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# WMSC Inspection Report 20261026A

**ISSUED 10/30/2026**

**Inspection Details**

Title: Emergency Trip Station (ETS) Inspection

Location: Wheaton (B10) to Glenmont (B11)

Date of Inspection: 10/26/2026

Time of Inspection: 12:30am to 4:00am

Announced (via conference call with Metrorail Information Technology)

Risk-Based (Safety Certification Oversight)

Functional Area: Communication Systems, Operations, Control Center

Hazard Rating: 1E

## Overview

On October 26, 2026, WMSC Inspectors conducted an announced risk-based inspection of the Emergency Trip Station (ETS)[1] boxes along the roadway of both track 1 and 2 between Wheaton (B10) and Glenmont (B11) stations. WMATA is presently testing the ETS boxes along the B-Line portion of the Red Line (Glenmont to Gallery Place) as part of WMATA's Systemwide Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) Consolidation Phase 1 (Red Line).

This is a risk-based inspection as part of the WMSC's Safety Certification Oversight of WMATA's Systemwide Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) Consolidation Phase 1 (Red Line) that the WMSC selected for In-Depth Review (Program Standard Section 10.C.2). WMATA submitted the safety certification package to the WMSC on October 16, 2026. Those documents outline that all ETS boxes would be reconfigured and tested to align with the new Operations (OPS) 6 desk territory and to ensure all required ETS box calls are routed to the correct desk in the event of an emergency.

[1] Sometimes referred to as "blue boxes" or "blue light stations," Metrorail's version of a blue light station are termed emergency trip station (ETS) boxes which are defined by Metrorail as "A facility for emergency deenergization of the third rail, marked by a blue light, and located every 800' along the right-of-way." (Metrorail Operating Rule Book (MOR), Glossary of Terms) ETS boxes are a vital safety asset throughout the Metrorail system.

The WMATA's Systemwide Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) Consolidation Phase 1's (Red Line) goal is to modify the current rail traffic controller configuration in the control center.2 At present, two rail traffic controllers oversee three different areas of operations: OPS desk 1 (covers the entire Red Line), OPS desk 2, and OPS desk 3. This requires close coordination between the two rail traffic controllers who work together on the same desk as button controller and radio controller respectively. The consolidation project aims to differently distribute workload among rail traffic controllers by splitting ops desk territories to allow one single controller to oversee the command and control of one dedicated operations desk. This requires re-mapping each ETS box along the right-of-way so that each is reconfigured to the newly-assigned desk to receive the call.

After concluding the inspection, WMSC Inspectors conducted a debrief with the Supervisor of Information Technology Services 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

Thirty-four phones (contained within the ETS box enclosure) were tested between chain markers (CM) B632+20PL and B718+91PL as outlined in the test plan checklist (B10-B11 OPS 6 ETS Test.xlsx). Each call station was required to transmit two calls, one directly to the Ops 6 desk using an internal extension and the second by dialing 911. Upon successful transmission to the desk, each phone number was confirmed via the Ops 6 operator to ensure two-way communication was successful and that the programming was accurate. Additional observations were conducted by a WMATA internal testing team that ran traces on the lines to monitor the communication of the devices.

[2] The control center is the 'nerve center' of the entire WMATA system (all modes). It has multiple operational branches all under a single facility, bringing together such functional areas as Rail Operations, Bus Operations, Metro Transit Police and Security Operations, Maintenance and Systems Operation, as well as Cybersecurity Operations and Video Surveillance Teams.

## Photo

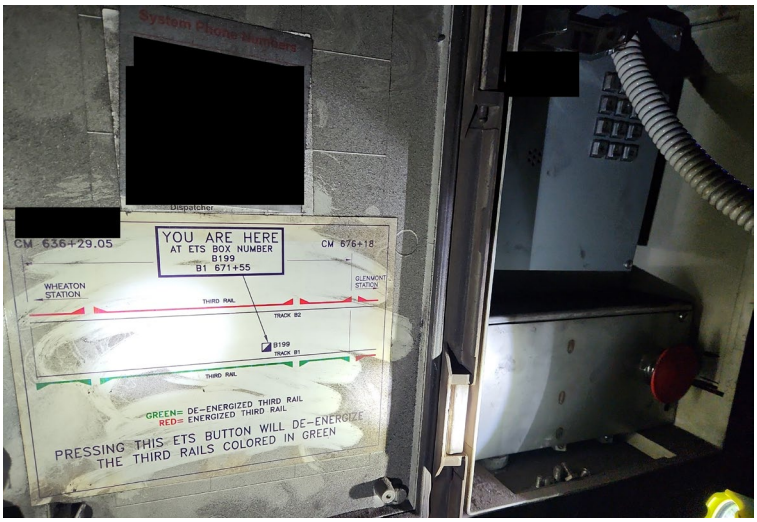



Photo 1: ETS Box in the process of being tested between Wheaton (B10) and Glenmont stations (B11).

All field testing was conducted as prescribed within the project documents; therefore, 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 Tuesday, November 3, 2026,** to acknowledge receipt.