



W-0409 – Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons at Foggy Bottom-GWU Station – October 8, 2024

Document Purpose:

This WMSC written report on WMATA Metrorail's safety event investigations and review of Metrorail's findings in accordance with the WMSC Program Standard, in conjunction with the attached Metrorail investigation reports that have undergone WMSC staff review and, if necessary, feedback and revision, describes the investigation activities, identifies factors causing or contributing to the safety events, and sets forth ongoing, additional, or upcoming corrective actions and further oversight work (such as inspections and audits) as necessary or appropriate. The WMSC's ongoing oversight during the investigative process, including safety event reporting and verification, participation in investigative interviews, data review, consistent communication with the Metrorail investigations team, and feedback on Metrorail's reports leads to further improvements prior to consideration of the reports by WMSC Commissioners for adoption. The WMSC's safety event investigation oversight assures the sufficiency and thoroughness of Metrorail's investigations. The WMSC Commissioners are considering these documents (the WMSC review and Metrorail's investigation reports) as a unified item for adoption at the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission meeting on December 9, 2025.

WMSC staff recommend adoption of this investigation.

Safety event summary:

On Tuesday, October 8, 2024, Foggy Bottom-GWU Station was evacuated due to the presence of smoke and fire, which was later determined to be caused by accumulated debris in a gap between the railing and a concrete wall on the mezzanine level of the station, above track 2. During the event, the manual fire pull station was not activated, as required by Metrorail procedure.

An investigative review of closed-circuit television footage showed that at 11:33 a.m., smoke began to emit from the gap between the railing and the concrete wall. The Station Manager extinguished the fire, using a fire extinguisher. At 11:36 a.m., the Station Manager notified a Communications Agent in the Control Center and requested emergency assistance.

At 11:37 a.m., the Communication Agent notified the Control Center Operations Manager and requested assistance from the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Services Department (DCFEMS). Approximately two minutes later, the Station Manager reported that the fire reignited and that smoke was coming from a gap between the mezzanine railing and the concrete wall. The Communications Agent instructed the Station Manager to evacuate customers and close the station. At 11:39 a.m., fans were activated, and at 11:45 a.m., train operators were instructed to bypass the station with train environmental ventilation systems off.

WMATA personnel from multiple departments, including the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD), were dispatched to the station. At 11:46 a.m., MTPD personnel arrived and established a command post at the station's entrance. DCFEMS personnel arrived at 11:48 a.m. At 11:53 a.m., third rail power was de-energized on track 2, and DCFEMS extinguished the fire before clearing the scene.

Third Rail power was restored, and the station was reopened, with normal train service on both tracks restored by 1:05 p.m. There were no injuries reported.



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When corrective actions result from safety events, they follow WMATA's internal corrective actions process and are called Recommended Corrective Actions (RCA). Investigation W-0409 led to an RCA, which called for evaluation of a new telescoping vacuum cleaner to clean behind parapet walls and other possible cleaning solutions. Such improvements would further enhance Metrorail practices to prevent smoke and fire incidents that result in emergency station evacuations for safety reasons.



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Department of Safety
Office of Safety Investigations

FINAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION A&I E24800

Date of Event:	October 8, 2024
Type of Event:	Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons
Incident Time:	11:33 Hours
Location:	Foggy Bottom Station – Mezzanine Level
Time and How received by Safety:	11:38 Hours – Safety Information Official (SIO)
Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) Notification Time:	13:17 Hours
Responding Safety Officers:	WMATA: Office of Safety Investigations (OSI) Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) WMSC: None Other: None
Rail Vehicle:	N/A
Injuries:	None
Damage:	Mezzanine Wall – Smoke/Burn Markings
Emergency Responders:	Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) District of Columbia Fire and EMS (DCFEMS)
Safety Universal Data System (SUDS) Incident Number:	20241008#120462MX

Incident Date: 10/08/2024 Time: 11:33 hours
Final Report – Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons Rev. 2
E24800

Drafted By: SAFE 704 – 10/22/2024
Reviewed By: SAFE 707 – 05/06/2025
Approved By: SAFE 707 – 05/06/2025

