

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

Assessment of Mail Center Operations Initial Investigative Findings

FEBRUARY 2016

City Controller
Alan Butkovitz



Promoting honest, efficient & fully accountable government



Assessment of Mail Center Operations

Initial Investigative Findings

FEBRUARY 2016

Executive Summary

Why the Controller's Office Conducted this Assessment

The Controller's Office developed information that there was mismanagement and inefficient operations in the City of Philadelphia's Mail Distribution Center (Mail Center). This government facility is under the management of the Department of Revenue, as it is responsible for processing all notices, fines, tax bills, parking violations and other city-related correspondence to Philadelphians and those doing business with Philadelphia.

The Controller's investigators conducted on-site inspections where documents, distribution data, and employee time sheets from the facility were photographed in order to conduct an assessment of the operations within the Mailroom. The last on-site inspection was completed with the cooperation of the new Revenue Commissioner.

What the Controller's Office Found

While the inquiry is still ongoing and in the initial stages of a full analysis, information developed to date have raised serious concerns about the services of the Mail Center. It appears mail is being processed in a manner that is not timely, placing recipients at risk of additional fines and penalties, loss of driving privileges, vehicle impoundment and even warrants for their arrest and being jailed.

Specific findings have included the following:

- A Municipal Court Traffic Division payment notice with a due date of Dec. 4, 2015 was found in the Mail Center on Dec. 3, 2015. The date of the notice was Nov. 20, 15.
- A Municipal Court notice for a litter fine with a due date of Dec. 14, 2015 was found in the Mail Center on Dec. 16, 2015. The date of the notice was Dec. 4, 2015.
- A subpoena dated Nov. 17, 2015 for an individual to appear in court on Dec. 3, 2015 was found on a machine in the Mail Center on the same date as the court date.
- A Water Bill that was supposed to be paid on Dec. 4, 2015 was found a day before its due date. In addition, hundreds of similar letters were stacked in the Mail Center.

What the Controller's Office Recommends

Due to the issues and concerns uncovered to date, it was deemed necessary to bring the preliminary findings to the attention of Revenue Department leadership to immediately correct these issues while the rest of the inquiry proceeded. The Controller's Office recommends the Revenue Commissioner take immediate action to 1). Ensure that mail received by the Mail Center is processed and placed in the mail system in a timely manner; 2). Provide appropriate levels of management and oversight to manage the basic functions of the facility; and 3). Cooperate fully in a joint effort with the Controller's Office in analyzing the operations of the Mail Center with the goal of improving operations.

BACKGROUND

The Controller's Office developed information that there was mismanagement and inefficient operations in the City of Philadelphia's Mail Distribution Center (Mail Center). This government facility is under the management of the Department of Revenue, as it is responsible for processing all notices, fines, tax bills, parking violations and other city-related correspondence to Philadelphians and those doing business with Philadelphia.

The Mail Center is a large mail processing center with numerous sorters, folders, envelope stuffers and postage machines. According to unit time sheets there are 10 full time permanent employees assigned and some temporary employees used throughout the year to assist in increased mail volume.



During the preliminary activities of this inquiry, information was developed that indicated the initial allegations had merit and, as a result, immediate action was required to ameliorate the risk to the recipients of mail sent out by the Mail Center.

The Controller's investigators conducted on-site inspections where documents, distribution data, and employee time sheets from the facility were photographed in order to conduct an assessment of the operations within the Mailroom. The last on-site inspection was completed with the cooperation of the new Revenue Commissioner.

While additional information is being reviewed, the findings on the following pages is provided to substantiate the initial allegations and for use by the Revenue Department to immediately correct the significant issues while the rest of the inquiry is completed.

FINDINGS:

First Judicial District of Philadelphia – Court of Common Pleas

According to the Court Administrator, information sent out by the First Judicial District through the Mail Center may include notices of court dates, judicial orders, child custody issues, child and family support requirements and other important matters, many which are time sensitive.

Pictured below is a group of letters from the Domestic Relation Branch of the Family Court Division of the Court of Common Pleas. Note that the letters were originally postmarked for November 27, 2015, then re-dated November 30, 2015, yet are still in the Mail Center on December 3, 2015. The actual contents of these letters are not currently known.



First Judicial District of Philadelphia – Municipal Court – Traffic Division

According to a Director within the Municipal Court Traffic Division, many mail notices sent out are time critical and some are specifically required by the Rules of Criminal Procedure. For example, Notice 1 sent in accordance with Rule 411, is sent out 10 days after a citation is issued and requires the recipient to respond within 10 days or an additional fee of \$25 is added, suspension of their driver license, impoundment of their vehicle and ultimately a warrant for their arrest. While the traffic division generally gives the recipient up to 20 days to respond, the Director noted that any delay in mail, particularly the ones required by procedure, were problematic.

Issues that could be caused by delayed mail include:

- Not even being aware of a citation (one issued by police when offender was not present/available)
- Not being notified of a pending license suspension
- Not being notified of an actual license suspension
- Not being notified of a court date

Pictured below is a Subpoena/Commitment dated November 17, 2015 with an order to appear in court on December 3, 2015 at 9:00 AM. The letter also indicates that if the recipient does not appear, a judgment will be entered against them, a warrant will be issued for their arrest and a warrant officer will be sent to their place of employment or their home to take them into custody. Of particular interest is that this letter had not been sent out and was on a machine in the Mail Center on December 3, the day of the court date.

SUBPOENA/COMMITMENT

THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

SS. [Redacted]

**YOU ARE ORDERED TO APPEAR AT
PHILADELPHIA TRAFFIC COURT**

AT 800 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia PA 19123-2690

Date: 12/03/2015 Time: 09:00 AM Courtroom: F

DATE OF BIRTH (MM DD YY)	DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER	DEFAULT AMOUNT
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	\$3,361.75

By the order of the Traffic Court

YOU ARE COMMANDED BY ORDER OF THE COURT TO APPEAR AS A DEFENDANT IN THIS DEFAULT CASE AT THE PRECISE DATE, TIME AND PLACE INDICATED ABOVE. IF YOU DO NOT APPEAR AS INDICATED ABOVE, YOU WILL HAVE A JUDGEMENT ENTERED AGAINST YOU. A WARRANT, IF NOT ALREADY ON YOUR RECORD, WILL BE ISSUED FOR YOUR ARREST AND A WARRANT OFFICER WILL BE SENT TO YOUR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR TO YOUR HOME TO TAKE YOU INTO CUSTODY. IN ADDITION, YOUR DRIVING PRIVILEGES WILL BE SUSPENDED.

DEFENDANT MAY BE RELEASED FROM THIS HEARING OR FROM SUBSEQUENT ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS FOR THIS DEFAULT PRIOR TO THE HEARING BY POSTING THE ENTIRE DEFAULT AMOUNT OWED TO THE TRAFFIC COURT. THIS SUBPOENA WILL LIFT ANY CURRENT ENFORCEMENT ACTION TAKEN BY THE TRAFFIC COURT.

RIGHT TO RETAIN PRIVATE COUNSEL FOR THIS HEARING.

BRING THIS NOTICE WITH YOU

PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS

payable to Traffic Court (Include citation number)

12/03/2015 00:49

Another item of interest, a notice of license suspension, is pictured below. This letter is dated December 24, 2015 yet is still in the mail center on January 8, 2016. Failure of the recipient to receive this letter could result in their continuing to drive unaware of their license suspension and that they are subject to arrest and having their vehicle impounded, if stopped by authorities.

PTCM03-113012-MGD

PHILADELPHIA TRAFFIC COURT
800 SPRING GARDEN STREET
P.O. BOX 56301
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19130-6301
(215) 686-1675

GARY S. GLAZER
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

1001

NOTICE DATE: 12/24/15

NOTICE OF LICENSE SUSPENSION

You have failed to respond to the Notice of Impending Suspension of Driving Privileges or other notices previously sent that warned of impending suspension of your driving privileges.

Your failure to respond has resulted in your name being sent to the Department of Drivers Licensing and your driving privileges will be suspended and remain suspended until you enter a plea of GUILTY or NOT GUILTY.

If your driving privileges are suspended you will be eligible for impoundment of any vehicle you own or drive and ultimately a warrant will be issued for your arrest.

