



WMSC Inspection Report 20260820

ISSUED 8/24/2026

Inspection Details

Title: Overnight Roadway Worker Protection (RWP)

Location: West Falls Church (K06) to Dunn Loring (K07), Tracks 1 and 2

Date of Inspection: 8/20/2026

Time of Inspection: 11:00pm on 8/19/2026 to 4:00am on 8/20/2026

Unannounced

Risk-Based (Investigation)

Functional Area: Roadway Worker Protection, Vehicles, Track

Hazard Rating: 3C

Overview

On October 31, 2024, the Federal Transit Administration issued the Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) rule ([49 CFR Part 671](#)). The rule establishes the first ever federal “minimum safety standards for rail transit Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) to ensure the safe operation of public transportation systems and to prevent safety events, fatalities, and injuries to transit workers who may access the roadway in the performance of work.” (49 CFR section 671.3.) On December 2, 2024, the rule took effect, and rail transit agencies were required to achieve a state safety oversight agency-approved roadway worker protection program by December 2, 2025. Metrorail received WMSC approval of its new program that complies with FTA’s Part 671 on December 1, 2025.

On April 1, 2026, Metrorail’s Part 671 compliant Roadway Worker Protection Program officially replaced the legacy program.

Since the inception of the WMSC’s current Inspection Program in November 2024, roadway worker protection defects have comprised one-third¹ of all defects identified by WMSC Inspectors. Adherence to roadway worker protection rules is critical to the safety of roadway workers and is therefore a continued focus area of the WMSC’s oversight activities.

¹ Source: WMSC Inspections Dashboard, August 2026.



Metrorail certifies roadway workers as proficient in rules and procedures by affixing a special sticker to Metrorail employees' OneBadge² so that other personnel may identify that the worker has received the required RWP training and is therefore knowledgeable on the RWP rules.

The goal of this August 20, 2026, Inspection was to observe rules compliance under the new Roadway Worker Protection Program, specifically observing overnight work crews to ensure the workers and equipment are compliant with the new Roadway Worker Protection Manual.

After concluding the inspection, WMSC Inspectors conducted a debrief with the WMATA Roadway Worker in Charge (RWIC) 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.

Observations and Defect Determinations

Defect 1

WMSC Inspector detected a sinkhole in the ballast near switch 19 at the outbound end of the pocket track. The hole was 4 feet deep, and there were no barriers or coverings to prevent someone from falling in. Although a cone was placed on the manhole cover, the inadequate lighting in the area made it challenging to notice.

Hazard Rating: 3B

² WMATA's OneBadge is the official identification method at WMATA and is the only identification card used and recognized by employees and contractors.



Photos



Photo 1: Sinkhole near switch 19 on the outbound end of the pocket track.

Defect 2

WMSC Inspector observed a broken wooden step leading to the catwalk of the platform at the West Falls Church (K06) station on track 2.

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos



Photo 2: Shows the defective step and the broken board.



Defect 3

WMSC Inspector observed that one of the E-flare lights used for track protection was not lit on the track leading into the yard.

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos



Photo 3: One of the E-flare lights was not illuminated.

Defect 4 (mitigated)

WMSC Inspector observed that a Metrorail employee had an expired RWP sticker. Metrorail implemented an extension of five months for employees under Temporary Order (TO-26-04) to qualify for their new Roadway Worker Protection training. This employee's extension ended in July 2026 and was not allowed to access the work area.



Photos



Photo 4: Shows an employee with an original expiration date of February 2026. However, according to TO-26-04, the extension expired in July 2026. The employee was not allowed to access the work area.

Defect 5 (mitigated)

WMSC Inspector observed that no Warning Strobe and Alarm Device (WSAD) on the third rail next to the traction power room where workers were testing equipment. Inspector reminded the crew that they did have four WSADs throughout the interlocking; therefore, they moved one WSAD from a location where workers were no longer working to put the WSAD down at this location, mitigating the risk.



Photos

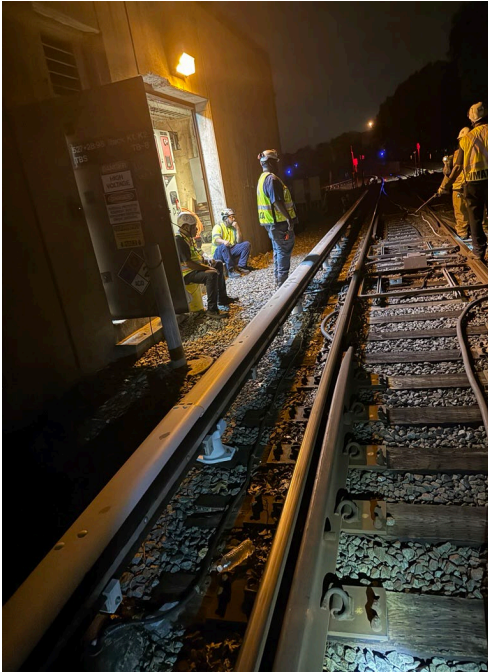


Photo 5: There was no WSAD present during work near the third rail.

Next Steps

Please respond **by Thursday, August 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.