



WMSC Inspection Report 20260504

ISSUED 5/6/2026

Inspection Details

Title: West Falls Church Yard Car Wash Inspection

Location: West Falls Church Yard (K99)

Date of Inspection: 5/4/2026

Time of Inspection: 8:30am to 11:00am

Unannounced

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

Functional Area: Life Safety, Roadway Worker Protection

Hazard Rating: 2D

Overview

On May 4, 2026, WMSC Inspectors conducted an inspection of the West Falls Church (K99) car wash. The car wash is located on track 16, attached to the Service and Inspection (S&I) building. According to the interlocking operator on duty, the car wash facility is in operation as a car wash. Upon arrival of a rail vehicle, all alarms systems, both visually and audibly, were observed functioning in a normal state.

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.¹ That means the same hazards that are present on the roadway exist in the car wash, but the car wash also

¹ 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.)



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 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

Observation 1

The car wash is located on track 16, attached to the Service and Inspection (S&I) building. The inspection team requested the interlocking operator to move a rail vehicle through the wash facility to observe the car wash while in use. The car wash alarm functioned properly. Lights were observed above all doors, both interior and exterior of the wash facility. Upon arrival of the rail vehicle, all alarms systems, both visually and audibly, were observed functioning in a normal state. The interlocking operator confirmed that the carwash facility is currently in service.



Observation 2

Five fire extinguishers were observed within the facility. One extinguisher was observed with a May 2026 inspection, and the four other extinguishers were observed with an April 2026 inspection and need to be inspected for May 2026. These extinguishers are all within proximity to one another.

Photos



Photos 1 (left) and 2 (right): extinguisher that needs to be inspected for May 2026 and an example of one of the four extinguishers that already completed the May 2026 inspection.

Defect 1

The pedestrian exterior door located on the east entrance of Track 16CW, was not secured. The latch to secure the door closed is not functioning, meaning the door does not stay shut when in an unlocked position.

Hazard Rating: 2D



Photos



Photos 3 (left) and 4 (right): location of exterior door and the latching mechanism that is not functioning.

Defect 2 (partially mitigated)

Five “Restricted Area” signs were observed not connected to the handrails and thus not in position to warn employees to contact the Interlocking Operator before entering the car wash area. WMSC Inspectors observed one employee walk past the sign and enter the area without contacting the control point as indicated by the warning signs. Four of the five warning signs were refastened to the handrails, putting the signs back into position. The warning sign on the west end of the carwash was not fixed onsite due to the short length of the chain to attach the sign and still needs to be fixed.

Hazard Rating: 2D



Photos



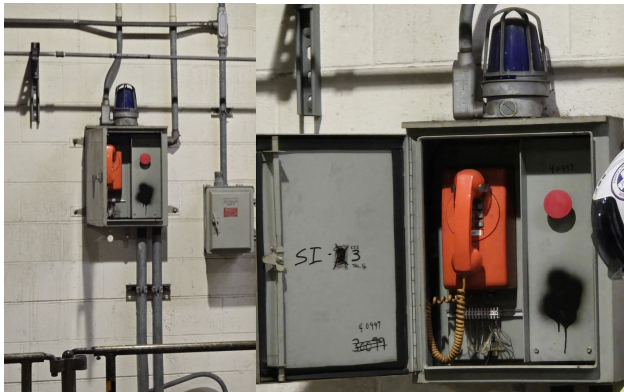
Photos 5 (left) and 6 (right): example of two signs that were able to be reattached and the area where the one sign's chain is not long enough for a reattachment of the warning sign.

Defect 3

The emergency trip station (ETS)² box SI-3 (Telephone Number 40997) located on the north side safety walk inside the car wash facility is not illuminated. Additionally, the functionality of the telephone was checked, and no dial tone or automatic connection was observed.

Hazard Rating: 2D

Photos



Photos 7 (left) and 8 (right): the location of the defective ETS box in the car wash.

² Sometimes referred to as "blue boxes" or "blue light stations," Metrorail's version of a blue light station are termed emergency trip station (ETS) boxes which are defined by as "A device for emergency third-rail de-energization, marked by a blue light, located approximately every 800 feet along the right-of-way." (Metrorail Operating Rule Book (MOR), Glossary of Terms, section 17-6.)



Defect 4

A tripping hazard was noted outside the east entrance of the carwash facility. The covers to the wire chase adjacent to the non-controlled tracks are deteriorated, damaged, or broken and pose an employee hazard, especially at night.

Hazard Rating: 2D

Photos



Photos 9 (left), 10 (center), and 11 (right): Photos of the damaged, broken, or deteriorated covers.

Next Steps

Please respond **by Monday, May 11, 2026**, to acknowledge receipt and to convey responses to the WMSC regarding what, if any, actions will be or have been taken in response.