



IMPAIRED DRIVING

Task Force Newsletter



Save a Life™
Texas Department of Transportation

At the **April 17, 2025**, meeting of the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, members discussed the following topics:

Regional Toxicology Liaisons Project

The Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT), in collaboration with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), has launched the [Regional Toxicology Liaisons \(RTL\) Project](#) to improve the effectiveness of drug-impaired driving investigations across the U.S. This initiative focuses on increasing support for forensic laboratories, fostering collaboration among traffic safety stakeholders, and promoting consistency in toxicology testing and reporting.



A key component of the project is the **State Toxicology Assessment**, a one-day, in-state event designed to bring together toxicology laboratories, traffic safety partners, and impaired driving stakeholders. Facilitated by the RTLs, these collaborative sessions aim to:

- Promote open dialogue around toxicology testing practices and challenges
- Explore barriers to effective testing, reporting, and communication
- Discuss the impact of state statutes and legal frameworks on testing procedures
- Identify available resources and strategies to close testing or reporting gaps
- Review how toxicology results are communicated and understood by law enforcement and traffic safety officials
- Encourage exploration of alternative testing matrices (e.g., oral fluids, blood, urine)

These assessments help build stronger partnerships across sectors, improve laboratory coordination with other agencies, and ultimately enhance the overall response to drug-impaired driving. Feedback and findings from the assessments are compiled into a report with actionable recommendations. State partners, including the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force (TxIDTF), will support the RTLs by helping to connect them with local stakeholders and advance follow-up actions based on the assessment outcomes.

For more information, contact Chris Heartsill at chris@soft-tox.org.



Check Out The Street Talk Blog!

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force's Street Talk Blog is your hub for the latest insights and strategies in the fight against impaired driving. From cutting-edge research to interviews with leading experts, the blog highlights best practices that make a real difference on Texas roads. Explore the [Street Talk Blog](#) today—and be sure to bookmark it for ongoing updates!

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.



Legislative Update

The TxIDTF has been closely monitoring several key bills from the 2025 Texas Legislative Session related to impaired driving and public safety. The following bills have been sent to the Governor for signature or veto. These will continue to be tracked and reported to the TxIDTF, with ongoing discussions about their potential implications:

- ★ **HB 46** – Relating to the medical use of low-THC cannabis under the administration of the Texas Compassionate-Use Program; requiring registration.
- ★ **HB413** – Relating to the release of certain defendants detained in jail pending trial.
- ★ **HB2017** – Relating to increasing the criminal penalty and changing the eligibility for community supervision, mandatory supervision, and parole for certain persons convicted of intoxication manslaughter.
- ★ **HB4215** – Relating to the regulation of delivery network companies; requiring an occupational permit; authorizing a fee.
- ★ **SB 3** – Relating to the regulation of products derived from hemp, including consumable hemp products and the hemp-derived cannabinoids contained in those products; requiring occupational licenses and permits; imposing fees; creating criminal offenses; authorizing an administrative penalty. - **VETOED**



- ★ **SB 296** – Relating to driving safety or motorcycle operator training course dismissal.
- ★ **SB 650** – Relating to requiring the use of electronically readable information to verify a purchaser's age in the retail sale of alcoholic beverages.
- ★ **SB 745** – Relating to enhancing the criminal penalty for the offense of intoxication manslaughter in certain circumstances.
- ★ **SB 826** – Relating to the operation of a motor vehicle in a school crossing zone while intoxicated; increasing a criminal penalty.
- ★ **SB 1886** – Relating to the execution of a search warrant for taking a blood specimen from certain persons in certain intoxication offenses.

Stay tuned for ongoing updates as these bills move forward.

PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: Advancing NHTSA Recommendations



The TxIDTF Prevention Subcommittee is making strides in strengthening impaired driving prevention efforts by actively working on two key recommendations from [NHTSA's 2022 Texas Impaired Driving Assessment](#). These efforts aim to create more coordinated, community-based responses and ensure prevention strategies are integrated into systems where they can have the greatest impact.

Supporting School Resource Officers (SROs)

Recognizing the critical role SROs can play in early prevention, the Subcommittee is working to build stronger connections with school-based law enforcement professionals. As part of this effort, members will attend the [National Association of School Resource Officers \(NASRO\) Conference](#) in Grapevine from July 6–8, where they will host an informational booth. This direct engagement will provide opportunities to:

- Learn how SROs currently address impaired driving-related concerns in their schools.
- Explore how TxIDTF and its partners can support SROs with tools, messaging, and programming tailored to youth prevention.
- Identify potential partnerships with school districts, educational leaders, and law enforcement.

