



August 7, 2026

Mr. Randy Clarke
General Manager and CEO
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Acceptance and Close out of 2021 7000-Series Railcar Orders

Dear Mr. Clarke,

On June 24, 2026, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) requested close out of the [December 29, 2021 Order](#) of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC). Both organizations have been in dialogue since this request was made and the WMSC has made additional verification that the return to service plan is in fact fully implemented.

The WMSC recognizes this organization-wide effort by WMATA to meet the requirements of the WMSC Order and subsequent return to service plan that brought all 7000-Series railcars back into safe passenger service for the region.

Then-Necessary Removal of 7000-Series from Service

On October 12, 2021 ([Investigation Report W-0256](#)), a 7000-series train on the Blue Line derailed between Rosslyn and Arlington Cemetery stations. In the days after the derailment, it was determined that the fourth axle of railcar 7200 (derailed car) was found to be out of compliance with the 7000-series specifications for wheel and axle assembly. Similar defects were identified on other 7000-series railcars not involved in the October 12 derailment. (The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) ultimately found that “the derailment occurred because the wheels of one wheelset had migrated outward on their axle....” Railroad Investigation Report RIR-23-15)

As a result of this earlier investigation information, the WMSC issued an [Order on October 17, 2021](#) directing WMATA to remove all 7000-series railcars from passenger service until “develop[ment] a plan, under the oversight of the WMSC to assess the cause, and to provide for the detection and prevention of wheel gauge anomalies in 7000 Series railcars; and Implement[ation of] a plan that provides for the safe return to revenue service of each 7000 Series railcar.”

On December 29, 2021, the WMSC observed certain 7000-Series railcars had returned to service that did not meet the inspection criteria specified in the return to service plan approved by the WMSC at the time. This led to the WMSC issuing another [Order on December 29, 2021](#) to keep all 7000-series railcars out of service until creation and implementation of a revised return to service plan.



WMATA-WMSC Collaboration Post-Derailment

Since the December 2021 order, WMATA and WMSC have worked together to return the 7000-series to safe, passenger use.

As part of mitigations provided in the return-to-service plan:

- WMATA established a Track-Vehicle working group to maintain ongoing awareness of track, and rail car safety trends.
- WMATA track engineering and rail car engineering teams started to regularly review vehicle track interaction data that were being collected by 7000-series railcars instrumented to do so, which had not been undertaken until as part of the return to service plan.
- WMATA started using this analysis to schedule and perform repair work of various track locations that denoted track geometry deficiencies.
- WMATA also instituted a formalized training program for railcar mechanics with responsibilities for performing back-to-back wheel measurements on 7000 series rail cars.
- WMATA revised procedures for data recording of these measurements as well as quality control of these measurements, along with utilizing a calibrated digital gauge for this measurement to assure accuracy of readings.
- WMATA instituted revised procedures for rail car maintenance to identify and isolate any axles that were found to be outside the required measurement tolerances thereby preventing such axles/rail cars being used for passenger service prior to repair.
- WMATA initiated and completed a campaign to rebuild all of the 7000-series rail car axles using a higher interference fit and with a higher pressing tonnage based on engineering studies and the findings of the NTSB investigation into the causes of wheel migration on 7000 series rail car axles. WMATA has confirmed that these new wheel assemblies on each of the 748 have undergone WMATA's safety certification program.

Acceptance and Close Out of October and December 2021 Orders

This letter constitutes the WMSC's acceptance and close out of both the October 17, 2021 and December 29, 2021 Orders. The above-listed mitigations implemented pursuant to both orders must remain part of WMATA's 7000-series railcar maintenance going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharmila Samarasinghe".

Sharmila Samarasinghe
Acting Chief Executive Officer