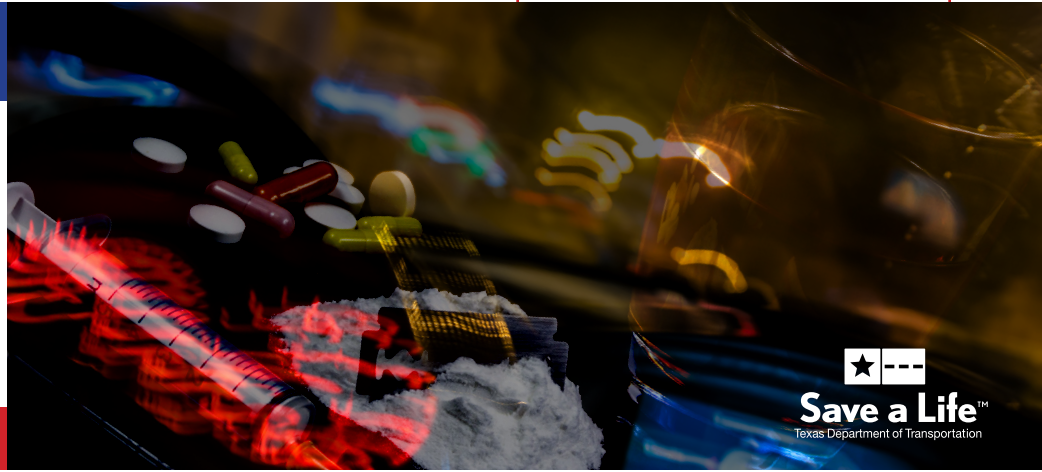




IMPAIRED DRIVING

Task Force Newsletter



Save a Life
Texas Department of Transportation

National Recognition:

2025 GHSA Roadway Safety Award Recipient

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force is pleased to highlight a recent honor presented at the **2025 Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) Annual Meeting**. At this national event, **Debra Coffey** received the **Kathryn J.R. Swanson Public Service Award** in recognition of her long standing contributions to roadway safety advancement and impaired driving prevention.

GHSA highlighted Coffey's decades of work supporting ignition interlock expansion, improving alcohol monitoring programs, and strengthening impaired driving legislation. Her leadership has contributed to the adoption of ignition interlock laws in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, resulting in more than 300,000 devices installed nationwide — a milestone that continues to support safer roads and reduce recidivism.

Additional accomplishments recognized during the award presentation include founding the Safety and Advocacy for Empowerment (SAFE) Coalition, advising the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators on ignition interlock best practices, and testifying before legislative bodies across the country to support impaired driving countermeasures. Coffey also serves as Chair of the National Alliance to Stop Impaired Driving.

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force is fortunate to have a leader like Debra Coffey among its members because of her decades of dedication, national influence, and unwavering commitment to saving lives strengthens the work of every partner at the table. Her contributions elevate the group's collective impact and continue to inspire progress toward safer roadways for all Texans.



*Congratulations,
Debra, on this
well-deserved award!*

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Spotlight: National Recognition for Longtime Roadway Safety Leader**
- **Statewide Updates: Data, Policy, and Program Developments**
- **Street Talk Blog Highlights**
- **Forum 2026: Registration Open & Final Preparations**
- **Texas Impaired Driving Assessment: Testimony Week Wrap Up**
- **Upcoming Events & Training Opportunities**



The next meeting:
March 26, 2026

**Embassy Suites by Hilton
– San Marcos Hotel &
Conference Center**
1001 E. McCarty Lane
San Marcos, TX 78666



STATEWIDE PROGRAM &

POLICY UPDATES

At the [February 5, 2026](#), meeting of the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, members discussed the following topics:

TxDOT Behavioral Traffic Safety Updates

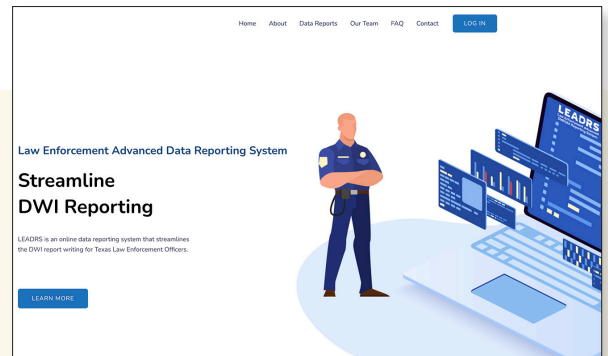
The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is broadening its impaired driving safety efforts by adding a focus on drug impaired driving, in addition to its existing alcohol related messaging. This expanded approach will be supported through newly awarded contracts with external communications partners, who will help develop and deliver targeted public awareness campaigns.

