Grove Hall Station, Dorchester, MA: Delivery Operations

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 26-120-3-R27 | November 10, 2026



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Transmittal Letter

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

November 10, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR: CARISSA ANN SHEA
MANAGER, MASSACHUSETTS-RHODE ISLAND DISTRICT



FROM: Monica J. Brym
Director, Field Operations, Atlantic and WestPac

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Grove Hall Station, Dorchester, MA: Delivery Operations (Report Number 26-120-3-R27)

This report presents the results of our audit of delivery operations and property conditions at the Grove Hall Station in Dorchester, MA.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President
Chief Solutions and Strategy Officer and Executive Vice President
Vice President, Network Solutions and Performance Excellence
Vice President, Delivery Operations
Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations
Vice President, Atlantic Area Retail and Delivery Operations
Director, Retail and Post Office Operations Maintenance
Corporate Audit and Response Management

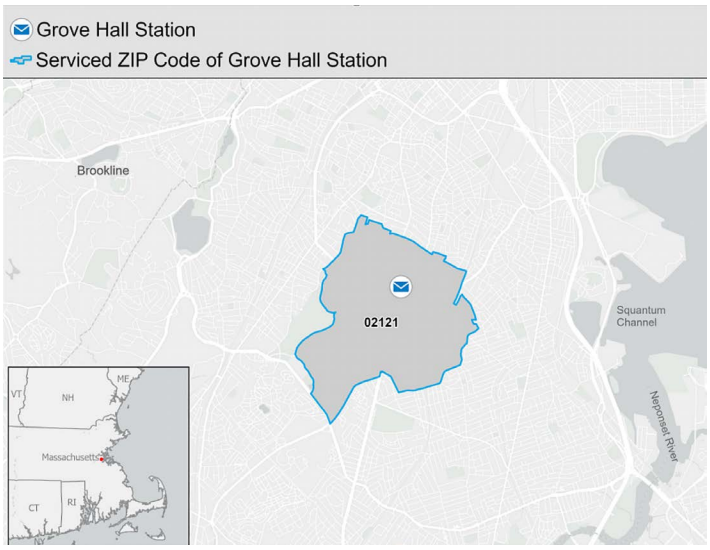
Results

Background

The Postal Service's mission is to bind the nation together by providing prompt, reliable, efficient, and universal mail and package delivery to more than 167 million residential and business addresses across the country six days a week. To achieve this mission, the Postal Service developed the *Delivering for America* plan,[1] which outlines how it will transform from a financially strained, operationally outdated institution to a more modern, efficient, and sustainable national service provider. The plan addresses organizational inefficiencies, advances cost-reduction and revenue-growth initiatives, and innovates retail centers and services. 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 Grove Hall Station in Dorchester, MA (Project Number 26-120-3). We selected the Boston area based on a March 25, 2026, congressional request from U.S. senators and representatives from Massachusetts to audit statewide postal operations and address mail delivery delays in the greater Boston area.[2] The Grove Hall Station is in the Massachusetts-Rhode Island (MA-RI) District of the Atlantic Area and serves about 29,025 people in ZIP Code 02121, which is considered an urban area[3] (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. ZIP Codes Serviced by the Grove Hall Station



Source: OIG analysis of ZIP Code data.

We assessed all units in the MA-RI District units based on the number of Customer 360 (C360)[4] delivery-related inquiries,[5] stop-the-clock (STC)[6] scans performed away from the delivery point and at the unit, undelivered route information, and Leg 1 and Leg 3 failures[7] between April 1 and July 16, 2026.

We judgmentally selected the Grove Hall Station, located in the greater Boston area, primarily based on the number of C360 delivery related inquiries and Leg 3 failures from April 1 to July 16, 2026. See Table 1 for a comparison of some of these metrics between the unit and the rest of the district.

1 *Delivering for America: Our Vision and Ten-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Sustainability and Service Excellence*, issued on March 23, 2021, *and Delivering for America 2.0: Fulfilling the Promise*, issued on September 30, 2024.
2 March 25, 2026, letter to Inspector General Tammy Hull from Senators Edward Markey and Elizabeth Warren and Representatives James McGovern, Stephen Lynch, Katherine Clark, Ayanna Pressley, and Jake Auchincloss expressing concerns with mail delays and post office closures in the greater Boston area. The letter noted the OIG's 2024 audits in the Massachusetts-Rhode Island district and requested another OIG review of statewide postal operations, including staffing in the greater Boston area.
3 We obtained ZIP Code information related to population and urban/rural classification from 2020 Census Bureau information.
4 Customer 360 is a cloud-based application that enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer inquiries.
5 Delivery-related inquiries include a compilation of package inquiry, package pickup, daily mail service, and hold mail inquiries.
6 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."
7 Leg 1 failures occur when there is a delay from the time a mailpiece was collected to the initial processing. Leg 3 failures occur after the mailpiece has been processed at the final processing facility on a final processing operation and is not delivered to the customer on the day it was intended.

