



Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Property Condition Reviews – Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset Post Offices in Kentucky

Report Number 21-227-R22 | November 18, 2021

West Somerset Post Office



KENTUCKY



Monticello Post Office



Whitley City Post Office

Table of Contents

- Cover
- Transmittal Letter 1
- Results..... 2
 - Background..... 2
 - Objective, Scope, and Methodology..... 2
 - Building Maintenance 2
 - Building Safety..... 5
 - Corrective Actions 7
 - Recommendation #1..... 7
 - Recommendation #2..... 7
 - Recommendation #3..... 7
 - Recommendation #4..... 7
 - Management’s Comments..... 7
 - Evaluation of Management’s Comments 8
- Appendices 9
 - Appendix A: Facility Deficiency Summary 10
 - Appendix B: Management’s Comments..... 12
- Contact Information 15

Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

November 18, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: LE GRETTA Y. GOODWIN
DISTRICT MANAGER (A), KENTUCKY –
WEST VIRGINIA DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lazerick C. Poland", is positioned below the recipient information.

FROM: Lazerick C. Poland
Director, Property Condition Reviews

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Property Condition Reviews –
Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset Post Offices
in Kentucky (Report Number 21-227-R22)

This report presents the results of Property Condition Reviews at the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset Post Offices in Kentucky.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit Response Management
Chief Retail and Delivery Officer and Executive Vice President
Chief Commerce and Business Solutions Officer and Executive Vice President
Vice President, Area Retail and Delivery Operations, Central
Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations
Vice President, Facilities

Results

Background

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of property conditions at the Whitley City (leased), Monticello (owned), and West Somerset (owned) post offices in the Kentucky – West Virginia District (Project Number 21-227). This audit was designed to provide U.S. Postal Service management with timely information on potential risks related to property conditions. The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe and healthy environment for both employees and customers in accordance with its internal policies and procedures¹ and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)² safety laws.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to determine if Postal Service management is adhering to building maintenance, safety and security standards, and employee working condition requirements at post offices.

To accomplish our objective, we developed a checklist of requirements related to building maintenance, safety, and security. We judgmentally selected the Whitley City Post Office based on interior square footage, the number of maintenance requests, and repair and maintenance spending. We selected the Monticello and West Somerset post offices based on their proximity to the Whitley City Post Office. In addition, we reviewed Postal Service systems to identify maintenance issues and analyzed documentation for deficiencies. We conducted site visits from August 17-19, 2021, and performed observations, completed the checklists, and briefed local management on the issues identified.

We relied on computer-generated data from the Postal Service electronic Facilities Management System (eFMS). We assessed the reliability of the extracted data by reviewing the documentation and comparing it to our observations for completeness, validity, and accuracy. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We conducted this performance audit from August through November 2021 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. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on October 26, 2021 and included their comments where appropriate.

We found that building maintenance and safety at the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset post offices did not meet prescribed standards. We identified 42 deficiencies (16 were corrected during or after our site visits) at the three facilities that ranged from minor to more serious violations (see [Appendix A](#)). We did not identify any security issues at the three facilities.

Building Maintenance

At the Whitley City Post Office, we identified a damaged wall under the urinal (see [Figure 1](#)) and a semi-operable faucet that leaks water when turned on in the men's restroom. The water supply was turned off using the shutoff valve underneath the sink. We also identified peeling ceiling coverings in the utility room (see [Figure 2](#)) and a damaged door lock in the workroom leading to the lobby area, which potentially leaves the workroom unsecured. In addition, local management did not perform required semiannual housekeeping inspections or maintain PS Form 4851, Housekeeping Inspection.

¹ Handbook MS-47, Facility Cleaning, TL-5, June 27, 2014.

² OSHA Act of 1970 and Handbook EL-801, *Supervisor's Safety Handbook*.

Figure 1. Damaged Wall Under Urinal



Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) photo taken August 17, 2021.

Figure 2. Peeling Ceiling Coverings



Source: OIG photograph taken August 17, 2021.

