



IMPAIRED DRIVING

Task Force Newsletter



Save a Life™
Texas Department of Transportation

Boating While Intoxicated

Cody Jones, Assistant Commander Game Warden and Boating Law Administrator, shared important insights on recreational boating in Texas, which has a significant economic impact of \$11.8 billion annually and involves 4.5 million boaters. Texas has over 554,000 registered motor-powered vessels and approximately 359,000 unregistered vessels like kayaks and paddleboards. About 1 in 33 Texans own a vessel, and 1 in 54 own motorboats.

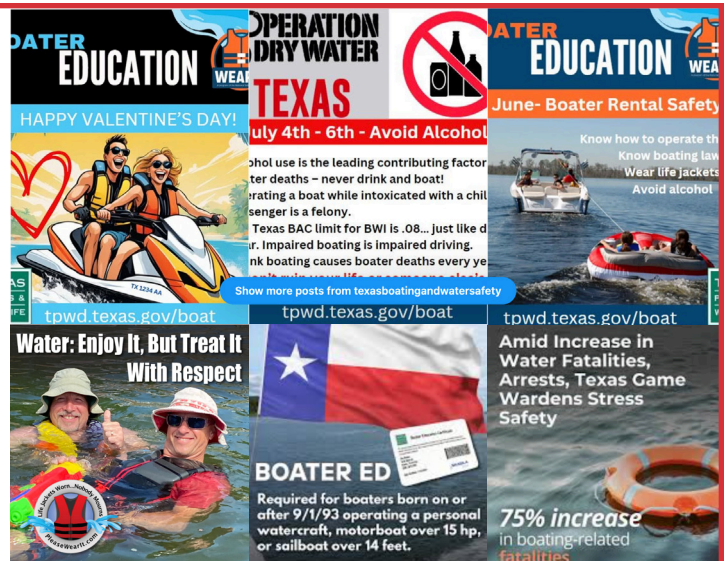
Alcohol remains a leading factor in fatal boating accidents. Boating While Intoxicated (BWI), defined under Penal Code Chapter 49, applies not only to operators but also passengers engaging in activities such as skiing, surfing, or wakeboarding. Taking sobriety seriously on the water is crucial to protect all passengers and operators.



The national [Operation Dry Water](#) campaign raises awareness and boosts enforcement around

boating under the influence. In 2024, Texas reported 32 BWIs, 3 DWIs (related to driving after boating), and 5 boating fatalities. In 2025, so far, there have been 34 BWIs, 4 DWIs, and 1 fatality. Agencies are encouraged to participate in this campaign.

Additionally, [Seated Standardized Field Sobriety Tests](#) (SFSTs)—validated for use on water without requiring standing balance—are being promoted, with ongoing efforts to educate judges and prosecutors on their effectiveness.



(Above): Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's social media posts regarding boating safety. (Below): A couple stops to drink beers on the lake.



Newsletter Additions

If you would you like to add anything to the next edition of the newsletter, please send your information to c-hrncir@tti.tamu.edu.

The next meeting of the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force will be held on **November 6, 2025**.

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Austin
6505 N I-35, Austin, Texas 78752



**TEXAS
IMPAIRED DRIVING
TASK FORCE**



Retailer Enforcement Update: Fiscal Year 2025

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) provided an overview of enforcement activities and priorities for fiscal year 2025, with a continued focus on high-risk locations, especially those with prior complaints or on priority watchlists.

During FY25, TABC received 2,297 complaints from the public. TABC encourages the public to report suspected violations involving alcohol retailers. To file a complaint, individuals should provide the business name and address, details of the suspected violation, witness and suspect contact information (if available), and the date and time of the incident. Reports may be submitted anonymously and can be filed:

- **In person** at any local TABC office
- **By email:** complaints@tabc.texas.gov
- **By fax:** 512-206-3449
- **By mail:**

Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission
Attn: Enforcement Division
P.O. Box 13127, Austin, TX 78711

These efforts help ensure alcohol laws are enforced consistently to protect public safety across Texas.

Key TABC Performance Highlights:



34,297
Number of Inspections

8,632

Number of
Undercover
Operations



60%

Statewide Retailer
Compliance Rate

7,076

Number of
Minor Sale
Operations



15%

Statewide Retailer
Detection Rate

814

Number
of Administrative
Violations



494

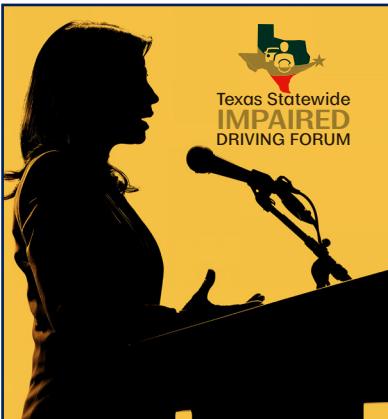
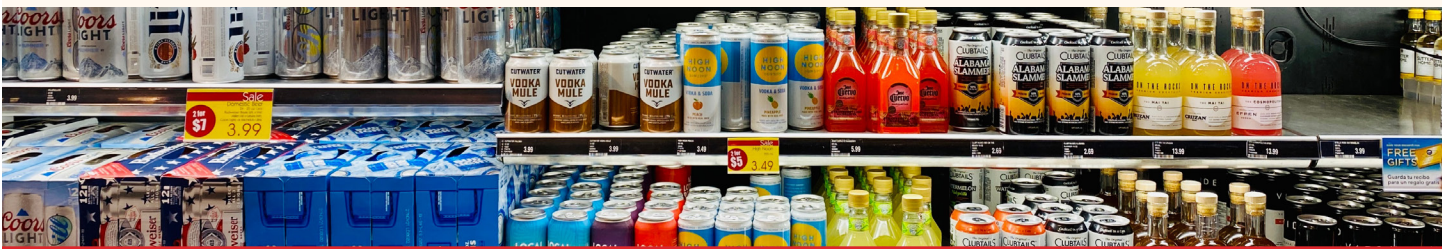
Number of
Criminal Violations



5,401

Number of Pre-Licensing
Assessments

Editorial photo credit (below): Jammy Jean, stock.adobe.com



2026 Texas Impaired Driving Forum

We are now accepting proposals for speakers and presentations for the 2026 Texas Impaired Driving Forum. If you are interested in presenting, please submit your proposal using the form linked below. All applicants will be notified of their selection status by the end of November 2025.

[Submit a Proposal](#)

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation, will also present the Texas Impaired Driving Safety Awards at the Forum. These awards recognize individuals and organizations that go above and beyond in their efforts to eliminate impaired driving in Texas.

[Nominate a Traffic Safety Champion](#)



Legislative Update

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force (TxIDTF) has been closely tracking key bills from the 89th Texas Legislature related to impaired driving and public safety. Several important bills have been signed into law, including:

- **HB 46:** Relating to the medical use of low-THC cannabis under and the administration of the Texas Compassionate-Use Program; requiring registration.
- **HB 2017:** Relating to increasing the criminal penalty and changing the eligibility for community supervision, mandatory supervision, and parole for certain persons convicted of intoxication manslaughter.
- **HB 4215:** Relating to the regulation of delivery network companies; requiring an occupational permit; authorizing a fee.
- **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.

For detailed summaries and implications of these bills, click [here](#).

The special legislative session began on July 21st. The Legislative Subcommittee will continue to monitor and provide updates on any additional impaired driving legislation as it progresses.

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.

Learn more about the TRCC [here](#), or [join the newsletter list](#) to stay informed on the latest developments.



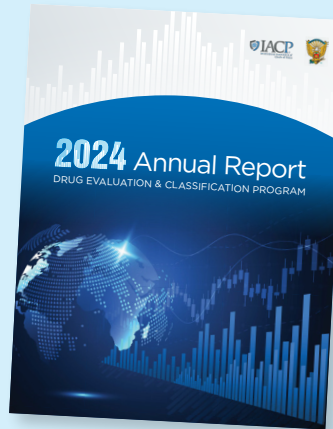


At the July 17, 2025, meeting of the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, members discussed the following topics:

Impaired Driving Enforcement Training and Detection

Texas continues to make strides in impaired driving enforcement and training. In fiscal year (FY) 2025, agencies across the state remained actively engaged in Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Schools, in-service classes, Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE), and specialized DWI training programs.

According to the latest [Annual Report from the International Association of Chiefs of Police \(IACP\)](#), Texas is trending positively compared to other states, even though fewer enforcement evaluations were reported this year. The DRE Data System shows year-over-year increases in evaluation and toxicology data submissions as more DREs complete their re-certification process.



DRE Evaluations Table	
Year	Totals
2022	635
2023	766
2024	738
2025 (YTD)	340

Additional training initiatives, including Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST), Friday classes, and Drug Impairment Training for Educational Professionals (DITEP), also show consistent participation. These ongoing efforts underscore Texas's statewide commitment to improving impaired driving detection, enforcement, and road safety.

Currently, there are:



425
Certified DREs



55
DRE Instructors

147
Participating
Agencies

Addressing Language Barriers in DWI Education

Cinthya Fillips, Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), led a discussion on the challenges faced by defendants with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), particularly those who do not speak English or Spanish, in accessing court-ordered DWI education classes. Each year, approximately 5,500 DWI cases in Texas involve LEP individuals who are non-Spanish speakers.

Current regulations require a minimum of three participants for a class to be held, and instruction must be delivered in a single language. While accommodations are required for LEP participants, the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) does not specify how these should be implemented. Currently, only English and Spanish DWI education content is licensed through the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR).

Efforts are underway to engage TDLR in the conversation and explore solutions to ensure equitable access to DWI education for all language groups. A [detailed report](#) on this issue is available.



Impaired Driving Data

AASHTOWARE data dashboards are now available, and they provide quick access to valuable impaired driving information. These dashboards enable identification of high-risk areas, supporting targeted prevention and enforcement

efforts. Additionally, work is in progress to integrate toxicology and crash data for more comprehensive analysis.

To request access to the AASHTOWARE data dashboards, please email trf_crash@txdot.gov.

