



WMSC Inspection Report 20260922A

ISSUED 9/25/26

Inspection Details

Title: L-Line Bridge (Fenwick Bridge) Overnight Roadway Worker Protection Inspection

Location: L-Line Bridge (Fenwick Bridge) and L'Enfant Plaza (F03)

Date of Inspection: 9/22/2026

Time of Inspection: 11:00pm on 9/21/26 to 4:00am on 9/22/26

Announced (via email to Senior Director, Safety Assurance on 9/21/26)

Risk-Based (Investigation)

Functional Area: Roadway Worker Protection, Vehicles, Track

Hazard Rating: 3C

Overview

On September 21, 2026, WMSC Inspectors intended to conduct an inspection of the L Line Bridge (carries Yellow Line over the Potomac River) weekend Revenue Service Adjustment (RSA)¹ outage work zone, which spanned from Pentagon Station (C07) to L'Enfant Plaza Station (F03).

This is a risk-based inspection based on several recent safety events involving roadway maintenance machines:

On Sunday, September 20, 2026, the tamper machine (T005) derailed at L2 137+00 while mitigating a fouled ballast condition in the RSA work zone (Pentagon Station (C07) to L'Enfant Plaza Station (F03)). Fouled ballast is a condition that can cause drainage problems and affect the ability of the ballast to constrain/stabilize the track, creating a potential safety concern. At the time of the derailment, WMATA had not concluded the necessary maintenance work and additional work was necessary to reopen the line for revenue service. Considering this derailment and recent safety events involving roadway maintenance machines, the WMSC determined a risk-based inspection of this RSA work zone was necessary.

The WMSC arrived at this work zone the day after the derailment and found all work complete and the fouled ballast area had been remediated.

¹ An RSA is a planned, temporary alteration to the normal, public-facing train schedule to accommodate infrastructure maintenance, track upgrades, or structural rehabilitation.



Other Related Safety Events Involving Roadway Maintenance Machines

The April 22, 2026, collision between a prime mover flatcar (work equipment) and a stationary Metrorail Silver Line passenger train at Metro Center Station 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 2026.²

Subsequently, 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 worker 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.

The purpose of the inspection is to assess Metrorail's compliance with established Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) requirements, Roadway Maintenance Machine (RMM) movement, and operating procedures, and other required communication protocols during the RSA work zone. The inspection focused on whether work was being performed in accordance with Metrorail procedures and whether adequate protections were in place to control the risks associated with personnel, on-track equipment, and train movements within the work area.

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.

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

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."



Observations and Defect Determinations

Observation 1

WMSC Inspectors listened to radio communication between the control center and various roadway maintenance machines that requested to leave the work area. There were a total of nine RMM units leaving the area to store at Alexandria Yard (C99). The control center coordinated a convoy of track repair-related RMMs to disembark the work location. The control center set up a convoy block of three units per convoy. A convoy block “is a section of track between two specific locations into which no other train or equipment is permitted to enter while it is occupied by a convoy.” The WMSC observed this was done in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures, SOP 15, 15.5.9 Convoy Blocks for Movement of a Convoy. This movement was successfully executed by the MICC and the Equipment Operators.

Observation 2

The L-Line bridge’s roadway worker in charge (RWIC) served as the RWIC responsible for overall roadway worker protection for multiple work crews across the entire RSA. The work limits that the RWIC was responsible for appeared very large for a single RWIC who was overseeing multiple work groups within that overarching work zone. The RWIC acknowledged that managing the size of the work zone limits was a significant task; however, the RWIC maintained excellent radio communication with the control center.

Observation 3

WMSC Inspectors observed an automatic train control (ATC) work crew performing switch maintenance, circuit verification and interlocking inspections at L’Enfant Plaza (F03), which is necessary when putting a track back in service from an RSA. The ATC crew performed their own safety briefing specific to the work they were performing after they received the initial On-Track Safety Briefing from the RWIC. The work they were conducting was essential to the restoration of service.

Next Steps

Please respond **by Monday, September 28, 2026**, to acknowledge receipt.