



# WMSC Inspection Report 20260421

ISSUED 4/24/2026

## Inspection Details

Title: Dulles Rail Yard Car Wash Inspection

Location: Dulles Yard (N99)

Date of Inspection: 4/21/2026

Time of Inspection: 8:30am to 10:30am

Unannounced

Risk-Based (Corrective Action Plan TOC-OTR-15-006)

Functional Area: Life Safety, Roadway Worker Protection

Hazard Rating: 2D

## Overview

On April 21, 2026, WMSC Inspectors carried out an inspection of the Dulles Rail Yard (N99) car wash. This car wash is currently in use by Metrorail and is the only car wash that does not have a train approach warning system. Dulles Yard (N99) carwash is located on the south side of the yard and is a standalone building along the car wash track. Interlocking control was notified of our inspection and a request was made to send a train through the car wash. The car wash facility is in service and began functioning automatically once the train approached and entered the building.

This is a risk-based inspection based on findings from the [Federal Transit Administration's Safety Directive 16-2](#). Directive 16-2, TOC-OTR-15-006, stated "WMATA must install a Train Movement Indication system in all car wash facilities." This corrective action was closed by the WMSC after Metrorail confirmed funding availability, the associated task order (FQ 17044-19-031), and for the installation of the car wash warning systems at the six identified locations (West Falls Church Yard (K99), Alexandria Yard (C99), Greenbelt Yard (E99), Branch Ave Yard (F99), New Carrollton Yard (D99), and Glenmont Yard (B98)). At the time this directive was issued (December 15, 2015) and at the time the WMSC closed this CAP (January 30, 2020), the Dulles Yard was not yet in existence.

Rail vehicle car washes represent a complex set of risks and is, therefore, a unique area of the Metrorail system. The rail vehicle car wash is considered part of the Metrorail roadway.<sup>1</sup> That means

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<sup>1</sup> Any "Land on which rail transit tracks and support infrastructure have been constructed to support the movement of rail transit vehicles." (Metrorail Operating Rulebook, Glossary of Terms, Definition of Roadway.)



the same hazards that are present on the roadway exist in the car wash, but the car wash also presents additional hazards. Adherence to Metrorail’s roadway worker protection rules are essential to keeping workers safe from injury or death; however, because of the additional hazards associated with the washes, additional mitigations are required to keep personnel safe. The unique hazards of the car wash include industrial cleaning fluids that require special protection and location-specific hazards. For example, on the location-specific hazards: Car washes are directly connected to the Service and Inspection (S&I) shops located in various rail yards. This means a worker could open a door without awareness of the hazards of train movement and third rail high-voltage electricity immediately on the other side of the door.

To mitigate these unique hazards, all car wash facilities in the Metrorail system (except Dulles (N99)) have a train motion detector and alarm system that visually and audibly notifies workers in the area that a rail vehicle is moving in, out, or through the car wash and poses a serious threat to the safety of workers in proximity.

The WMSC is in the process of conducting a comprehensive set of car wash inspections at all such locations to assess the operating environment and hazards presented at each facility. The WMSC initiated these inspections as a result of an outstanding action to have a “train motion detection/safety enhancement system” installed at the Dulles Yard (N99) Car Wash (W-RY-9, WMSC Pre-revenue Service Review of Silver Line, Phase 2). The collective goal of these inspections is to assess the car wash facilities across the Metrorail system.

After concluding the inspection, the WMSC Inspectors conducted a debrief with the Interlocking Operator and the Superintendent onsite 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**

### **Defect 1**

The doors to the carwash building are missing the strobe indicators to alert entering personnel of train movement within the building. This was communicated to the senior staff at the yard during the debrief. The photos below show where the traditional audio and visual alarms are located on Metrorail car wash stations throughout the system.

### **Hazard Rating: 1B**



**Photos**



Photos 1-3: Direct access to the Dulles Yard (N99) car wash with no warning system that a train may be transiting through the wash when entering the facility via these doorways.

**Defect 2**

One of the personnel entrance/exit doors was blocked by a personal vehicle which fully restricted egress access from the car wash should there be an emergency representing a



hazard to employees. This was noted, along with all other defects and observations, to onsite staff during the debrief.