CITATION NUMBER	SECTION/ SUBSECTION VIOLATED	DESCRIPTION OF VIOLATION	DATE OF VIOLATION	FINE/ COSTS	ALREADY PAID	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE
AA1539672	4706C1	CERTIF OF EMISS	11/14/15	\$180.50	\$0.00	\$180.50
AA1539683	4703A	VIOLATE INSPECT	11/14/15	\$180.50	\$0.00	\$180.50

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE (NO TRIAL) \$361.00

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE \$377.00

Failure to indicate a plea when forwarding payment will result in a Guilty plea being recorded.

IF YOU WISH TO PLEAD GUILTY
Sign your name on the line below:

IF YOU WISH TO PLEAD NOT GUILTY
Sign your name on the line below:

If you plead guilty points or suspension may be assessed against your license.
Indicate daytime telephone (new address if applicable):

If you need a monthly payment plan you must come to court in person. Submit Certified Check or Money Order made payable to "PHILA. TRAFFIC COURT", 800 SPRING GARDEN STREET, P.O. BOX 56301, PHILA., PA 19130-6301. To ensure proper credit, please write citation number(s) on your check or money order. Payments may be made in person between the hours of 8:30 AM and 7:30PM. Mastercard, Visa or Discover and Mac are also accepted. Mac payments can only be made in person at the above address. If paying by Mastercard, Visa or Discover please indicate by checking the appropriate box and including your Account Number, Expiration Date, Payment Amount and Signature.

If you are Hearing Impaired, please contact Philadelphia Traffic Court at TDD 215-686-1740.

NO CELLULAR PHONES OR WEAPONS PERMITTED IN COURTHOUSE

ACCOUNT NUMBER [REDACTED] AA1539672

EXPIRATION DATE [REDACTED] PAYMENT AMOUNT \$ [REDACTED]

☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA ☐ DISCOVER ☐ NOVUS

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

01/08/2016

It should be noted that the previous two items may be what the Mail Center classifies as "spoils", i.e. items that were damaged during processing. According to those interviewed, the Mail Center is supposed to immediately return "spoils" to the issuing agency for them to reissue the correspondence. In the case of these two pictured items, neither had been returned to the Traffic Division for reissue as of January 21, 2016.

Finally, pictured below is a box containing hundreds of Traffic Division notices. These notices are dated November 20, 2015 with a payment due date of December 4, 2015. This box of unprocessed mail was noted still in the Mail Center on December 3, 2015. Note the possible sanctions in the letter, if not paid by the due date, include warrant issue, warrant fees, additional fees, driver's license suspension, vehicle impoundment and an associated fee. As these letters haven't been folded, placed in envelopes, sorted and postmarked much less provided to the US Postal Service, delivery in time to pay the amount on or before the due day would be improbable.

PTCM 19-080515-JPM

FIRST DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA MUNICIPAL COURT
TRAFFIC DIVISION
800 SPRING GARDEN STREET
P.O. BOX 58301
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19130-6301
(855) 889-1676
WWW.COURTS.PHILA.GOV

MARSHA H. NEFFIELD
PRESIDENT JUDGE

GARY S. GLAZIER
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

11/20/15

**PHILADELPHIA MUNICIPAL COURT TRAFFIC DIVISION
PAYMENT ORDER REMINDER**

Account Information				
Plan Number	Statement Date	Payment Due Date	Citations Enrolled	Minimum Payment
[REDACTED]	11/20/15	12/04/15	4	\$25.00

Balance Summary

Original Balance	- Payments	= New Balance
\$816.45	\$525.00	\$291.45

Failure to remit payment by the payment due date will place you in **DEFAULT**. If this occurs, the following sanctions may go into effect:

- A **WARRANT** will be issued for your arrest and a warrant fee will be added to **EACH** citation on the plan.
- An additional fee of \$25.00 may be added to each citation on the plan.
- Your Driver's License will be suspended.
- Any vehicle you own, may be subject to **IMMEDIATE IMPOUNDMENT** by a Police Officer or The Philadelphia Parking Authority.
- If your vehicle becomes eligible for impoundment a \$75.00 fee will be added to your record.

To ensure proper credit and avoid **EXTRA FEES** being added to your record, please follow the instructions below:

- Write your plan number or driver's license number on your check.
- Payments may be made in person between the hours of 8:30 AM and 7:30 PM, Monday thru Friday.
- Pay with your credit card on the web: <http://courts.phila.gov/traffic/index.html>

Detach and mail this portion with your check or money order to Philadelphia Municipal Court Traffic Division. Please use black or blue ink.

☐ New Address? Check box & print changes on back. PA27855290

If you are Hearing Impaired, please contact Philadelphia Municipal Court Traffic Division at TTD 215-686-1740

Account Number [REDACTED]

Expiration Date [REDACTED]

Fill in amount completely. [REDACTED]

Make payments to: Philadelphia Municipal Court
800 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Authorized Signature _____

12/03/2015 00:48

VISA [REDACTED]

MasterCard [REDACTED]

PA 19123

Department of Revenue – Water Revenue Bureau

The Water Revenue Bureau is a major user of the Mail Center as they mail monthly water bills as well other notices to water customers, many of which are time sensitive.

The Controller's Office has received several complaints from water customers about their bills being late or payment notices being received with only a few days in which to pay. These complaints are consistent with the initial findings of significant delays by the Mail Center in processing of outgoing mail.

Pictured below is an undated payment agreement notice indicating a down payment of \$333.00 due by November 9, 2015. This item in a box of hundred of similar notices was still sitting in the Mail Center on November 5, 2014.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
WATER REVENUE BUREAU

Department of Revenue
P.O. Box 41496
Philadelphia, PA 19101-1496
Phone: (215) 686-6880

TOTAL AGREEMENT BALANCE	\$664.30	BALANCE DUE AFTER DOWN PAYMENT	\$331.00
NUMBER OF MONTHLY PAYMENTS	8	MONTHLY PAYMENT AMOUNT	\$56.00

ACCOUNT NUMBER [REDACTED]

PROPERTY LOCATION [REDACTED]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON BACK

DOWN PAYMENT AMOUNT [REDACTED]

AMOUNT DUE \$333.00

DUE DATE 11/09/15

THE DOWN PAYMENT MUST BE PAID BY THE DUE DATE SHOWN ABOVE.
YOUR FIRST MONTHLY PAYMENT WILL BE DUE IN APPROXIMATELY 30 DAYS.
ALL CURRENT CHARGES MUST BE PAID IN ADDITION TO THE MONTHLY AGREEMENT AMOUNT, BY THE DUE DATE ON THE BILL. YOU WILL BE SENT A BILL EACH MONTH.
BY MAKING PAYMENT OF THE DOWN PAYMENT AMOUNT ON THIS BILL, YOU AGREE TO ACCEPT THE TERMS SHOWN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE THE MONTHLY PAYMENTS UNTIL THE BALANCE IS PAID IN FULL.
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **WATER REVENUE BUREAU**
RETAIN TOP SECTION IF PAYMENT IS MAILED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CALL (215) 686-6880.

WATER AND SEWER PAYMENT AGREEMENT TERMS AND DOWNPAYMENT BILL

ACCOUNT NUMBER [REDACTED]

PROPERTY LOCATION [REDACTED]