Inside the Monticello Post Office, we identified stained ceiling tiles in the workroom and post office box areas (see Figure 3). On the exterior, we identified peeling paint (see Figure 4), dirty lightbulbs, and a missing light bulb outside the lobby entrance. Besides these issues, the Monticello Post Office seemed to be

well maintained. We also noted the Postmaster completed and maintained PS Form 4851, as required.

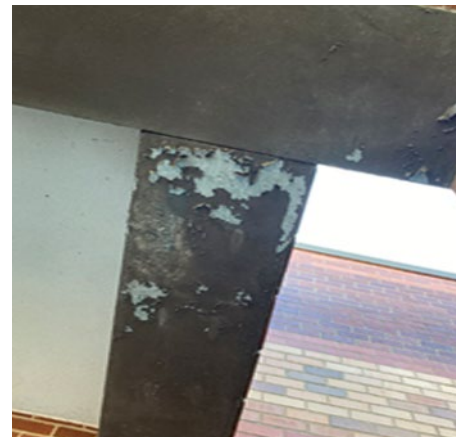
Figure 3. Stained Ceiling Tiles



Source: OIG photograph taken August 18, 2021.



Figure 4. Peeling Paint Outside Lobby



Source: OIG photograph taken August 18, 2021.



At the West Somerset Post Office, we found damaged walls behind the window clerk counters (see Figure 5), stained ceiling tiles in the lobby, workroom near the break room, carrier station #11 (see Figure 6), and the men's restroom; and

a damaged sidewalk curb in the customer parking lot (see Figure 7). We also identified partially detached baseboard strips in both lobby entrances of the building (see Figure 8).

Figure 5. Damaged Walls



Source: OIG photograph taken August 19, 2021.

Figure 6. Stained Ceiling Tiles in Lobby



Source: OIG photograph taken August 19, 2021.

Figure 7. Damaged Sidewalk Curb



Source: OIG photograph taken August 19, 2021.

Figure 8. Partially Detached Baseboard Strips



Source: OIG photograph taken August 19, 2021.

In addition, we found the following issues at the West Somerset Post Office:

- Misaligned ceiling tiles in the storage room and workroom.
- Stained and damaged ceiling tiles in the storage room.

- Burned-out lightbulbs in the lobby entrance.
- Dirty and misaligned vent in the workroom area near the break room.
- Separated wallpaper in the lobby.
- Housekeeping inspections (PS Form 4851) were not performed.

Building Safety

At the Whitley City Post Office, we identified the only fire extinguisher in the building had not been inspected monthly since October 2019 or annually since December 2016. OSHA³ recommends one fire extinguisher per every 3,000 square feet (SF). The facility's interior area is over 4,000 SF, which means the facility should have more than one fire extinguisher. In addition, we identified 74 expired first-aid kit items with expiration dates ranging from September 2001 to February 2018, including antacid packets, eye and skin buffered flushing solution, antiseptic, eye wash, sinus tablets, and burn cream. We also found the following four posters were not displayed as required:

- OSHA posters 3165 (English) and 3167 (Spanish version), *Job Safety and Health*
- CA-10, *What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work*
- *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures*
- *Poster 7, Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Property*

At the Monticello Post Office, we identified a paper shredder and copy machine in the postmaster's office area that were plugged into a surge protector instead of directly into the wall (see Figure 9) and none of the four fire extinguishers had been inspected annually since January 2019. In addition, OSHA posters 3167 and CA-10 were not displayed as required.

Figure 9. Paper Shredder and Copy Machine Plugged into Surge Protector



Source: OIG photograph taken August 18, 2021.

At the West Somerset Post Office, we identified blocked electrical panels in the mechanical room (see Figure 10), an uneven sidewalk near the lobby entrance, which presented a potential trip hazard (see Figure 11), a pothole in the customer parking lot (see Figure 12), and cracked asphalt in the handicap parking space (see Figure 13). In addition, none of the seven fire extinguishers in the building had been inspected annually, and there were no dates on the tags to indicate the last inspection date.

