U.S. Postal Inspection Service's Oversight of Mail Suspected of Containing Illicit Drugs at Postal Facilities

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Highlights

Objective

Our objective was to evaluate the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's controls for handling mail suspected of containing illicit drugs at U.S. Postal Service facilities.

The Postal Inspection Service established the *Proper Handling of Suspected Marijuana Parcels Mandatory Stand-Up Talk* in FY 2019 as guidance for postal employees on how to handle mail suspected of containing illicit drugs (suspected mail). In addition, the Postal Inspection Service's Administrative Nonmailability Protocol policy describes procedures for recording referred suspected mail by postal employees. This policy was established primarily to remove marijuana from the mailstream.

When an employee identifies suspected mail, they should secure it, inform management, and contact the Postal Inspection Service. The postal inspector should then record the suspected mail and postal facility information into a tracking database, and either:

- Pick up the suspected mail if it is in close proximity;

- Have the employee mail it to the postal inspector upon request; or

- Have the employee return the mail to the mailstream, if there is insufficient reason to suspect mail contains illicit drugs.

Once the postal inspector receives the suspected mail, they will attempt to contact the sender or recipient and, if unsuccessful, scan it as "seized by law enforcement." The scan is visible in the Postal Service's tracking system to the sender and recipient as well as postal personnel. The postal inspector holds scanned suspected mail for ▮▮▮▮▮ then disposes of the contents.

We planned our fieldwork before the President of the United States issued the national emergency declaration concerning the novel coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) on March 13, 2020. The results of this audit do not reflect operational changes and/or service impacts that may have occurred as a result of the pandemic.

Findings

Opportunities exist for the Postal Inspection Service to enhance controls for handling mail suspected of containing illicit drugs at postal facilities.

Postal inspectors did not always properly record mail suspected of containing illicit drugs in the tracking database when notified by Postal Service employees. We reviewed the Postal Inspection Service's tracking database for FY 2019 and determined that there were incorrect data entries across all 17 divisions. For example, 21 percent of the referrals did not have the postal employee names and phone numbers and 7.5 percent did not have a reason for the referral. In addition, 21 of 34 postal inspectors interviewed stated they do not create an entry in the tracking database until they receive the suspected mail.

This occurred because management provided verbal guidance to record suspected mail information when mail is received. However, this was inconsistent with the policy that requires postal inspectors to record suspected mail information when notified by postal employees. Without proper records, these packages could go undetected by the Postal Inspection Service and expose the public and postal employees to harmful substances.

> *"We reviewed the Postal Inspection Service's tracking database for FY 2019 and determined that there were incorrect data entries across all 17 divisions."*

The Postal Inspection Service did not always instruct postal facility employees to store suspected mail in a secure location. Seven of 65 postal employees we interviewed at five facilities indicated that suspected mail is not always stored securely. Although we did not identify any suspected mail during our visits to 12 postal facilities, at each location, postal employees showed us the designated area where they store suspected mail when they encounter it. At three of the 12 facilities, the designated areas were accessible to all employees and not secure. At the other nine facilities,

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the designated areas were secured. In addition, eight of 34 postal inspectors we interviewed stated they encountered unsecured suspected mail at postal facilities.

Conflicts in policy resulted in postal employees making their own determination on where to secure suspected mail. When suspected mail is not secured, there is an increased risk of loss or theft that can provide opportunities for employee misconduct, such as illegal distribution or use of harmful substances.

Further, postal inspectors did not always scan suspected mail when in their possession. This occurred because scanning devices are not readily accessible to postal inspectors and the Postal Inspection Service has not identified the number of scanners on hand, or the specific need by office, to meet scanning requirements. Postal inspectors do not scan mail that will be used in investigative actions to protect the integrity of ongoing investigations. Additionally, policy does not require postal inspectors to scan suspected mail when a mailpiece is diverted from or returned to the mailstream. Due to a lack of scans and tracking visibility, the Postal Service paid some minimal customer insurance claims which it is not financially obligated to pay. Without tracking visibility, it could encourage loss and theft of mail.

Recommendations

We recommended management:

- Ensure postal inspectors comply with the Administrative Nonmailability Protocol policy regarding suspected mail recordkeeping.

