

# Cleveland Heights Branch, Cleveland Heights, OH: Delivery Operations

## AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 25-141-2-R26 | December 22, 2025





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# Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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December 22, 2025

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** SUSAN A. TAYLOR  
MANAGER, OHIO 1 DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is positioned below the "MEMORANDUM FOR" section.

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

**SUBJECT:** Audit Report – Cleveland Heights Branch, Cleveland Heights, OH:  
Delivery Operations (Report Number 25-141-2-R26)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Cleveland Heights Branch in Cleveland Heights, OH.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesy provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ramona Gonzalez, 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

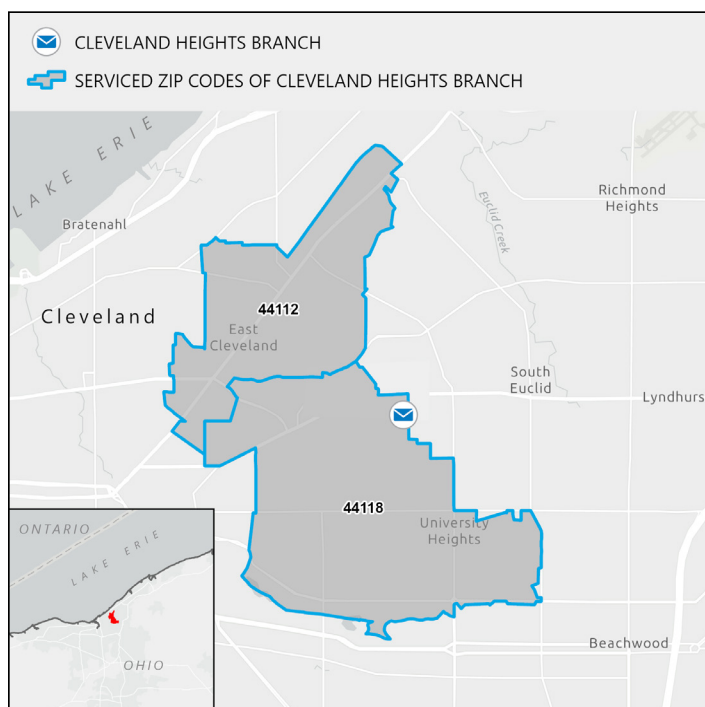
The U.S. Postal Service's mission is to provide timely, reliable, secure, and affordable mail and package delivery to more than 160 million residential and business addresses across the country. The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews delivery operations at facilities across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

This interim report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Cleveland Heights Branch in Cleveland Heights, OH (Project Number 25-141-2). The Cleveland Heights Branch is in the Ohio 1 District of the Central Area and serves about 59,123 people in ZIP Codes 44112 and 44118, which are considered urban communities<sup>1</sup> (see Figure 1).

This delivery unit has 50 city routes. From August 23 through September 19, 2025, the delivery unit had four supervisors assigned.<sup>2</sup> The day prior to our site visit, the unit manager was detailed to a different facility, and another unit manager was assigned to this unit from a different facility. In addition, two relief supervisors had been detailed to this unit since April 2025. The Cleveland Heights Branch falls under the Cleveland Post Office for employee availability<sup>3</sup> measurement. As of August 22, 2025,<sup>4</sup> the year-to-date employee availability rate for the Cleveland Post Office was 92.4 percent, which is under the Postal Service's retail and delivery operations employee availability goal of 93.7 percent for fiscal year 2025. The Cleveland Heights Branch is one of three delivery units<sup>5</sup> the OIG reviewed during the

week of September 22, 2025, that are serviced by the Cleveland Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC).

**Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Cleveland Heights Branch**



Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

We assessed all units serviced by the Cleveland P&DC based on the number of Customer 360 (C360)<sup>6</sup> delivery-related inquiries,<sup>7</sup> stop-the-clock (STC)<sup>8</sup> scans performed away from the delivery point and at the unit, undelivered route information, and Leg 1 and Leg 3 failures<sup>9</sup> between May 1 and July 31, 2025.

