



IMPAIRED DRIVING

Task Force Newsletter



Save a Life™
Texas Department of Transportation

At the March 6, 2025, meeting of the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, members discussed the following topics:



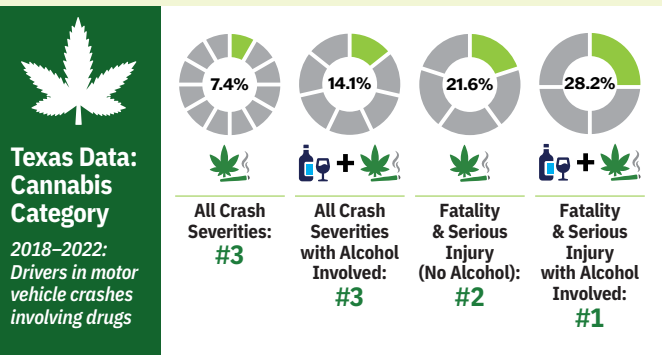
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senate Bill 3: Derived Cannabis Products Ban

Senate Bill 3 (SB3) proposes a sweeping ban on all THC products in Texas, regardless of their source or THC concentration. This includes hemp-derived items that currently comply with the federal limit of 0.3% THC. The bill is designed to close loopholes in the 2019 Texas hemp law, which inadvertently allowed for the sale of psychoactive THC isomers such as Delta-8 and Delta-9 derived from hemp. SB3 has already passed the Senate and is now under review in the House State Affairs Committee—signaling strong legislative momentum and suggesting that, even if a total ban is not enacted, significant new restrictions are likely.

Even with restrictions likely to be in place, it remains crucial to educate the public, particularly regarding the risks associated with combining alcohol and THC products. In response, the TxIDTF has produced three key fact sheets on this issue:

- [Hemp-Derived Consumable Products and the Concern for Children and Adolescents](#)



- [Consumable Hemp Program in Texas – An Overview](#)
- [THC and Alcohol Combined: A Critical Threat to Our Roadways](#)

These fact sheets aim to educate the public and policymakers about the risks and challenges associated with the increasing availability of these products.

IMPAIRED DRIVING ENFORCEMENT TRAINING AND DETECTION



SFST Training Inconsistencies in Texas: A Growing Concern

Originally, the Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) training in Texas was managed under a single agency, ensuring consistency and adherence to nationally recognized standards. However, a policy change, that occurred roughly 20 years ago, opened the door for any certified SFST instructor to conduct the training independently. While this may have expanded access to training, it also eliminated centralized oversight—resulting in wide variation in the quality and accuracy of instruction across the state.

This lack of uniformity is problematic because SFSTs are intended to be administered in a very specific, standardized manner. If officers are not properly trained to conduct these tests exactly as outlined in the NHTSA Manual, the validity of the results can be compromised. This not only undermines law enforcement efforts to identify impaired drivers but can also weaken cases in court, where defense attorneys may challenge the officer's training or test administration.

The implications are serious:

- Public safety is at risk if impaired drivers are not accurately identified and removed from the roads.
- Court outcomes may be jeopardized, with valid arrests potentially dismissed due to improper SFST administration.
- Officers may lack confidence in using the tests, reducing their effectiveness in real-world situations.

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force's stakeholders are actively exploring ways to address this issue, including the potential to reestablish oversight and accountability in SFST training. Ensuring that all officers receive consistent, evidence-based instruction is essential to maintaining the integrity of impaired driving enforcement and protecting the safety of Texas roadways.



Fiesta in San Antonio. Photocredit: <https://fiestasananantonio.org/>

RETAILER ENFORCEMENT

Major Enforcement Operations

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) shared an update on major enforcement efforts aimed at preventing underage alcohol sales and ensuring retailer compliance across the state. Throughout the year, TABC will conduct a series of high-impact operations timed around major events and periods when youth access to alcohol typically increases.

- **Pisano Operations:** January
- **Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo:** February–March
- **Spring Break:** March
- **SXSW Festival:** March
- **Fiesta:** April
- **Back to School:** August–September
- **State Fair of Texas:** September–October
- **Holiday Periods:** Focused enforcement during high-risk times like Labor Day, New Year's Eve, Independence Day, and Memorial Day.

These operations help ensure retailers follow the law and protect communities by reducing underage access to alcohol.



Big Tex at the State Fair of Texas. Photo credit: <https://bigtex.com/>

IMPAIRED DRIVING DATA

DWI Tracking Database

Led by Eva Shipp and Emily Martin of TTT's Road User Safety Program, this multi-agency project is building a statewide, comprehensive impaired driving data system. Funded to collaborate with TxDOT, the TxIDTF, the Texas Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC), and other stakeholders, the effort aligns with key recommendations from the 2022 Texas Impaired Driving Assessment. The project aims to:

- Track DWI cases from citation through completion of treatment or compliance
- Integrate data from multiple systems, including:
 - Crash
 - Driver & Criminal History
 - Citation & Adjudication Records
 - Roadway Data
 - Vehicle Information
 - Injury Surveillance
 - LEADRS (Law Enforcement DWI reporting system)
- Provide timely, accurate data to support education, enforcement, and engineering strategies
- Identify and monitor repeat offenders statewide

The TxIDTF continues to support the project by reviewing the Impaired Driving Critical Pathway and providing input on missing elements, data flow accuracy, timeframes, and unique case considerations. Their insights are helping shape a system that can drive smarter policies and more effective impaired driving interventions across Texas.

