we identified 9,602 delayed mailpieces at 52 carrier cases, the hot case,[13] the PO Box section, and the postage due section.[14] Specifically, we identified 8,736 letters, 855 flats and 11 packages. In addition, management did not accurately report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)[15] system. While management reported 1,401 delayed mailpieces, this only represented about 15 percent of the delayed mail we identified at the unit. See Table 3 for the number of pieces for each mail type and Figure 2 for examples of delayed mail found at carrier cases. Further, the carriers did not complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, Undelivered Mail Report,[16] to document undelivered mailpieces.

Table 3. Types of Delayed Mail Identified

Type of Mail	Carrier Cases	Hot Cases	PO Box	Postage Due	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	6,687	1,400	321	328	8,736
Flats	718	57	80	0	855
Packages	0	0	11	0	11
Totals	**7,405**	**1,457**	**412**	**328**	**9,602**

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit on June 3, 2025.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail in the Carrier Cases

Source: OIG photos taken June 3, 2025.

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13 Distribution case for last-minute sorting of mail that a carrier collects before leaving for their route.
14 Mail on which additional postage is collectible on final delivery, generally because of forwarding or additional services provided.
15 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.
16 PS Form 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report,* lists all mail distributed to the carrier for delivery that was left in the office or returned undelivered.

Why Did It Occur

The majority of delayed mail we identified was due to insufficient staffing. On Monday, June 2, 2025, the day prior to our visit, the unit did not have adequate resources to complete mail deliveries. Specifically, they had six vacant routes without a regular carrier assigned and five open routes due to unscheduled leave. The unit also had 11 vacant part-time city carrier positions. The unit manager requested help from district management, but only two additional carriers were provided. Delayed mail was not properly reported in the DCV system because the closing supervisor did not perform a complete review of the workroom floor to identify undelivered mail. The supervisor stated she prioritized other duties, such as completing operating reports and redistributing mail to carriers for route assistance.

Further, management was not enforcing the Redline[17] process. Specifically, management did not verify the carriers identified and placed mail brought back from their routes into the appropriate area or completed a PS Form 1571 to document the reason why the mail could not be delivered. Further, a 3M case[18] was not provided for carriers to use upon return from street delivery; therefore, they were putting some mail back in their cases upon returning from their routes.

What Should Have Happened

District management should have provided the unit with enough resources to deliver all the mail each day. Postal Service policy[19] states that managers must review the day's workload and be sure that replacements are available for unscheduled absences. Management must also develop contingency plans for situations that may interfere with normal delivery service.

In addition, Postal Service policy[20] states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. Further, managers are required[21] to report all mail in the delivery unit after the carriers have left for their street duties as either delayed or curtailed in the DCV system. Management must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day. Additionally, policy[22] states delivery units must follow the Redline process, which includes carriers properly depositing mail in the missent, missorted, and missequenced mail case and completing a PS Form 1571 for other undelivered mail brought back to the delivery unit. Further, managers must complete a review of the unit to verify delivery of all mail or that any undelivered mail has a PS Form 1571 attached.

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.

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17 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.
18 The area of the delivery unit where carriers place their missent, missorted, and missequenced mail.
19 Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services,* TL-14, Section 111.2, June 2019.
20 *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.
21 *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide,* August 2023.
22 Standard Operating Procedures, Redline Policy.

Finding #2: Package Scanning

What We Found

Employees improperly scanned packages away from the intended delivery point and handled packages incorrectly at 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 packages sampled, 20 (67 percent) had improper scans, including:

- Six packages were scanned "Delivery Attempted – No Access to Delivery Location" between 0.5 and 2.4 miles (see Figure 3) from the delivery point. These scans should be made as close to the delivery point as possible.

- Five packages were scanned "Held at Post Office at the Customer's Request," but the customers did not have a hold request on file.

- Three packages were missing an STC scan to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.

- Two packages were missing an arrival at unit (AAU) scan, which lets the customer know the package has arrived at the local post office.