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Foggy Bottom Station – Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons

October 8, 2024
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIMS	Advanced Information Management System
ARS	Audio Recording System
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
COMR	Office of Radio Communications
DCFEMS	District of Columbia Fire and EMS
ERT	Emergency Response Team
MICC	Metro Integrated Command and Communications Center
MOR	Metrorail Operating Rulebook
MTPD	Metro Transit Police Department
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OEP	Office of Emergency Preparedness
OSI	Office of Safety Investigations
RTC	Rail Traffic Controller
RTRA	Rail Transportation
SIO	Safety Information Official
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPOTS	System Performance On-Time Summary
SUDS	Safety Universal Data System
TRST	Track and Structures
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
WMSC	Washington Metrorail Safety Commission

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Department of Safety – Office of Safety Investigations

Executive Summary

**Note that all times listed are approximate and may contain minor variations due to differences between systems of record. **

On Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 11:33, smoke began to emit from between the concrete wall partition and the station wall (parapet wall) at Foggy Bottom Station above track 2. The Station Manager noticed the smoke and responded with an extinguisher to remedy it.

The Station Manager returned to the kiosk and contacted the Metro Integrated Command and Communications Center (MICC) Communications Section and requested for the fire department to be dispatched due to the heavy smoke. The Communications Agent instructed the Station Manager to close the station.

The Communications Agent notified the Operations Manager (Rail 1) of the event and contacted the District of Columbia Fire and EMS (DCFEMS) to respond. Fans were activated, and trains were instructed to bypass the station. Metro Transit Police Department was dispatched.

The Office of Track and Structures (TRST), Rail Transportation (RTRA), Safety Investigations (OSI), and Emergency Preparedness (OEP) were notified and dispatched to Foggy Bottom Station.

Third rail power was de-energized to allow the fire department to gain access to the affected area. After the smoke was extinguished, all personnel cleared the roadway, and third rail power was restored. The station was re-opened to customers.

At 13:03 hours, Train ID 431 was the first train to service the station on track 1 and at 13:05 hours, Train ID 428 was the first train to service the station on track 2.

There were no injuries that were reported as a result of this event.

The probable cause of the Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons event on October 8, 2024, at Foggy Bottom Station was due to debris that had accumulated within a crack on the parapet wall.

Incident Site

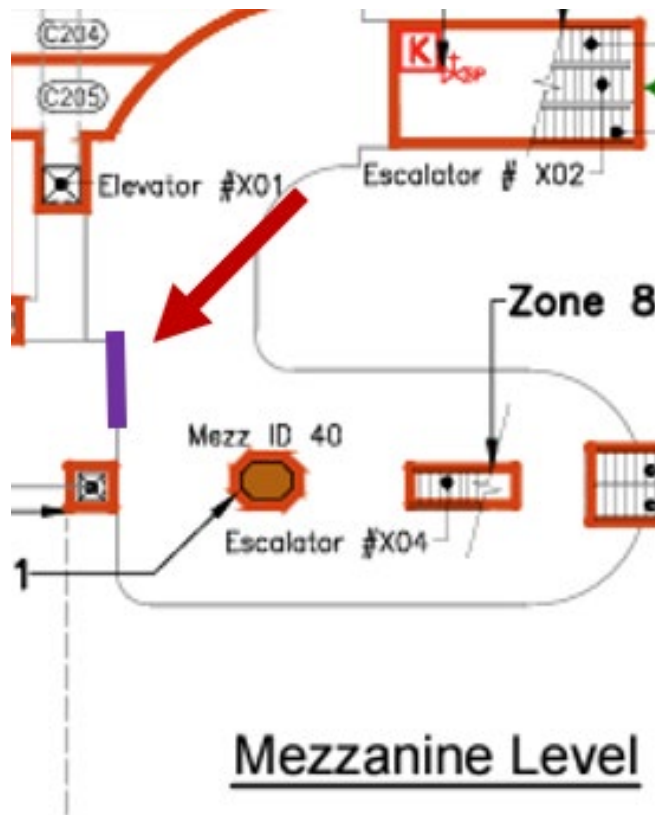
Foggy Bottom Station – Mezzanine Level Parapet Wall

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Field Sketch/Schematics



The above depiction is not to scale.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this accident investigation and candid self-evaluation is to collect and analyze available facts, determine the probable cause(s) of the incident, identify contributing factors, and make recommendations to prevent a recurrence.

