



WMSC Inspection Report 20260912 (amended)

ISSUED 9/15/2026 (re-issued **as amended** 10/1/2026)

Inspection Details

Title: Class 2 Vehicle (RMM) Movement Inspection

Location: West Falls Church Yard (K99) to East Falls Church (K05) Work Location

Date of Inspection: 9/12/2026

Time of Inspection: 11:00pm on 9/11/2026 to 6:00am on 9/12/2026

Announced (Via email to Assistant Director of Track and Structures on 9/11/2026)

Risk-Based (Investigation)

Functional Area: Roadway Worker Protection, Vehicles

Hazard Rating: 3C

Overview

On September 11, 2026, WMSC Inspectors observed the transfer of roadway maintenance machines (known as RMMs or Class 2 vehicles)¹ from West Falls Church Yard to the weekend work zone at the East Falls Church (K05) interlocking. The objective of Metrorail's Track and Structure (TRST) work that weekend was to replace ties, remove excess ballast, and tamp the interlocking area on the Track 1 (inbound) rail. To facilitate this work, Metro brought 11 RMMs to the work area. The WMSC's inspection of this work focused on safety stops, RMM movements in the yard and mainline, and RMM communications between the control center, interlocking operators, and the flagmen and operators on the various roadway maintenance machines in use.

The WMSC recently carried out a similar inspection at the New Carrollton rail yard on August 28, 2026 ([Report 20260828](#)), focusing solely on compliance with Metrorail Operating Rulebook safety stop² regulations. This inspection more broadly focused on safety stops, RMM movements in the

¹ According to the Metrorail Operating Rulebook, Class 2 vehicles are "Any rail vehicle designed only for maintenance purposes;" Roadway Maintenance Machines (RMM) are Class 2 vehicles and are further defined 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." Metrorail Operating Rulebook 17-4; 17-14.

² A safety stop is a deliberate stop made by rail vehicle operators to ensure conditions are safe before movement continues. It is used to prevent collisions, verify authority, confirm track conditions, or address close-in situations.



Yard and Mainline, and RMM communications between central (MICC), Interlocking Operators, and RMM flagmen and operators.

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

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.
- 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 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

Section 7 of the Metrorail Operating Rulebook (MOR) identifies the general rules for rail vehicle operations and movement. Two MOR rules govern the requirements for what are known as “safety stops:” 7.1.8 outlines when safety stops are required and 7.1.9 states the required stopping distances.

³ NTSB Preliminary Report: <https://www.nts.gov/investigations/Pages/RRD26FR015.aspx>

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.”



WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION

MOR 7.1.8 Safety Stops - Safety stops must be made when approaching another rail vehicle, bumping post, or any obstruction.

MOR 7.1.9 Safety Stop Distances - Safety stops must be made at:

- three (3) car lengths,
- two (2) car lengths,
- 50 feet,
- 10 feet, and then 3mph
- Proceed at a speed not to exceed three (3) miles per hour until final stop is made

In addition to safety stops, WMSC Inspectors monitored compliance with rules 12.5.1, 12.5.4, 13.10.2, 12.14, and 13.11 through 13.11.5. These rules dictate how RMMs should move and communicate in the yard and mainline to avoid risk and limit hazards. The specific rules that were monitored are below:

12.5 Protection on Controlled Track

12.5.1 Before Roadway Maintenance Machines enter or foul controlled track, employee in charge must obtain authorization from the Rail Traffic Controller or Interlocking Operator.

This verbal authorization must include time, limits, and tracks to be used, and must be communicated to all accompanying employees.

12.5.4 RMMs not equipped with Automatic Train Protection must not be moved on revenue tracks until an absolute block is established by the Rail Traffic Controller.

13.10.2 Rail Vehicle Operators and Roadway Workers using radios to communicate with the Rail Traffic Controller must use the designated Radio Ops channels for their location on the Metrorail system as shown in the Radio Ops Table.

Line	Location	Radio Ops Channel
Red Line	ALL	OPS 1
Orange Line	Inbound at CM 223+00	OPS 2
	Outbound at CM 223+00 (K02-K08)	OPS 4
Silver Line	Inbound at CM 223+00	OPS 2
	Outbound at CM223+00 (K02-N06)	OPS 4
Blue Line	Inbound at CM 188+30	OPS 2
	Outbound at CM 188+30 (C06-J03)	OPS 3
Yellow Line	ALL	OPS 3
Green Line	ALL	OPS 3

Table 1: Radio Ops Channels.



13.11 Radio Messages: Content & Code Words

13.11.1 Metro personnel must use commonly accepted terms for radio communications.

13.11.2 When communicating location information that is Alpha-numeric (e.g., C-07, B-11), ICAO phonetics must be used for “alpha” character.