- One package was scanned "Delivered at Parcel Locker," which should only be performed when a package is successfully left at the delivery point.

- A carrier delivered a package on April 21, 2025, and brought it back because it had been sitting by the customer's door for an extended time. However, he forgot to place it in the "Return to Sender" area.

- One package was scanned "No Such Number," and it was not placed in the "Return to Sender" area.

- One package was scanned "Available for Pickup – PO Box." However, the package was addressed for street delivery.

Figure 3. Scan Away From the Delivery Point in St. Louis, MO
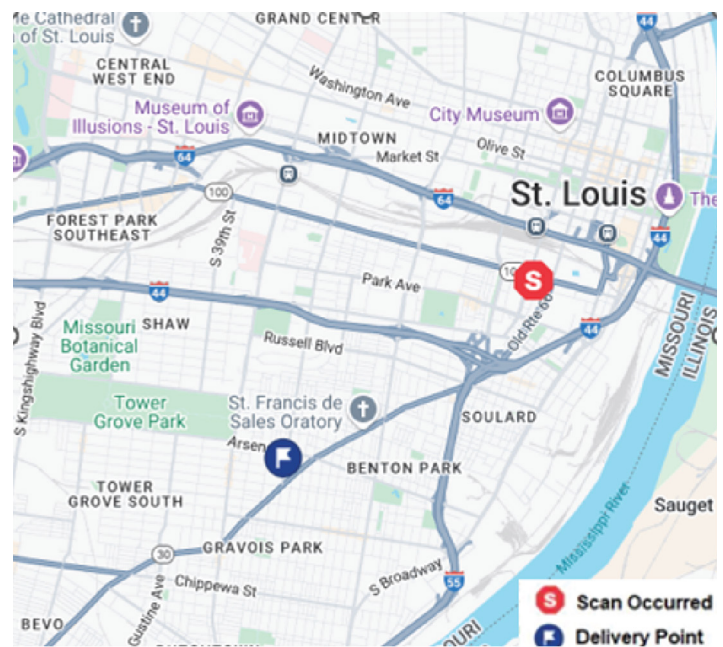
Source: Postal Service Single Package Look Up.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not always monitor and enforce proper package scanning procedures. The supervisor stated that she was unable to complete a walkthrough of the unit to identify packages and verify the scan status due to other responsibilities, such as staff training and coordinating the redistribution of mail to carriers for route assistance. The station manager also stated that she usually reviews package scan reports in the morning, but she was unable to review Monday's reports due to assisting with supervisory duties.

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,[23] which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.[24]

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23 *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.
24 *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

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.

Finding #3: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Unit management did not properly update the arrow key inventory log and safeguard arrow keys. On the morning of June 5, 2025, we reviewed the unit's arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)[25] system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. Unit management reported 60 keys in RADAR as "In-Use," or "In-Vault." Based on our physical review of arrow keys at the unit, 26 of the 60 keys were missing and not reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. In addition, 25 keys found at the unit were not recorded in RADAR.

In addition, arrow keys were not always kept secure. Specifically, the door to the room where arrow keys were stored was open and unattended throughout the day. Further, unit management did not verify keys were scanned out and properly returned daily.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not properly manage arrow keys due to ongoing operating challenges at the unit such as dealing with understaffing, unscheduled absences, staff training, and assisting supervisors.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that arrow key security procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,[26] 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[27] states that arrow keys must remain secured until they are individually assigned to personnel. 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.

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25 The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.
26 Administrative Support Manual Issue 13, January 2024.
27 *Arrow/Modified Arrow Lock (MAL) Key Accountability Standard Work Instruction*, dated May, 2024.
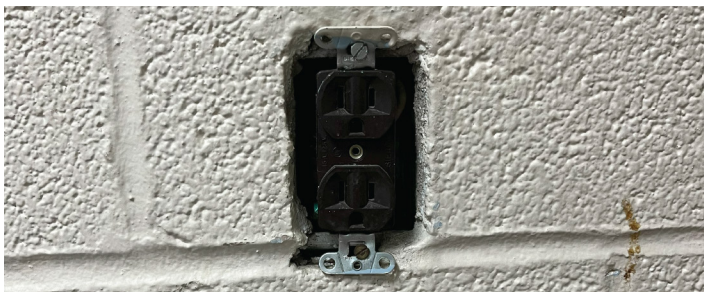
Finding # 4: Property Conditions

What We Found

We found three safety issues at the Maryville Gardens Station. Specifically:

- An outlet in the breakroom was missing a cover (see Figure 4).