Investigative Methods

The investigative methodologies included the following:

- Physical Site Assessment
- Informal Interviews – Collected through conversations with individuals during the investigation to provide background and supporting information. Written statements were reviewed from personnel present during the event.
- Documentation Review – Collection of relevant work history information and process documentation contained in WMATA systems of record. These records include:
 - Metrorail Operating Rulebook (MOR)
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
 - MTPD Event Report - Pending
 - OEP Report
 - Maximo Data

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- System Data Recording Review – Collection of information contained in Metro Data Recording Systems. This data includes:
 - Audio Recording System (ARS) playback
 - Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV)
 - System Performance On-Time Summary Report (SPOTS)

Investigation

On Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 11:33, smoke began to emit from a build-up of debris located in a crack on the parapet wall at Foggy Bottom Station mezzanine level above track 2.



Image 1 – Image of a gap in the parapet wall where debris accumulated.

The Station Manager noticed the smoke and responded with an extinguisher to remedy it.



Image 2 – Image of the Station Manager utilizing a fire extinguisher.

The Station Manager returned to the kiosk; the Audio Recording System (ARS) revealed that at 11:36 hours, the Station Manager contacted the MICC – Communications Section and requested for the fire department to be dispatched due to the smoke conditions.

At 11:37 hours, the Communications Agent notified Rail 1 of the report, and seconds later contacted the DCFEMS. At 11:38 hours, Rail 1 notified the Safety Information Official (SIO), who dispatched personnel from the OSI and OEP.

At 11:38 hours, the Station Manager contacted the MICC – Communication Section and reported smoke between the concrete wall and the railing on the track 2 side of the mezzanine near the elevator. The fire was extinguished, and it started again, with heavy smoke; the Communications Agent instructed the Station Manager to close the station.

At 11:39 hours, Rail 2 requested the fans to be activated at Foggy Bottom Station. The Radio Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) instructed a Rail Supervisor located at Farragut West Station to report to Foggy Bottom Station. At 11:41 hours, the MTPD Dispatch instructed officers to respond.

At 11:45 hours, the Radio RTC announced for trains to bypass the station and to turn off the Environmental Ventilation. A bus bridge was established between Farragut West Station and Rosslyn Station.

Closed-circuit Television (CCTV) revealed that at 11:44 hours, all customers were evacuated, and the Station Manager closed the entrance gate.

At 11:46 hours, an MTPD Officer arrived on the scene. At 11:48 hours, DCFEMS arrived on the scene and flushed the debris buildup that was between the concrete wall and the station wall. At 11:49 hours, the Rail Supervisor arrived on the scene. The MTPD Officer advised that the Command Post would be established at the entrance of the station.

The Advanced Information Management System (AIMS) revealed that at 11:53 hours, third rail power was de-energized at Foggy Bottom Station on track 2.

At 11:58 hours, the Rail Supervisor requested foul time to confirm third rail power was de-energized. At 11:59 hours, the Radio RTC granted the Rail Supervisor foul time. At 12:01 hours, the Rail Supervisor confirmed that the third rail power was de-energized and relinquished foul time.

At 12:09 hours, the Incident Commander advised that the TRST Emergency Response Team (ERT) arrived on the scene.

At 12:49 hours, DCFEMS exited Foggy Bottom Station. At 12:55 hours, DCFEMS turned over the scene to MTPD. At 12:56 hours, MTPD turned the scene over to ERT.

At 12:57 hours, ERT advised that third rail power could be restored at Foggy Bottom Station on track 2, and all personnel were clear from the roadway.

At 13:01 hours, third rail power was restored, and the station was reopened to customers.

At 13:03 hours, Train ID 431 was the first train to service the station on track 1, and at 13:05 hours, Train ID 428 was the first train to service the station on track 2.