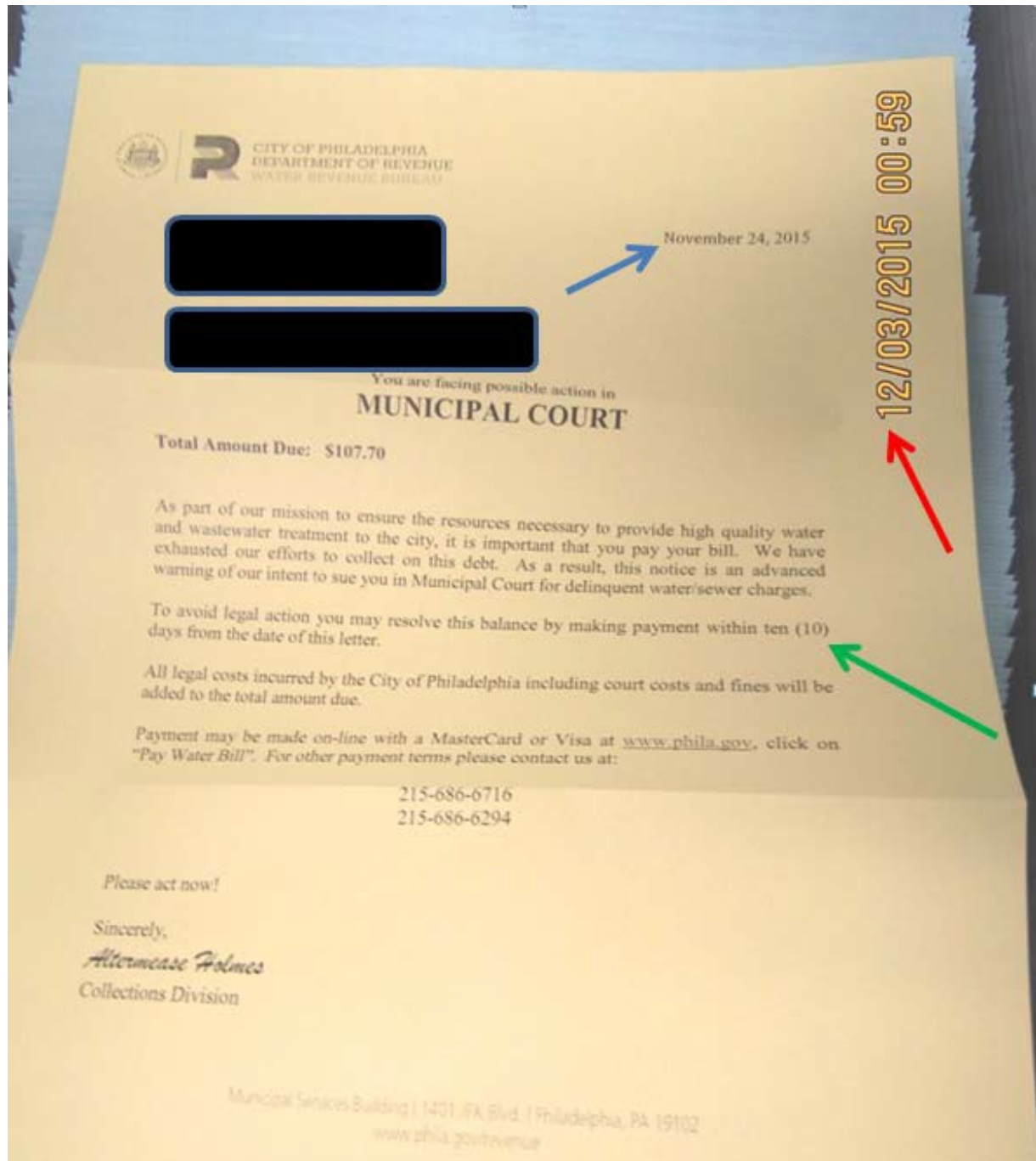
DUE DATE 11/09/15

AMOUNT DUE \$333.00

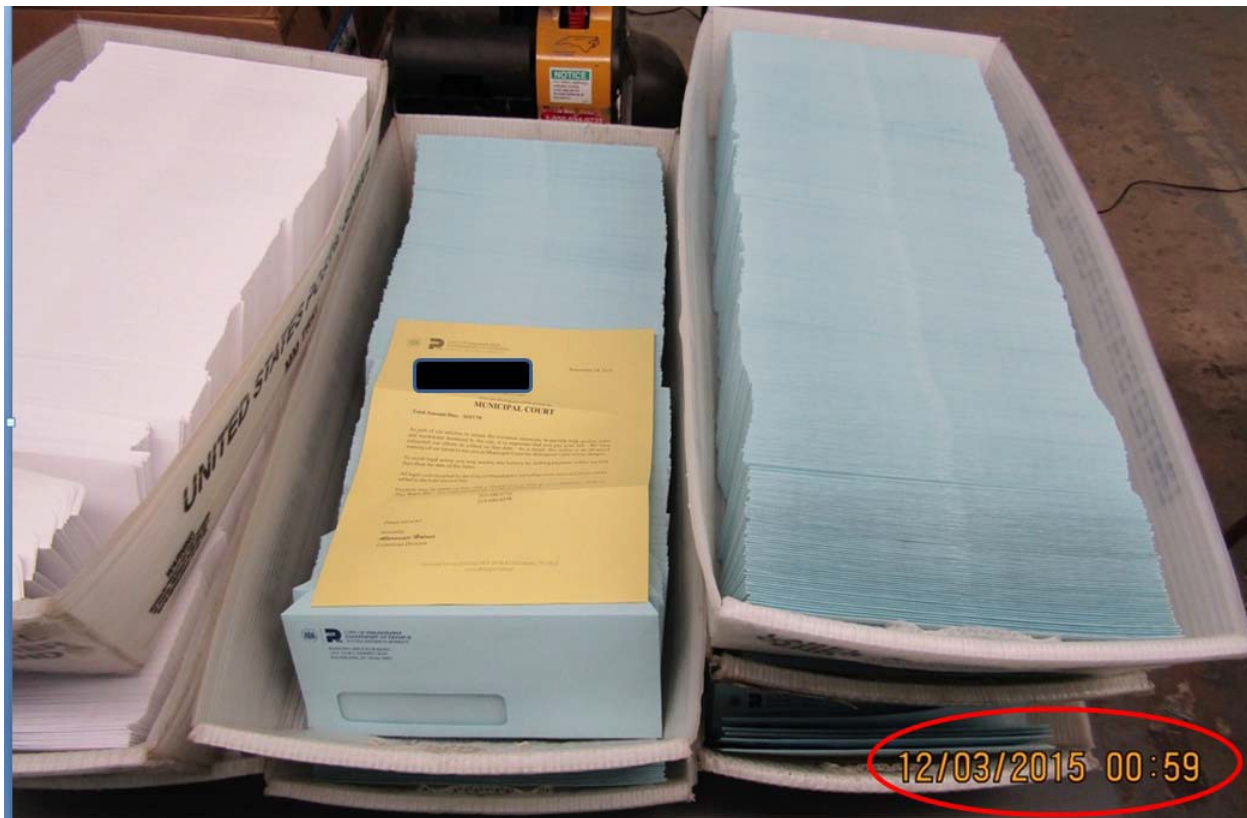
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
P.O. BOX 41496
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19101-1496

11/5/2015 01:54

The Water Revenue Bureau also sends out notices when water bills are not paid or payment agreements are not fulfilled, warning the recipient of their intent to sue in Municipal Court. Pictured below is one such notice, dated November 24, 2015, indicating the recipient has ten days from the date of the letter to resolve the balance to avoid legal action. This letter, along with hundreds of similar letters, was still in the Mail Center on December 3, 2015, one day before the due date.



Pictured below is the Municipal Court notice detailed on the previous page with a due date the following day, along with the stacks of other similar notices (blue envelopes), waiting to be mailed.



Department of Finance – Code Violation Enforcement Division

According to information developed to date, the mailing of Code Violation Enforcement Division correspondence has been a source of concern within that division for some time. They reportedly have received numerous complaints about mail not being received on time and thereby preventing recipients from responding to the request in a timely manner. As a result, they started waiving late fees and rescheduling hearings when these type complaints were received. Also, in an effort to improve and monitor the process, they reportedly started sending a representative to the Mail Center to check on the status of some of their mailing in an effort to improve the process.

According to the Office of Administrative Review, the office that monitors and oversees the code enforcement program for the city, all of their mail is time sensitive. Their correspondence gives the recipient a specific time period in which to respond, either by paying the fine or requesting review. Failure to respond within the time frame results in additional penalties accruing, missing a hearing date and being found liable in absentia, additional enforcement such as filing a Code Enforcement Complaint in Municipal Court, or additional action such as reporting to a collection agency or credit bureau. In addition, responding and resolving taxpayer claims of late mail causes additional work for the office.

Pictured below, on the left, is a cover letter on a box with hundreds of code violation notices. The cover letter notes that the attached letters are dated October 26, 2015, were sent to the mail room on October 27, 2015 with a "Must Mail by Date of September 30, 2015."

On the right is the attached letters, dated October 26, 2015. This box of unsent, unprocessed notices were still in the Mail Center on November 5, 2015.