**Hazard Rating: 1B**

**Photos**

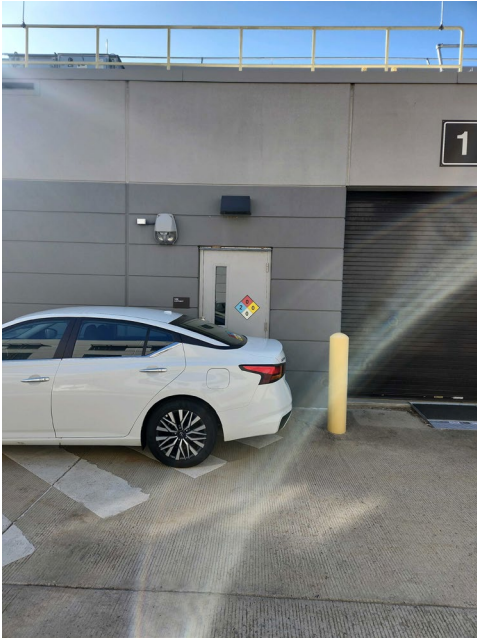


Photo 4: Personal vehicle blocking ingress or egress to and from the car wash.

**Defect 3**

The doors between the wayside and mechanical areas are missing the audio and visual alarms used to notify personnel of movement of train vehicles within the wayside part of the building. Again, the photos below show where alarms and strobes are traditionally located in the other Metrorail car wash stations.

**Hazard Rating: 1B**



## Photos



Photo 5: Doorway missing any warning system to alert workers they are entering an area of the building with potential rail vehicle movement.

### Defect 4 (mitigated)

A door between the mechanical area of the car wash and the wayside area was being propped open with a rock. The rock was removed by oversight personnel and the door was secured.

**Hazard Rating: 1B**



## Photos



Photo 6: Door propped open that should remain secured and closed because of hazards on other side.

### Defect 5

The control panel in the rail yard tower that allows the interlocking operators to remotely open and close the car wash facility rolling door is not working. It was indicated by WMATA personnel during the inspection that the condition has been ongoing, and no Maximo<sup>2</sup> work order has been opened to track or correct this defect.

**Hazard Rating: 1B**

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<sup>2</sup> Maximo is the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) database for asset management. Maximo tracks, manages, and reports all maintenance activity for WMATA.



## Photos



Photo 7: Out of service control panel in the Tower.

## Observation 1

A car wash audible strobe and alarm system is not installed on either door to the car wash posing a potential hazard to Metrorail employees.

**Hazard Rating: 1B**

## Photos



Photo 8: Entrance (facing east).

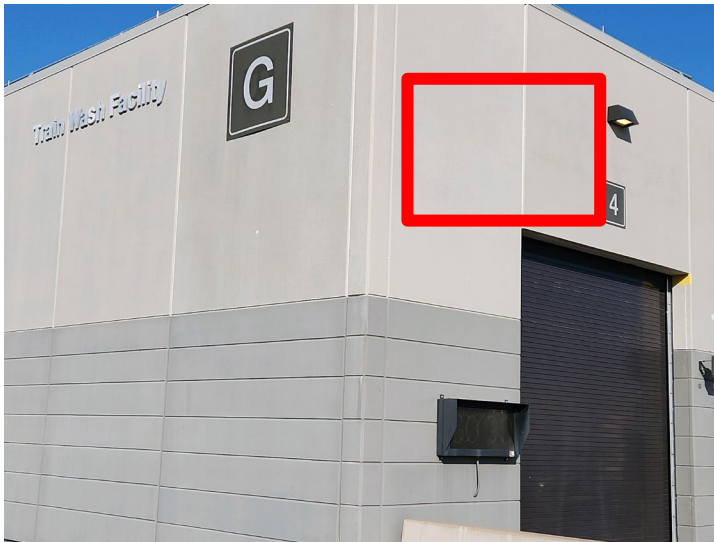


Photo 9: Alternate angle of the east-facing entrance.



Photo 10: Exit (facing west).



### Observation 2

Trains seem to be receiving conflicting signals when in approach to the car wash. The plain language sign to the left of the operator indicates a “Go” condition but the signal to the right of the operator gives a red “Stop” aspect.

### Photos



### Observation 3

The emergency eyewash and deluge shower stations were only present within the mechanical room side of the facility, but none were available on the wayside part as observed at other yard car wash sites. Meaning that there is no decontamination station in



the car wash should a worker need access to quick use of an eye wash or rinse station. The closest decontamination station to the car wash interior is located in an adjacent room.

#### **Observation 4**

Due to the proximity of the yard to Dulles International Airport, sound measurements were taken while aircraft passed overhead to be considered in relation to the audible train approach alarm (which is missing). The ambient noise at the car wash entrance without a plane passing overhead was approximately 52dB. When a plane was directly overhead of the car wash entrance in approach or on departure from the airport the peak measurement was approximately 80dB for both approach and departure movements.

### **Next Steps**

Please respond **by Monday, April 27, 2026**, to acknowledge receipt and to convey responses to the WMSC regarding what, if any, actions will be or have been taken in response.