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WMSC Inspection Report 20261026B

ISSUED 10/30/2026

Inspection Details

Title: Roadway Worker Protection Overnight Inspection

Location: Wheaton (B10) to Glenmont (B11)

Date of Inspection: 10/26/2026

Time of Inspection: 00:30am to 04:00am

Announced (via conference call with Metrorail Information Technology stakeholders)

Risk-Based (Data Review)

Functional Area: Roadway Worker Protection

Hazard Rating: 3D

Overview

On October 26, 2026, while onsite for a WMSC Inspection of Emergency Trip Station (ETS)[1] testing, WMSC Inspectors also carried out a Roadway Worker Protection inspection. The goal of this inspection was to observe rules compliance under the WMATA's Roadway Worker Protection Program, specifically observing overnight work crews to ensure the workers and equipment are compliant with the Roadway Worker Protection Manual, the Metrorail Operating Rulebook (MOR), and the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program.

This is a risk-based inspection based on current data analysis of Improper Roadway Worker Protection (O-23)[2] violations. Since November 2024, roadway worker protection defects continue to statistically demonstrate it to be a key area of safety and one area that requires the inspection program's attention. More recently Improper RWP events are rising. In June 2026 there was one

[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.

[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."

RWP violation, three in July 2026, in August 2026, and five in September 2026.[3] RWP defects comprise about 37% of all WMSC inspection defects.[4] This is up from 33% as of July 2026. Adherence to roadway worker protection rules is critical to the safety of roadway workers and is therefore a continued focus area of the WMSC's oversight activities.

Metrorail certifies roadway workers as proficient in rules and procedures by affixing a special sticker to Metrorail employees' OneBadge[5] so that other personnel may identify that the worker has received the required RWP training and is therefore knowledgeable on the RWP rules.

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

Observation 1

WMSC Inspectors attended the On-Track Safety Briefing (OTSB) and conducted a review of the personal protective equipment (PPE) in use by the roadway work crew. The purpose of On-Track Safety Briefings is to ensure all personnel are aware of potential hazards, mitigations for those hazards, and operational expectations before commencing work, thereby preventing accidents. The On-Track Safety Briefing is completed by the roadway worker in charge and identifies the form of roadway protection, working limits, job tasks and general hazards. The job description for this inspection was Emergency Trip Station (ETS) testing. The working limits were established with Exclusive Track Occupancy (ETO),[6] and

[3] Source: WMSC Safety Events Dashboard (October 30, 2026)

[4] Source: WMSC Inspections Dashboard (October 30, 2026)

[5] WMATA's OneBadge is the official identification method at WMATA and is the only identification card used and recognized by employees and contractors.

[6] Exclusive Track Occupancy (ETO): A method of establishing working limits on controlled track in which the movement authority of trains and other equipment is withheld by the rail traffic controller or interlocking operator or restricted by flagman. The authority for movement of rail vehicles within the working limits rests solely with the RWIC of said limits. (Source: Metrorail Operating Rulebook.)

the inspection activities were conducted without the removal of third rail power. The OTSB was completed and signed by all in attendance.

Defect 1

The On-Track Safety Briefing was conducted and signed by all employees in attendance. Although the status of third rail traction power was reviewed during the On-Track Safety Briefing, the Roadway Worker in Charge failed to check the Power Outage type in the briefing section 2: RWP for Fixed Working Limits. The On-Track Safety Briefing is the written record of the Roadway Worker Protection, hazards and work activities.