Table 1. Delivery Metric Comparison From April 1 Through July 16, 2026

Delivery Metric	Unit	District
C360s Related to Delivery (average per route)	9.1	3.3
Leg 3 Failures (percent of sampled pieces)	12.1	1.2

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service's C360 and Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) System data extracted July 22, 2026. Informed Visibility provides service performance measurements and diagnostics of market-dominant products, mail inventory, and predictive workloads of all mail. PTR is the system of records for all delivery status information for mail and packages with trackable services and barcodes.

The Grove Hall Station is one of six delivery units[8] the OIG reviewed during the week of August 31, 2026. This delivery unit has 16 city routes. From July 11 through August 7, 2026, the delivery unit had one station manager and one supervisor assigned.[9] During the week of our site visit, the station manager was detailed to another facility, and the supervisor was serving as the acting station manager. In addition, a second supervisor was on detail from another facility. The Grove Hall Station falls under the Boston Post Office for employee availability[10] measurement. As of August 2026, the year-to-date employee availability rate for the Grove Hall Station was 92.7 percent, which is less than the Postal Service's retail and delivery operations employee availability goal of 93.95 percent for fiscal year 2026.

For the month prior to our fieldwork visit, the Grove Hall Station was operating one city carrier over its complement.[11] During the same period, the unit had a carrier overtime usage of 19 percent, which was above the 14.9 percent of planned overtime for carriers at the unit.[12] During the week of our site visit, the unit's carrier overtime usage was 22.9 percent, which was 53.2 percent over the planned overtime ratio.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery operations and property conditions at the Grove Hall Station in Dorchester, MA.

To accomplish our objective, we combined preliminary data analyses with an on-site inspection performed September 1-3, 2026. Prior to the visit, we analyzed staffing levels, mail arrival times, package scanning performance, reported mail delays, arrow key[13] inventories, Voyager card[14] exceptions, and property safety and security issues. While on-site, we reviewed operational compliance focusing on mail conditions, package scanning procedures, arrow key accountability, carrier separation and transfer documentation, Voyager card exception justifications, and property safety and security conditions. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on October 22, 2026, and included its comments, where appropriate.

We are issuing this interim report to provide the Postal Service with timely information regarding conditions we identified at the Grove Hall Station. We will issue a separate capping report[15] that provides the Postal Service with the overall findings and recommendations for all six 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. It will also respond to the broader postal operations and mail delivery concerns in the greater Boston area raised by the congressional members in their letter to the OIG.

8 The other five units were the Brockton Sorting and Delivery Center (S&DC), Brockton, MA (Project Number 26-120-1); the Brookline Branch, Brookline, MA (Project Number 26-120-2); the Lawrence Post Office, Lawrence, MA (Project Number 26-120-4); the Medford Branch, Medford, MA (Project Number 26-120-5); and the Roxbury Station, Roxbury, MA (Project Number 26-120-6). The scope of these audits does not include the plants that service the six units.
9 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.
10 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.
11 Carrier complement obtained from the City Delivery Variance (CDV) system. From July 18 through August 14, 2026, the unit had an earned carrier complement of 18 and an actual carrier complement of 19.
12 Carrier overtime data for the period of July 18 through August 14, 2026, was obtained from the eFlash system, a system used by the Postal Service to track employee workhours.
13 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.
14 The Postal Service uses credit cards, called Voyager cards, to pay for commercially purchased fuel, oil, and routine maintenance for its vehicles.
15 The capping report project number is 26-120.

See Appendix A for additional information about our scope and methodology.

Results Summary

We identified issues affecting delivery operations and property conditions at the Grove Hall Station. Specifically, we found issues with three 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
Voyager Card Transactions		X
Property Conditions	X	

Source: Results of our fieldwork during the week of August 31, 2026.