According to the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) report, the Station Manager observed smoke coming from behind the parapet wall on the mezzanine at Foggy Bottom Station. They attempted to extinguish it with the kiosk fire extinguisher. The fire did not go all the way out and began filling the mezzanine with smoke. The Station Manager evacuated the station, and the Rail Section began bypassing the station. Allied Security Officers assisted in the evacuation of the station. DCFEMS was dispatched as well as MTPD, ERT, Power (High and Low), and OEP.

DCFEMS began its investigation into the source of the smoke and the cause of the fire. Through their investigation, it was determined that there was a significant amount of trash that was burning in the crack between the parapet wall and the mezzanine structure. Pressurized water cans were utilized to attempt to extinguish the fire completely.

Unified Command requested 3rd rail power to be energized on Track 2 so that the DCFEMS could utilize a ladder to access the rest of the burning material. The burning material was pulled out of the crack, soaked down, and then disposed of by ERT. Once the bulk of the smoldering material was removed the decision was made to soak the area with a handline to cool the remaining debris and flush as much out of the crack as possible.

Once the area was wet down, DCFEMS terminated command and the WMATA Incident Commander transferred command to ERT.

Chronological Event Timeline

A review of ARS playback, i.e., phone and radio communications, revealed the following timeline:

Time	Description
11:33:15 hours	Smoke began to emit from the wall atop track 2. [CCTV]
11:33:40 hours	The Station Manager exited the kiosk with the fire extinguisher. [CCTV]
11:36:22 hours	<u>Station Manager</u> : Requested the fire department to respond to smoke on the side of the rail on the mezzanine level. [Radio Ops 5]
11:37:30 hours	<u>Communications Agent</u> : Notification to Rail 1. [Phone Rail 1]
11:37:49 hours	<u>Communications Agent</u> : Contacted DCFEMS. [Phone ROIC]
11:38:03 hours	<u>Rail 1</u> : Notification to SIO. [Phone Rail 1]

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Time	Description
11:38:29 hours	<u>Station Manager</u> : Reported smoke between the concrete wall and the railing on the track 2 side of the mezzanine near the elevator. The fire was extinguished, and it started again, with heavy smoke. <u>Communications Agent</u> : Instructed to evacuate the station. [Phone ROIC]
11:39:30 hours	<u>Rail 2</u> : Requested fan activation. [Phone Rail 2]
11:39:39 hours	<u>Radio RTC</u> : Attempted to contact a Rail Supervisor. <u>Rail Supervisor</u> : Advised located at Farragut West Station. <u>Radio RTC</u> : Instructed to respond to Foggy Bottom Station. [Radio Ops 2]
11:41:49 hours	<u>MTPD Dispatch</u> : Requested officers to respond to Foggy Bottom Station. [Radio MTPD 1X]
11:44:27 hours	The Station Manager closed the entrance gate. [CCTV]
11:45:02 hours	<u>Radio RTC</u> : Announced that trains would bypass Foggy Bottom Station. [Radio Ops 2]
11:46:00 hours	<u>MTPD Officer</u> : Reported located at Foggy Bottom Station. [Radio MTPD 1X]
11:48:53 hours	The Fire Department arrived. [CCTV]
11:49:14 hours	The Rail Supervisor arrived. [CCTV]
11:49:14 hours	<u>MTPD Officer</u> : Advised that the Command Post would be located at the station entrance. [Radio MTPD 1X]
11:53:30 hours	Third rail power was de-energized. [AIMS]
11:58:54 hours	<u>Rail Supervisor</u> : Requested foul time to confirm power de-energized. [Radio Ops 2]
11:59:15 hours	Blue block and human form in place on track 2. [AIMS]
11:59:37 hours	<u>Radio RTC</u> : Granted foul time to the Rail Supervisor. [Radio Ops 2]
12:01:35 hours	<u>Rail Supervisor</u> : Confirmed third rail power de-energized on track 2, and relinquished foul time. [Radio Ops 2]
12:09:17 hours	<u>Incident Commander</u> : Advised that ERT was on the scene. [Radio MTPD 2X]
12:49:18 hours	The Fire Department departed [CCTV]
12:55:04 hours	<u>Incident Commander</u> : Advised that the Fire Department turned over the scene. [Radio MTPD 2X]
12:56:20 hours	<u>Incident Commander</u> : Advised that MTPD turned over the scene to ERT. [Radio MTPD 2X]
12:57:09 hours	<u>ERT</u> : Advised that third rail power could be restored at Foggy Bottom Station on track 2. [Radio Ops 2]
13:01:45 hours	Third rail power restored on track 2. [AIMS]
13:03:30 hours	<u>Train ID 431</u> : Serviced Foggy Bottom Station on track 1. [SPOTS]
13:05:35 hours	<u>Train ID 428</u> : Serviced Foggy Bottom Station on track 2. [SPOTS]