Mail Cover Letter

Contract Type ☒ Sweep ☐ False Alarm

Letter/Notice Date 10/26/15 Must Mail by Date 10/30/15

Letter/Notice Type Let So

Date Sent to Mailroom 10/27/15 Time ☐ am ☐ pm

Date Rec'd by Mailroom 1/1 Time ☐ am ☐ pm

Number of Pieces Printed 359

of Pieces from PVB

Total # of Pieces 359

Postage Starting Amount

Postage Ending Amount

Postage Amount Used

Number of Letters/Notices Mailed Date Time

of Letters/Notices Ref'd to ACS Date Time

Reason


Date Mailed by Mailroom 1/1 Time ☐ am ☐ pm

Mailroom Operator's Signature

Quality Assurance's Signature

ACS Verifier's Signature

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CODE VIOLATIONS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
PC BOX 98218
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103-0218
(215) 676-3000



10/26/2015

NOTICE OF CODE VIOLATION

Dear

Based on the official data on a Code Violation Notice (CVN) for a violation of the Philadelphia Code for the individual or business referenced below as an enterprise registered in your name. As the owner, it is your responsibility to prevent and correct such infractions.

Failure to pay or contest this violation will result in additional penalties and further legal action, including the filing of a Code Enforcement Complaint in Municipal Court.

CVN	FINE	VIOLATION	VIOLATION	VIOLATION	VIOLATION	VIOLATION	VIOLATION	VIOLATION	VIOLATION
DATE	AMOUNT	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE
44817042	\$150.00	10/26/15	10/26/15	10/26/15	10/26/15	10/26/15	10/26/15	10/26/15	10/26/15

VIOLATION DESCRIPTION: CLITTERED CURB/CHOWING VIOLATION NUMBER: 000000 TOTAL FINE: \$150.00 AMOUNT DUE: \$150.00

OWNER STREET CODE: 13067100

VIOLATION COMMENTS: OVERFLOWING DUMPSTERS

Payment instructions are listed below:

- Pay online with a credit card at www.phila.gov and select Pay Code Violation Notices
- Pay in person at the Violations Branch, 913 Filbert Street in Philadelphia Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Saturday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
- Mail your check or money order along with the payment coupon below to the address listed on the coupon. Write the CVN number on the check or money order.

If your check is returned unpaid for insufficient or uncollected funds, (1) you authorize eCheck, LLC to make a pre-time electronic funds transfer from the amount to collect a fee of \$20; and (2) eCheck, LLC may re-present your check electronically to your depository institution for payment.

Keep this coupon for your records (not all violations may be listed above).

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
PC BOX 98218
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103-0218

Payment Coupon
Do not send cash.

AMOUNT DUE:
CVN: 44817042
Owner Street Code: 13067100
Request Hearing: ☐


If you wish to contest this violation at an informal hearing at the Office of Administrative Review, check the hearing box above and mail to the address listed on this coupon.

000014300050004070609071010015000201511/05/2015 01:54

On the following pages are additional examples of Code Enforcement mailing problems noted in the Mail Center.

The below Notice of Code Violation, dated November 20, 2015, was in a stack of hundreds of other notices in the Mail Center on December 3, 2015.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CODE VIOLATIONS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
PO BOX 56318
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130-6318
(215) 587-2605

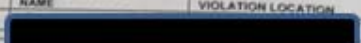
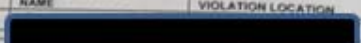


NOTICE OF CODE VIOLATION

Dear HOUSING AUTHORITY PHILA

Below is the official data on a Code Violation Notice (CVN) for a violation of the Philadelphia Code issued against a property registered in your name. As the owner, you are responsible to prevent and correct such infractions.




Failure to pay or contest this violation will result in additional penalties and further legal action, including the filing of a Code Enforcement Complaint in Municipal Court.

CVN	FINE AMOUNT	VIOLATION DATE	VIOLATION TIME	VIOLATION DAY	VIOLATOR NAME	VIOLATION LOCATION	OWNER STREET CODE
41535642	\$50.00	11/13/15	10:54AM	Friday			T1229350

VIOLATION CODE/DESCRIPTION	ISSUING OFFICER BADGE NUMBER	TOTAL PAID	AMOUNT DUE
SWLK NOT LITTR FREE	000705	\$0.00	\$50.00

OFFICER COMMENTS MAINTAIN ITS CLEANLINESS BY REMOVING ANY RECEPTACLES, TRASH, DEBRIS, RECYCLING AND LITTER. A violation of City Code has occurred at this location. Identity information was not recovered from the refuse material.

Payment instructions are listed below:

-  **Pay online** with a credit card at www.phila.gov and select Pay Code Violation Notices
-  **Pay in person** at the Violations Branch, 913 Filbert Street in Philadelphia
Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Saturday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
-  **Mail your check or money order** along with the payment coupon below to the address listed on the coupon. Write the CVN number on the check or money order.

If your check is returned unpaid for insufficient or uncollected funds, (1) you authorize eCollect, LLC to make a one-time electronic funds transfer from your account to collect a fee of \$20; and (2) eCollect, LLC may re-present your check electronically to your depository institution for payment.

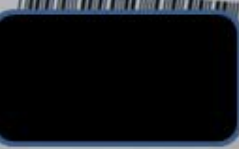
Keep this part for your records (not all violations may be listed above)

Return this coupon with your payment.

Payment Coupon
Do not send cash.

AMOUNT DUE: \$50.00
CVN: 41535642
Owner Street Code: T1229350
Request Hearing: ☐ Check box

If you wish to contest this violation at an informal hearing at the Office of Administrative Review, check the hearing box above and mail to the address listed on this coupon.



00000333001020209030500101000500011201580

11/20/2015 00:56

The below Notice of Code Violation, dated December 2, was in a pile of other violation notices that all appeared to be “spoiled”. These notices were still in the Mail Center and had not been returned to the generating department as of December 16, 2015.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CODE VIOLATIONS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
PO BOX 56318
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130-6318
(215) 567-2605

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CODE VIOLATIONS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
PO BOX 56318
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130-6318
(215) 567-2605

NOTICE OF CODE VIOLATION

Dear [REDACTED]

Below is the official data on a Code Violation Notice (CVN) for a violation of the Philadelphia Code issued against the property registered in your name. As the owner, you are responsible to prevent and correct such infractions.

Failure to pay or contest this violation will result in additional penalties and further legal action, including the filing of a Code Enforcement Complaint in Municipal Court.

CVN	FINE AMOUNT	VIOLATION DATE	VIOLATION TIME	VIOLATION DAY	VIOLATOR NAME	LOCATION	OWNER STREET CODE
33187766	\$50.00	07/25/13	06:48AM	Thursday	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	3502000022 06/01/12

VIOLATION CODE/DESCRIPTION	ISSUING OFFICER BADGE NUMBER	TOTAL PAID	AMOUNT DUE
UNAUTH COL NO FEE PD	000945	\$0.00	\$50.00

OFFICER COMMENTS PROPERTY NOT AUTHORIZED FOR COLLECTION SERVICE. A violation of City Code has occurred at this location. Identity information was not recovered from the refuse/recycling.

Payment instructions are listed below:

- Pay online** with a credit card at www.phila.gov and select Pay Code Violation Notices
- Pay in person** at the Violations Branch, 913 Filbert Street in Philadelphia
Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
- Mail your check or money order** along with the payment coupon below the address listed on the coupon. Write the CVN number on the check or money order.

If your check is returned unpaid for insufficient or uncollected funds, (1) you authorize select, LLC make a one-time electronic funds transfer from your account to collect a fee of \$30; and (2) select, LLC may represent your check electronically to your depository institution for payment.

Keep this part for your records (not all violations may be listed).

Return this coupon with your payment.

Payment Coupon
Do not send cash.



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
PO BOX 56318
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130-6318

Amount Due: \$50.00
CVN: 33187766
Street Code: 3502000022 06/01/12
Next Hearing: ☐ Check box

12/16/2015 00:20

00010940 500020000000

The below notice, dated December 1, 2015, is notifying the recipient of a disputed code violation of the hearing date (on the second page, not pictured) and the consequences for not appearing, which includes the full amount of all fines and penalties and further action in Municipal Court. This letter was noted still in the Mail Center on December 16, 2015.