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!

Drawn to Justice: Austin Police Department's Bold Approach to DWI Enforcement

In this *Driving Change* podcast episode, Sgt. Ryan Huling of the Austin Police Department discusses the department's innovative DWI strategies, including the *365 No Refusal Initiative* and the *Qualified Technician Program*—a groundbreaking effort that trains officers to safely and legally draw blood from DWI suspects, a task traditionally performed by Emergency Medical Services.



Unpacking the DUI Puzzle—Who's Driving Impaired and Why It Matters

A [recent study](#) (Goings et al., 2023) revealed that over 20 million Americans—11% of the U.S. population (age 16 and older)—drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs each year. This post explores the intersection of impaired driving, mental health, and public safety, offering a deeper look at who's driving impaired and what that means for our communities.

DWI Tracking Database

Led by Emily Martin and Eva Shipp of TTI's Road User Safety Program, this multi-agency project is building a framework for a statewide, comprehensive impaired driving data system, in alignment with key recommendations from the 2022 Texas Impaired Driving Assessment.

In its early phases, the project will focus on aggregate-level data to establish foundational insights. Over time, the system is intended to evolve to include individual-level data capable of tracking every DWI incident—from the initial citation through the completion of all court-imposed compliance and/or treatment requirements.

The TTI team provided the IDTF with an update on project activities including:

- National activities including an upcoming NHTSA report on the current state of impaired driving tracking systems nationally
- Work toward defining the “ideal state” for the Texas impaired driving tracking system, including identifying and prioritizing data variables and potential sources
- Developing performance measures that can be implemented in the short-, medium-, and long-term
- Investigating potential data sources and published reports that can inform the system's design

Volunteers Needed!

The TTI team is looking for subject matter experts to help answer questions about the DWI process and any data that might be generated. No technical knowledge is needed. They are looking for prosecutors, judges, probation, treatment, prevention providers, and any other interested parties to serve as sounding boards and guide the development of the framework.

Please contact Jessica VanDenBogaert at j-vandenbogaert@tti.tamu.edu for more information.





Attitudes Toward Driving After Cannabis Use: A Systematic Review (2024)

A recently published systematic review and meta-analysis of 42 studies explored public perceptions of Driving After Cannabis Use (DACU). While 69% of respondents viewed DACU negatively, 31% did not consider it dangerous or impairing. Cannabis users were notably less likely to see DACU as risky compared to non-users or mixed groups. Interestingly, attitudes were consistent regardless of age, country (U.S. vs. Canada), or the legal status of cannabis.

The study calls for improvements in public education and enforcement strategies, the development of validated and standardized survey tools, and more precise survey language—particularly regarding timeframes and THC potency—to better capture public perceptions.

Attitudes Toward Driving After Cannabis Use



*Improve public
education and
enforcement strategies*



*Develop validated,
standardized survey
tools*



*Use neutral, specific
language in surveys
(e.g., "driving after
cannabis use" vs. "under
the influence")*



*Clarify timeframes
and THC potency in
questions*

2025 Texas Impaired Driving Plan – Coming Soon!

The TxIDTF, in partnership with TxDOT, has completed the revised 2025 Texas Impaired Driving Plan for submission to NHTSA. Once approved, the finalized Plan will be made available on the [TxIDTF website](#). Stay tuned for its release!



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**FEB.
23–27
2026**

Texas Impaired Driving State Assessment

The Texas Impaired Driving Assessment will be held February 23–27, 2026 (location TBD). Facilitated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), this assessment offers an in-depth review of Texas' impaired driving program. A panel of subject-matter experts will examine program components, recognize strengths and accomplishments, and provide recommendations for improvement.



UPCOMING EVENTS!

SEPTEMBER

- [Texas DRE: Specialized DWI Training “Don’t Fear the Darkside”](#)
September 2–3 | Georgetown Texas
- [TRCC: Annual Stakeholder Meeting](#)
September 4 | Virtual
- [TDCAA: Legislative Update](#)
September 4 | Fort Worth, Texas
- [TDCAA: Rolling Stoned – Investigating & Prosecuting the Drugged Driver](#)
September 5 | Kyle, Texas
- [TDCAA: Legislative Update](#)
September 5 | San Antonio, Texas
- [TDCAA: Guarding Texas Highways – Revisiting Impaired Driving Investigation & Prosecution](#)
September 10 | Georgetown, Texas
- [TDCAA: Legislative Update](#)
September 22 | Round Rock, Texas
- [TDCAA: Annual Criminal & Civil Law Conference](#)
September 22–25 | Round Rock, Texas
- [MADD: Move With MADD](#)
September 27 | Houston, Texas

OCTOBER

- [MADD: Move With MADD](#)
October 11 | San Antonio, Texas
- [Texas DRE: Specialized DWI Training “Don’t Fear the Darkside”](#)
October 14–15 | Schertz, Texas
- [IACP: IACP Annual Conference & Exposition](#)
October 18–21 | Denver, Colorado

NOVEMBER

- [MADD: Move With MADD](#)
November 8 | Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

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

