# USPS OIG: Tackling Delivery Delays

*May 1, 2019* — More packages and fewer letters to more addresses each year. That’s the daily drill for U.S. Postal Service city carriers and city carrier assistants (CCA), the non-career carriers who make up a growing segment of the workforce.

As we’ve noted in past [**blogs**](https://www.uspsoig.gov/blog/delivery-hurdles), customers are feeling negative effects of this changing mail mix. Complaints of late delivery or missed deliveries have increased in some areas.

Our latest [**audit report**](https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2018/DR-AR-19-005.pdf) on delivery delays looked at select post offices in the Richmond District, where residents have complained of poor mail service. Our analysis of delivery performance indicators, including carriers returning after 7 p.m., overtime hours used, and customer complaints, identified 16 delivery units with poor performance.

We reviewed city delivery operations and customer service data in these 16 units and identified several issues, including:

* None of the 16 units achieved their goal of distributing mail to carrier routes by 8:30 a.m., known as the Distribution-Up-Time (DUT), during September 2018. A late DUT means carriers start their routes later, which can affect delivery performance.
* More than 18 percent of city carriers returned to their units after 7 p.m. and as late as 10 p.m. in fiscal year 2018, well short of the Postal Service’s goal of 95 percent of city letter carriers returning from street operations before 5 p.m., and 100 percent by 6:00 p.m.
* None of the 16 units adequately addressed customer complaints logged in Enterprise Customer Care, the tool used to track customer complaints that cannot be handled immediately, such as “where is my package?”

Carriers returning from their routes after 6:00 p.m. remains a nationwide problem for the Postal Service. We have chronicled this in past audit [**reports**](https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2018/DR-AR-18-006.pdf) and recommended that USPS improve mail flow within and between the processing centers, as well as develop a plan to review package data and make route adjustments as needed. In the Richmond report, we also recommended that supervisors utilize operational and reporting tools to monitor delivery operations. We also recommended that supervisors follow customer service policies and procedures to resolve customer complaints timely and to the customer’s satisfaction.