- An Inspection Service lookout gallery door was blocked (see Figure 4).

- The unit had a handicap ramp but no railing or automatic door button.

Figure 4. Examples of Property Safety Issues

Missing Outlet Cover

Blocked Inspection Service Door

Source: OIG photos taken June 3, 2025.

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

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight or take the necessary actions to verify that property condition issues were corrected. Specifically, management was not aware of the missing electrical outlet cover in the breakroom. Management stated it instructed the custodian to keep the area clear in front of the lookout gallery door; however, during our visit the door was blocked. In addition, management was not aware of the requirement to have a railing for the ramp or door operation controls on the customer lobby doors.

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.[28] Further, the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. 4151–57 requires that buildings or facilities that were designed, built, or altered with federal dollars or leased by federal agencies after August 12, 1968, be accessible.

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

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

> **Postal Service Response**
> The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

Finding # 5: Separation of Packages for Dispatch

What We Found

Employees at the Maryville Gardens Station did not properly separate packages destined for the St. Louis P&DC and NDC. Specifically, on June 4, 2025, during the unit's evening operations, we observed Priority mail and non-Priority packages commingled in the same containers for dispatch.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide oversight to ensure that employees properly separated packages for dispatch. The unit manager stated she previously worked at a level 20 facility where Priority and non-Priority mail were combined and was not aware of the level 22 and above requirement for Priority and non-Priority package separation.

What Should Have Happened

The Postal Service requires all level 22 units and above to separate Priority Mail from non-Priority Mail packages and use a specific placard when dispatching to the processing facility.[29]

Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Proper mail preparation is required for visibility throughout the Postal Service network. When mail is not properly separated for dispatch to the processing facility, in accordance with procedures, there is an increased likelihood that mail will require additional processing steps. Furthermore, this can result in delays and service failures and an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand.

Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

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29 *Learn and Grow RDC/RSC Updates*, May 2024.

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 delivery operations and 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 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 Creve Coeur Branch, O' Fallon Main Post Office, Saint Charles MPO, Ballwin MPO, Maryville Gardens Station, Southwest Station, and Clayton Branch, as well as the district.

We assessed the reliability of the Product Tracking & Reporting system[30] and the DCV system 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.

Prior Audit Coverage

Report Title	Objective	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact
Mail Delivery, Customer Service, and Property Condition Reviews – Select Units, St. Louis, MO Region	To evaluate the mail delivery, customer service, and property conditions at the Maryville Gardens Station	22-115-R22	August 31, 2022	None

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30 The system of record for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

Appendix B: Management's Comments

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

July 18, 2025

VICTORIA SMITH
ACTING DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Maryville Gardens Station, St. Louis, MO: Delivery
Operations (Report Number 25-100-5-DRAFT)

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

Management generally agrees with the findings related to delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys, property conditions and separation of packages for dispatch.

Management has begun taking steps to address the five 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 and report all missing keys to the US Postal Inspection Service. 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 has abated two safety issues. Management is working to resolve the remaining issues, which requires the submission of workorders for assistance from other resources.

Separation of Packages for Dispatch: Management will provide service talks to reinforce package separation practices to ensure Priority Mail is not comingled with non-priority mail. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

E-SIGNED by JEREMIE SIX
on 2025-07-18 17:19:48 EDT
_____
Jeremie Six
District Manager, KS-MO District

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

Contact us via our Hotline and FOIA forms. Follow us on social networks. Stay informed.

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