In addition, TxDOT shared several updates aimed at improving the overall grant cycle. These enhancements include more structured opportunities for collaboration between applicants and TxDOT program managers, aimed at improving proposal quality and alignment with program goals and extended submission timelines and giving applicants additional time to prepare comprehensive proposals and respond to guidance. These changes are intended to streamline the process, support higher quality applications, and strengthen the effectiveness of funded traffic safety initiatives.

Data & System Enhancements

Texas continues to strengthen its impaired-driving data systems. Recent updates include improvements to the CR-4 crash report form, expansion of [LEADRS](#) with new dashboards and Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) integration, and ongoing analytics pilots with local agencies. Work is also underway to better connect crash, arrest, and court data across statewide systems.

These system enhancements are helping agencies capture clearer impairment-related crash data, reduce reporting burdens, identify enforcement gaps, and build a more complete statewide picture of impaired-driving trends. Notably, the updated CR-4 form now includes two new mandatory questions for fatal and serious-injury crashes, requiring officers to indicate whether they believe the crash was alcohol-related, drug-related, or both. These additions are expected to produce much clearer statewide data by the time the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) closes out the dataset in 2029.



In addition, all DRE evaluations must now be entered into LEADRS beginning January 1, 2026, further strengthening toxicology and enforcement data integration. Together with expanded automated court-record uploads, these enhancements will continue to increase data accuracy and support stronger planning and decision-making across partner agencies.

Hemp & THC Regulatory Activity

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) are considering regulatory updates related to consumable hemp, youth access, labeling requirements, and ongoing enforcement gaps. Recent discussions highlighted several significant developments. [TABC](#) has released rules, and multiple stakeholders submitted written and verbal comments. A continued recommendation was emphasized for a 25+ age restriction, citing research on brain development and psychosis-related risks.

[DSHS](#) has also released draft rules (Title 25, Health Services, pages 71–85), which propose substantial changes, including a dramatic increase in licensing fees—from roughly \$150 to \$5,000–\$20,000 per location. Despite these changes, concerns remain about limited enforcement capacity and funding, while many intoxicating hemp products continue to remain on shelves due to existing loopholes. At the federal level, a major loophole is scheduled to close in November 2026.

Additional updates include implementation of [SB 2024](#), which removed intoxicating vape products from store shelves; compliance monitoring and law enforcement



training are ongoing. Agencies also clarified that businesses must hold separate alcohol and cannabis-related licenses, and although TABC cannot directly regulate cannabis licensing, it can take administrative action against alcohol licenses. Under current code, non-compliance involving cannabis products could place a business's alcohol license at risk. Lastly, agencies are still working to determine an effective model for conducting compliance checks across jurisdictions.



Prosecution & Judicial Developments

Clay Abbott, Texas' Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP), reported on statewide trends and updates based on discussions from the annual [Prosecutor Task Force meeting](#). He noted significant post-pandemic recovery in prosecutorial staffing and impaired-driving case processing. Prosecutor numbers, which had dropped to roughly 2,200 during the COVID period, have now rebounded to nearly 3,800 statewide, easing caseload pressures and contributing to improved DWI prosecution rates in rural jurisdictions.

Mr. Abbott shared additional operational updates, including a strong caution against using roadside oral-fluid/saliva testing for arrest decisions, emphasizing that the technology is better suited for post-arrest applications, such as probation or bond compliance. He also highlighted improvements in toxicology turnaround times, minimal complaints about the Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) program, and growing availability of DREs statewide. These trends reflect meaningful progress in rebuilding prosecution capacity and improving the handling of impaired-driving cases statewide.



Street Talk Blog Highlights

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force’s [Street Talk Blog](#) is your hub for the latest insights, research spotlights, and practical strategies in the fight against impaired driving. From emerging trends to expert perspectives, the blog highlights best practices that make a meaningful difference on Texas roads.

Explore the *Street Talk Blog* today — and be sure to bookmark it for ongoing updates!

Recent Highlights Include:

- [The Morning After – Public Perceptions of Hangover Impaired Driving](#)
- [Young Adults, Crossfading, and Dangerous Driving](#)
- [A New World of Impaired Driving Prevention Through AI Chatbot Simulations](#)
- [Rideshare and Safe Ride Programs: Know the Difference](#)
- [Picture This: Cautionary Measures on Prescription Drugs](#)

2026 TEXAS IMPAIRED DRIVING FORUM

March 25, 2026 • Embassy Suites, San Marcos

The Texas Impaired Driving Forum will take place on **March 25, 2026**, at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos. The Forum brings together statewide partners from law enforcement, public health, prevention, prosecution, toxicology, research, and community organizations for a full day of learning and collaboration. Sessions will explore impaired driving trends, evidence based strategies, and innovative approaches that support safer roadways across Texas.

Event details, agenda information, and hotel accommodations may be found on the [Forum webpage](#).