  12/01/15

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CODE VIOLATION ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
P. O. BOX 56318
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130-6318
(215) 567-2605

PLEASE NOTE YOUR HEARING WILL BE HELD AT
THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
100 S BROAD STREET, 4TH FLOOR
BROAD & CHESTNUT STREETS (ENTER THROUGH CHESTNUT ST DOOR)

DEAR SIR/MADAM: TELEPHONE INQUIRIES: (215) 567-2605

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT YOUR REQUEST FOR A HEARING ON YOUR DISPUTED CODE VIOLATION NOTICE(S) IS SCHEDULED FOR THE DATE AND TIME LISTED BELOW.

PLEASE BRING WITH YOU ANY DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE THAT WILL ASSIST YOU IN PRESENTING YOUR CASE. IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR, YOU WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE FULL AMOUNT OF ALL APPLICABLE FINES AND PENALTIES AND FURTHER ACTION IN MUNICIPAL COURT.

PLEASE BE ADVISED YOU MAY CHOOSE TO HAVE YOUR REVIEW THROUGH AN ONLINE PROCESS. YOU CAN SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST FOR AN ONLINE REVIEW AT [HTTP://WWW.PHILA.GOV/FINANCE/UNITS-ADMINREVIEW.HTML](http://www.phila.gov/finance/units-adminreview.html). IF YOU SCHEDULE AN ONLINE HEARING, YOUR PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED IN-PERSON HEARING WILL BE CANCELED.

IF YOUR CHECK IS RETURNED UNPAID FOR INSUFFICIENT OR UNCOLLECTED FUNDS, (1) YOU AUTHORIZE ECOLLECT, LLC TO MAKE A ONE-TIME ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FROM YOUR ACCOUNT TO COLLECT A FEE OF \$20; AND (2) ECOLLECT, LLC MAY RE-PRESENT YOUR CHECK ELECTRONICALLY TO YOUR DEPOSITORY INSTITUTION FOR PAYMENT.

HEARING DATE: 1/14/16 HEARING TIME: 1:30 PM

CVN	ISSUE DATE	VIOLATION	AMOUNT PAID	AMOUNT DUE
18255112	9/29/15	HIGH WEEDS, BUSHES	\$.00	\$75.00
18188553	9/20/15	PREM NOT LITTER FREE	\$.00	\$50.00
18183314	9/09/15	HIGH WEEDS, BUSHES	\$.00	\$75.00
18170331	9/10/15	HIGH WEEDS, BUSHES	\$.00	\$75.00
18011066	8/12/15	HIGH WEEDS, BUSHES	\$.00	\$75.00
17995670	8/11/15	HIGH WEEDS, BUSHES	\$.00	\$75.00
17994270	7/29/12	STAGNANT POOL WATER	\$.00	\$75.00
17992391	8/13/15	HIGH WEEDS, BUSHES	\$75.00	\$40.00
17793064	8/23/15	HIGH WEEDS, BUSHES	\$.00	\$75.00


0000000000


12/16/2015 00:21

LET25

The below correspondence, dated December 5, 2015, in a box with hundreds of other notices, noted that the recipient had ten days from the date of the notice to pay a false alarm violation or be subject to an additional \$25.00 fee. These notices were still in the Mail Center on December 16, 2015, past the ten day due date.

SWPC01 12.5.01 CEC

 **CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**
CODE VIOLATION ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
P. O. BOX 56318
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130-6318
(215) 567-2605



12/05/15

A017591


DEAR SIR/MADAM:

PURSUANT TO SECTION 9-305 OF THE PHILADELPHIA CODE, EACH FALSE ALARM OVER TWO WITHIN AN ALARM USER'S REGISTRATION YEAR IS A VIOLATION, SUBJECT TO A FINE OF \$75, WHICH MUST BE PAID IN FULL WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THIS NOTICE DATE OR A PENALTY OF \$25 WILL BE INCURRED. PAYMENTS ARE ACCEPTED AT 913 FILBERT ST. MON-FRI 8AM-8PM, SAT 9AM-1PM. FAILURE TO ANSWER OR APPEAR AT A HEARING WILL RESULT IN ADDITIONAL PENALTIES AND FURTHER LEGAL ACTION AND WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ADMISSION OF LIABILITY. TO PAY BY WEB GO TO WWW.PHILA.GOV AND SELECT PAY ALARM REGISTRATION/FINES.

HEARING REQUEST BOX SEND TO: PO BOX 56318, PHILA, PA 19130-6318
REGISTRATION FEES MUST BE PAID IN FULL BEFORE A HEARING CAN BE SCHEDULED ON FALSE ALARM VIOLATIONS.

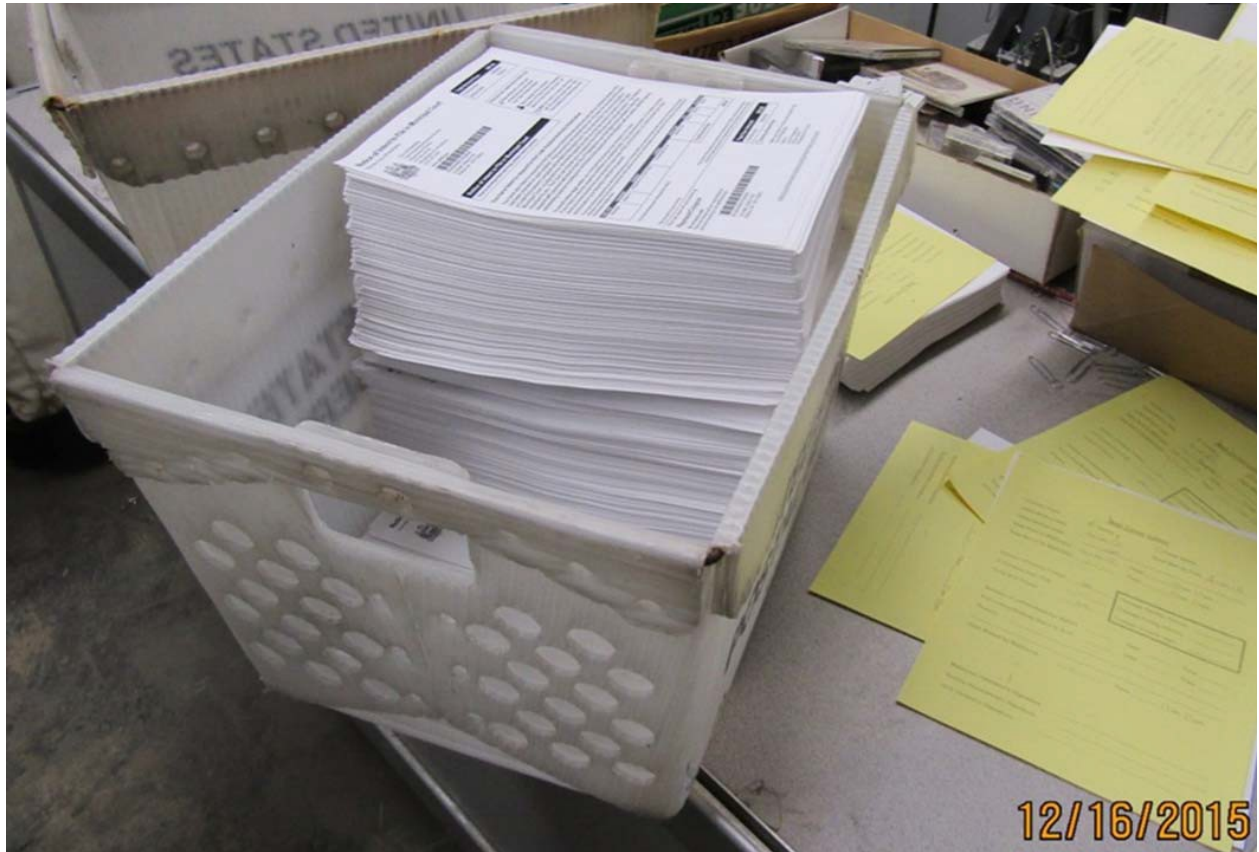
FEES LISTED BELOW INCLUDE A CURRENT ANNUAL REGISTRATION CHARGE OF \$50 AND \$20 FEE FOR RETURNED CHECKS. IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE RECENTLY PAID THE ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEES LISTED ON THIS NOTICE, YOU MAY SEND THE REMAINING BALANCE OR CONTACT US AT THE ABOVE LISTED TELEPHONE NUMBER TO CONFIRM PAYMENT RECEIPT.

