



IMPAIRED DRIVING

Task Force Newsletter



Save a Life™
Texas Department of Transportation

Spotlight: 2026 Texas Traffic Safety Awards

The Texas Traffic Safety Awards recognize individuals and organizations whose leadership, innovation and commitment have made a meaningful impact on roadway safety. Awards are presented to law enforcement officers and traffic safety professionals across five categories. Texas Impaired Driving Task Force (TxIDTF) administrator, Christine Adams, received the award for the Traffic Safety Professional in the Impaired Driving Category. The award recognizes leadership and collaborative efforts that advance impaired driving prevention through research, education, public health initiatives, outreach and partnerships.

Christine Adams is an Associate Research Scientist at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, in the Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies. She has served as the administrator for the TxIDTF for five years, in partnership with the Texas



Christine Adams was recognized for her contributions to roadway safety during the 2026 Texas Traffic Safety Conference, hosted by the Texas Department of Transportation. Photo credit: Carlos Champion.

Department of Transportation (TxDOT), fostering stakeholder engagement to reduce incidents of impaired driving and improve roadway and community safety. Her work focuses on collaboration between stakeholders to develop and deploy practical strategies that strengthen systems and promote public safety initiatives.

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Newsletter Additions

Have an initiative, new resource, event, or accomplishment to highlight? Send your updates to Courtney Hrnir (c-hrnir@tti.tamu.edu) for consideration in the next TxIDTF newsletter.





At the August 6, 2026, meeting of the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, members discussed the following topics:

STATEWIDE PROGRAM & POLICY UPDATES

TxDOT Behavioral Traffic Safety Updates

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) provided several updates related to highway safety planning, grant management, and impaired driving initiatives. Members were recognized for their significant contributions to both the Texas Impaired Driving Program Technical Assessment and the 2026 Impaired Driving Strategic Plan. Task Force participation and collaboration were highlighted as key factors in the successful completion of these statewide efforts.

TxDOT reported that the FY 2027 Triennial Highway Safety Plan and Annual Grant Application were submitted ahead of schedule, helping position funding for release before September 1. Members were encouraged to continue strengthening collaboration across projects and disciplines to maximize progress toward reducing impaired driving fatalities and serious injuries in Texas.

Additional updates included the successful [2026 Traffic Safety Conference](#), the continued expansion of traffic safety partnerships, and plans to incorporate the Impaired Driving Forum into the 2027 Texas Traffic Safety Summit. Future summit discussions may also include topics related to distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Impaired Driving Enforcement and DRE Program Updates

Task Force members received an update on statewide impaired driving enforcement efforts, including recent changes to the administration of the Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) and Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) programs. TxDOT has consolidated the SFST and DRE programs into a single unit to improve coordination, staffing, and training delivery throughout Texas.

The Texas DRE Program currently includes 428 certified Drug Recognition Experts, 60 instructors, and 157 agencies with at least one DRE. Additional DRE schools are scheduled throughout FY 2027, and scholarship opportunities continue to support agencies that may not otherwise be able to participate in DRE training.

The Task Force also received an update on the continued partnership between the Texas DRE Program and the [Be A Blake Foundation](#), which provides travel scholarships to agencies that may not otherwise have the resources to participate in DRE training. Scholarship support continues to help expand access to training opportunities across Texas, particularly for smaller and rural agencies. Six candidates have recently accepted scholarship awards, helping strengthen local impaired driving enforcement capacity throughout the state.



Members also discussed recommendations emerging from the Impaired Driving Assessment, including strategies to increase refresher training opportunities and improve DRE coverage for rural and resource-limited agencies. Exploration is underway regarding an on-call DRE model that could provide support to jurisdictions without local DRE resources.

The discussion also emphasized the growing challenge of cannabis-impaired driving. Members highlighted the importance of conducting the full SFST battery when impairment is suspected and noted the continued need for training and awareness surrounding drug-impaired driving investigations.



