



AUDIT REPORT

Mail Delivery Issues – West Park Station, Philadelphia, PA

August 12, 2019

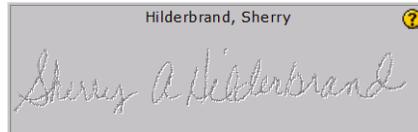


Report Number DRT-AR-19-015



August 12, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: JUDITH W. HERRICK
MANAGER, PHILADELPHIA METRO DISTRICT



FROM: Sherry A. Hilderbrand
Director, Delivery and Retail Response Team

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery Issues – West Park Station,
Philadelphia, PA (Report Number DRT-AR-19-015)

This report presents the results of our review of mail delivery issues at West Park Station, Philadelphia, PA (Project Number 19RG030DRT000).

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Byron Bustos, Operations Manager, at bbustos@uspsig.gov, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Vice President, Delivery and Retail Operations
Vice President, Area Operations
Corporate Audit and Response Management

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of Mail Delivery Issues – West Park Station, Philadelphia, PA (Project Number 19RG030DRT000). The West Park Station is in the Philadelphia Metro District of the Eastern Area. This audit was designed to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential delivery risks at the West Park Station.

The West Park Station has 25 city routes delivered by 41 carriers (27 full-time regular city carriers and 14 city carrier associates¹). We selected the West Park Station based on the percentage of city carriers returning after 6 p.m.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of this audit was to assess mail delivery service on selected routes at the West Park Station – Philadelphia, PA. To accomplish our objective, we analyzed delivery metrics such as mail arrival, distribution-up time (DUT), carriers' return to office time, and the number of routes and carriers to assess performance of delivery operations. In addition, we analyzed Enterprise Customer Care (eCC)² case data and social media reviews from Yelp and Google. During our site visit from June 25-26, 2019, we interviewed management and employees, conducted delivery unit observations, reviewed scanning procedures on packages, and evaluated the process completed by delivery supervisory personnel in response to eCC cases.

We relied on computer-generated data from the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), eCC, Scan Point Management, and Field Staffing and Support systems. Although we did not test the validity of controls over these systems, we assessed the accuracy of the data by testing the completeness and reasonableness of the data, observing operations at the unit, and interviewing Postal Service officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We conducted this audit from June through August 2019, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on July 18, 2019, and included their comments where appropriate.

¹ A non-career, bargaining unit employee who performs the full range of city carrier duties.

² eCC is a Postal Service software program to record and track customer complaints received by letter, phone, visit, or through the Postal Service's website

Finding # 1: City Carriers Returning After 6 p.m.

City carriers at the West Park Station did not meet the goal of 100 percent returning to the office by 6 p.m. Our analysis found that during Quarters (Q) 1 and 2 of fiscal year (FY) 2019, fewer than 24 percent of city carriers returned by 6 p.m., 51 percent by 7 p.m., and 84 percent by 8 p.m. (see Table 1). The Postal Service's goal is to have 100 percent of its carriers returning by 6 p.m.³ Postal Service policy states that when it is observed that a delivery unit is regularly exceeding its daily authorized carrier hours, management must first ensure that applicable procedures are fully implemented and enforced. Further, attention must be given to carrier scheduling, receipt of mail, and carrier work methods in the office and on the street.⁴

Table 1. West Park Carriers Returning By 6 p.m.

FY 2019 Quarter	Percentage of Carriers Returning By 6 p.m.	Percentage of Carriers Returning By 7 p.m.	Percentage of Carriers Returning By 8 p.m.
1	22%	47%	81%
2	25%	55%	87%
Total Average	24%	51%	84%

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of City Carriers Returning After 6 p.m. data from EDW- Delivery Data Mart.

This condition occurred due to ineffective management. In particular:

- Route Inspections and Adjustments:** Management had not conducted annual inspections of letter carrier routes on 22 of the 25 routes this fiscal year as required.⁵ Of the 22 routes not completed this fiscal year, six were completed in 2018, 15 in 2017, and one in 2016. Further, the most recent formal city carrier route adjustments were completed on April 3, 2012. Our analysis of West Park Station mail volume from the last route adjustment time period to the current volume shows a decline of between 9 and 44 percent. [Table 2](#) lists the last date there was a Postal Service (PS) Form 3999,⁶ Inspection of Letter Carrier Route, on file and routes with over 30 percent volume differences between March through May in 2012 and 2019.

³ Publication 99, *We, The Postal Service – The 24 Hour Clock Indicators and Service Goals*.

⁴ Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services Section 141.113, updated with *Postal Bulletin* revisions through March 18, 2004.

⁵ Delivery and Retail Standardization Tab 4-3, Route Evaluations and Adjustments, City Carriers Standard Operating Procedures.