TEXAS IMPAIRED DRIVING ASSESSMENT

Testimony Week Completed & Final Report In Progress

Texas completed its in person testimony sessions for the statewide Impaired Driving Assessment on **February 23–25**.

Attendees shared program strengths, operational challenges, and opportunities for alignment across state systems. The assessment team is in the final stages of completing the report, which is expected to be published later this spring.



To those who participated, you demonstrated exceptional communication, analytical thinking, and subject matter expertise. Your leadership and professionalism are invaluable to your organizations and to the state’s impaired driving countermeasures program. On behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation, Behavioral Traffic Safety Division, thank you for your time, expertise, and honest perspectives. Your work will have a lasting impact on impaired driving prevention and response efforts across Texas.



UPCOMING EVENTS & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



MARCH

- [2026 Vermont Highway Safety Conference](#)
March 24, 2026 | Killington, VT
- [2026 Texas Statewide Impaired Driving Forum](#)
March 25, 2026 | San Marcos, TX
- [TDCAA: Rolling Stoned: Investigating & Prosecuting the Drugged Driver](#)
March 25, 2026 | Richmond, TX
- [Texas Impaired Driving \(TxIDTF\) Task Force Quarterly Meeting](#)
March 26, 2026 | San Marcos, TX

APRIL

- [TDCAA: Worst Case Scenario: Impaired Driving Cases from Crash to Courtroom](#)
April 1, 2026 | Abilene, TX
- [DITEP: Kilgore Free 16-Hour Course](#)
April 1-2, 2026 | Kilgore, TX
- [International Association for Chemical Testing, Annual Conference](#)
Cincinnati, OH | April 12-27, 2026
- [2026 Lifesavers Conference on Road Safety](#)
April 19-21, 2026 | Baltimore, MD
- [TDCAA: Guarding Texas Highways: Revisiting Impaired Driving Investigation & Prosecution](#)
April 24, 2026 | Houston



MAY

- [Worst Case Scenario: Impaired Driving Cases from Crash to Courtroom](#)
May 1, 2026 | Nacogdoches, TX
- [Guarding Texas Highways: Revisiting Impaired Driving Investigation & Prosecution](#)
May 8, 2026 | Hillsboro, TX
- [Institute of Police Technology and Management \(IPTM\) Symposium on Traffic Safety](#)
May 18-21, 2026 | Lake Buena Vista, FL
- [Traffic Record Coordinating Committee \(TRCC\) Quarterly Meeting](#)
May 27, 2026 | Virtual

JUNE

- [DITEP: Lexington Free 16-Hour Course](#)
June 3-4, 2026 | Lexington, TX
- [DITEP: Abilene Free 16-Hour Course](#)
June 16-17 | Abilene, TX

JULY

- [TxDOT Traffic Safety Conference](#)
July 14-17, 2026 | Addison, TX
- [All Rise RISE26 Conference](#)
July 20-23, 2026 | Nashville, TN
- [Traffic Record Coordinating Committee \(TRCC\) Quarterly Meeting](#)
July 29, 2026 | Virtual

AUGUST

- [Association of Transportation Safety Information Professionals \(ATSIP\) 2026 Traffic Records Forum](#)
August 2-5 | New Orleans, LA
- [Texas Impaired Driving Task Force \(TxIDTF\) Quarterly Meeting](#)
August 6, 2026 | Pflugerville, TX
- [Rolling Stoned: Investigating & Prosecuting the Drugged Driver](#)
August 7, 2026 | Seymour, TX
- [Rolling Stoned: Investigating & Prosecuting the Drugged Driver](#)
August 29, 2026 | Richmond, TX
- [2026 International Association of Chiefs of Police \(IACP\) Impaired Driving and Traffic Safety \(IDTS\) Conference](#)
August 21-23, 2026 | Anaheim, California
- [2026 National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders \(NAWHSL\) Annual Meeting](#)
August 27-29, 2026 | Minneapolis, MN
- [Rolling Stoned: Investigating & Prosecuting the Drugged Driver](#)
August 21, 2026 | Tyler
- [Rolling Stoned: Investigating & Prosecuting the Drugged Driver](#)
August 28, 2026 | Dallas

SEPTEMBER

- [Governor's Highway Traffic Safety \(GHSA\) 2026 Annual Meeting](#)
August 29-September 2, 2026 | Minneapolis, MN
- [International Association of Chiefs of Police \(IACP\) Annual Conference 2026](#)
October 24-27, 2026 | Orlando, FL
- [NASID National Conference](#)
April 27-29, 2027 | Arlington, VA (Save the Date)

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



Newsletter Additions

Have an initiative, new resource, event, or accomplishment to highlight?

Send your updates to Courtney Hrcncir (c-hrcncir@tti.tamu.edu) for consideration in the next TxIDTF newsletter.