- Update the Administrative Nonmailability Protocol to require postal inspectors to instruct Postal Service employees to secure suspected mail in a secure location until a determination is made regarding the disposition of the suspected mail.

- Determine where scanning devices are needed and distribute scanning devices to those locations.

- Instruct postal inspectors to scan all suspected mail that is either seized, diverted, or removed from the mailstream.

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Transmittal Letter

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

November 18, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: GARY R. BARKSDALE
CHIEF POSTAL INSPECTOR

[signature: Margaret B. McDavid]

FROM: Margaret B. McDavid
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
 For Inspection Service and Information Technology

SUBJECT: Audit Report – U.S. Postal Inspection Service's Oversight of
Mail Suspected of Containing Illicit Drugs at Postal Facilities
(Report Number 20-178-R21)

This report presents the results of our audit of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's
Oversight of Mail Suspected of Containing Illicit Drugs at Postal Facilities.

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

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit Response Management

Results

Introduction/Objective

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's controls for handling mail suspected of containing illicit drugs at U.S. Postal Service facilities. Our objective was to evaluate the Postal Inspection Service's controls for handling mail suspected of containing illicit drugs at Postal Service facilities.

We planned our fieldwork before the President of the United States issued the national emergency declaration concerning the novel coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) on March 13, 2020. The results of this audit do not reflect operational changes or service impacts that may have occurred as a result of the pandemic.

Background

The mission of the Postal Inspection Service is to support and protect the Postal Service and its employees, infrastructure, and customers; enforce the laws that defend the nation's mail system from illegal or dangerous use; and ensure public trust in the mail.[1] Suspected mail can in some cases include hazardous materials or explosives.[2] However, for the purposes of this report, "suspected mail" refers to mail suspected of containing illicit drugs. The Postal Inspection Service received and recorded 66,042 mailpieces containing 143,460 pounds of illicit drugs from the mailstream in fiscal years (FY) 2018 and 2019 (see Table 1).

> "The Postal Inspection Service received and recorded 66,042 mailpieces containing 143,460 pounds of illicit drugs from the mailstream in FY 2018 and 2019 ."

Table 1. FY 2018-2019 Mail Containing Illicit Drugs Received and Recorded from the Mailstream[3]

Type of Drug	FY 2018		FY 2019	
	Pounds	Percentage	Pounds	Percentage
Marijuana	47,366	98.73	93,651	98.08
Methamphetamines	259	0.54	843	0.88
Other Controlled Substances	177	0.37	553	0.58
Cocaine	131	0.27	214	0.22
Steroids	17	0.04	149	0.16
Other Non-Controlled Substances	22	0.05	78	0.08
Total	**47,972**	**100**	**95,488**	**100**

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of FY 2018 and 2019 Postal Inspection Service Case Management System reports.

The effort to remove illicit drugs from the mailstream relies, in part, on postal employees remaining vigilant and following proper procedures. The Postal Inspection Service established the *Proper Handling of Suspected Marijuana Parcels Mandatory Stand-Up Talk* in FY 2019 as guidance for postal employees on how to handle mail suspected of containing illicit drugs. In addition, the Postal Inspection Service Administrative Nonmailability Protocol (ANP) policy describes

