# Facility Condition Reviews – Mail Processing Facilities

*May 8, 2019* — **Background**

In fiscal year (FY) 2018, the Postal Service had 286 mail processing facilities with over 70 million interior square feet. Between October 2010 and February 2018, mail processing facilities generated more than 46,000 maintenance requests and incurred over $876 million in maintenance costs.

The Postal Service is obligated, by both internal policies and federal regulations, to maintain facilities in accordance with prescribed standards to provide a safe and healthy workplace for its employees.

Our objective was to determine if Postal Service management adhered to building safety, maintenance, and security standards at mail processing facilities. Our scope included 32 statistically selected mail processing facilities nationwide.

**What the OIG Found**

Postal Service mail processing facilities did not consistently meet prescribed building safety, maintenance, or security standards. We identified 282 deficiencies at the 32 facilities, which ranged from minor oversight infractions to more serious fineable violations.

For the 282 deficiencies identified:

* One hundred forty-five deficiencies (51 percent) at 27 facilities related to safety, to include blocked fire extinguishers and/or blocked fire alarm pull stations;
* Sixty-eight deficiencies (24 percent) at 24 facilities related to maintenance, to include severely damaged roofing, ceilings, and infrastructure; and,
* Sixty-nine deficiencies (25 percent) at 27 facilities related to security, to include unsecure vehicles, non-functioning security cameras, and unsecure perimeter fences.

At one facility, building safety deficiencies were so severe that we escalated the issues to Postal Service leadership while on-site. Subsequently, the Postal Service contracted with an engineering firm to complete a structural evaluation. In a February 2019 report, the engineering firm recommended that the Postal Service complete permanent repairs to structural concrete slabs. The report also recommended that management perform site observations and a structural review of floor slab construction subjected to forklift traffic.

The reasons for the deficiencies related to building safety, maintenance, and security included facility personnel not conducting required safety reviews and housekeeping inspections, and facilities not having the authorized complement of maintenance employees on the rolls.

When corrective actions are not implemented, or are implemented but inadequate, issues may continue to exist, increasing the Postal Service’s exposure to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fines, and the risk of injury to employees and customers. At the 32 facilities we visited, 116 of the 215 safety and security deficiencies identified were potential OSHA violations subject to fines.

**What the OIG Recommended**

We recommended management develop and implement an action plan to address deficiencies identified during our audit, including the engineering firm report, to include a timeline for completing items; and, hire additional maintenance staff at locations where appropriate.

[**Read full report**](https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2018/SM-AR-19-003.pdf)