IF YOUR CHECK IS RETURNED UNPAID FOR INSUFFICIENT OR UNCOLLECTED FUNDS, (1) YOU AUTHORIZE ECOLLECT, LLC TO MAKE A ONE-TIME ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FROM YOUR ACCOUNT TO COLLECT A FEE OF \$20; AND (2) ECOLLECT, LLC MAY RE-PRESENT YOUR CHECK ELECTRONICALLY TO YOUR DEPOSITORY INSTITUTION FOR PAYMENT.

CVN/DC#	ISSUE DATE	TIME	ALARM LOCATION	AMOUNT DUE
090492012	11/19/15	7:45AM		\$75.00
TOTAL DUE:				\$75.00

12/16/2015


The below stack is thousands of Notice of Intent to File in Municipal Court. These have a notice date of December 4, 2015 and indicate the recipient has 10 days from the date of the notice to pay in full or a Code Enforcement Complaint will be filled in Municipal Court. These were noted in the Mail Center on December 16, 2015, past the 10 day deadline.



On the following page is a copy of one of these notices.

Below is one of the notices, dated December 4, 2015 with a 10 day suspense noted still in the Mail Center on December 16, 2015.

Notice of Intent to File in Municipal Court
from the City of Philadelphia

 City of Philadelphia
Code Violation Enforcement Division
Department of Finance
P.O. Box 56318
Philadelphia, PA 19130-6318
(215) 567-2605
www.phila.gov

Total Amount Due: \$90.00
CVN Number: 18002655
Notice Date: 12/04/15

How you can resolve this matter now:

- ☐ Pay online with a credit card at www.phila.gov and select "Pay Code Violation Notices"
- ☐ Pay in person at the Violations Branch, 913 Filbert Street, Philadelphia. Mon-Fri, 8 am-8 pm; Sat, 9 am-1 pm
- ☒ Mail your check or money order along with the payment coupon below. Write CVN number(s) on check/money order.

Notice of Intent to File in Municipal Court
This is an important warning; please read it carefully.

You have failed to respond to the Code Violation Notice(s) listed below.

You have also failed to respond to the Delinquency Notice that was previously sent and an additional penalty of \$15 has been imposed on each violation. If full payment is not received within ten (10) days from the date of this notice, a Code Enforcement Complaint will be filed in Municipal Court. You are warned that, if you are found guilty in Municipal Court, a judgment may be entered against you and you may lose money or property or other rights important to you. The Court can impose up to a maximum fine of \$300 plus court costs per violation. Your failure to respond with payment will result in the City of Philadelphia's use of all legal means available to collect this outstanding balance including but not limited to the placement of this obligation with an outside collection agency.

To avoid further legal action, you must pay the full amount due indicated in this notice.

If your check is returned unpaid for insufficient or uncollected funds, (1) you authorize eCollect, LLC to make a one-time electronic funds transfer from your account to collect a fee of \$20, and (2) eCollect, LLC may re-present your check electronically to your depository institution for payment.

If you have already appeared for an administrative hearing for a CVN listed below, you cannot schedule another hearing as it has already occurred and a disposition rendered. If you wish to contest the CVNs, please make sure you will be available for the date and time of the hearing as hearings cannot be rescheduled multiple times.

CVN, DCF	Issue Date	Violation	Street Code	Fine	Penalty	Amount Due
18002655	08/26/15	PREM NOT LITTER FREE	5404001219	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$90.00
Total Amount Due						\$90.00

If you have already paid, disregard this notice.

If you wish to first contest this violation at a hearing at the Office of Administrative Review, check the Hearing Request Box below and mail to the address listed on this notice.

Keep this part for your records.
Return this coupon with your payment.

Payment Coupon
Do not use cash.
Returned checks will be resubmitted for payment incurring an additional fee.

Past Due Amount: \$90.00
CVN Number: 18002655


☐ Hearing Request Box

- Make your check or money order payable to the City of Philadelphia
- Mail to:
City of Philadelphia
PO Box 56318
Philadelphia, PA 19130

00031100504080400000102010900900012041502

12/16/2015 00:22

Below is a notice of a Code Enforcement Complaint dated November 23, 2015, that indicates the recipient is being sued and must pay in full seven days before their hearing date. It also indicates if they pay in full, their amount due is \$410.00 but they will be sued for \$990.00. This notice is still unprocessed, not yet mailed and in the Mail Center on December 16, 2015.


CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CODE VIOLATION ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
P.O. BOX 56318
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19130-6318
(215) 686-1587

11/23/2015

As set forth in the attached Code Enforcement Complaint (CEC), you are being sued in Municipal Court for violating the Philadelphia Code and failure to submit payment in full for the Code Violation Notice(s) referenced on the CEC.

If you wish to resolve this matter without an appearance in Court, your payment in full MUST be received one week (7 days) prior to your hearing date.

No continuances will be granted by mail or telephone. If settlement is not completed one week prior to your hearing date, YOU MUST APPEAR IN COURT.

AMOUNT TO BE PAID IN FULL PRIOR TO HEARING DATE	\$ 410.00
AMOUNT TO BE SUED FOR IN MUNICIPAL COURT	\$ 990.00

To make payment in full prior to the hearing date:

- Send check or money order made payable to "City of Philadelphia" to the address above.
- To ensure proper credit, write the CE number on check or money order.
- Return this notice with your payment.

You may pay in person at the Violations Branch, 913 Filbert Street in Philadelphia.
Payments accepted Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM and Saturday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

IF YOUR CHECK IS RETURNED UNPAID FOR INSUFFICIENT OR UNCOLLECTED FUNDS, (1) YOU AUTHORIZE ECOLLECT, LLC TO MAKE A ONE-TIME ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER FROM YOUR ACCOUNT TO COLLECT A FEE OF \$20; AND (2) ECOLLECT, LLC MAY RE-PRESENT YOUR CHECK ELECTRONICALLY TO YOUR DEPOSITORY INSTITUTION FOR PAYMENT.

L + I, while often beleaguered for their ability to accomplish work in a timely manner, also uses the Mail Center for their correspondence to the public, many of which are time sensitive and part of the notification process,

City of Philadelphia
OUTGOING MAIL PROCESSING CENTER
MAILING SERVICES REQUEST FORM

To: Gary McVane, OMPC Supervisor

CUSTOMER MUST FILL IN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

DATE: 10/28/2015 CUSTOMER NAME Eve Miller
DEPARTMENT I. & I TEL. NO. 686-2447
JOB NAME Reinspection Invoices TOTAL QUANTITY 15

PLEASE NOTE: ALL REQUEST FORMS MUST HAVE A SAMPLE OF THE MAILING ATTACHED

MAIL SERVICES REQUIRED
(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

(FOLD) PERFORATE
(INSERT) -- INDICATE NO. OF INSERTS 0
(APPLY POSTAGE) (SEAL)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: NONE