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1   Postal Inspection Service mission as defined on their website as of September 9.
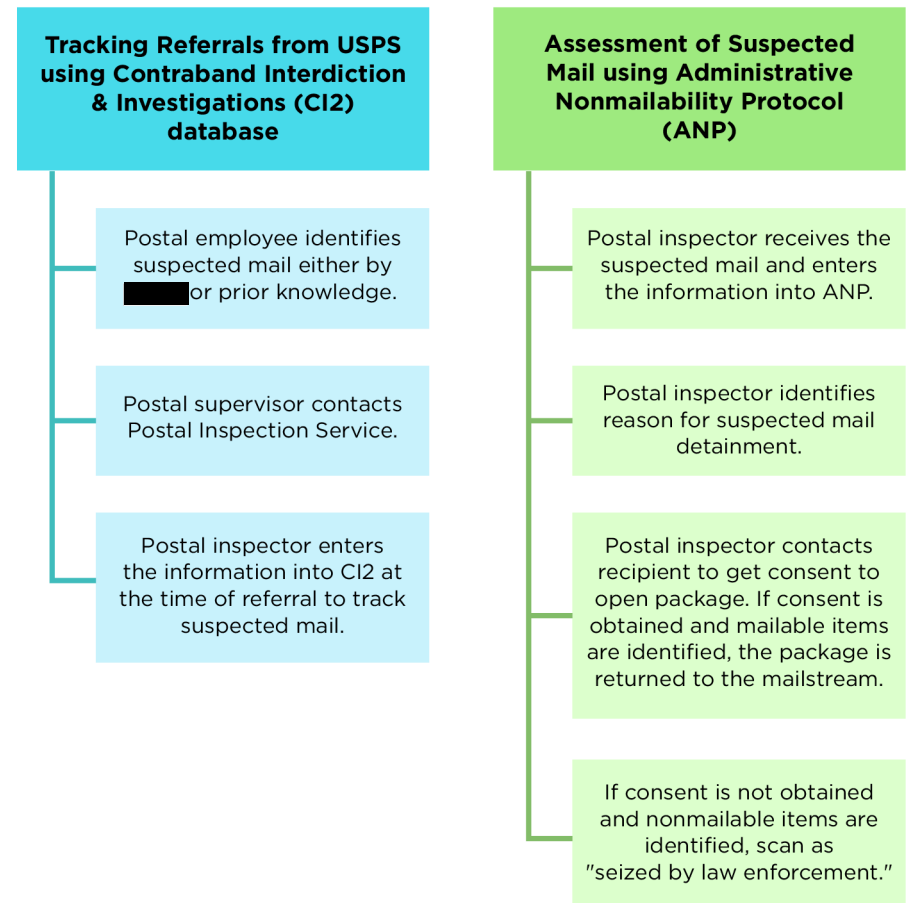2   *Postal Inspection Service Safe and Secure Postal Employee Crime Prevention* dated September 2012.
3   Other controlled substances include drug types such as Heroin, Mushroom, Human Growth Hormone, PCP, Ecstasy (MDMA), Fentanyl, Amphetamines, OxyContin/Oxycodone, Ketamine, and LSD.

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the procedures for recording referred suspected mail by postal employees. This policy was established primarily to remove marijuana from the mailstream. Postal employees should secure the mail, contact their manager when they identify suspected mail, and notify the Postal Inspection Service. The postal inspector should then either pick up the suspected mail if within close proximity, have the employee mail it to the postal inspector upon request, or have the employee return the mail to the mailstream if there is insufficient reason to suspect the mail contains illicit drugs.

When the Postal Inspection Service is notified, they enter the information into the Contraband Interdiction and Investigations database (CI2).[4] CI2 tracks the suspected mail from a postal facility to the Postal Inspection Service to ensure it can be accounted for if it goes missing. Once postal inspectors receive the suspected mail, they are also required to record mailing information in the ANP.[5] The ANP database in the Case Management System is also used to document suspected mail once it's in the Postal Inspection Service's custody as seen in Figure 1. Postal inspectors will then attempt to contact the sender or recipient and, if unsuccessful, scan the mail as "seized by law enforcement." The scan is visible in the Postal Service's tracking system to the sender and recipient as well as postal personnel. The postal inspector holds scanned suspected mail for ███████ then disposes of the contents. If the sender or recipient gives consent and the postal inspector identifies mailable items, then the mail is re-entered into the mailstream.

Figure 1. ANP Procedures for Recording Suspected Mail of Containing Illicit Drugs

Tracking Referrals from USPS using Contraband Interdiction & Investigations (CI2) database	Assessment of Suspected Mail using Administrative Nonmailability Protocol (ANP)
Postal employee identifies suspected mail either by ████ or prior knowledge.	Postal inspector receives the suspected mail and enters the information into ANP.
Postal supervisor contacts Postal Inspection Service.	Postal inspector identifies reason for suspected mail detainment.
Postal inspector enters the information into CI2 at the time of referral to track suspected mail.	Postal inspector contacts recipient to get consent to open package. If consent is obtained and mailable items are identified, the package is returned to the mailstream.
	If consent is not obtained and nonmailable items are identified, scan as "seized by law enforcement."