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

<sup>2</sup> Assignments based on 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.

<sup>3</sup> The Postal Service calculates employee availability by dividing straight time hours worked by potential straight time hours. Potential straight time hours generally include actual straight time hours worked, sick leave taken, and leave without pay.

<sup>4</sup> August 22, 2025 was the last day of Pay Period 18.

<sup>5</sup> The other two units were Station B, Cleveland, OH (Project Number 25-141-1) and the Shaker Heights Station, Cleveland, OH (Project Number 25-141-3).

<sup>6</sup> Customer 360 is a cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.

<sup>7</sup> Delivery-related inquiries include a compilation of package inquiry, package pickup, daily mail service, and hold mail inquiries.

<sup>8</sup> An STC scan is 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."

<sup>9</sup> Leg 1 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. Leg 3 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.

We judgmentally selected the Cleveland Heights Branch primarily based on the number of C360 inquiries related to delivery. We determined the unit average of 5.4 C360 inquiries per route exceeded the 3.1 district average by 2.3 percent. We also chose this unit based on Leg 3 failures.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Cleveland Heights Branch in Cleveland Heights, OH.

To accomplish our objective, we focused on the following audit areas: delayed mail, package scanning, arrow keys,<sup>10</sup> carrier separations and transfers, Voyager card<sup>11</sup> transactions, 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 September 23–25, 2025, we reviewed mail conditions, package scanning procedures, arrow key security procedures, carrier separation and transfer procedures, Voyager card transactions, unit safety and security conditions, and package separation procedures. We also analyzed the scan status of mailpieces at the carrier cases and interviewed unit management and employees. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on December 2, 2025, and included its comments, where appropriate (see Table 1).

We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding conditions we identified at the Cleveland Heights Branch. We will issue a separate capping report<sup>12</sup> that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all three 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.

<sup>10</sup> Arrow keys are distinctively shaped keys that 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.  
<sup>11</sup> The U.S. Postal Service uses credit cards, called Voyager cards, to pay for commercially purchased fuel, oil, and routine maintenance for its vehicles.  
<sup>12</sup> The capping report project number is 25-141.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Cleveland Heights Branch. Specifically, we found issues with three 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
Voyager Card Transactions	X	
Property Conditions	X	
Package Separations		X

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of September 22, 2025.

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

- Package Scanning – We analyzed package scanning between June 1 and August 31, 2025, and reviewed two packages found at the carrier cases on the morning of September 23, 2025. We did not identify any issues with package scanning.
- Arrow Keys – We conducted an inventory of the arrow keys and observed the procedures for safeguarding arrow keys. We did not identify any systemic issues with the management or safeguarding of arrow keys.

- Carrier Separations and Transfers - We analyzed employee data from July 12 through August 22, 2025. All carriers assigned to the unit either reported to work or were accounted for by management during this time, indicating no issues with carrier separations and transfers.
- Package Separations - We observed package separation procedures on September 24, 2025, and determined the unit was properly separating Priority Mail from non-Priority Mail packages.



# Finding #1: Delayed Mail

## What We Found

On the morning of September 23, 2025, we identified 2,348 delayed mailpieces<sup>13</sup> at 27 carrier cases, the hot case,<sup>14</sup> and the PO Box area. Specifically, we identified 1,581 letters and 767 flats. In addition, management did not report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)<sup>15</sup> system. See Table 2 for the number of pieces for each mail type and

Figure 2 for examples of delayed mail found at carrier cases and the hot case. Further, we observed that carriers generally did complete Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,<sup>16</sup> to document undelivered mailpieces but were not always filling them out correctly; for example, many were missing signatures or the mail count.