Note: Times above may vary from other systems' timelines based on clock settings.

Advanced Information Management System (AIMS)

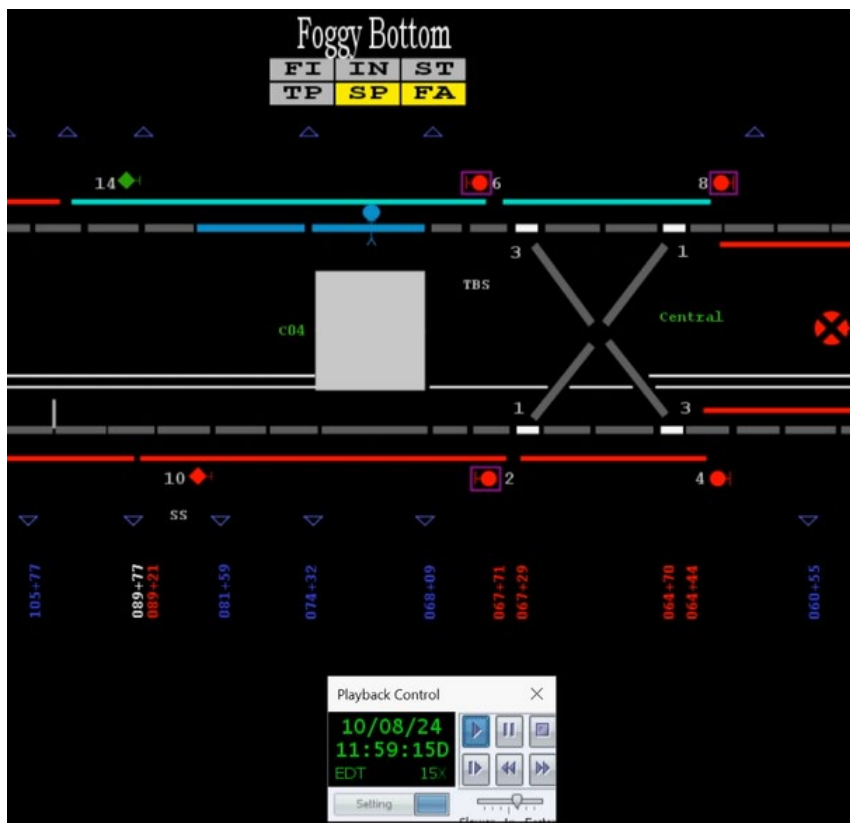


Figure 1 – AIMS depicting third rail power de-energized, blue block and human form in place at 11:59 hours.

Office of Systems Maintenance, Office of Radio Communications

No radio communication issues were observed during this event.

Interview Findings and Written Statements

As part of the investigation launched into the event, Safety interviewed one person. The interview identified the following key findings associated with this event. The findings detailed below include reported information from involved personnel and may conflict with other data sources contained in the report.

During an informal interview, the Station Manager reported observing smoke and small flames between a concrete wall partition and the station wall on the mezzanine level. The Station Manager attempted to extinguish the fire with a fire extinguisher retrieved from the station kiosk; the fire reignited three times. The Station Manager contacted the MICC via the kiosk phone to report the incident.

