



WMSC Inspection Report 20260723A

ISSUED 7/27/2026

Inspection Details

Title: Track Inspection, Crystal City to National Airport Track #1

Location: Crystal City (C09) to National Airport (C10) Track #1

Date of Inspection: 7/23/2026

Time of Inspection: 12:00am to 5:00am

Announced (via email Director, Track and Structures)

Risk-Based (Investigation, Inspection, Data Review)

Functional Area: Track, Roadway Worker Protection

Hazard Rating: 1C

Overview

On July 23, 2026, the WMSC conducted a track walk inspection from Crystal City (C09) to National Airport (C10) on track 1. The goal of the inspection was to assess the overall track conditions, identify whether any gauge rods¹ are present, and to observe roadway worker protection rules compliance.

This is a risk-based inspection based on the July 4, 2026, derailment (Safety Event Code A-5)² that occurred near College Park-U of Md Station (E09). Based on preliminary investigation information, gauge rods were in use at the site of the derailment. WMATA permits the use of gauge rods to be installed for a period of 14 days or less. According to WMATA procedure, for a gauge rod to remain in place longer than 14 days,³ it must be approved by a track director. Metrorail identified all gauge rods throughout the system and is in the process of mitigating the track defects that required the gauge rods in the first place and thus removing all gauge rods throughout Metrorail. Additionally, any gauge rods in service beyond the 14-day period have been reviewed by the Track and Structures

¹ Gauge rods are designed to hold the track in gauge by preventing the spreading and tilting of rails. They are meant for temporary repair only.

² In accordance with WMSC Program Standard (Rev. 8) Metrorail must "...report all safety events outlined in the Safety Event Notification Matrix in the timeframe and manner specified for each safety event type." Safety event code A-5 (FTA) is triggered when one or more wheels of a rail transit vehicle unintentionally leaves the rails. Source: WMSC Program Standard (Rev. 8).

³ Source: Track and Structures Maintenance Bulletin #20160929-05, Gauge Rod Installation.



(TRST) Director, and an approval memorandum for temporary gauge rods remaining in service was issued on July 13, 2026. The July 13, 2026, Track and Structures memorandum states that depending on the inspection results, the current field conditions, and the planned repair dates, the following controls have been put in place:

- The required weekly inspections continue to be completed and documented.
- Supplemental special inspections will be conducted to ensure twice-weekly inspections of gauge rods take place.
- Any change in track conditions is immediately reported, and remedial action is taken in accordance with TRST-1000 standards.
- The gauge rods remain in place until the underlying track defects are corrected and supplemental gauge restraint is no longer required.
- The gauge rods must be removed after permanent repairs are completed and the track has been restored to the required TRST-1000 standards.
- The associated work order must be closed out when repairs are complete.

On July 13, 2026, Metrorail stated there were two gauge rods in the Crystal City (C09) to National Airport (C10), segment of track 1.

This inspection focused on identifying any track wear or maintenance concerns that could affect the safe operation of train movements throughout the area. Track conditions were assessed against Metrorail's track maintenance standards. During the inspection, one gauge rod was identified. After completing the inspection, the WMSC reviewed Maximo⁴ work order (20565789), which confirmed that one gauge rod was removed and one remained.

After concluding the inspection, WMSC Inspectors conducted a debrief with the Track Inspector Supervisor 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.

⁴ Maximo is the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) database for asset management. Maximo tracks, manages, and reports all maintenance activity for WMATA.



Observations and Defect Determinations

Metrorail's Track and Structures Department relies on the TRST-1000, Track Inspection and Safety Standards, that rates various track defects by severity using a color-coded system (section 102.2):

102.2. Level of Serviceability (Condition Rating)

(A) **Green** (Minimal wear): This condition of serviceability exists when the track structure is

maintained well within the limits of track tolerances. This will be denoted on subsequent charts and reports as "G" for "satisfactory" and indicated, if necessary, by the color Green.

(B) **Yellow** (Damage and/or Wear): This condition of serviceability exists when damage or wear exists such that one or more of the components of a section of track have broken down or worn to the point of rapidly approaching tolerance or is at tolerance but does not exceed tolerance. This will be denoted on subsequent charts and reports as "Y" for "needs attention" and indicated, if necessary, by the color Yellow.

(C) **Red** (Severe Damage/Wear, Exceeds Tolerances): This condition of serviceability exists when a given component is severely worn or a given condition has exceeded tolerances to an extent that serviceability is possible with failure expected in the near future. Restricted Speeds may need to be implemented based on the nature of the defect or at the discretion of the qualified person inspecting the track. This will be denoted on subsequent charts and reports as "R" for "immediate remedial action" and indicated, if necessary, by the color Red.

(D) **Black** (Failing/Failed): This condition exists when something in the track structure could lead to instantaneous service interruptions, derailment, loss of life, injury, or property damage. When such a condition is discovered, the qualified person inspecting must make every effort to correct the condition immediately and must decide whether to allow operations to continue under supervision or to remove the track from service. If operations are allowed to continue, the qualified person must remain at the location of the defect until relieved or until the condition is corrected. This will be denoted on subsequent charts and reports as "B" for "immediate remedial action" and indicated, if necessary, by the color Black.