NOTE: NO RETURN ENVELOPE

DATE MATERIAL DELIVERED TO OMPC

DATE REQUIRED TO BE MAILED

SIGNATURE OF DEPARTMENT/AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE
DELIVERING MAIL

SIGNATURE OF OMPC REPRESENTATIVE
RECEIVING MAIL

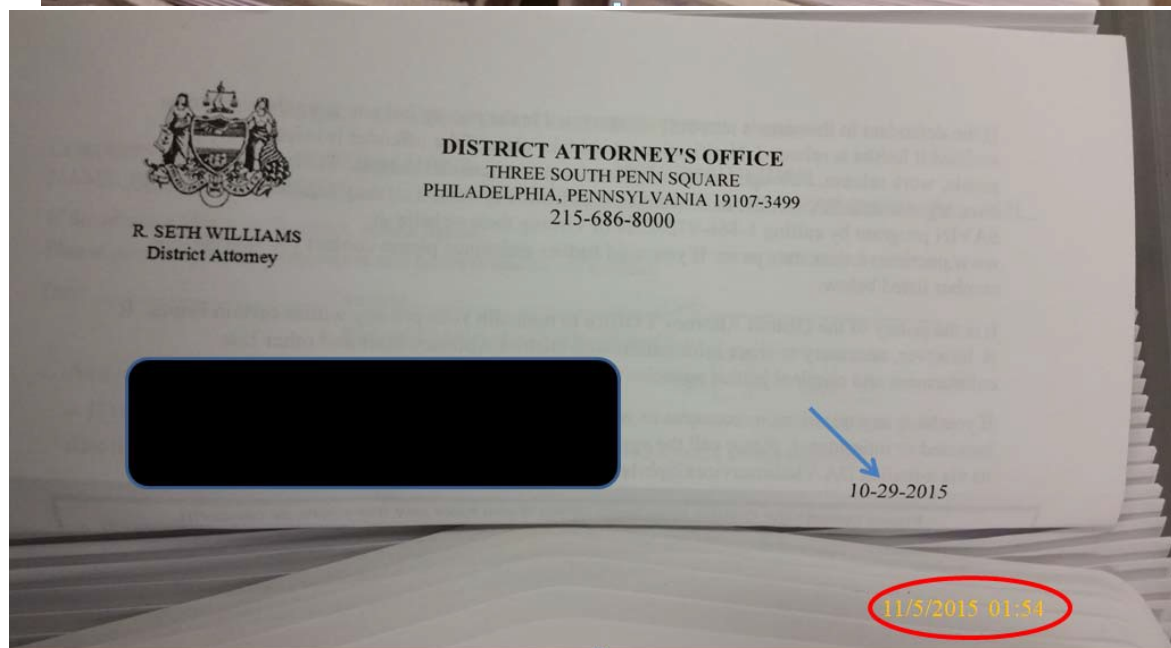
11/5/2015 01:54

17

Office of the District Attorney

The District Attorney's Office also uses the Mail Center for correspondence with the public.

Pictured below are numerous skids of mail with the District Attorney's return address. These items were noted in the Mail Center on November 5, 2016 and the enclosed letters had a date of October 29, 2015.



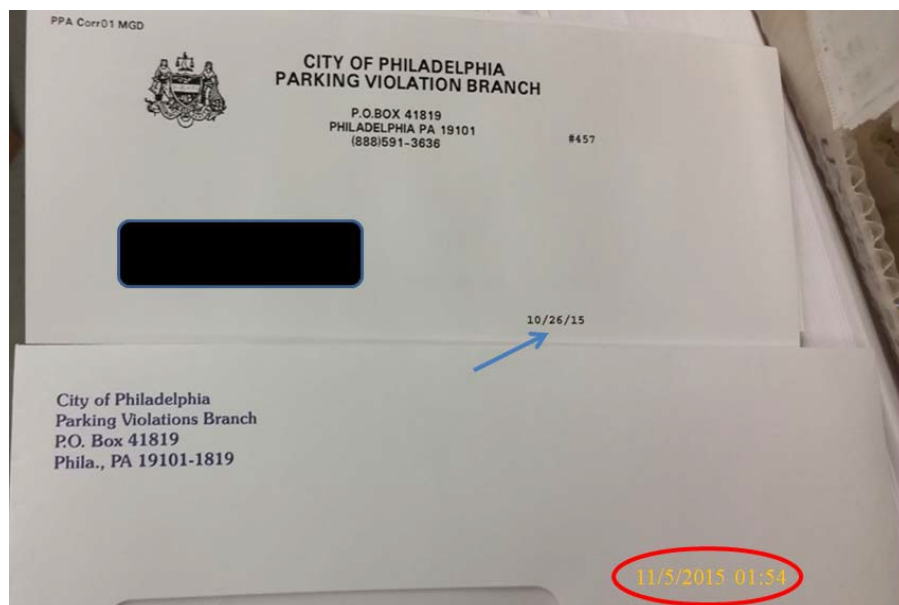
The purpose, content and time sensitive nature of these letters are not known at this time.

Philadelphia Parking Authority – Parking Violations Branch

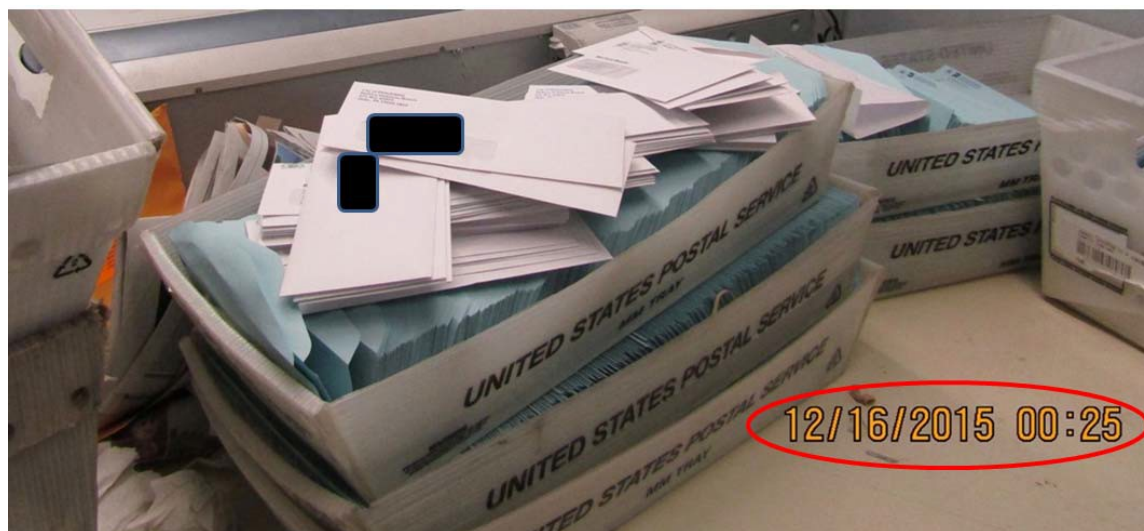
The Philadelphia Parking Authority PPA, also uses the Mail Center for some of its correspondence. According to their website, at <http://www.philapark.org/faq/>

If you do not request a hearing to contest your ticket or pay the ticket within 15 days of issuance, a notice of violation will be sent to the registered owner of the vehicle. This notice will explain that the violation must either be paid or contested within 10 calendar days of the date on the notice or a **\$30.00** penalty will be added. If the violation is not paid or contested before it enters delinquency status (approximately 30 days after issuance), a second penalty of **\$35.00** will be added.

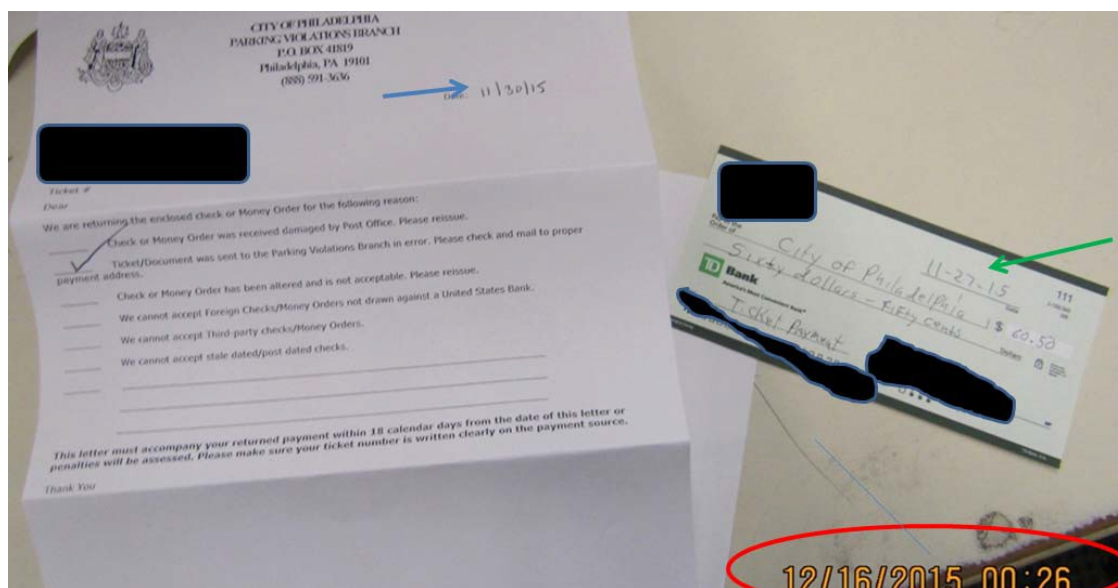
Pictured below are two notices sent to persons who had been ticketed. The first notice is dated October 26, 2015 and the second is dated October 27, 2015. Both were still in the Mail Center on November 5, 2015.



