

Skid Row's only post office has closed because of safety concerns

 latimes.com/california/story/2026-06-30/skid-rows-only-post-office-has-closed-because-of-safety-concerns

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June 30, 2026



Dwight Gaines, 65, in front of a USPS office in Skid Row that has been closed since January. Gaines lives across the street from the post office.

(Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

- In January, the only post office serving Skid Row abruptly closed. Postal officials said the reason was criminal activity.
- One advocate said the city has surrendered to crime.
- Homeless residents, many of whom don't have a car or are disabled, now have to travel outside of Skid Row to get stamps or mail a package.

Skid Row's only post office has closed after what officials said were repeated break-ins and damage to employee property.

Homeless residents, many of whom don't have a car or are disabled, now have to travel outside of Skid Row to get stamps or mail a package. The closure has prompted anger and frustration in a community that is used to being ignored.

"Don't desert us," said Dwight Gaines, 65, who usually sleeps in an encampment across from the now-shuttered post office on 7th Street. "People down here need services."

Estela Lopez, who represents about 500 businesses as executive director of the L.A. Downtown Industrial District Business Improvement District, said the city seems to have given up on fighting crime.

"Have we reached a point in this city where we are unable to address criminal activity, even when it threatens the right of every resident to be served by the Postal Service?" she said. "[Criminals have] already claimed the street lights, fire hydrants. They have wreaked havoc on city infrastructure, and now taken away the right to postal services. ... It's surrender. We are surrendering in Los Angeles."



Estela Lopez, executive director of the Downtown Industrial District BID, points to a damaged alternative mailbox.

(Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

The 7th Street post office near the center of Skid Row was on a list of locations being reviewed for “efficiency and financial feasibility,” Natashi Garvins, U.S. Postal Service strategic communications specialist for the Los Angeles area, said in an email. The post office, which was on the list because of “criminal and unsafe activities,” closed in January.

“Multiple break-ins incurring damage to the facility — most recently in late January 2026 — along with damage to employees’ personal property, prompted an expedited closure due to the safety risks to people and property at the location,” Garvins said.

The Skid Row post office opened in the 1990s, Garvins said, and served 364 P.O. boxes. Those with P.O. boxes have been [redirected to a post office](#) on North Vignes Street near Union Station, about two miles away. Closer is a post office at 5th and Spring streets, on the edge of Skid Row, about a mile from the old post office.

“For folks who don’t have a car, bus service is anemic and scary,” Lopez said. “If you’re disabled, things are harder, all of life is harder.”

A spokesperson for Mayor Karen Bass did not respond to a request for comment.

The Downtown Women’s Center operates a day shelter that offers some mail services, including stamps and envelopes. But funding from the city and county was recently cut in half, said the center’s chief executive, Amy Turk.

“If this happened in Beverly Hills, you would have heard about it,” she said. “It’s a community that isn’t heard the same way.”

In his 10 years living on Skid Row, Gaines visited the post office at least twice a month, mailing money to his family in New Orleans to help care for his elderly mother. He got to know some of the employees, even as the hours were reduced.

The closure felt personal to him.

“It made me feel like they didn’t care about the people that they serve,” he said.

Lauren Mills, a spokesperson for U.S. Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove said the lawmaker was unaware that the post office, which was on the edge of her district, had been closed until informed by The Times last week.

At that point, Mills said, Kamlager-Dove’s office submitted inquiries to the Postal Service asking about the reason for the closure and what is being done to alleviate the burden on customers.

“We ... will continue working to ensure downtown businesses and residents have access to convenient and reliable postal services,” Mills said in a statement.



Meghan Kessler, outside her tent on Skid Row, said she was disappointed that the post office had closed. “It’s supposed to be a service to people,” she said.
(Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

Meghan Kessler, who has lived on Skid Row since September, said the old post office was convenient.

When she mailed a notarized document overnight to her father, who lives out of state, she had to walk only a few blocks from her encampment on 7th Street.

She said she was disappointed that the post office has closed. She doesn’t have a car.

“It’s supposed to be a service to people,” she said.

On Thursday, Lopez walked from her office to the closed post office.

On the way, her security team called an ambulance for a man passed out on the street and noted vulgar graffiti for their cleanup team to cover up.

A metal gate blocked the entrance to the post office, and two encampments had sprung up. A man pulling a cart approached.

“Is the post office closed?” he asked.

Lopez’s team gave him directions to the nearest open one. He thanked them and left quickly, saying he needed to start walking.

“Every community should have a post office,” he called out as he went on his way.