Figure 10. Blocked Electrical Panels



Source: OIG photograph taken August 19, 2021.

³ OSHA Fire Protection and Prevention, 1926 150(c)(1)(i).

Figure 11. Uneven Sidewalk



Source: OIG photograph taken August 19, 2021.

Figure 12. Pothole in Customer Parking Lot



Source: OIG photograph taken August 19, 2021.

Figure 13. Cracked Asphalt



Source: OIG photograph taken August 19, 2021.

We also found 19 alcohol prep pads in the first-aid kit that had expired in April 2016 and the emergency eyewash station was not tested weekly⁴ according to local staff. There was no testing log maintained to indicate the last date tested. In addition, posters CA-10, OSHA 3167, *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures*, and Poster 7 were not displayed as required.

The Postal Service is required to maintain a safe environment for both employees and customers. In addition, OSHA requires employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace free of recognized hazards. More importantly, these issues could jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of Postal Service employees and customers. Further, it could create an environment that dissuades customers from doing business in these offices. If management does not address workplace hazards, the Postal Service could potentially incur fines.

Conditions related to building maintenance and safety occurred due to management not prioritizing issues or lack of oversight and awareness of the maintenance and safety requirements. For example, management did not consider some maintenance and safety issues such as damaged walls, missing posters, fire extinguisher inspections, blocked electrical panels, and the uneven

⁴ ANSI Eyewash Z358.1 2014 (Maintenance & Testing section).

sidewalk to be priorities. Ceiling tile issues occurred due to malfunctioning heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Although the HVAC issues were fixed, management did not consider replacing the ceiling tiles to be a priority. Managers' and supervisors' failure to complete housekeeping inspections at Whitley City and West Somerset post offices indicates their lack of awareness of the policy⁵ and its requirements.

Management's attention to maintenance and safety deficiencies can reduce the risk of injuries to employees and customers and related costs, such as workers' compensation claims, lawsuits, and OSHA penalties; and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand. We identified 10 issues at the three post offices that could potentially result in \$56,860 of risk⁶ exposure.

Corrective Actions

Management at the Whitley City and West Somerset post offices took immediate corrective action while we were onsite and displayed poster CA-10, OSHA posters 3165 and 3167, Poster 7, and the *Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures* poster.

In addition, management at the Monticello Post Office took the following corrective actions:

- Unplugged the paper shredder and copy machine from the surge protector.
- Cleaned dirty light bulbs, repainted peeling paint, and replaced missing and burned-out light bulbs outside the lobby entrance.
- Replaced stained ceiling tiles in the workroom and post office box areas.
- Displayed the CA-10 and OSHA posters 3167.

We appreciate management's prompt attention to these matters.

⁵ *Custodial Team Cleaning Handbook*, Section 4.6, March 13, 2019.

⁶ Based on average fine amount the Postal Service paid for post office OSHA violations from 2018 to 2020.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **Manager, Kentucky and West Virginia District**, address all building maintenance and safety issues identified at the Whitley City and West Somerset post offices.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **Manager, Kentucky and West Virginia District**, perform and document fire extinguisher inspections monthly and annually as required at the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset post offices.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **Manager, Kentucky and West Virginia District**, assess the requirements to determine the appropriate number and class of fire extinguishers needed for the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset post offices.

Recommendation #4

We recommend the **Manager, Kentucky and West Virginia District**, reiterate the policy to perform and document housekeeping inspections and provide necessary training for managers and supervisors at the Whitley City and West Somerset post offices and verify that facility personnel conduct inspections at the required frequency.