Strengthening Safe Community Coalitions

The Subcommittee is also expanding collaboration between traffic safety programs and underage substance use prevention coalitions. These partnerships are essential for building consistent, unified messaging and amplifying outreach across Texas communities. Future efforts include:

- Encouraging regular networking and shared initiatives among coalition partners.
- Developing a new infographic and fact sheet that ties together impaired driving, alcohol use, and substance use prevention strategies.
- Aligning education and outreach efforts across local and regional programs to reduce duplication and maximize impact.

By working across sectors and tapping into trusted community networks, the Subcommittee is helping to ensure that prevention messages are reaching broader, more diverse audiences.



Updates from the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC)

The TxIDTF and the TRCC are partners in the push to improve Texas impaired driving data. While the TxIDTF brings a wide variety of impaired driving partners and stakeholders, the TRCC focuses on improving 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](#).



The next meeting:
Thursday, July 17, 2025

Norris Conference Center
2525 W Anderson Ln. #365
Austin, TX 78757

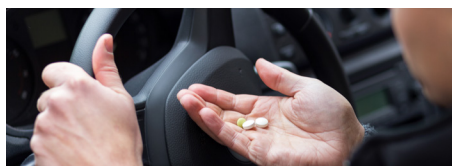


Upcoming Events



JUNE

- **TDCAA: Rolling Stoned – Investigating & Prosecuting the Drugged Driver**
June 25 | Bridgeport, Texas
- **TDCAA: Worst Case Scenario – Impaired Driving Cases from Crash to Courtroom**
June 27 | Fort Worth, Texas



JULY

- **ATSIP Traffic Records Forum**
July 6–9 | Boston, Massachusetts
- **TDCAA: Prosecutor Trial Skills Course**
July 13–18 | Austin, Texas
- **ODC: Workplace Impairment Training**
July 15 | Virtual
- **TRCC Meeting**
July 16 | Virtual
- **TxIDTF Meeting**
July 17 | Austin, Texas
- **Impaired Driving Symposium**
July 30–31 | Denton, Texas

AUGUST

- **IACP Impaired Driving & Traffic Safety Conference**
August 4–6 | Chicago, Illinois
- **NSCL Legislative Summit**
August 4–6 | Boston, Massachusetts
- **GHSA Annual Meeting**
August 23–27 | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

SEPTEMBER

- **Texas DRE: Specialized DWI Training “Don’t Fear the Darkside”**
September 2–3 | Georgetown Texas

Judicial Training Updates: Supporting Judges in Impaired Driving Education

The Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ) continues to play a vital role in advancing impaired driving education for judges across the state. Throughout 2025, the Center has provided dynamic, evidence-based training opportunities designed to strengthen judicial understanding of impaired driving laws, trends, and courtroom challenges.

Recent Highlights:

- **Criminal Justice Conference – Georgetown (Feb. 20):** Featured focused sessions on complex and emerging topics such as DWI arrests on military bases, crossfading (polydrug use), and key insights on the Interstate Compact.
- **DWI Court Team Basic and Advanced Training – Galveston (Mar. 3):** This specialized event brought together entire DWI Court Teams—judges, prosecutors, probation officers, and treatment providers—for collaborative learning through real-world case scenarios.

- **Regional Conferences – (Apr. 7 & May 12):** Covered DWI discovery issues, mental health and impaired driving, mandatory traffic fines, ignition interlocks, and occupational driver’s licenses.

Upcoming Trainings:

- **DWI Summits – Rockwall (June 5) & Jourdan (June 27):** These events will address pressing issues such as pre-trial issues, ignition interlocks, and traffic-related fines and occupational driver’s license restrictions.
- **2025 Impaired Driving Symposium – Denton (July 30):** A deep-dive event featuring sessions on K-9 searches, oral fluid testing, mental health considerations, and facilitated case-based learning.

Looking Ahead:

Key issues shaping future judicial training include:

- Inconsistent traffic fine collection, which can impact program funding and judicial discretion.
- The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Smith v. Arizona*, which is reshaping how forensic evidence must be presented in court by emphasizing defendants’ right to cross-examine the analysts who conducted the tests.

As impaired driving cases grow more complex, TCJ remains committed to equipping Texas judges with the knowledge, tools, and collaboration opportunities they need to navigate evolving legal and scientific landscapes.