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WMSC Inspection Report 20261017

ISSUED 10/21/2026

Inspection Details

Title: Foggy Bottom (C04) to Pentagon (C07) Shutdown Inspection

Location: Rosslyn (C05)–Arlington Cemetery (C06) and Rosslyn (C05)–Clarendon (K02)

Date of Inspection: 10/17/2026

Time of Inspection: 6:00am to 1:00pm

Announced (via email to Director, Track and Structures)

Risk-Based (Investigation)

Functional Area: Roadway Worker Protection, Vehicles, Track

Hazard Rating: 3C

Overview

On October 17, 2026, WMSC Inspectors visited the shutdown area between Foggy Bottom (C04) to Pentagon (C07) and Rosslyn (C05) to Clarendon (K02). Multiple Metrorail departments were working in these areas, Track and Structures (TRST) was the primary department, conducting tie renewal and grout pad/fastener maintenance during the shutdown.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess Metrorail's compliance with established Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) requirements, roadway maintenance machine (RMM) movement and operating procedures, and communication protocols in the shutdown area. This is a risk-based inspection based on several recent safety events involving roadway maintenance machines:

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) as parties to that investigation. NTSB published the preliminary report in May 2026.[1]

[1] NTSB Preliminary Report: https://www.ntsb.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 on Track 1 between East Falls Church Station (K05) and West Falls Church Station (K06). There were three minor injuries reported. All injuries were non-life-threatening, and all individuals have been released from the hospital since the event. All three collisions are still under investigation. The April 22, 2026, collision that resulted in patron injuries is being led by the NTSB. The two more minor collisions occurred on August 14 and 15 and are being investigated by the WMSC and WMATA, respectively. These investigations are ongoing.

On September 20, 2026, the tamper machine (T005) derailed near the Yellow Line Bridge (chain marker L2 137+00) while mitigating a fouled ballast condition in a work zone (Pentagon Station (C07) to L'Enfant Plaza Station (F03)).

After concluding the inspection, WMSC Inspectors conducted a debrief with the Employee in Charge (EIC) and 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

WMSC Inspectors observed 16 RMM in the shutdown areas. The tie renewal work crew was using 13 RMMs at the C06 Arlington Cemetery interlocking location. All equipment was secured except for the Ballast Vacuum (BV01), which was actively removing ballast from the roadway during the inspection. WMSC Inspectors encountered three additional RMMs at the Rosslyn (C05) platform in preparation for grout and fastener maintenance operations.

[2] In accordance with WMSC Program Standard (Rev. 9) 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."

Observation 1

WMSC Inspectors observed the equipment operator and flag person on the roadway maintenance machines using proper radio communication and hand signals (see Metrorail Operating Rulebook section 13.11 below) while safely positioning the RMM in the designated work area at Rosslyn (C05) track 2, in accordance with MOR 13.11. The work crew was making several moves to realign the units to begin work.

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.

Observation 2

WMSC Inspectors observed that the operator and flag person of the consist PM-40 were following procedures listed in Metrorail Operating Rulebook section 12.18 while units were making moves at Rosslyn (C05).

12.18 Shoving or Backing Movements

12.18.1 Locations of Operator 12.18.1.1 Roadway Maintenance Machine Operators must operate from the leading end of the movement when equipped with an operating compartment. Exceptions: Operators may operate from other than the leading end of the movement:

a. As listed in special instructions,
b. When authorized by the Rail Traffic Controller,
c. When changing ends would occur in a tunnel,
d. When the movement does not exceed one (1) train length on a revenue track, or one (1) train length beyond an opposing interlocking signal.

12.18.2 Operating From Other Than the Leading End of Movement

12.18.2.1 When operating Roadway Maintenance Machines from other than the leading end of the movement:

a. Crew members must take proper action to control the movement.
b. The maximum authorized speed is Not exceeding 20 mph.
c. Crew member directing the movement must be qualified on the physical characteristics of the territory, and 12-9.
d. Crew member directing the movement and the Rail Vehicle Operator must work together to comply with the requirements of Restricted Speed, when applicable.

Photos



Photo 1 (Left): RMM using the correct Shoving or Backing movement procedures. Photo 2 (right): RMM with flag person on the rear using proper Shoving or Backing movement procedures.

Defect 1

WMSC Inspectors observed severe spalling and head checking on the left rail at C2 145+20. A joint bar was installed prior to the inspection in case the surface defect caused the rail to fracture.

Hazard Rating: 3B

Photos



Photo 3: Rail defect at C2 145+20 left rail.

Defect 2 (Mitigated)

WMSC Inspectors observed that the negative paddle on the Warning Strobe Alarm Device (WSAD) was not properly placed on the rail within the work area at the Arlington Cemetery (C06) interlocking, on track 1. However, when it was brought to the Employee in Charge (EIC), they explained that multiple units were traversing the interlocking and that once those units were secured, the WSAD would be properly placed. A cover board was also missing at the end approach at C1 187+70.

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos



Photo 4: WSAD not set up properly in the work area.

Defect 3

WMSC Inspectors observed several broken studs on the fasteners along the curve between K2 149+00 and K2 155+00 on the left rail. According to the TRST-1000,[3] table 107.5A, the consecutive broken studs met the criteria for a priority level of Yellow.