Table 2. Types of Delayed Mail Identified

Type of Mail	Carrier Cases	Hot Case	PO Box Area	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	1,127	454	0	1,581
Flats	503	138	126	767
Totals	1,630	592	126	2,348

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit on September 23, 2025.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail in the Facility

Delayed Mail at Carrier Case



Delayed Mail at Hot Case



Source: OIG photos taken before carriers arrived on the morning of September 23, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Count of mail included individual piece counts and OIG estimate based on Postal Service conversion factors in Management Instruction PO-610-2007-1, *Piece Count Recording System*, and Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*, Appendix D.  
<sup>14</sup> The hot case is a case designated for final withdrawal of mail as carriers leave the office.  
<sup>15</sup> DCV is a tool for unit management to manually self-report delayed mail, which provides a snapshot of daily mail conditions at the point in time when carriers have departed for the street.  
<sup>16</sup> 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 delayed mail was due to a lack of management oversight as it was the unit manager's first week assigned to the unit. Specifically, management did not follow the redline process.<sup>17</sup> For example, on the morning of September 23, we identified missent, missorted, and missequenced (3M) mail in several carrier cases. The PM relief supervisors had instructed carriers to keep this mail at their cases, rather than placing it in the 3M case.<sup>18</sup> Further, PM relief supervisors did not review 3M mail and record it on the 3M Daily Log. The unit manager stated that the two PM relief supervisors had less than six months of supervisory experience and one was training the other.

In addition, management did not verify that carriers completed PS Forms 1571 accurately to document the reason why the mail could not be delivered. The unit manager stated that management had not provided instructions to the carriers regarding how to fill out the form correctly.

In addition, management did not report delayed mail in the DCV system because the PM relief supervisors were not aware that this was their responsibility and did not have access to the DCV system. The unit manager stated that PM relief supervisors did not communicate to him that they did not have access to the DCV system and needed additional training.

## What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured that all mail was processed and delivered daily. Postal Service policy<sup>19</sup>

states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. In addition, policy<sup>20</sup> states that 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, and states that carriers must not take any mail back to their cases in the PM. In addition, carriers should place missequenced mail into the 3M case when they return from their routes<sup>21</sup> and a supervisor should review and report this mail on a 3M Daily Log and notify the appropriate operations support office.<sup>22</sup> In addition, managers are required<sup>23</sup> to report all mail in the delivery unit after the carriers have left for their street duties as either delayed or curtailed in the DCV system. Further, management must update the DCV system if volumes have changed prior to the end of the business day.

## 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.

<sup>17</sup> The redline process is 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.

<sup>18</sup> The 3M case is the area of the delivery unit where carriers should place their 3M mail to be sorted by clerks for further processing.

<sup>19</sup> *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

<sup>20</sup> *Redline Policy Standard Operating Procedures*.

<sup>21</sup> *3M (Missent, Missort and Missequence)* Standard Work Instruction: Carrier, May 8, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> *3M (Missent, Missort and Missequence)* Standard Work Instruction: Supervisor, May 8, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> *Informed Visibility Delivery Condition Visualization User Guide*, July 31, 2025.



## Finding #2: Premium Fuel Voyager Card Transactions

### What We Found

Unit management did not always properly reconcile unauthorized Voyager card premium fuel transactions. We reviewed the Fuel Asset Management System (FAMS) reconciliation exception report for premium fuel transactions from March 8 through August 31, 2025, and identified 16 unauthorized premium fuel transactions valued at \$701.96. Although these transactions were marked as reconciled by unit management, none of the reconciliation comments addressed the unauthorized transactions. Further, 10 of the 16 premium fuel transactions were from one carrier.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to prevent the purchase of premium fuel. Both the carrier and the AM supervisor believed that premium fuel was authorized for a specific model of postal delivery vehicle. Further, the AM supervisor who made the comments in FAMS only used comments that were from a prepopulated menu in the system and did not add their own comments to describe specific situations.

### What Should Have Happened

According to Postal Service policy,<sup>24</sup> all high-risk transactions must have a comment entered for the transaction to be fully reconciled. If none of the pre-approved comment options are sufficient to explain the reason for the high-risk transaction, the "Other" option should be selected, and an applicable comment should be manually entered.

### Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

When premium fuel transactions are not properly reconciled, there is an increased risk that the Postal Service will not identify unauthorized purchases.

### Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

<sup>24</sup> FAMS User Guide, Reconciliation by Exception Process, March 5, 2013.