⁶ Route inspections are documented on PS Form 3999.

**Table 2. OIG Analysis of Route Adjustments and Mail Volumes
for Routes with over 30 Percent Average Volume Differences
From March – May 2012 compared to March – May 2019**

Route Number	Last PS Form 3999 on File	Flats	Letters	Parcels	Average Difference
075	6/23/2017	-28%	-55%	-49%	-44%
078	9/13/2017	-21%	-61%	-44%	-42%
077	11/9/2017	-24%	-54%	-30%	-36%
079	6/23/2017	-35%	-47%	-23%	-35%
066	10/17/2016	-18%	-53%	-31%	-34%
047	1/23/2019	-31%	-33%	-39%	-34%
031	6/21/2017	-23%	-53%	-19%	-31%
041	4/5/2017	-33%	-35%	-26%	-31%
098	11/9/2017	-19%	-41%	-30%	-30%

Source: EDW - Delivery Data Mart.

Route adjustments are an important part of city delivery service and management must continuously review and evaluate, as required. In addition to maintaining an appropriate daily workload, management should review routes annually.⁷ The promptness and efficiency with which they make adjustments depends directly on management conducting route inspections, which includes carrier workhours, mail volume, and delivery points. Careful analysis of the data will assist the delivery service manager in determining where routes adjustments should be made and any areas for service improvement.

- Clerk Hours Utilization:** Management is not effectively managing clerks for mail distribution. Although the station has five full-time clerks, our analysis of DUT — the time that clerks have completed sortation to distribute mail to each delivery route — shows that between May 12 and June 10, 2019, the station's DUT of 8:30 a.m. was not met 71 percent of the time. The average late time was 47 minutes. During our observations on June 25-26, 2019, the station scheduled only one clerk to perform package sortation and one clerk to be at the retail window from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Carriers must wait for the DUT to be completed to retrieve the remainder of mail and packages to be delivered on their routes.

Effective management by inspecting routes and improving staffing levels could allow city carriers to return to their units by 6 p.m. and meet the Postal Service's goal and ultimately increase customer satisfaction and enhance the customer experience.

⁷ Handbook M-39, Section 211.1, Selecting Period for Mail Counts and Route Inspections.

Recommendation #1: We recommend the **Manager, Philadelphia Metro District**, instruct unit management to review and conduct annual route inspections and adjust city routes as needed for service improvement.

Recommendation #2: We recommend the **Manager, Philadelphia Metro District**, instruct unit management to review and adjust clerk hours and scheduling to ensure mail sortation is completed on time so carriers can deliver the mail as scheduled.

Finding #2: Unsecured Keys and Stamp Stock

During our site visit we observed unsecured vehicle and arrow⁸ keys and unsecured stamp stock inventory. Specifically, vehicle and arrow keys were scattered in an unlocked box and on a counter and two vehicle keys were lost on the morning of June 25, 2019, and later found in a different location. In addition, the safe where accountable stamp stock is kept was unlocked (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figures 1 & 2. Vehicle Keys and Stamp Stock at Risk



Source: OIG photographs taken June 25, 2019, at the West Park Station in Philadelphia, PA concerning vehicle and arrow keys and stamp stock at risk.

These conditions occurred because management did not ensure keys and accountable items were properly secured, as required.⁹ Effective physical access controls protect Postal Service employees and assets.

⁸ The Postal Service uses Arrow locks to secure collection and relay boxes, apartment panels, outdoor parcel lockers, cluster box units (CBU), and neighborhood delivery and collection box units (NDCBU).

⁹ *Postal Operations Manual*, Issue 9, Sections 633.42, Arrow Lock Keys, and 126.2,4 Protecting Stamps and Accountable Stock.

Recommendation #3: We recommend the Manager, Philadelphia Metro District, instruct unit management to ensure vehicle keys and stamp stock are secured.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with all three recommendations but did not state agreement or disagreement with the findings. See [Appendix A](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Regarding recommendation 1, management will ensure the annual inspections are completed timely and correctly and complete annual route inspections. The target implementation date is September 20, 2019.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated that besides general scheduling, the issue that continues to prevent West Park from achieving its DUT is their low parcel per hour productivity and management of the attendance policy. Management will provide unit management with daily reports to identify parcel productivity gaps. In addition, the district will begin a weekly review with unit management to identify and address all unscheduled leave occurrences and take the appropriate level of corrective actions per Article 16 of the collective bargaining agreements for both the Carrier and Clerk craft. The target implementation date is August 19, 2019.

Regarding recommendation 3, management will develop a service talk and issue it to all Executive Administrative Service staff within the district to reiterate their obligation to ensure security of all accountable items with a delivery unit and will monitor compliance. The target implementation date is August 26, 2019.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

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

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed.