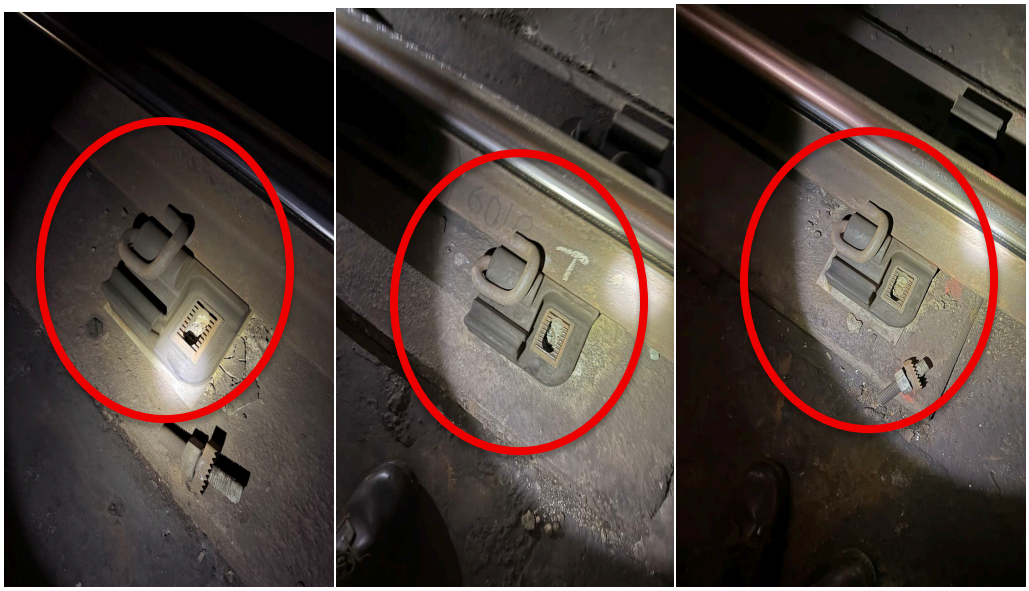
Table 107.5A: Direct Fixation/Restraining Rail Fastener Guidelines: Minimum Non-Defective in 40 ft.

Tangent to 2500 ft Radius	2500 ft. to 800 ft. Radius	<800 ft. Radius	Max Distance between Non-Defective Fasteners	Level	Operating Speed
12	13	14	Up to 60 inches	Green	Normal
10	11	12	More than 60 up to 90 inches	Yellow	Medium
7	8	9	More than 90 up to 120 inches	Red	Slow
Less than 7	Less than 8	Less than 9	More than 120 inches	Black	OOS

Hazard Rating: 3C

[3] WMATA's track inspection and safety standards are defined by the Track and Structures (TRST) TRST-1000.

Photos



Photos 5 (left), 6 (middle) and 6 (right): Shows a few of the broken studs throughout the area.

Defect 4

WMSC Inspectors observed several corroded fasteners and studs on the right rail at C2 167+50 to 169+00. There was no lateral movement observed; however, the fasteners and studs are corroded from a previous water leak. According to TRST-1000, table 107.5A, this is a yellow condition.

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Less than 7	Less than 8	Less than 9	More than 120 inches	Black	OOS

Hazard Rating:3C

Photos



Photo 8: Corroded fasteners.

Defect 5

WMSC Inspectors observed a missing chain marker sign at C2 168+00.

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos

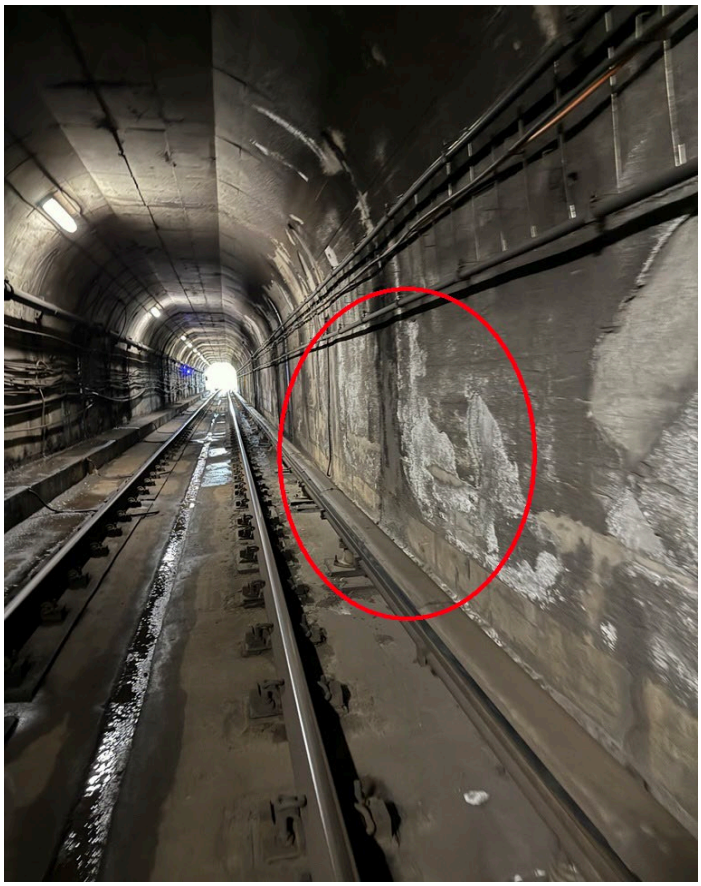


Photo 9: Missing chain marker sign at C2 168+00.

Defect 6

A coverboard is missing at the end approach at C1 187+70.

Hazard Rating: 3C

Photos



Photo 10: Missing a coverboard in background photo.

Next Steps

Please respond **by Monday, October 26, 2026,** to acknowledge receipt and to convey responses to the WMSC regarding what, if any, actions will be or have been taken in response.