Hazard Rating: 3D

Photos

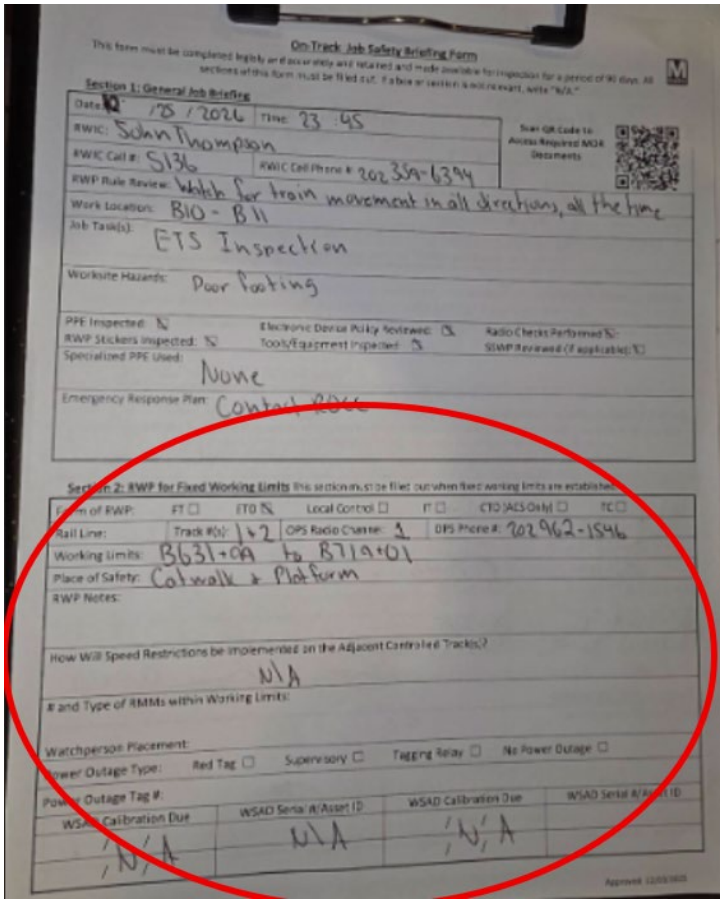


Photo 1: On-Track Safety Briefing Form. Incomplete Section 2 while outlines the type of protection and the fixed working limits.

Defect 2

Section 3: RWP for Mobile Work was completed on the On-Track Safety Briefing form and populated with incomplete or incorrect information. The work assignment and protection for the Emergency Trip Station inspection was identified as Exclusive Track Occupancy. Section 3 of the On-Track Safety Briefing states that it is to be completed for work assignments that use Train Approach Warning (TAW). As a result, the Roadway Worker In Charge failed to state the status of third rail power on the form and filled out a section for a type of protection that was not being used for the work activity (TAW).