Recommendations should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendations can be closed.

APPENDIX A. MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS

DISTRICT MANAGER
PHILADELPHIA METROPOLITAN DISTRICT



August 8, 2019

LAZERICK POLAND
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Mail Delivery Issues-West Park Station, Philadelphia, PA
Audit Report # DRT-AR-19

I am currently in receipt of the Draft Audit Report that has been created in reference to the mail delivery issues at the West Park Station in Philadelphia. I have reviewed your findings with the acting Postmaster of Philadelphia, Joseph Stewart as well as the Delivery Programs Staff at the Philadelphia District. The data provided was reviewed in depth and on-site visits by delivery analysts were done during both the morning (AM operations) and evening (PM operations) to assist local staff with the recommendations outlined in the report. **Management agrees with each of the three (3) recommendations contained in the Draft Audit Report.** Herein are the responses to the recommendations cited:

Recommendation #1- We recommend the Manager, Philadelphia Metro District instruct unit management to review and conduct annual route inspections and adjust city routes as needed for service improvement.

Management Response/Action Plan:

A review of the 3999 data for West Park shows that 12 of the 25 routes have had a PS Form 3999 conducted during calendar year 2019. As stated in the draft report, full inspections have not been done in West Park since 2012, due largely to the fact the office had not previously been identified to be one that would present the greatest opportunity for route reduction. However, the fact remains the Station Manager of West Park has an obligation to ensure the annual inspections are completed timely and correctly. In addition, the Manager of Customer Service Operations (MCSO) that oversees this unit is also responsible to ensure annual inspections are completed timely and correctly. The MCSO has been tasked with assisting the Station Manager to complete the yearly inspections at West Park. The 12 routes that were inspected earlier in the fiscal year will also be re-walked to validate the data that was previously collected.

Target Implementation Date: September 20, 2019

Responsible Management Official: Manager, Customer Service Operations, Area

3190 S 70TH STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19153-9997

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Recommendation #2: We recommend the Manager, Philadelphia Metro District, instruct unit management to review and adjust clerk hours and scheduling to ensure mail sortation is completed on time so carriers can deliver the mail as scheduled.

Management Response/Action Plan

The Customer Service Variance (CSV) program indicates that West Park earns 4.89 full time clerks. A Web coins review shows there are currently six (6) employees on the rolls assigned to this unit. Aside from general scheduling, the issue that continues to prevent West Park from achieving the expected Distribution up Time (DUT) each day is the parcels per hour productivity. Since Jun 1, 2019 the unit has averaged 201 parcels per hour which is significantly less than the expected 270 per hour. West Park is rarely mentioned on the morning district teleconference as having mail flow issues from the Philadelphia Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) and I am not aware of any mitigating circumstance that prevents them from achieving the DUT with the resources that are currently in place. To improve productivity in the West Park Station, Operations Programs Support will be providing the management staff daily reports that identify gaps in productivity as it relates to parcel processing. It is expected that when productivity goals are met, the DUT at West Park will be achieved on a daily basis. In addition what does impact clerk staffing (as well as the Carrier Return Profile) is effective management of the attendance policy at West Park Station. The year to date sick leave percentage in West Park is 5.6% for letter carriers and 5.3% for clerks. An office wide attendance review conducted from June 1, 2019 through July 31, 2019 shows the office has incurred 321 instances of unscheduled absences. The district discipline log does not show any entries made from West Park management as it relates to attendance related discipline during that time frame. I have tasked the district Attendance Control Office to immediately begin a weekly cadence with the MCSO that oversees West Park station to ensure all unscheduled occurrences are met with the appropriate level of corrective action as outlined in Article 16 of the collective bargaining agreement with both the Carrier and Clerk craft.

Target Implementation Date: August 19, 2019

Responsible Official: Manager, West Park Station

Recommendation #3- We recommend the Manager, Philadelphia Metro District, instruct unit management to ensure vehicle keys and stamp stock are secured.

The conditions in West Park occurred because of a failure by local management to ensure vehicle keys and accountable items (stamp stock) were properly secured as

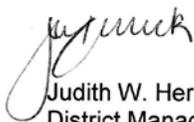
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required. Although this requirement is a basic responsibility of USPS Customer Service/Delivery Manager, it is apparent in this case (and perhaps others) the responsibility was not taken seriously. A service talk is being developed by the Manager of Operations Program Support that will be issued to all EAS Staff within the

District to reiterate their obligation to ensure security of arrow and vehicle keys and all other accountable items within a delivery unit. He will also be tasked with monitoring compliance to the policy during subsequent on site reviews at all delivery units within the Philadelphia District.

Target Implementation Date: August 26, 2019

Responsible Official: Manager, Operations Programs Support



Judith W. Herrick
District Manager
Philadelphia District