Welcome New Members:

Natalie Paulus
Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Erica Blanco
DPS Driver's License Division

Noelle Delgado
Association of Substance Abuse Programs

Anna Unnerstall
Association of Substance Abuse Programs

August 2026 TxIDTF Meeting Updates, Continued.

THC & Alcohol Subcommittee Recommendations

On July 31, 2026, the Department of State Health Services reinstated clarifications to the definitions of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) made to the Schedule of Controlled Substances that had been adopted in 2021. As a result, Texas now prohibits products containing any other than Delta-9 THC at a concentration not more than 0.3% on a dry weight basis. Under current law, legal Delta-9 THC products include drinks, tinctures, and edibles. Despite these changes, the THC beverage market continues to expand with products now available in major national retailers such as Target.

The THC & Alcohol Subcommittee presented revised roadway-focused recommendations addressing cannabis and alcohol-related impaired driving concerns. Members reviewed proposed recommendations and provided feedback to support further refinement before final consideration by the Task Force.

Discussion centered on improving data collection related to impaired driving crashes and offenses involving THC and other impairing substances. Members noted that more comprehensive and consistent data could help support training initiatives, guide policy development, and inform future legislative discussions.

The Task Force also discussed concerns regarding toxicology “stop testing” practices and their potential impact on impaired driving cases. Members expressed support for improving awareness of these issues and exploring opportunities to strengthen toxicology testing capabilities while acknowledging existing resource and funding challenges.



Target features hemp-derived, low-dose THC-infused beverages on prominent endcap displays across more than 300 stores in select states like Texas, Florida, Illinois, and Minnesota.

Additionally, members voiced support for prohibiting the co-mingling of THC and alcohol sales at on-premises consumption establishments as part of the subcommittee’s ongoing work. Recommendations will be updated based on member feedback and circulated for additional review.



DPS Enforcement Update: Governor’s GA-56 Hemp Initiative

Captain Christopher Mulch of the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) provided an overview of enforcement efforts related to Governor Abbott’s [GA-56 Executive Order](#) addressing hemp and hemp-derived products. Discussion focused on protecting children, strengthening enforcement of existing laws, and addressing organized criminal activity associated with illegal hemp product sales.

Members learned about DPS’s coordinated approach with law enforcement and regulatory partners, including efforts to identify unlawful distribution networks, review transportation documentation requirements, conduct laboratory testing, and support enforcement actions statewide.



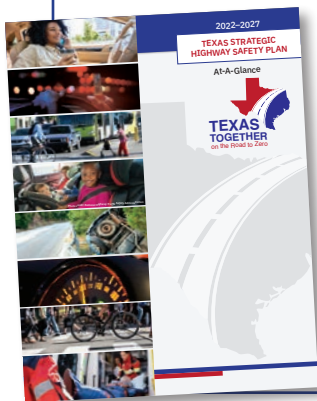
August 2026 TxIDTF Meeting Updates, Continued.

Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Engagement

Planning for the next Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) cycle is underway as the current plan approaches expiration in 2026. Assessment findings recommended a stronger role for the Texas Impaired Driving Task

Force within the SHSP Impaired Driving Emphasis Area, aligning with broader national recommendations to improve statewide impaired driving coordination.

To support this effort, Task Force representatives were identified across multiple disciplines, including data and planning, education and prevention, enforcement, forensic testing, prosecution, judicial bond, treatment, and probation. Members were encouraged to participate through existing Task Force subcommittees and continue contributing expertise to statewide safety planning efforts.



Next Texas Impaired Driving Task Force Meeting

We're looking forward to bringing the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force together again in FY2027. Planning for the next meeting is currently underway, and details regarding the date, time, and location will be shared as soon as they are finalized. Stay tuned for more information!



TEXAS
IMPAIRED DRIVING
TASK FORCE

TxDOT Impaired Driving Campaign Updates

Members received an update on TxDOT's [Drive Sober. No Regrets. campaign](#), which operates year-round and includes targeted enforcement and media outreach efforts throughout the year. The summer campaign launched in June with updated messaging that specifically addresses drug-impaired driving in addition to alcohol-impaired driving.