Source: OIG analysis of *Postal Inspection Service ANP Procedures for Parcels Suspected of Containing Non-Mailable Matter.*

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4   The CI2 database portal tracks Postal Service referrals and information from the Postal Service employee.
5   Once Postal Inspection Service personnel are in possession of the referred mail or if they have identified suspected mail, they enter the required information in the ANP system and follow a triage process to record and document information from the mail.

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Illicit drugs are classified as prohibited mail and the Postal Service is not financially obligated to make payment on any indemnity claims associated with those packages.[6] However, some customers who use the Postal Service to ship illicit drugs will ██ ██, it goes through the Customer Inquiry and Claims Reponses System (CIRCS)[7] adjudication system process. Customers can file a claim no sooner than seven days after a package is shipped, depending on the type of service. If the suspected mail was scanned "seized by law enforcement," CIRCS will deny the claim.

> *"Without proper records, lost or stolen suspected mail could go undetected by the Postal Inspection Service and could expose the public and postal employees to harmful substances."*

To evaluate the controls, we reviewed policies and procedures, and conducted observations and interviews related to handling and securing suspected mail. Of the 2,859 facilities we identified which had a high probability of suspected mail, we judgmentally selected 12 facilities near OIG offices in the Dallas, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Washington D.C. metropolitan areas. At these facilities, we interviewed 38 Postal Service supervisors, 18 support staff, and nine letter carriers. We also interviewed two postal inspectors who had experience handling suspected mail from each of the 17 divisions. Finally, we compared FY 2018 and 2019 Postal Inspection Service seizure data to Postal Service tracking and scan data captured in Product Tracking and Reporting (PTR) to ensure tracking and visibility of suspected mail.

While the Postal Inspection Service has guidelines in place, we found opportunities exist for the Postal Inspection Service to enhance controls for handling mail suspected of containing illicit drugs at postal facilities. Specifically, suspected mail was not always recorded, secured, and stored as required to prevent theft, misplacement, illegal distribution, and use of harmful substances increasing the risk of misconduct and harm to the public and Postal Service employees.

Finding #1: Suspected Mail Not Properly Recorded

We interviewed postal inspectors who used the CI2 database in FY 2019 to determine if they properly record suspected mail. We found that the postal inspectors did not always properly record mail suspected of containing illicit drugs in the tracking database when notified by Postal Service employees. We reviewed the Postal Inspection Service CI2 tracking database for FY 2019 and determined that there were incorrect data entries across all 17 divisions. For example, 21 percent of the referrals did not have the postal employee names and phone numbers and 7.5 percent did not have a reason for the referral. In addition, we interviewed 34 postal inspectors and 21 of them (62 percent) stated they do not create a detailed entry in the CI2 database at the time of the suspected mail referral. Rather, they enter the details after the mail is received.

This occurred because management provided verbal guidance to postal inspectors that was inconsistent with the written ANP procedures. Specifically, Postal Inspection Service management verbally instructed personnel to input information into the CI2 database after they receive the package. Postal Inspection Service policy[8] states that postal inspectors are required to record information about suspected mail in CI2 when notified by postal employees to ensure the tracking of mail in transit. Without proper records, lost or stolen suspected mail could go undetected by the Postal Inspection Service and could expose the public and postal employees to harmful substances.

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6   Indemnity payments are insurance claims against the Postal Service when there is loss or damage to insured articles in the mailstream.
7   CIRCS is designed to pay or deny claims against the Postal Service where there is loss or damage to insured articles in the mailstream.
8   *ANP procedures for Parcels Suspected of Containing Non-Mailable Matter Service Manual,* dated March 2019.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **Chief Postal Inspector** ensure postal inspectors comply with Administrative Nonmailability Protocol policy regarding suspected mail recordkeeping.

Finding #2: Unsecured Suspected Mail

We found that the Postal Inspection Service did not always instruct postal facility employees to store suspected mail in a secure location. Seven of 65 postal employees interviewed at five facilities[9] indicated that suspected mail is not stored securely. In addition, eight of 34 postal inspectors we interviewed stated they have encountered unsecured suspected mail at facilities. Although we did not identify any suspected mail during our visits to 12 postal facilities, at each facility, postal employees showed us the designated area where they would store suspected mail when they encounter it. The designated areas were secure at nine facilities; however, at three facilities, these areas were accessible to all employees and not secure. For example, at one facility the suspected mail would be stored, when any is identified, in an unlocked bin next to a supervisor's desk on the workroom floor, as seen in Figure 2. In another facility, the designated area was a shelf located next to a door. At the third location, suspected mail would be stored in an unlocked bin for mail that is being shipped to or picked up by the Inspection Service. Employees told us they considered this to be secure because it was next to a supervisor's desk.

