



WMSC Inspection Report 20260923B

ISSUED 9/28/2026

Inspection Details

Title: U Street (E03) Overnight Roadway Work Inspection

Location: U Street (E03)

Date of Inspection: 9/23/2026

Time of Inspection: 11:00pm on 9/22/26 to 4:00am on 9/23/26

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 23, 2026, the WMSC conducted an overnight inspection of Track and Structures (TRST) work crew with the goal of observing roadway worker protection (RWP) and rail maintenance machine (RMM) operations for compliance with the Metrorail Operating Rulebook (MOR) and the Roadway Worker Protection Manual (RWPM). This included observing the on-track safety briefing and requesting roadway access, as well as radio communication between the control center and various roadway maintenance machines.

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

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 2026.¹

¹ NTSB Preliminary Report: <https://www.nts.gov/investigations/Pages/RRD26FR015.aspx>



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.² 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.

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)).

After concluding the inspection, WMSC Inspectors conducted a debrief with the Roadway Worker in Charge and the Safety Department Escort 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

On the way to the work zone, WMSC Inspectors conducted an inspection of Room 200 on the mezzanine level of U Street Station (E03).

Fire Equipment Cabinet 216:

- Two fire extinguishers were past due for an inspection. (Last inspected in July 2026.)
- A fire extinguisher was also stored on the floor and not affixed to a wall bracket.

International Fire Code (IFC) 906.2 – Portable fire extinguishers shall be selected, installed, and maintained (In accordance with NFPA 10)

² 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."



Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos

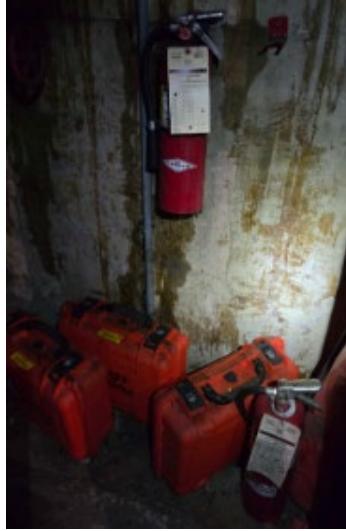


Photo 1 (left) extinguisher due for an inspection. Photo 2 (right) a loose extinguisher on the floor and not affixed to the wall.

Defect 2

Additionally, WMSC Inspectors checked Fire Equipment Cabinet 100 on the platform level of U Stret Station (E03) and found improper storage of work tools and equipment in the fire equipment cabinet.

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos

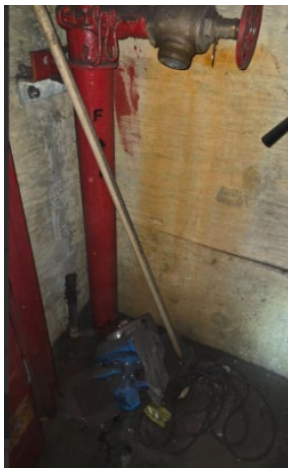


Photo 3: equipment improperly stored in a fire cabinet.



Defect 3

A Metrorail employee was observed wearing a black outer garment displaying an X on the rear and not the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) mandated by Roadway Worker Protection manual, which only permits Yellow for Metrorail employee safety vests.

6.3 Safety Vest

6.3.1 Safety vest worn by employees and contractors shall meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) / International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA0 107 Class 2 Type R Standard

6.3.2 All safety vests worn at WMATA must be pre-approved by Safety

6.3.3 Safety Vest worn by employees must be Yellow, with an X on the back of the vest.

Hazard Rating: 3C

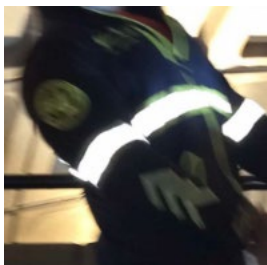


Photo 4: Roadway worker wearing a black safety vest.

Observation 1

Once at the work zone, WMSC Inspectors watched the On-Track Safety Briefing (OTSB). They also reviewed the OTSB form afterwards. On-Track Safety Briefings are crucial for ensuring that all personnel are aware of potential hazards, control measures, and operational expectations before commencing work, through displaying a significant role in preventing accidents in transit environments. The On-Track Safety Briefing is completed by the roadway worker in charge (RWIC) and identifies the form of roadway protection, working limits, job tasks and general hazards. WMSC Inspectors observed the OTSB was conducted thoroughly, covering all the above-mentioned areas, ensuring the work could be performed safely.