13.11.3 ICAO phonetics must be used when communicating about Traction Power Substations or Tiebreaker Stations.

13.11.4 Employees must use phonetic spelling during poor communication conditions.

13.11.5 Communications must be as brief as possible and must use these key words:

“Copy” To signify that the message was received and understood.

“Over” At the close of each transmission to which a response is expected.

“Out” At the close of each transmission to which a response is not necessary. “Out” must be preceded by proper identification.

“Emergency” Transmitted three times to obtain use of radio channels for initial report of conditions endangering rail vehicle movements.

12.14 Operations at Night

12.14.1 Roadway Maintenance Machines operating at night must display white lights to the front and red lights to the rear.



Inspection Summary

Class 2 Vehicle (RMM) Movement from West Falls Church Rail Yard (K99) to signal K-99/58			
RMM Identification	Movement Authority & Protection Permission received before fouling controlled track (MOR 12.5.1) Yes or No	Movement Authority and Protection Absolute block established when required (MOR 12.5.4) Yes or No	Radio Communication Compliance Rail Vehicle Operators and Roadway and Radio Messages: Content & Code Words (MOR 13.10.2,13.11 and 13.11.5) Yes or No
BV01	Yes	Yes	Yes
TC07	Yes	Yes	Yes
TR07	Yes	Yes	Yes
TR06	Yes	Yes	Yes
TC05	Yes	Yes	Yes
GC01	Yes	Yes	Yes
PM47	Yes	Yes	Yes
T004	Yes	Yes	Yes
PM43	Yes	Yes	Yes
BR03	Yes	Yes	Yes
PM49	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2: Class 2 Vehicle (RMM) Movement from West Falls Church Rail Yard (K99) to signal K-99/58.



Class 2 Vehicle (RMM) Movement from West Falls Church Rail Yard (K99) to West Falls Church (K06) Platform Track 3. (ammended)					
RMM ID	Safety stops as required Yes or No	Movement Authority & Protection Absolute block established when required (MOR 12.5.4) Yes or No	Radio Communication Compliance Rail Vehicle Operators and Roadway and Radio Messages: Content & Code Words (MOR 13.10.2,13.11 and 13.11.5) Yes or No	2 White lights Front When Moving Yes or No	2 Red lights Rear When Moving Yes or No
BV01	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
TC07	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
TR07	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
TR06	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
TC05	No (2 of 4)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
GC01	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
PM47	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
T004	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PM43	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Yes*
BR03	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
PM49	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Table 3: Class 2 Vehicle (RMM) Movement from West Falls Church Rail Yard (K99) to West Falls Church (K06) Platform Track 3.

*See Defect 2 below.

Observation 1

Although the RWIC did not check proper PPE, the RWIC did check all Metrorail badges (or identifications) of the work crew to ensure proper roadway worker protection certifications were valid, meaning each crew member was authorized to enter the roadway.



Defect 1

Refer to Table 3 above. WMSC Inspectors observed that 2 out of the 11 RMMs were using the required safety stops outlined in the MOR while traveling between West Falls Church Yard (K99) and the West Falls Church Station (K06) platform. 8 out of the 11 units were not following the proper safety stops per Metrorail Operating Rules (MOR) 7.1.8 and 7.1.9. MOR rule 7.1.8 outlines when safety stops are required, and 7.1.9 states the required stopping distances. 7 of the 8 performed no safety stops while one performed two safety stops but not the required 4. Inspectors observed 11 RMM moving and their adherence to these safety stops. The first RMM inspected, BV01, was not approaching a vehicle or bump post and not required to perform Safety Stops. The next 10 were approaching vehicles and required by rule to perform safety stops. Of the 10 RMMs, only two reformed the required safety stops.

MOR 7.1.8 Safety Stops - Safety stops must be made when approaching another rail vehicle, bumping post, or any obstruction.

MOR 7.1.9 Safety Stop Distances - Safety stops must be made at:

- three (3) car lengths,
- two (2) car lengths,
- 50 feet,
- 10 feet, and then 3 mph
- Proceed at a speed not to exceed three (3) miles per hour until final stop is made

Hazard Rating: 3D

Defect 2 (corrected)*

WMSC Inspectors observed that 8 7 out of the 11 RMMs moving during the inspection did not display a red aspect at the rear of the RMM (see table 3). According to MOR 12.14.1, roadway maintenance machines operating at night must display white lights to the front and red lights to the rear. This allows roadway workers to discern whether the RMM is approaching their position or traveling away from their position and therefore permits informed understanding to reduce safety risk to roadway workers and other RMMs operating in the vicinity.