Defect 1

WMSC Inspectors identified a gauge rod located at chain marker C1 347+50. This area was previously identified by TRST and reported to the WMSC. It has been observed that seven crossties are showing signs of lateral movement, along with loose screw spikes and gauge variation all within a 40 ft section. As per the TRST-1000, Volume 1, 107.3A, the area is



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considered a yellow condition (See table). After conducting verification with MaxTrax and Optram,⁵ it was noted that there is a loose gauge rod in the area (which has not been updated in the database but was confirmed by WMSC to be secured) and no other defects were found in that vicinity.

Table 107.3A: Defective Tie Guidelines: Minimum Non-Defective in 40 ft.

Tangent to 2500 ft. Radius	2500 ft. to 800 ft. Radius	<800 ft. Radius	Max Distance between Non-Defective Ties	Level	Operating Speed
12	13	14	Up to 60 inches	Green	Normal
10	11	12	More than 60 up to 90 inches	Yellow	Medium
7	8	9	More than 90 up to 120 inches	Red	Slow
Less than 7	Less than 8	Less than 9	More than 120 inches	Black	OOS

Notes:

- This table refers to Minimum Non-Defective Ties in 40 ft. of Rail (Total are 17)
- All non-defective ties must be well distributed throughout the 40 ft. of rail.

Hazard Rating: 2C

Photos



Photo 1 (left): Location of gauge rod at C1 347+50. Photo 2 (middle): Visible lateral movement on the tie plate. Photo 3 (right): Tie plate embedded in the tie, causing tie plate cutting.

⁵ MaxTrax and Optram are specialized enterprise software solutions used in the rail and public transit industries to manage infrastructure assets, maintain linear track conditions, and handle regulatory compliance. Source: MaxTrax.



Defect 2

WMSC Inspectors observed chipping on the left-hand curved switch point on the #6 switch at National Airport (C10). As per the TRST-1000, Table 108.3B, this is considered a yellow condition.

Table 108.3B: Chipped Switch Point Depth Standards

Depth of Chip	Level	Operating Speed
Less than 3/16 inch	Green	Normal
3/16 up to 3/8 inch	Yellow	Medium
More than 3/8 up to 3/4 inch	Red	Slow
More than 3/4 inch	Black	OOS

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos



Photo 4: Shows chipping on the switch point on switch 6 at National Airport (C10).

Defect 3

WMSC Inspectors observed a potential tripping hazard on the platform at Crystal City (C09) track 1, inbound side. The manhole cover was not leveled and, if someone stepped on part of the cover, the other side would rise above the level of the tile.

Hazard Rating: 4D



Photos

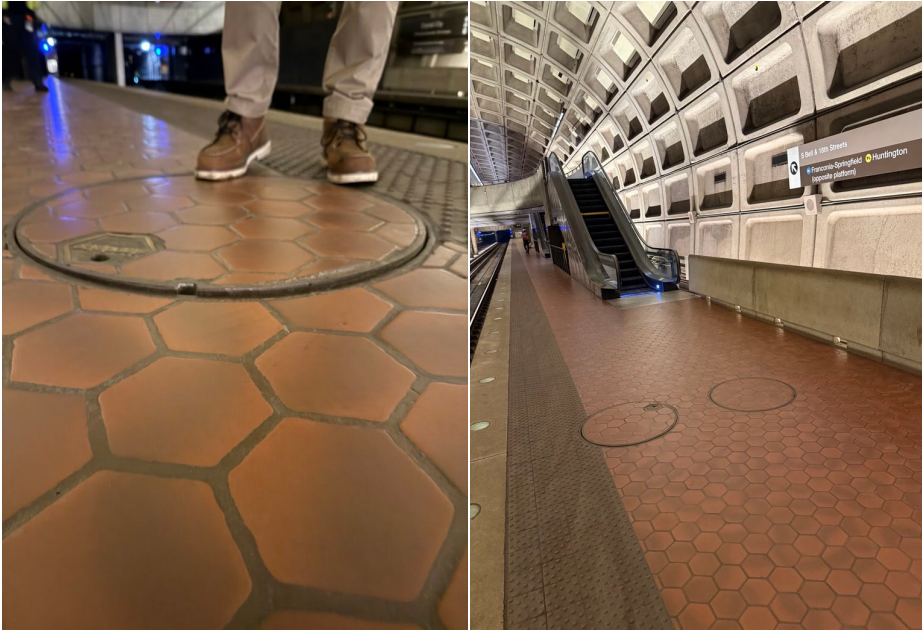


Photo 5 (left): Shows the side of the manhole cover raised once there is weight placed on the other side. Photo 6 (right): Shows the location of the manhole cover (inbound track).

Observation 1

WMSC Inspectors observed multiple loose/broken studs, split fasteners, and cracked grout pads from C1 351+00 to 359+00. None of these issues were consecutively occurring conditions that warranted a color-coded condition rating. Raising for awareness to consider performing an assessment of the area for stud, fastener, and grout maintenance.

Observation 2

WMSC Inspectors observed a broken chain marker sign lying between tracks at C1 350+00.



Photos



Photo 7: Broken chain marker sign.

Next Steps

Please respond **by Thursday, July 30, 2026**, to acknowledge receipt and to convey responses to the WMSC regarding what, if any, actions will be or have been taken in response.

Regarding Defect 1, WMSC asks for clarification: If a gauge rod is present, why is there no documentation of the surrounding conditions that would necessitate the gauge rod in the defect database?