Photos

A photograph of a Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (OTSB) complaint form. The form is titled "OTSB Form - Job Safety Working Form". It contains several sections for recording incident details, including "Incident Description", "Witnesses", "Investigation", and "Resolution". The form is filled out with handwritten information, including the date "11/24/2016" and the time "10:00 AM". The form is printed on a grid background.

Photo 5: Complaint OTSB form.

Observation 2

WMSC Inspectors conducted a visual inspection of personal protective equipment (PPE) in use by the work crew at U Street platform and mezzanine.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program

6.10.9 Rubber insulating gloves are valid for use at WMATA for six months past the most recent test date stamped on the gloves.

The observation verified that the roadway worker in charge (RWIC) was using class 0 electrical gloves that were within compliance as required by PPE Program for the verification of third rail power de-energization.



Photos



Photo 6: Compliant Class 0 electric gloves used by RWIC.

Observation 3

WMSC Inspectors also monitored radio communications on radio Ops 3: Listening for movement authority and absolute block³ protection established via Central, as laid out in MOR 12.5.4:

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.

Observation 4

Inspectors listened to ensure that the rules that govern the radio communications were licit, as laid out in MOR 13.11 (see below). All radio communications followed the Metrorail Operating Rulebook standards. Inspectors heard workers articulate the proper use of radio terminology like “copy” and “over”. All communication was also in compliance with the MOR adoption of the ICAO phonetic alphabet (Alph, Bravo, Charlie, etc.). There were no defects detected.

³ An absolute block is “A section of track that must not be occupied by more than one (1) train or piece of equipment. Metrorail Operating Rulebook Glossary of Terms 17-1



13.11 Governs 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.

Observation 5

Class 2 vehicles are defined by the Metrorail Operating Rulebook as “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.” WMSC Inspectors monitored compliance with the requirement of the MOR when operating at night to display white lights to the front of the RMM and red lights to the rear. The purpose of the White Lights and Red Lights rules on Class 2 vehicles are intended to indicate movement direction of RMMs at night or in low-light areas.

White Lights (Front) - Acts as headlights to illuminate the tracks ahead and signal the forward direction of travel to personnel and vehicles on or near the tracks. In addition, a white light designates the leading end of the Class 2 in the current direction of travel.



Red lights (Rear) - A red light designates the rear of the Class 2. This helps personnel and other train operators to identify the RMMs back end. The distinction is important to prevent orientation confusion and collisions.

12.14 Operations at Night

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

Photos



Photo 7 (left): Prime Mover (PM48) white aspect to the front. Photo 8 (right): WMSC Inspectors observed Flatcar 543 red aspects were blinking and therefore their full illumination is not caught in this photo.

Observation 6

WMSC Inspectors verified the correct placement of roadway worker protection (RWP) equipment per the Roadway Worker Protection Manual (RWPM) section 1.22 - Exclusive Track Occupancy (ETO). The limits of the track occupancy were explicitly defined and secured using the safety equipment and visual indicators described below:

1.22.3 Exclusive Track Occupancy⁴ Set-Up Exclusive Track Occupancy working limits supplemental protection, consisting of placement of supplemental shunting devices accompanied by two (2) red lanterns or e-flares, and “End Work Area” mats.

The presence of the required safety equipment ensures that the work area is secure against unauthorized rail vehicle entry.

⁴ ETO is a method of local control where working limits are established “using controlled signals that are placed under the exclusive control of Automatic Train Control personnel. MOR Glossary of Terms 17-10



Photos



Photo 9: Compliant ETO setup.

Observation 7

WMSC Inspectors verified the usage and proper placement of all (three) wayside strobe alarm devices (WSAD). If power is re-energized, the WSAD will make a loud audible noise and flash, which is a passive monitoring mitigation for inadvertent re-energization.

18.4.8 A Warning Strobe and Alarm Device (WSAD) must be installed on the section(s) of de-energized third rail within audible and visual range of personnel within those specific sections of third rail when work requiring a power outage is being performed.

WMSC Inspectors confirmed compliance with rule 18.4.8 at all three installations of installed WSADs within the working limits.

Photos



Photo 10: Properly installed WSAD.



Next Steps

Please respond **by Thursday, October 1, 2026**, to acknowledge receipt and to convey responses to the WMSC regarding what, if any, actions will be or have been taken in response.