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

- Package Scanning – We analyzed package scanning between May 1 and July 31, 2026, and analyzed all 30 packages identified at the unit on the morning of September 1, 2026. We did not identify any issues with package scanning.
- Carrier Separations and Transfers – We analyzed employee data from June 27 through August 7, 2026. 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.
- Voyager Card Transactions – We analyzed Voyager card premium fuel transactions from February 17 through August 14, 2026, and identified four premium fuel purchases. We did not identify any recurring systemic issues.
- Arrow Keys – We observed the procedures for safeguarding arrow keys and did not identify any issues but did identify issues with the management of arrow keys (see Finding #2).

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

What We Found

On the morning of September 1, 2026, we identified 8,947 delayed mailpieces at 14 out of 16 carrier cases. Specifically, we identified 1,784 letters, 7,133 flats, and 30 packages.[16] In addition, management did not accurately report this mail as undelivered in the Delivery Condition Visualization (DCV)[17] system. 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, unit management did not properly follow the redline process,[18] which includes carriers completing Postal Service (PS) Forms 1571, *Undelivered Mail Report*,[19] to document undelivered mailpieces.

Table 3. Types of Delayed Mail Identified

Type of Mail	Carrier Cases	Total Count of Delayed Mail
Letters	1,784	1,784
Flats	7,133	7,133
Packages	30	30
Totals	**8,947**	**8,947**

Source: OIG count of delayed mailpieces identified during our visit on September 1, 2026.

Figure 2. Examples of Delayed Mail in Carrier Cases





Source: OIG photos taken before carriers arrived on the morning of September 1, 2026.

16 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 Delivery Condition Visualization Volume Conversion Chart.
17 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.
18 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 and completed PS Form 1571 and that no mail is taken back to the carrier case.
19 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

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to verify that all mail was cleared from the unit, conduct or enforce the redline process, or properly report any delayed mail.

Additionally, unit management stated that there were eight carriers absent on Monday during the week of our site visit. Further, unit management explained that there was a local festival on Saturday that also affected the mail delivery that day, causing a backlog of mail at the unit to be delivered on Monday. Also, the acting station manager was aware that the PS Form 1571 needed to be completed but did not know who was responsible for completing it. As a result, unit management did not ensure that carriers completed the form to document the reasons mail could not be delivered. Further, management did not properly report delayed mail in the DCV system because the PM supervisor did not conduct a thorough walkthrough of the workroom floor to confirm that carrier cases were cleared of mail.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have ensured that all mail was delivered daily. Specifically, management should have conducted an adequate walkthrough of the workroom to verify that all mail was delivered and ensured that the reason for undelivered mail brought back from the street was properly documented on PS Forms 1571. Policy[20] 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. In addition, Postal Service policy[21] 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[22] 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. Also, 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.

20 *Redline Policy Standard Operating Procedures.*
21 *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.
22 *Informed Visibility Delivery Conditions Visualization,* Report Notes, *October 8, 2025.*

Finding #2: Arrow Keys

What We Found

Unit management did not properly manage and safeguard arrow keys. On the morning of September 2, 2026, we reviewed the unit's arrow key certification list in the Retail and Delivery Applications and Reports (RADAR)[23] system and conducted a physical inventory of keys at the unit. Unit management reported 45 keys in RADAR as "In-Use," "Damaged," or "In-Vault." Based on our physical review of arrow keys at the unit, four of the 45 keys were missing, and an additional four keys found at the unit were not recorded in RADAR.

We also found that carriers were not signing the daily log to acknowledge their acceptance of assigned keys, and management was not verifying that all keys were returned and accounted for daily.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight to properly manage and safeguard the arrow keys. Specifically, the acting station manager acknowledged that she certified the arrow key list in RADAR in August 2026 without properly reconciling it to the actual arrow keys on hand. In addition, the unit manager relied on the supervisors to properly perform the daily arrow key accountability procedures. Further, the supervisors or clerks were not verifying that all keys were returned and accounted for daily.

In addition, unit management did not enforce the requirement for all carriers to sign the daily log to acknowledge their acceptance of arrow keys and did not verify that all keys were returned daily because it was focused on getting the mail out for delivery.

What Should Have Happened

Management should have verified that arrow key management procedures were properly followed. According to Postal Service policy,[24] management must keep an accurate inventory of all arrow keys. Any missing keys must be immediately reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Further, broken keys must be updated on the RADAR inventory log.

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 that 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 arrow keys, there is increased risk of the keys being inappropriately used to commit 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.

23 The arrow key certification in RADAR provides a national platform for all facilities to verify current inventory and account for all arrow keys.
24 *Standard Work Instruction: U.S. Postal Service Arrow Key Guidebook,* dated March 2025.