Weather

On October 8, 2024, at the time of the incident, NOAA recorded the temperature as 65F, with passing clouds, winds 6 mph, and 45% humidity. Foggy Bottom Station is an indoor station. Weather was not a contributing factor in this incident (Weather source: NOAA) – Location: Washington, DC.

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Related Rules and Procedures

Standard Operations Procedures (SOP)

678 - Procedure for Managing Fire and Smoke on the Metrorail System

Metrorail Operating Rules (MOR)

9.4 Reports of a Track or Rail Defect; Hazardous Conditions

9.4.1 Rail Vehicle Operators who observe smoke in their immediate area are authorized and required to shut off the train's Environmental (EV) Control System and inform the Rail Traffic Controller.

Human Factors

Fatigue

Signs and Symptoms of Fatigue

The biomathematical fatigue modeling application (SAFTE-FAST Web SFC) was not applied for this event.

Fatigue Risk

The biomathematical fatigue modeling application (SAFTE-FAST Web SFC) was not applied for this event.

Post-Incident Toxicology Testing

Post-Incident Toxicology Testing was not conducted for this event.

Findings

- Debris buildup began to smolder within a crack on the parapet wall.
- The Station Manager used the fire extinguisher from the kiosk in an attempt to extinguish the fire three times.
- The manual fire pull station was not pulled. The system was tested and working properly.
- The smoke detector did not activate the station emergency fire alarm.
- DCFEMS flushed the debris buildup that was between the concrete wall and the station wall.
- There were no injuries reported.

Immediate Mitigation to Prevent Recurrence

- The Station Manager attempted to extinguish the fire with a fire extinguisher.
- The station was closed to customers.
- Trains bypassed the station.
- The Fire Department was dispatched.

Probable Cause Statement

The probable cause of the Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons event on October 8, 2024, at Foggy Bottom Station was due to debris that had accumulated within a crack on the parapet wall.

Recommended Corrective Actions

Corrective Action Code	Description	Responsible Party	Estimated Completion Date
120462_SAFECAPS_Facilities_001	“Facilities Maintenance will evaluate a new telescoping vacuum cleaner to clean behind parapet walls and other possible cleaning solutions.”	Facilities Maintenance	12/31/2025

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Summary

The below narratives summarize the incident and represent the statements made by the involved individual. As such, times and details may present a conflict with the data contained in systems of record.

During an informal interview, the Station Manager reported observing smoke and small flames between a concrete wall partition and the station wall on the mezzanine level. The Station Manager attempted to extinguish the fire with a fire extinguisher retrieved from the station kiosk; the fire reignited three times. The Station Manager contacted the MICC via the kiosk phone to report the incident.

Appendix B – OEP Incident Response Report



SAFE OEP Incident Response Report

Overview

<u>Incident Date/Time:</u>	<u>Responder 1:</u>	<u>Additional Responders:</u>
2024-10-08		
11:38	<u>SIO 1:</u>	<u>Incident Type:</u>
		Fire behind the parapet wall
<u>Incident Location:</u>	<u>SIO 2:</u>	
Foggy Bottom	<u>SIO Log #:</u> 12852	

Incident Metrics

<u>OPS Channel:</u> Rail Ops 2	<u>On Scene Time:</u> 12:30
<u>MTPD Channels:</u>	<u>Disregard Time:</u> N/A
MTPD 2x	<u>Time of Recovery:</u> 12:56
<u>Bus/Rail Yard Channel:</u>	<u>In-Service Time:</u> 13:10
<u>Incident Start Time:</u> 11:38	<u>Command Est. Time:</u> 11:48
<u>PR Dispatch Time:</u> 11:39	<u>Transfer of Command Time:</u> 12:56
<u>Response Time:</u> 11:39	

Incident Personnel

<u>Metro IC:</u> Cruiser	<u>Maintenance Lead (ERT):</u> ERT
<u>Jurisdictional IC:</u> DCFD	<u>Investigations Lead (MTPD):</u>
<u>Fire Liaison ROCC:</u> DCFD Capt.	
<u>Transportation Group Supervisor- RAIL:</u>	<u>Investigations Lead (Safety):</u>
	<u>Transportation Lead (Bus TFS):</u>
<u>Operations Section Chief:</u>	

