



WMSC Inspection Report 20262018A

ISSUED 2/20/2026

Inspection Details

Title: Permission to Pass Red Signal Radio Communication Inspection

Location: (N98B interlocking) - OPS 4

Date of Inspection: 1/29/2026

Time of Inspection: February 12, 2026, to February 17, 2026 (five hours)

Unannounced

Risk-Based (Data Review, Investigation)

Functional Area: Roadway Worker Protection, Operations

Hazard Rating: 1B

Overview

From February 12, 2026, through February 17, 2026, a WMSC Inspector spent approximately five hours tracing the actions of Metrorail radio rail traffic controllers using digital tools such as radio playback (radio operations channel 4), Maximo,¹ and Advanced Information Management System (AIMs)² playback. This inspection targeted five instances of a rail traffic controller granting permission for trains to pass a red signal on January 29, 2026. In some instances, rail vehicle operators are granted permission to pass a red signal, for example, there may be a problem with the signal itself. Another example may include the situation where the signal is locked in the red (Stop) indicator and will not permit the controller to change the signal to a lunar (Proceed) signal.

¹ Maximo is Metrorail's database for asset management; it tracks, manages, and reports all maintenance activity.

² The Advanced Information Management System (AIMs) is the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system used by Metrorail's control center to manage all rail line traffic, traction power devices and station equipment by receiving information from the field, processing it, and displaying it on workstations and large projection screens on the floor of the control center. AIMs playback function enables the review of historical information.



This is a risk-based inspection based on a data review of red signal overruns that occurred in January 2026.³ In January 2026, there were three red signal overruns during a two-week period, which is a significantly higher rate than the average of one per month during 2025. Additionally, this inspection is based on the investigation into the January 17, 2026, O-8 Red Signal Overrun event near Ballston-MU Station (K04).

Red signal overruns are when a rail vehicle passes a red (stop) signal without other permission to pass that red signal. Red signal overruns have the potential to cause serious or deadly injury and can significantly damage rail transit infrastructure.

After concluding this inspection, the WMSC Inspector conducted a debrief with the control center's Assistant Operations Manager, in accordance with Program Standard Section 6.F.1.

Defects and Corrective Actions

WMSC Inspections identify safety issues that may be classified as defects, findings, or recommendations. Findings and recommendations are defined by Program Standard Section 5.E.2 and 5.E.3, respectively. Ordinarily, issues identified in a WMSC inspection report are classified as defects. Defects are specific safety issues of non-conformance/non-compliance that are identified and that require remedial action.

This inspection did not identify any findings or recommendations and therefore does not require a WMSC Corrective Action Plan in accordance with Program Standard Section 5.E.4.

Defect Observations and Determinations

For this inspection, the WMSC Inspector relied on Advanced Information Management System playback, the MAXIMO incident tracking, and radio recordings to check compliance with Metrorail Operating Rulebook (MOR) 3.1.2:

Rail Traffic Controller or Interlocking Operator shall give permission to pass a red signal after the switches have been clamped for the required move. Once this has been verified, the Rail Vehicle Operator will be given permission to pass the red signal at a speed no greater than five (5) mph, and 12.4.3 Personnel shall not take any action until they are positive that all radio transmissions or receptions are heard, fully understood, and acknowledged. Individual radio transmissions shall, always, be repeated by the receiver so the transmitter can confirm the message was received completely and by the intended receiver.

On January 29, 2026, at approximately 8:21am, the AIMS display showed a down track circuit on track 2 in the N98B interlocking, which is located between Dulles Airport Station (N10) and Loudon Gateway Station (N11). When there is track occupancy in the interlocking, the signal is locked and will not permit a lunar (or Proceed signal) to be established. The Ashburn Station terminal

³ The data used in analysis comes from Metrorail's "Data Mart." Specifically, the Safety Universal Data System (SUDS) data from January 1, 2025, through January 31, 2026. There were 12 red signal overruns in all of 2025. While three red signal overruns occurred in January 2026.



supervisor was dispatched to clamp switch 3 in the normal position (this locks the switch in the correct position for revenue service and prevents the switch from moving) before trains were permitted to pass the N98B-08 red signal in accordance with MOR 3.1.2. A total of five trains were given permission to pass the N98B-08 red signal under the supervision of rail traffic control.

A Metrorail Communications and Signaling crew inspected the down track circuit and put the interlocking back in service after removing ice and unclamping switch 3. As a result, at approximately 9:33am a lunar (Proceed) signal was established at N98B-08, and trains were no longer passing the red signal under supervision of rail traffic control.

The five trains that were granted permission to pass the red signal at N98B-08 on January 29, 2026.

Time	Train ID	RTC and Train Operator Rule Compliance
8:50am	630	Compliant with MOR 3.1.2
8:57am	632	Compliant with MOR 3.1.2
9:04am	636	Compliant with MOR 3.1.2
9:09am	638	Compliant with MOR 3.1.2
9:21am	640	Compliant with MOR 3.1.2

Observation 1

At approximately 8:50am Train ID 630 was given permission to pass red signal N98B-08 with speed not to exceed 5mph. The rail traffic controller and the train operator adhered to MOR section 3.1.2 radio procedures.

Observation 2

At approximately 8:57am Train ID 632 was given permission to pass red signal N98B-08 with speed not to exceed 5mph. The rail traffic controller and the train operator adhered to MOR section 3.1.2 radio procedures.

Observation 3

At approximately 9:04am Train ID 636 was given permission to pass red signal N98B-08 with speed not to exceed 5mph. The rail traffic controller and the train operator adhered to MOR section 3.1.2 radio procedures.



Observation 4

At approximately 9:09am Train ID 638 was given permission to pass red signal N98B-08 with speed not to exceed 5mph. The rail traffic controller and the train operator adhered to MOR section 3.1.2 radio procedures.

Observation 5

At approximately 9:21am Train ID 640 was given permission to pass red signal N98B-08 with speed not to exceed 5mph. The rail traffic controller and the train operator adhered to MOR section 3.1.2 radio procedures.

This inspection did not identify any defects based on information known to the WMSC Inspector at the time of the inspection.

Next Steps

Please respond **by Monday, February 23, 2026**, to acknowledge receipt.