Pictured below is a stack of mail in the Mail Center, some with PPA returns addresses and hand addressed to recipients.



One of the letters was from PPA, returning a payment that was made to them in error. The enclosed check was written by the sender on November 27, 2015 and processed for return by PPA on November 30, 2015. However, the correspondence is in the Mail Center waiting to be mailed on December 16, 2015. Unfortunately, this individual may have an outstanding fine somewhere, building fees and penalties, when he believes he has paid the violation.



Mail Center Operations

In addition to the problems with timely mail processing discussed above, there are indications the Mail Center is wasting funds on postage costs by not appropriately processing mail.

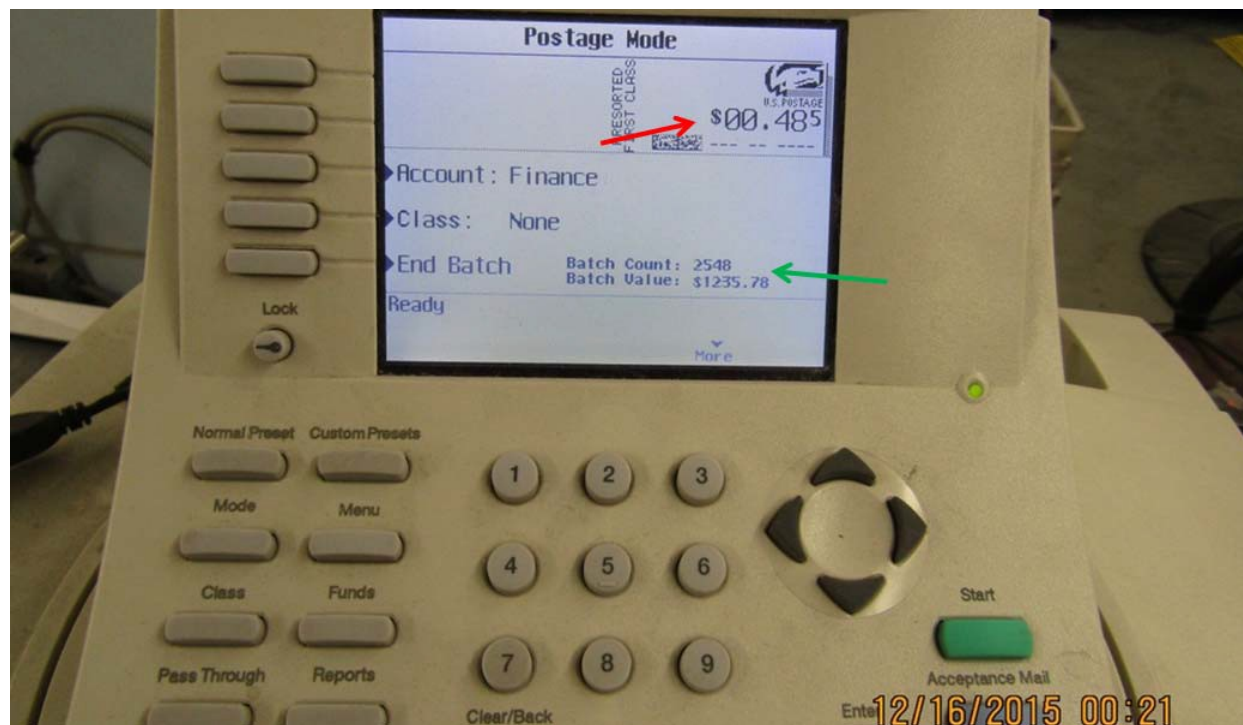
According to information currently available, mail that is pre-sorted by Zip Code incurs a postage fee of 39.1 cents and non-sorted mail is charged at 48.5 cents each. While the Mail Center has a mail sorter that, according to information available, can process approximately 4,600 pieces of mail an hour, it may not be fully utilized and thereby incurring significant increased costs for city mailings.

Pictured below are numerous skids of mail from the Department of Revenue that have been processed at the 48.5 cent rate instead of the cheaper pre-sorted 39.1 cent rate. The reason for this apparent waste of funds and the total impact is still under review.

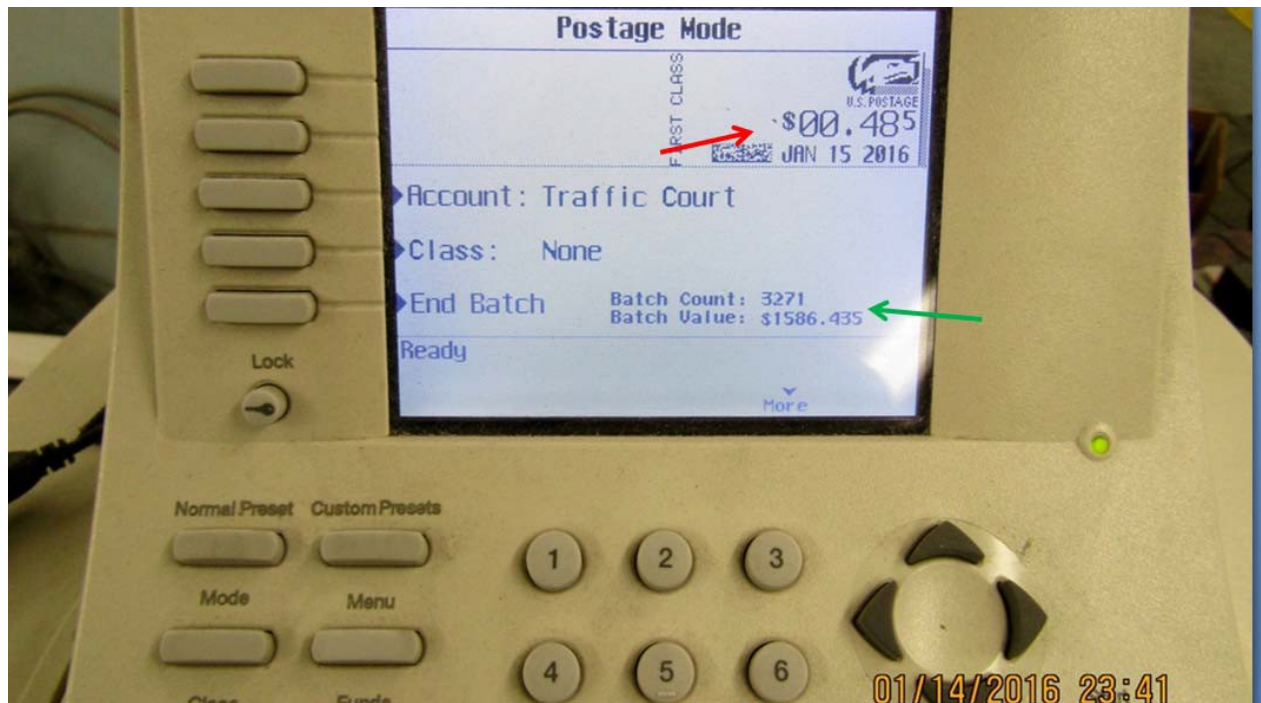
Also, note that this mail is not postmarked with a date. The reason for this is under review.



In addition, information on only three mail processing runs on three separate occasions (see pictures below and next page) indicated possible excess postage in the amount of \$1,217.58, over using the mail sorter and applying the 39.1 cent postage meter.



Also of interest, these two postage runs don't indicate a postmark date.



Also, besides those incidents noted previously in this report, there are indications that mail may not be returned to the department as required. The below picture, taken on December 3, 2015, shows numerous items of mail, with varying dates, including one postmarked June 22, 2015.





While the above mail may be “spoils”, as previously described, it was not returned to the sending department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preliminary results of our assessment, detailed above, we recommend that the Revenue Commissioner take immediate action with the following:

- (1) ensure that mail received by the mail center is processed and placed in the mail system in a timely manner,
- (2) immediate and appropriate levels of management and oversight should be undertaken to manage the mail center function,
- (3) “spoiled” or undeliverable mail is immediately provided to the appropriate department for reissue; and
- (4) cooperate fully in a joint effort with the Controller’s Office in analyzing the operations of the center with the goal of improving operations, efficiency and costs.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Additional inquiry and assessment is in process and specific findings and conclusions will be fully developed and substantiated and reported when complete or necessary.