Management's Comments

Management agrees with the report's findings, recommendations, and other impact amount.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated that they have abated all maintenance and safety issues at the West Somerset Post Office except the damaged walls behind the window clerk counters; the cracked asphalt in the handicap parking lot; the burned out lightbulbs in the lobby entrance; and the separated wallpaper in the lobby. Management has also abated all maintenance and safety issues at the Whitley City Post Office except the peeling paint coverings in the utility room. Management provided photos of the abated issues

and a target implementation date of December 31, 2021 for addressing the remaining items.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated that they will perform and document fire extinguisher inspections monthly and annually at the Whitley City and West Somerset post offices. Management indicated that they began inspecting fire extinguishers monthly at the Whitley City Post Office in August 2021 and completed annual inspections at the Monticello Post Office in August 2021, at the West Somerset Post Office in September 2021, and at the Whitley City Post Office in October 2021. Management provided a target implementation date of November 30, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 3, management provided a table listing the appropriate number and class of fire extinguishers needed for the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset post offices, but did not provide evidence of obtaining the additional extinguishers required at the Whitley City and Monticello post offices. Management provided a target implementation date of November 30, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 4, management stated that Whitley City and West Somerset management have been trained on performing housekeeping inspections and are performing them daily. They also provided copies of completed PS Forms 4851 as evidence. Management provided a target implementation date of November 30, 2021.

See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations and corrective actions should resolve the issues identified in the report.

Regarding recommendation 1, management needs to provide supporting documentation and/or pictures of corrective actions they have taken to address the remaining maintenance and safety issues identified at the Whitley City and West Somerset post offices.

Regarding recommendation 2, management needs to provide evidence of the completed annual fire extinguisher inspections at the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset post offices, including copies of the inspection tags.

Regarding recommendation 3, management indicated that they assessed requirements for fire extinguishers and included a table showing the appropriate number and class of extinguishers needed at the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset post offices. Management needs to provide evidence of acquiring the additional extinguishers needed for the Whitley City and Monticello post offices.

Regarding recommendation 4, management's actions taken in completing housekeeping inspections at the Whitley City and West Somerset post offices are sufficient to address the recommendation.

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 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. We consider recommendation 4 closed with the issuance of this report.

Appendices

Click on the appendix title below to navigate to the section content.

Appendix A: Facility Deficiency Summary	10
Appendix B: Management’s Comments	12

Appendix A: Facility Deficiency Summary

Facility		Whitley City	Monticello	West Somerset	Total Deficiencies
Building Maintenance Issues					
1	Damaged walls	D	✓	D	2
2	Damaged ceiling tiles in the storage room	✓	✓	D	1
3	Damaged door in the workroom area	D	✓	✓	1
4	Damaged sidewalk curb in customer parking lot	✓	✓	D	1
5	Dirty light bulbs outside the lobby entrance	✓	D*	✓	1
6	Misaligned and dirty vents in the workroom	✓	✓	D	1
7	Misaligned ceiling tiles in storage and work rooms	✓	✓	D	1
8	Missing and burnt-out light bulbs	✓	D*	D	2
9	Peeling ceiling coverings in utility room	D	✓	✓	1
10	Peeling paint outside the lobby entrance	✓	D*	✓	1
11	Semi-detached baseboard strips in lobby entrance	✓	✓	D	1
12	Semi-operable faucet in men's restroom	D	✓	✓	1
13	Separated wallpaper in lobby	✓	✓	D	1
14	Stained ceiling tiles	✓	D*	D	2
15	Housekeeping Inspection (PS Form 4851)	D	✓	D	2

