



WMSC Inspection Report 20260826

ISSUED 8/27/2026

Inspection Details

Title: Maintaining Separation of Class 1 Vehicles and Class 2 Vehicles with Red Signals

Location: New Carrollton (D13), Landover (D12), Cheverly (D11), Deanwood (D10), Minnesota Avenue (D09)

Date of Inspection: 8/26/2026

Time of Inspection: August 26, 2026, through August 27, 2026 (three hours)

Unannounced

Risk-Based (Investigation)

Functional Area: Operations

Hazard Rating: 3C

Overview

From August 26, 2026, through August 27, 2026, a WMSC Inspector spent approximately three hours tracing the actions of Metrorail rail traffic controllers using digital tools such as radio playback operations (OPS channel 2) and AIMS.¹ This inspection focused on one class 2 vehicle movement behind a class 1 vehicle on August 26, 2026.²

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](#) in May 2026.³

¹ The Advanced Information Management System (AIMS) is the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system used by Metrorail's control center to manage all rail line traffic, traction power devices and station equipment by receiving information from the field, processing it, and displaying it on workstations and large projection screens on the floor of the control center. AIMS playback function enables the review of historical information.

² The Metrorail Operating Rulebook defines each as follows: Class One (1) vehicle is "Any rail vehicle designed to transport customers;" class Two (2) vehicle is "Any rail vehicle designed only for maintenance purposes." (MOR 17-4.)

³ 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.⁴

On August 14, 2026, at approximately 9:40pm prime mover (PM50), while towing a flat car (F520), struck track maintenance vehicle NSP01 in West Falls Church Yard (K99). There were no injuries. This investigation is ongoing.

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. This investigation is ongoing.

After concluding the inspection, WMSC Inspectors conducted a debrief with the Assistant Operations Manager 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

For this inspection, the WMSC Inspector relied on Advanced Information Management System (AIMs) playback and radio recordings (radio OPS channel 2) to check compliance with Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 15 Absolute Block/ Permissive Block.⁵ The relevant rules of SOP 15 that were inspected are as follows:

15.3.1 Absolute Block: An absolute block is a section of track that shall not be occupied by more than one train or track equipment

15.5.8.4: To establish an absolute block for a Class 2 Vehicle, the ROCC Supervisor shall:

15.5.8.4.1 Cause the interlocking signal at the distant limit of the absolute block to indicate "stop" after the revenue train ahead has cleared the interlocking signal;

⁴ 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."

⁵ The purpose of SOP 15, "...is to delineate procedures and requirements for maintaining safe train separation when the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) subsystem of the Automatic Train Control (ATC) system is unable to do so. (SOP 15.1)



Observation 1

On August 26, 2026, Prime Mover (PM) 62 (class 2 vehicle) requested to depart New Carrollton Station (D13) track 2 at 12:08 a.m. with a destination of Minnesota Ave Station (D09) for scheduled maintenance. At the same time Train ID 739 (class 1 vehicle) was leaving Deanwood Station (D10) track 2 in the direction of Vienna Station (K08). The button rail traffic controller caused D11-08 signal to indicate stop (red) and the radio rail traffic controller gave an absolute block to Prime Mover (PM) 62 to Landover Station (D12) track 2 in accordance with SOP 15.

Train ID 739 cleared the following signal, D98-40, before the button rail traffic controller established a lunar (proceed) signal for PM 62 at signal D11-08, and the radio rail traffic controller gave a new absolute block to PM 62 to Minnesota Ave (D08) Track 2 at 12:13 a.m.

This inspection did not identify any defects based on information known to the inspectors at the time of the inspection.

Next Steps

Please respond **by Monday, August 31, 2026**, to acknowledge receipt.