

September 7, 2001

PAUL E. VOGEL
VICE PRESIDENT, NETWORK OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

KEITH STRANGE
VICE PRESIDENT, PURCHASING AND MATERIALS

SUBJECT: Video Report - Air Carrier Reliability
(Report Number TR-VR-01-001)

This video report presents the results of our audit of mail delays occurring at the Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, (Atlanta Airport) Atlanta, Georgia, (Project Number 01NA001TR000). It supplements our published audit report dated August 2, 2001. The report responds to an anonymous complaint alleging that Delta Airlines allowed large volumes of mail to back up for days.

Our audit confirmed the allegation. Specifically, we found that Delta Airlines allowed over 600,000 pounds of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Express Mail to remain at the Atlanta Airport for up to 7 days beginning August 6, 2000, and continuing through September 8, 2000. During this time, 8,113 flights to which mail had been assigned departed from Atlanta with no mail onboard. Our audit also disclosed that while the mail was backlogged at the Atlanta Airport, Delta Airlines did not provide the required security over and protection of the mail.

We recommended Postal Service management establish a back-up plan that provides for timely intervention and use of alternative mail transportation when the amount of mail on-hand at the Atlanta Airport reaches unmanageable levels; assess damages, as provided for in the Air Systems contract, when air carriers cause major disruptions in the transportation of mail; and enforce applicable liquidated damages against air carriers when they do not load mail that has been properly tendered or when they do not properly protect the mail. Management agreed with our recommendations and the actions taken or planned should correct the issues discussed in the report. Management's comments and our evaluation of their comments are included in the written report.

Again, we appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff during the audit. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Maria Longley, acting director, Transportation, at 312-601-3905, or me at (703) 248-2300.

Debra S. Ritt
Assistant Inspector General
for Business Operations

Attachment

cc: John E. Potter
John M. Nolan
Patrick R. Donahoe
Mary Anne Gibbons
John A. Rapp
Kenneth C. Weaver
William T. Johnstone
John R. Gunnels