RESEARCH

Drug-impaired driving continues to rise on our roadways, posing a significant safety threat. In response, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released the [Drugs and Human Performance Fact Sheets: 2024](#) in December. This update focuses on how psychoactive substances, particularly drug combinations, affect driving performance. It is an essential resource for Drug Recognition Experts (DREs), law enforcement, attorneys, judges, and toxicologists, offering a mix of lab studies, simulations, and real-world case reports.

For a deeper dive into the latest findings, check out the newest [Street Talk Blog](#) by Cinthya Fillips at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.



Please welcome our new members:

- **Chris Heartsill**, Regional Toxicology Liaison, Mid-South Region
- **Andrea Henderson**, Probation and Parole Outreach Liaison, Region 6
- **Brian Swift**, CEO, Tarrant County Medical Society

WELCOME



Addressing Motorcycle Safety in Texas: New Educational Materials for Unlicensed Riders and Law Enforcement

Crash data from Texas reveals a troubling trend: a significant percentage of motorcycle riders killed in roadway crashes each year do not hold a valid motorcycle license. Since 2009, the only way to obtain a motorcycle license in Texas has been by completing an approved motorcycle safety course. This suggests that many unlicensed riders involved in fatal crashes may have lacked formal training in safe riding practices.

To address this issue, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute—through a Traffic Safety Grant sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation—is developing educational materials aimed at unlicensed motorcycle riders, as well as the law enforcement officers and judicial personnel who interact with them.

These materials will include:

- Information for law enforcement officers and municipal judges about the option to dismiss a citation for riding without a license if the rider completes a motorcycle safety course and earns a license.



- A paper and/or digital “tip card” for unlicensed riders, explaining this option and helping them locate motorcycle training schools in their area.

We invite you to complete this [brief survey](#) to share your feedback on whether these materials could benefit your agency, and what formats would be most helpful for your needs. Survey Deadline: May 1.

Please share this opportunity with your network!

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, July 17, 2025



TEXAS
IMPAIRED DRIVING
TASK FORCE

Norris Conference Center

2525 W Anderson Ln. #365
Austin, TX 78757



Newsletter Additions

If you would you like to add anything to the next edition of the newsletter, please send your information to

c-adams@tti.tamu.edu

or e-shields@tti.tamu.edu.



2025 Texas Impaired Driving Forum

We hope you enjoyed your experience at the 2025 Texas Impaired Driving Forum in Austin, TX! You can view presentations from the event [here](#).

We are accepting proposals for speakers/presentations for the 2026 Texas Impaired Driving Forum. Speaker/presentation proposals must be submitted using the form below. Proposals for speakers will be accepted until August 1, 2025. All proposals will be carefully reviewed for applicability to the Texas Impaired Driving Forum audience. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance status by the end of November 2025. Please complete the form [here](#).



Texas Statewide
IMPAIRED
DRIVING FORUM



Texas Impaired Driving Safety Awards

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, in collaboration with the Texas Department of Transportation, is proud to present the *Texas Impaired Driving Safety Awards*. This prestigious award honors and celebrates individuals and organizations that have demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment to the mission of eliminating impaired driving in Texas. Through this competitive process, we recognize those who go above and beyond to make a significant impact in enhancing road safety.

Congratulations to this year's recipients:

- **Judge Laura Barker**, Williamson County Court at Law #2
- **Jessica Frazier**, Comal County District Attorney's Office
- **Sergeant Ryan Huling**, Austin Police Department
- **Officers Alex Delarosa, Josh Mackey, Miguel Estrada, Joe Coronado, and Victora Perry**, Round Rock Police Department (pictured below)
- **Deputy Sheriff Jimmy Bustamante**, Bexar County Sheriff's Office
- **Sergeants Allan Wallace and Ben Shepard**, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission
- **Corporal Daniel Moody**, Jacksboro Police Department



2025 Impaired Driving Safety Award Recipients: Round Rock Police Department DWI Enforcement Team.

Updates from the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC)

This statewide group of stakeholders uses the TRCC as a forum for the planning, coordination, and implementation of projects to improve Texas' traffic records system. The TRCC uses federal "State Traffic Safety Information System Improvement Grants (405c)" and other funds to promote projects to improve the accessibility, accuracy, completeness, consistency, timeliness, and uniformity of the traffic records systems in Texas. These projects include efforts to improve individual databases as well as to promote linkages between the core traffic records systems through the development of interfaces to improve direct business needs and integration to improve data analysis.

Join the [TRCC](#) email list here.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY

- [TRCC Meeting](#)
May 7 | Virtual
- [IPTM Symposium on Traffic Safety](#)
May 19–22 | Orlando, Florida
- [RISE25 Conference](#)
May 28–31 | Kissimmee, Florida

JULY

- [ATSIP Traffic Records Forum](#)
July 6–9 | Boston, Massachusetts
- [TRCC Meeting](#)
July 16 | Virtual
- [ODC: Workplace Impairment Training](#)
July 15 | Virtual
- [TxIDTF Meeting](#)
July 17 | Austin, Texas

AUGUST

- [GHSA Annual Meeting](#)
August 23–27 | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

SEPTEMBER

- [Texas DRE: Specialized DWI Training "Don't Fear the Darkside"](#)
September 2–3 | Georgetown Texas

Also, see the full list of FREE Impaired Driving Training & Detection Courses at [Texas DRE](#) and [Texas SFST](#).