



WMSC Inspection Report 20260821

ISSUED 8/24/2026

Inspection Details

Title: Overnight Roadway Maintenance Machine (RMM) Communication and Roadway Worker Protection (RWP)

Location: Silver Spring (B08) to Forest Glen (B09), Track 2

Date of Inspection: 8/21/2026

Time of Inspection: 11:00pm on 8/20/2026 to 5:00am on 8/21/2026

Unannounced

Risk-Based (Investigation)

Functional Area: Roadway Worker Protection, Vehicles, Track

Hazard Rating: 3C

Overview

On August 21, 2026, WMSC Inspectors conducted an overnight inspection of Metrorail maintenance work, specifically observing adherence to roadway worker protection (RWP), and roadway maintenance machine (RMM)¹ movements at Silver Spring (B08) to Forest Glen (B09) track 2. Due to an arcing insulator that exploded, the planned overnight work that was the subject of this inspection was cancelled and therefore, the inspection was more limited than planned.

This is a risk-based inspection based on the April 22, 2026, collision between a prime mover flatcar (work equipment) and a stationary Metrorail Silver Line passenger train at Metro Center Station. This collision is presently under a National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation with the WMSC and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) parties to that investigation. NTSB published the [preliminary report](https://www.nts.gov/investigations/Pages/RRD26FR015.aspx) in May 2026.²

¹ The Metrorail Operating Rulebook (MOR) defines an RMM as “A device powered by any means of energy other than hand power. These devices are being used on or near rail track(s). They are for maintenance, repair, construction, or inspection of track, bridges, railway signal, communications, or electric traction systems.” Source: Glossary of Terms 17-14

² NTSB Preliminary Report: <https://www.nts.gov/investigations/Pages/RRD26FR015.aspx>



Additionally, on August 14 and 15, Metrorail reported two additional collisions that met the threshold for safety event code A-3 (b) Collision between two rail transit vehicles.³ On August 14, 2026, at approximately 9:40pm prime mover (PM50), while towing a flat car (F520), struck track vehicle NSP01 in West Falls Church Yard (K99). There were no injuries. Additionally, on August 15, 2026, at approximately 3:23am three roadway maintenance machines (PM41, T006, GC02) collided between East Falls Church Station (K05) and West Falls Church Station (K06) on track 1. There were three minor injuries reported. All injuries were non-life threatening, and all individuals have been released from hospital since the event. All three of these collisions continue to be investigated. The April 22, 2026, collision that resulted in patron injuries is being led by the NTSB. The two more minor collisions that occurred August 14 and 15 by the WMSC and WMATA, respectively. These investigations are ongoing.

As a result, the WMSC inspection program continues to regularly inspect roadway worker protection (RWP) during overnight work. However, WMSC is committed to observing all RMM movements to ensure rules and policies are being followed properly and in compliance with Metrorail operating rules and standard operating procedures.

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

The overnight Track and Structures (TRST) work crew was assigned to address a potential black condition⁴ (ballast-related condition) that was identified by the Track Geometry Vehicle (TGV). However, when the work crew arrived at the work zone on roadway maintenance machines, smoke was observed in the platform area and tunnel at Forest Glen (B09). The roadway worker in charge (RWIC) contacted the control center and was instructed to investigate the source of the smoke.

³ In accordance with WMSC [Program Standard](#) (Rev. 8) section 7.B Metrorail must "...report all safety events outlined in the Safety Event Notification Matrix in the timeframe and manner specified for each safety event type."

⁴ WMATA'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. A "black, failing/failed" condition is the most severe on this condition rating scale.



This inspection conducted by the roadway worker in charge determined that an insulator at the platform area of Forest Glen (B09) on track 2 had exploded.

As a result, all work was canceled, and a speed restriction (Maximo WO 20677271)⁵ was implemented until repairs could be conducted to address the potential black condition.

Observation 1

WMSC observed heavy smoke at the platform and tunnel of Forest Glen (B09) station track 2.

Photos



Photo 1: Smoke in the tunnel at Forest Glen (B09) track 2.

Observation 2

Inspection of the smoke source revealed that an insulator on the Forest Glen (B09) platform exploded.

⁵ Maximo is the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) asset management database. Maximo tracks, manages, and reports all maintenance activity for WMATA.



Photos



Photo 2: Exploded insulator and grout pad.

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.