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[REDACTED]

Incident Overview

Was Power removed: Yes

Red Tag (if applicable): Supervisory

Incident Narrative:

The station manager observed smoke coming from behind the parapet wall on the mezzanine at Foggy Bottom Station. They attempted to extinguish it with the fire extinguisher. The fire did not go all the way out and began filling the mezzanine with smoke. The station manager made the decision to evacuate the station and the Rail Section started bypassing. DC Fire was dispatched as well as MTPD, ERT, Power (High and Low), and OEP. The Allied Security Officers assisted in the evacuation of the station. MTPD officers arrived, confirmed the evacuation was complete, and established command. Cruiser [REDACTED] assumed the command upon his arrival and entered into Unified Command with [REDACTED] from DC Fire. The OEP Primary Responders arrived on the scene and split responsibilities. [REDACTED] remained at the command post to assist in Unified Command and Davis went to the mezzanine and platform to coordinate efforts on the ground. DC Fire began its investigation into the source of the smoke and the cause of the fire. Through their investigation, it was determined that there was a significant amount of trash that was burning in the crack between the parapet wall and the mezzanine structure. Pressurized water cans were utilized to attempt to extinguish the fire completely. Unified Command requested 3rd rail power to be energized on Track 2 so that the Fire Department could utilize a ladder to access the rest of the burning material. The burning material was pulled out of the crack, soaked down, and then disposed of by ERT. Once the bulk of the smoldering material was removed the decision was made to soak the area with a handline to cool the remaining debris and flush as much out of the crack as possible. A handline was charged from the engine and the area was flushed. Once the area was wet down, the fire department terminated command and the WMATA Incident Commander [REDACTED] transferred command to ERT [REDACTED]. Power was restored and normal service was resumed. The station was originally bypassed, and a shuttle bus was established. As the incident progressed there was a brief suspension of service before permission was granted for Rail to bypass the station via Track 1. The shuttle bus service supported operations until 13:30 hours. Normal rail service resumed at 1300 hours.

Incident Successes:

Good Command structure and communication on scene.

Opportunities for Improvement:

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Delay in returning to revenue service due to MTPD insisting on transferring command to Rail or ERT rather than holding command for an additional 3-5 minutes and coordinating with OEP and ERT who were on the platform advising that tracks were revenue ready and all personnel and equipment were clear of the roadway.

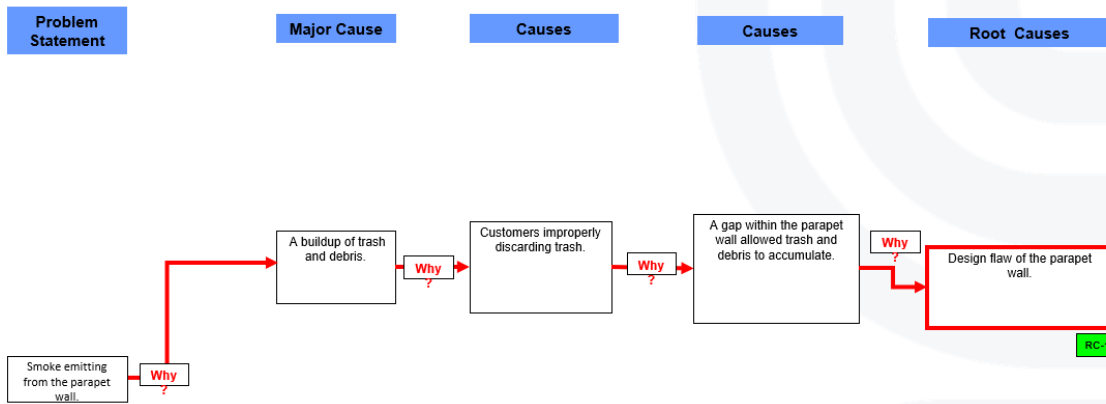
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Appendix C – Why-Tree Analysis

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Root Cause Analysis

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