> *"At one facility the suspected mail would be stored, when any is identified, in an unlocked bin next to a supervisor's desk on the workroom floor."*

Figure 2. Supervisor's Desk on a Workroom Floor

Source: OIG photograph taken during tour at a post office in VA showing a designated area used to store suspected mail. No suspected mail is shown in this photo.

Although Postal Service policy[10] states that employees should store suspected mail in a secure location, such as a locked office or safe, the Postal Inspection Service internal policy[11] does not require postal inspectors to provide clear guidance on securing suspected mail. As a result, postal employees made their own determination on where to secure suspected mail. When suspected mail is not secured, there is an increased risk of loss or theft that can provide opportunity for employee misconduct such as illegal distribution or use of harmful substances.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **Chief Postal Inspector** update Administrative Nonmailability Protocol to require postal inspectors instruct Postal Service employees to secure suspected mail in a secure location until a determination is made regarding the disposition of the suspected mail.

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9   Four of the five were sites we visited in VA and TX, with interviews conducted in person. We conducted interviews with personnel at one additional site in LA via telephone.

10 P*roper Handling of Suspected Marijuana Parcels Mandatory Stand-Up Talk* dated February 15, 2019.

11 *ANP procedures for Parcels Suspected of Containing Non-Mailable Matter Service Manual.*

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Finding #3: Suspected Mail Not Scanned Properly

Postal inspectors did not always scan suspected mail when in their possession. We reviewed ANP and PTR records to determine the amount of suspected mail the Postal Inspection Service diverted or removed from the mailstream and whether all suspected mail received a scan. In FYs 2018 and 2019, the Postal Inspection Service took 66,042 suspected mailpieces, 9,063 of which (14 percent) did not receive a "seized by law enforcement" or PTR scan to provide tracking visibility.

> *"In FYs 2018 and 2019, the Postal Inspection Service took 66,042 suspected mailpieces, 9,063 of which (14 percent) did not receive a "seized by law enforcement" or PTR scan to provide tracking visibility."*

Per Postal Inspection Service policy,[12] if contact with the sender or recipient is unsuccessful and mail is seized, it should be scanned as "seized by law enforcement." In addition, the Postal Service requires all mail to have a PTR scan throughout the mail flow process to provide full visibility.[13] This occurred because scanning devices are not readily accessible to postal inspectors who must scan mail when they decide to seize it. Also, the Postal Inspection Service has not identified the number of scanners on hand or the specific need by office to meet scanning requirements. To protect the integrity of ongoing investigations, postal inspectors will not scan mail that will be used in a controlled delivery.[14] Additionally, the policy does not require postal inspectors to scan suspected mail when a mailpiece is diverted from or returned to the mailstream.

Due to a lack of scans and tracking visibility, the Postal Service paid $2,565 related to customer claims for mail containing illicit drugs in FYs 2018 and 2019 and could continue to pay claims made by customers who ship illicit drugs through the mail. Table 2 shows the number of packages by drug type for which the Postal Service paid claims in FYs 2018 and 2019 to customers who submitted claims on packages that contained illicit drugs.

Table 2. Illicit Drugs Packages Insurance Payments

Fiscal Year	Drug Type	Packages	Cost
2018	Marijuana	5	$349.70
2019	Marijuana/LSD	17	$2,215.66
Total		**22**	**$2,565.36**

Source: Administrative Non-Mailable data and Enterprise Data Warehouse.

Recommendation #3:
We recommend the **Chief Postal Inspector** determine where scanning devices are needed and distribute scanning devices to those locations.

Recommendation #4:
We recommend the **Chief Postal Inspector** instruct postal inspectors to scan all suspected mail that is either seized, diverted, or removed from the mailstream.

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12 *ANP procedures for Parcels Suspected of Containing Non-Mailable Matter Service Manual,* dated March 2019.
13 *United States Postal Service - 2019 Annual Report to Congress,* Section Cooperate-Wide Goals and Targets, dated December 2019.
14 A controlled delivery is a law enforcement technique that allows the transport of illegal drugs, under law enforcement supervision, to those persons who have arranged for the shipment to identify, arrest and prosecute those persons that are responsible as defined on the Police-Academy.com website.