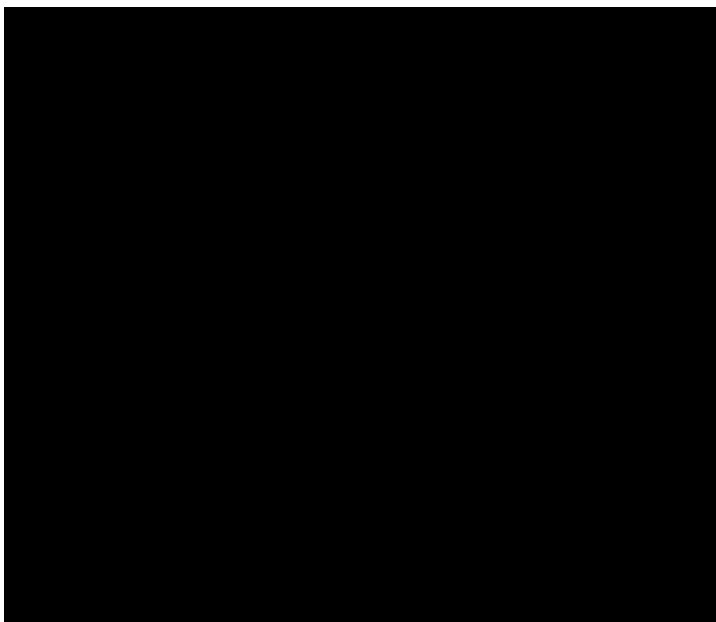
## Finding # 3: Property Conditions

### What We Found

We found property security issues at the Cleveland Heights Branch, including:

- There was no sign posted in the employee parking area stating that vehicles may be subject to search.
- [REDACTED]  
(see Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** [REDACTED]



Source: OIG photo taken September 23, 2025.

### Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight or take the necessary actions to verify that property condition issues were identified and corrected. The unit manager stated that it was his first week assigned to the unit, and he was not aware of the security issues. He was also not aware that having a subject to search sign in the employee parking lot was a requirement.

### What Should Have Happened

Management should have provided sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for maintaining facilities, reported security issues as they arose, and followed up for completion. The Postal Service requires management to maintain a safe environment for employees and customers.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the Postal Service is required to provide signage that vehicles may be subject to search.<sup>26</sup>

### Effect on the Postal Service and Its Customers

Management's attention to security deficiencies can reduce the risk of theft and damage to Postal Service vehicles. In addition, proper signage in the employee parking lot could reduce the risk of employee theft and associated costs.

### Postal Service Response

The Postal Service agreed with this finding.

<sup>25</sup> Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*, July 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Handbook RE-5, *Building and Site Requirements*, Site Security, 2-2.4 – Site Signage, September 2009.

# Appendix A: Additional Information

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We conducted this audit from September through December 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 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 Station B, Cleveland Heights Branch, and Shaker Heights Station, as well as the district.

We assessed the reliability of DCV and FAMS 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



December 3, 2025

LAURA LOZON  
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Cleveland Heights Branch, Cleveland Heights, OH:  
Delivery Operations (Report Number 25-141-2-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Cleveland Heights Branch, Cleveland Heights, OH: Delivery Operations*.

Management generally agrees with the three findings in the report on delayed mail, Voyager card transactions, and property conditions.

Management has begun taking steps to address the three 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*. In addition, PM relief supervisors have been given access to DCV. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for compliance.

*Voyager Card Transactions:* Management will provide a service talk on guidelines for the purchase of unleaded fuel for Postal Service vehicles. In addition, management will reiterate the responsibility of the site manager to ensure driver receipts, and "high-risk" transactions are reconciled within Fuel Asset Management System (FAMS).

*Property Conditions:* Management has abated one and is working to abate the other security issue found during the audit, which requires the submission of workorders for assistance from other resources.

E-SIGNED by SUSANA TAYLOR  
on 2025-12-03 12:37:22 EST

Susan Taylor  
District Manager, Ohio 1 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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