Facility		Whitley City	Monticello	West Somerset	Total Deficiencies
Building Safety Issues					
16	Blocked electrical panels	✓	✓	D	1
17	Cracked asphalt in customer parking lot	✓	✓	D	1
18	Emergency eyewash station not tested weekly	✓	✓	D	1
19	Expired item in first aid kit	D	✓	D	2
20	Fire extinguisher not inspected monthly	D	✓	✓	1
21	Fire extinguisher not inspected yearly	D	D	D	3
22	Plugged shredder and copy machines to a power surge protector	✓	D*	✓	1
23	Pothole in customer parking lot	✓	✓	D	1
24	Uneven sidewalk near lobby entrance – potential trip hazard	✓	✓	D	1
25	No OSHA poster 3167 (Spanish version), Job Safety and Health	D*	D*	D*	3
26	No OSHA poster 3165 (English version), Job Safety and Health	D*	✓	✓	1
27	No poster CA-10, What a Federal Employee Should Do When Injured at Work	D*	D*	D*	3
28	No Zero Tolerance Policy and Reporting Procedures	D*	✓	D*	2
29	No Poster 7, Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Property	D*	✓	D*	2
Total Deficiencies		13	8	21	42

Source: OIG analysis based on property reviews. ✓ – No deficiency; D – Deficiency; D* - Corrective Action

Appendix B: Management's Comments



November 4, 2021

JOSEPH WOLSKI
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Management Response: Property Condition Reviews – Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset Post Offices in Kentucky (Report Number 21-227-DRAFT)

Thank you for providing the Postal Service with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations containing in the draft audit report, *Property Condition Review – Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset Post Offices in Kentucky*.

Management agrees with the findings stated in the report. Following are our comments for each of the four recommendations.

Recommendation [1]:

We recommend the **Manager, Kentucky and West Virginia District**, address all building maintenance and safety issues identified at the Whitley City and West Somerset post offices.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management at **West Somerset** have abated all maintenance and safety issues identified in the report except the following:

- Damaged walls behind the window clerk counters
- Cracked asphalt in the handicap parking lot
- Burned out lightbulbs in the lobby entrance
- Separated wallpaper in the lobby

Documentation is attached to support abated issues.

Management at **Whitley City** have abated all building maintenance and safety issues identified in the report except the following:

- Peeling ceiling coverings in the utility room

Documentation is attached to support abated issues.

Target Implementation Date: 12/31/2021

Responsible Officials: Postmaster, West Somerset, KY and OIC, Whitley City, KY

Recommendation [2]:

We recommend the **Manager, Kentucky and West Virginia District**, perform and document fire extinguisher inspections monthly and annually as required at the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset post offices.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management at **Whitley City and West Somerset** will perform and document fire extinguisher inspections monthly and annually. Management requests this recommendation be closed with issuance of the final report based on the following completed actions:

Monthly fire extinguisher inspections:

- Whitley City, completed 8/17/2021

Annual fire extinguisher inspections:

- Whitley City, completed 10/28/2021
- West Somerset, completed 9/17/2021
- Monticello, completed 8/30/2021

Target Implementation Date: 11/30/2021

Responsible Official: Postmaster, Somerset, KY and OIC, Whitley City, KY

Recommendation [3]:

We recommend the **Manager, Kentucky and West Virginia District**, assess the requirements to determine the appropriate number and class of fire extinguishers needed for the Whitley City, Monticello, and West Somerset post offices.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation. Management has determined the appropriate number and class of fire extinguishers needed for each post office as identified in the table and requests closure of this recommendation with issuance of the final report.

Post Office	Fire Extinguishers Needed	Class
Whitley City	2	A
West Somerset	7	A
Monticello	6	A

Target Implementation Date: 11/30/2021

Responsible Official:

District Manager (A), Kentucky – West Virginia District

Recommendation [4]:

We recommend the **Manager, Kentucky and West Virginia District**, reiterate the policy to perform and document housekeeping inspections and provide necessary training for managers and supervisors at the Whitley City and West Somerset post offices and verify that facility personnel conduct inspections at the required frequency.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management at **West Somerset and Whitley City** have been trained and are performing housekeeping inspections daily. PS Form 4851 is provided as evidence.

Management requests closure of this recommendation with the issuance of the final report.

Target Implementation Date: 11/30/2021

Responsible Official:

District Manager (A), Kentucky – West Virginia District



Le Gretta Y. Goodwin
District Manager (A), Kentucky – West Virginia District

cc: *Manager, Corporate Audit Response Management*

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