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Management's Comments

Management agreed with recommendations 1, 2, and 3 and disagreed with recommendation 4.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated that the ANP will be reinforced to ensure postal inspectors are following proper recordkeeping policy. The target implementation date is November 30, 2020.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated the ANP will be updated to require postal inspectors to instruct Postal Service employees to secure suspected mail in a secure location until the suspected mail disposition is determined. The target implementation date is November 30, 2020.

Regarding recommendation 3, management stated prior to this audit, they began a review to determine locations where scanners are needed. They plan to continue this review and distribute scanners accordingly. The target implementation date is March 31, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 4, management stated any narcotic parcel seized as a result of a law enforcement operation will receive a "Seized by Law Enforcement" scan to avoid insurance claims or an ANP parcel missing issue. Additionally, management stated they oppose the recommendation because scanning parcels that are not in Postal Inspection Service custody could lead to safety concerns, jeopardize investigations, reduce ANP effectiveness, and/or create public confusion.

See Appendix B for management's comments in their entirety.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to recommendations 1, 2, and 3, and the corrective action should resolve the issues identified in the report. The OIG considers management's comments unresponsive to recommendation 4.

Regarding recommendation 4, we agree that the Postal Inspection Service has established procedures to scan seized suspected mail. However, as noted in the report, not all seized mail received a "Seized by Law Enforcement" scan. In addition, the Postal Service requires full visibility of the mail to provide real-time mail information to the customer and the Postal Service. There are more commonly used PTR scans that can avoid some of the stated concerns, for example, about safety. Therefore, as we recommended, the Postal Inspection Service should instruct postal inspectors to scan all suspected mail that is either seized, diverted, or removed from the mailstream.

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.

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Additional Information

Scope and Methodology

The scope of our audit included a review of the Postal Inspection Service's oversight of the Postal Service's handling of mail suspected of containing illicit drugs at postal facilities. We used FY 2018 – 2019 Postal Inspection Service data on mail suspected of containing illicit drugs, packages scans, and insurance claim payouts.

To accomplish our objective, we:

- Reviewed Postal Inspection Service policies and procedures to determine Postal Inspection Service roles and responsibilities, safety procedures, and timeliness of responses to illicit drugs mail.

- Reviewed FY 2019 Postal Inspection Service CI2 database data to determine completeness of documentation of Postal Service employees' suspected mail referrals.

- Compared FY 2018 – 2019 ANP and Indemnity claim records to determine if the Postal Service paid insurance claims on packages containing illicit drugs.

- Compared FY 2018 – 2019 Postal Inspection Service ANP and PTR data to ensure tracking and visibility of suspected mail.

- Observed 12 of 2,859 facilities and judgmentally selected postal facilities that were near OIG office in the Dallas, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C. metropolitan areas.

- Interviewed 38 postal supervisors,18 support staff, and nine carriers from 12 facilities in CA, TX, LA, PA, and VA to determine if they had training, were aware of policies, and what actions they took if they found suspected mail. We judgmentally identified areas for suspected illicit drug packages using OIG risk model data.

- Interviewed 34 postal inspectors – two from each of the 17 divisions – to determine if they had adequate oversight of how postal employees are handling suspected illicit drugs. We used the CI2 database to judgmentally select postal inspectors who had experience inputting referral information.

We conducted this performance audit from March through November 2020 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, 2020, and included their comments where appropriate.

We assessed the reliability of ANP, CIRCS, PTR, and CI2 database data by tracing it to source documents and interviewing representatives responsible for the data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