***Amended:** In response to the initial version of this report that was issued on 9/15/2026, WMATA provided additional information on 9/18/2026. WMATA disputed 4 of the 8 (WMATA did not identify which four units are in dispute) identified RMMs from table 3 regarding “Red lights Rear When Moving” based on the following:



- WMATA stated the red-light aspects on all eight units were tested, confirming the red aspects function,
- WMATA stated that CCTV footage showed four of the eight RMMs display red aspects in the rear at certain moments (undisclosed, no time stamps) within CCTV viewing range (undisclosed, locations not identified), and
- WMATA stated that on “most units” the lights will “automatically change” aspects from white to red or vice versa depending on travel direction without specific indication of whether the eight noted units have this automatic feature.

The WMSC reviewed the evidence from the inspection, taken together with WMATA’s additional information:

The WMSC determined that Prime Mover 43 (PM43) did have the correct light aspects visible to the front and the rear of the consist during the inspection on 9/12/26. The table above is now amended to reflect this.

Regarding the other three disputed that were not specifically identified by WMATA, the WMSC’s initial determination remains. WMATA’s light aspect testing, CCTV observation indicating proper aspect usage (at undefined times and locations), and the general statement that aspects change from white to red on “most units” when changing direction of travel (but without specific confirmation of whether that feature applies to the noted eight units), does not conflict with the WMSC’s observation as originally stated, which remain.

Hazard Rating: 3D

Defect 3

WMSC Inspectors observed that the Track and Structures Roadway Worker in Charge (RWIC) at East Falls Church (K05) did not fully check Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) of Metrorail personnel who were briefed. Roadway Worker Protection Manual section 1.8.4 requires that the roadway worker in charge check personal protective equipment (PPE) of all work crew personnel at the on track safety briefing.

Hazard Rating: 3C

Defect 4

WMSC Inspectors observed personnel not wearing the required safety shoes in accordance with Metrorail’s August 27, 2026, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program 4480-2-02/02, which states:



WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION

6.6.1.3 A six-inch boot is required for ankle support when employees are exposed to rough walking surfaces (e.g., ballast).

Additionally, the Metrorail Operating Rulebook outlines requirements for safety shoes.

MOR 16.6 Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Wear approved safety shoes when working in rail, yard, shop, or maintenance environments.

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos



Photo 1: Non-compliant footwear being used while on the roadway performing job duties.

Defect 5

WMSC Inspectors observed personnel placing shunts on the running rail during track set up without using the required Class O electrical safety gloves required by the August 27, 2026, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program 4480-2-02/02:

6.10.7 Class O rubber insulating gloves, used with leather protectors, shall be used at WMATA for tasks that include:

- 6.10.7.1 Work performed by electricians
- 6.10.7.2 Hot sticking the third rail
- 6.10.7.3 Warning Strobe Alarm Device (WSAD) placement and removal
- 6.10.7.4 Shunt placement and removal
- 6.10.7.5 Third rail insulating mat placement and removal



6.10.7.6 Any other work that requires the use of electrical insulating gloves

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos



Photo 2: Personnel not wearing Class O rubber insulated gloves (PPE) to install shunts.

Defect 6

WMSC Inspectors observed a Track and Structures roadway worker in charge wearing a backpack while setting up the work zone on the roadway. Finding 4 of the [2020 Audit of Roadway Worker Protection](#) specifically stated that “WMATA employees are not consistently following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for personnel entering or traversing WMATA’s roadway.” Part of this finding and corrective action required Metrorail to “codify...the policy that prohibits the wearing of backpacks on the roadway due to the risk of entrapment.” As a result, Metrorail created a permanent order prohibiting backpacks on or near the roadway. More recently, permanent order PO-26-14, which was approved August 26, 2026, and effective September 1, 2026, further clarifies the backpack rules. Specifically, PO-26-14 “establishes a new operating rule prohibiting employees from wearing backpacks, bags, or equipment with back and/or over-the-shoulder straps within four (4) feet of the nearest running rail, and including on safety walks, or elsewhere where such equipment could foul track infrastructure.”

Metrorail states that the purpose of this order is to “eliminate the risk associated with the wearing of backpacks, shoulder straps, or similar equipment becoming caught on track infrastructure or passing rail vehicles, including trains and roadway maintenance machines. Requiring these items to be hand-carried reduces the risk of entanglement and helps ensure employees can promptly and safely clear the tracks when necessary, minimizing the potential for trips, falls, delayed egress, or contact with moving rail vehicles.” Source: PO-26-14.

Hazard Rating: 3D



Next Steps

Please respond ~~by Friday, September 18, 2026,~~ to acknowledge receipt and to convey responses to the WMSC regarding what, if any, actions will be or have been taken in response. —

The WMSC first issued this report on 9/15/2026, WMATA responded on 9/18/2026 with additional information as required. As a result of WMATA's additional information, the WMSC re-issued this report as amended herein on 10/1/2026.

Please respond by Friday **by Tuesday, October 6, 2026,** to acknowledge receipt and to convey responses to the WMSC regarding what, if any, actions will be or have been taken in response.