Hazard Rating: 3D

Photos

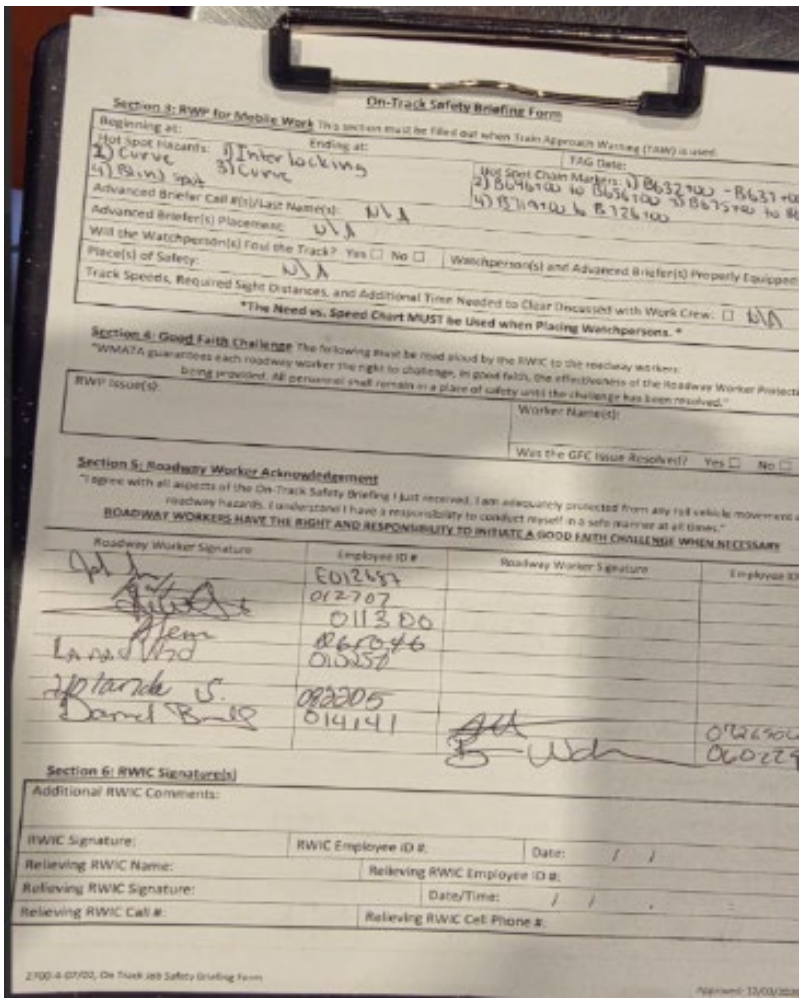


Photo 2: On-Track Safety Briefing Form with incorrect information.

Defect 3

Section 1 of the On-Track Safety Briefing is for General Job briefing and requires the Roadway Worker in Charge to verify and inspect all employees' personal protective equipment. Of the seven employees in attendance at the conclusion of the briefing, the WMSC identified three that were not in compliance with Section 6.6.1.5 of the August 17, 2026, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program (4480-2-02/02): safety footwear. The WMSC informed the Roadway Worker in Charge and Metrorail supervisor in attendance, and this was immediately mitigated.

> 6.6.1.5 of the August 17, 2026, PPE Program – Safety footwear shall have a defined heel when employees are exposed to rough walking surfaces, or when they are utilizing ladders.

Hazard Rating: 3D

Photos



Photo 3: Uncompliant Safety Boot (no defined heel)

Defect 4 (mitigated)

The Roadway Worker in Charge did not check that personnel were in possession of all required personal protective equipment. At the onset of the Emergency Trip Station (ETS) testing, the WMSC observed two Metrorail employees without safety glasses, which is required for Roadway workers, other transit personnel, contractors and visitors. The WMSC notified the Roadway Worker in Charge and the two employees were provided with eye protection before accessing the roadway.

> 1.17 RWPM Required Personal Protective Equipment for On-Track Safety.
>
> Personnel shall be governed by Metrorail's Safety Rules regarding "Required Personal Protective Equipment for On-Track Safety."

PPE	Roadway Worker[1]	Other Transit Personnel[2]	Contractors and Visitors
Hard Hat	R	AR	R3
Safety Glasses	R	R	R
Safety Footwear	R	R	R
High-Visibility Yellow Safety Apparel	R	R	NA

Photo 4: RWPM-27: R represents Required in Table.

Hazard Rating: 3D

Defect 5 (mitigated)

At the conclusion of the Emergency Trip Station (ETS) testing at Glenmont Station (B11), an employee was instructed by the Roadway Worker in Charge to remove the supplemental shunting devices.[7]

The Metrorail Electrical Operations Manual states in section 18.9.2 that High-voltage class O electrical safety gloves must be worn for shunt placement and removal. The WMSC observed an employee going to remove the Supplemental Shunting Device wearing only the insolated electrical safety gloves without the overcover of the leather glove. The leather gloves and rubber gloves are required to be used together and both gloves are necessary to protect the individual. The secondary leather gloves were found in the storage bag and provided to the employee.

Hazard Rating: 3D

Next Steps

Please respond **by Tuesday, November 3, 2026,** to acknowledge receipt and to convey responses to the WMSC regarding what, if any, actions will be or have been taken in response.

[7] Supplemental Shunting Device: A Safety approved wire with clamping devices on both ends that when properly installed is designed to show a track occupancy light on the AIM display and to result in a zero-speed command for Class One (1) rail vehicles. (RWPM – 71.)