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Prior Audit Coverage

Report Title	Objective	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact (in millions)
U.S. Postal Inspection Service Handling of Marijuana Packages	Determine whether the U.S. Postal Inspection Service has efficient and effective controls to manage the ANP program.	19-014-R20	3/13/2020	$253,613
Use of Postal Service Network to Facilitate Illicit Drug Distribution	Examine the role of the Postal Service network in facilitating illicit drug distribution, explore associated risks and vulnerabilities in the system, and identify opportunities to mitigate risks.	SAT-AR-18-002	9/28/2018	None
Opioid Safety Preparedness	Assess measures the Postal Service has implemented to prepare its workforce for the risks posed by shipments of synthetic opioids.	HR-AR-18-006	6/18/2018	None
Packages Suspected of Containing Marijuana	Assess the Postal Inspection Service's and Postal Service's handling of packages suspected of containing marijuana.	HR-AR-17-001	10/12/2016	None
U.S. Postal Service Mail Recovery Center	Assess the Mail Recovery Center's effectiveness in handling customer inquiries and managing items it received.	MS-AR-16-001	12/1/2015	None

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Appendix B: Management's Comments

GARY R. BARKSDALE
CHIEF POSTAL INSPECTOR

UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

November 10, 2020

Joe Wolski
Director, Audit Operations

SUBJECT: U.S. Postal Inspection Service's Oversight of Mail Suspected of
Containing Illicit Drugs at Postal Facilities
(Report Number 20-178-DRAFT)

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations contained in the draft audit report, U.S. Postal Inspection Confidential Funds Program.

The Postal Service agrees with recommendations 1, 2, and 3 and disagrees with recommendation 4. We acknowledge the monetary finding of $2,565.36. Management will address each recommendation separately below.

Recommendation 1: We recommend the Chief Postal Inspector ensure Postal Inspectors comply with Administrative Nonmailability Protocol policy regarding suspected mail recordkeeping.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation. We will reinforce the Administrative Nonmailability Protocols with our Inspectors to ensure Postal Inspectors follow proper recordkeeping policy.

Target Implementation Date: November 30, 2020

Responsible Official: Inspector in Charge, Contraband Interdiction and Investigations

Recommendation 2: We recommend the Chief Postal Inspector update Administrative Nonmailability Protocol to require Postal Inspectors instruct Postal Service employees to secure suspected mail in a secure location until a determination is made regarding the disposition of the suspected mail.

Management Response/Action Plan: Management agrees with this recommendation. The Administrative Nonmailability Protocols will be updated to

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require Postal Inspectors instruct Postal Service employees to secure suspected mail in a secure location until a determination is made regarding the disposition of the suspected mail.

<u>Target Implementation Date:</u> November 30, 2020

<u>Responsible Official:</u> Inspector in Charge, Contraband Interdiction and Investigations

<u>Recommendation 3:</u> We recommend the Chief Postal Inspector determine where scanning devices are needed and distribute scanning devices to those locations.

<u>Management Response/Action Plan:</u> Management agrees with this recommendation. Prior to this audit, we began a review to determine the locations which do not have access to scanners and assess their need. We will continue this project to identify locations and distribute scanners accordingly.

<u>Target Implementation Date:</u> March 31, 2021

<u>Responsible Official:</u> Inspector in Charge, Contraband Interdiction and Investigations

<u>Recommendation 4:</u> We recommend the Chief Postal Inspector instruct postal inspectors to scan all suspected mail that is either seized, diverted, or removed from the mailstream.

<u>Management Response/Action Plan:</u> Management disagrees with this recommendation. Our procedures ensure we apply a "Seized by Law Enforcement" scan to every parcel entering the Administrative Nonmailability Protocol (ANP) process. Any narcotics parcel seized as the result of a law enforcement operation will receive a "Seized by Law Enforcement" scan. These procedures were put in place to address several issues we previously identified, including insurance payments. Since these procedures were implemented, we have not experienced any other issues related to insurance claims or ANP parcels missing the "Seized by Law Enforcement" scan.

This audit report does not identify any findings which suggest a basis for the recommendation to scan all suspected mail. Scanning parcels as diverted or removed from the mailstream, that are never taken into USPIS custody, could lead to violence against postal employees, jeopardize investigations, and/or reduce the overall effectiveness of the ANP process. In addition, applying a scan indicating the parcel was diverted or removed from the mailstream will create confusion with

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the public, generate unnecessary customer queries, and create concerns where people believe that the Postal Service is monitoring their mail. This could result in tarnishing the Postal Service's brand and create questions related to the privacy of the mail. We strongly oppose this recommendation.

Thank you,

Gary R. Barksdale
Chief Postal Inspector

cc: *Manager, Corporate Audit Response Management*

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UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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