

I'm a 17-year US postal worker who has never witnessed such bad mail delays or heard management admit 'we can't handle volume' until now
Lauren Lee (llee@businessinsider.com)



Keith Birmingham/Digital First Media/Pasadena Star-News/Getty Images

Management and postal workers are left in the dark about delayed mail and packages during the holidays, one worker told Insider. Keith Birmingham/Digital First Media/Pasadena Star-News/Getty Images

- *Chris (not his real name), 41, is a veteran postal worker in Massachusetts who talked to Insider about the extreme delays he's seeing with the mail since the holidays, which were unusually slow.*
- *The delay in packages is just one of the many obstacles the US Postal Service faced in the past year, including [financial trouble](#), troubles with [mail-in voting](#), and a [pandemic](#).*
- *"I have no reassurance for [customers] either," Chris said. "All I can say is that when we get what they are waiting for, we get it right out to them."*
- *Chris, whose identity Business Insider has verified, spoke anonymously out of concern for losing his position.*
- *This is his story, edited for clarity and length, as told to reporter Lauren Lee.*

When I returned to work after Christmas, I heard stories from all my coworkers about how there was very light volume during the Christmas season.

This has never been the case. In my years at the post office, a 40-hour work week is unheard of during the holidays. Usually the month of December is filled with 60-hour work weeks.

In previous years, I've worked through 6 a.m. starts and 7 p.m. ending work days. Our goal has always been to get as much out as we can at all times. Even when we had hampers and hampers of Amazon, UPS, and FedEx overflow packages, we got it done.

Upon my return, I started paying more attention to the packages as they slowly came in.

Many dated back to the first and second week of December. This includes priority mail.

My local management's hands are tied. My office supervisors and postmasters know very little outside of the same thing they keep being told and relaying the message that "we can't keep up with the volume."

They don't have any more information than we do. The packages get sent and just get stuck somewhere in the middle.

There really is no rhyme or reason behind the delay of mail.

We haven't limited the workforce, so there's plenty of people to deliver the mail. Previous holiday seasons we kept up with our own volume along with Amazon packages.

Now, with Amazon creating their own fleet, we have less volume than ever, but we're still being told we can't handle the remaining volume.

There's no logic behind it. I'm very concerned about the future of this company. Not once in 17 years have I seen mail delayed or heard our management admit we can't handle volume.

The scary part is customers are noticing.

Customers on my route ask why they're just getting things that they ordered before Christmas. I get messages from friends via social networks asking me what's up with the post office lately because they're expecting overdue packages.

I see more and more people acknowledging how long things sent via USPS take to ship and receive. Recipients are hearing that we can't get the mail to them on time. They're starting to take note of how late their orders for Christmas have come in. They're understandably frustrated.

Sadly, I have no answers for them. I wish I had more information for my customers and the junior carriers who are worried about their jobs. I have no reassurance for them either. All I can say is that when we get what they are waiting for, we get it right out to them.

The word of mouth damage is what worries me the most.

We have always been so reliable. If it becomes known that the USPS orders will take longer than the competition then we could lose more business. I really hope higher level management can look into it and find solutions quickly.

This idea and lack of information is unprecedented. We are completely in the dark.