Finding #3: Property Conditions

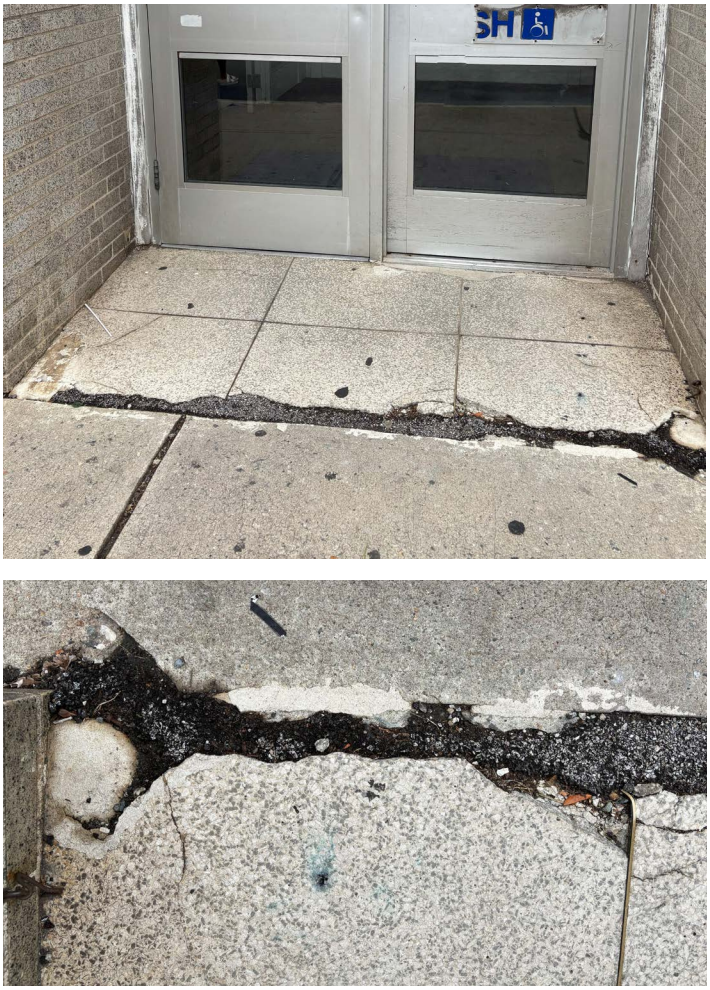
What We Found

We found safety and security issues related to property conditions at the Grove Hall Station.

Property Safety

- One of the four fire extinguishers was missing a monthly inspection tag and was blocked by cardboard. We could not determine if monthly inspections were conducted.
- The lobby entrance had a cracked and uneven surface that is a potential trip hazard (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Cracked and Uneven Surface at Lobby Entrance



Source: OIG photos taken on September 2, 2026.

Property Security

- A "Vehicles Subject to Search" sign was not posted at the employee parking lot.

Why Did It Occur

Management did not provide sufficient oversight of personnel responsible for fire extinguisher inspections. The station manager stated that she was not aware that the extinguisher inspection tag was missing due to competing duties. Additionally, the station manager acknowledged that she was not aware of the requirement to have "Vehicles Subject to Search" signage 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.[25]

According to policy,[26] the Postal Service is required to provide signage that vehicles may be subject to search.

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; reduce the likelihood of theft and mail tampering; and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand. 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.

25 Postal Service Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook,* July 2020.
26 39 CFR § 232.1 – Conduct on Postal property, Inspection, Recording Presence.

Appendix A: Additional Information

We conducted this audit from August through November 2026 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 control activities, information and communication, and monitoring 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 Brockton S&DC, Brookline Branch, Lawrence Post Office, Medford Branch, and Roxbury Station, as well as the district.

We assessed the reliability of 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

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

October 27, 2026

LAURA LOZON
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: Grove Hall Station, Dorchester, MA: Delivery Operations (Report Number 26-120-3-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings contained in the draft audit report, *Grove Hall Station, Dorchester, MA: Delivery Operations.*

Management generally agrees with the three findings related to delayed mail, arrow keys, 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*. Reviews will be conducted to monitor for 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 is working to abate the safety and security issues found during the audit, which requires the submission of workorders for assistance from other resources.

E-SIGNED by Carissa.A Shea
on 2026-10-27 12:23:03 EDT

Carissa A. Shea
District Manager, MA-RI District

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



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

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