The campaign targets Texans ages 18–44 and encourages individuals to plan for a sober ride after consuming alcohol or drugs. New campaign materials feature the “Any High is a DWI” message and include television, radio, billboard, digital, and social media outreach. Additional campaign efforts are planned leading into the Labor Day holiday period.

Task Force members were encouraged to utilize resources available through [SoberRides.org](#), including printable education materials, social media content, and customizable community presentations. Members were also reminded that the Digital Campaign Toolkit will be updated to support fall and Labor Day outreach efforts.

TxDOT's outreach Spokes Truck continues to travel across the state, providing interactive educational activities, impaired-driving awareness games, and a DWI simulator at community events.



(Top): TxDOT's mobile exhibit Spokes Truck hits the road for the “Drive Sober. No Regrets.” campaign, uses impairment-simulating goggles and real stories to teach Texans the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol, THC or other impairing drugs.

(Bottom): Posters from TxDOT's “Drive Sober. No Regrets.” campaign.



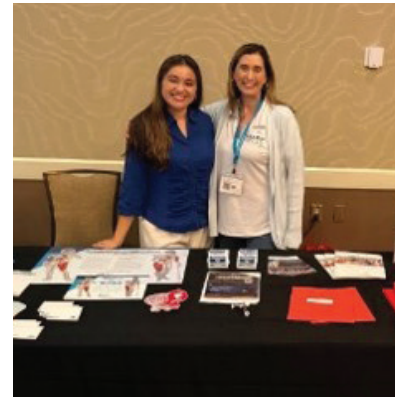
August 2026 TxIDTF Meeting Updates, Continued.

School Resource Officer Conference Outreach

Members received an update on the Education & Prevention Subcommittee's involvement and exhibitor participation at the [Texas School Resource Officer \(TASRO\) Conference](#) held in Corpus Christi. The conference provided an opportunity to expand awareness of Task Force initiatives and strengthen relationships with School Resource Officers and school-based partners throughout Texas.

Educational materials and impaired driving resources were distributed to attendees, including a newly developed infographic highlighting the recently enacted state jail felony offense for DWI committed in an active school zone. In addition to being shared with School Resource Officers visiting the exhibitor booth at the conference, the infographic was featured in the [Texas Association of School Resource Officers \(TASRO\) newsletter](#) and published on the [Texas Impaired Driving Task Force website](#), expanding its reach to school-based safety professionals throughout Texas.

Members emphasized that fostering partnerships with School Resource Officers may create additional opportunities for impaired driving prevention and education efforts among youth populations.



Left to Right: Emma Dugas (MADD), Ben Harper (TAMU AgriLife), Veronica Colmenarez (TxSDY).

Special thank you to the Education and Prevention Subcommittee for contributing their ideas, time, and financial support, which helped make participation possible.

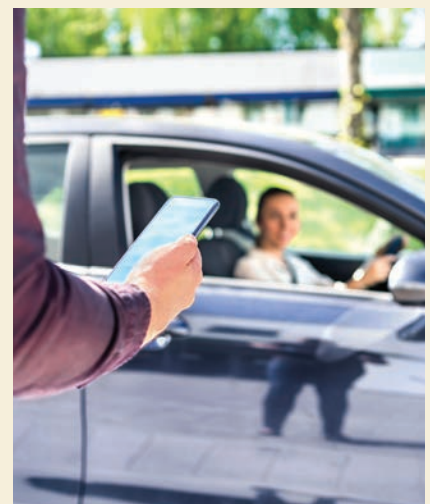


Rideshare Driver Impairment Discussion Continues

The Task Force continued a discussion first introduced during the March meeting regarding impaired driving among rideshare and delivery drivers. Members reviewed available information concerning Transportation Network Company policies and considered approaches currently used in other states.

While concerns have been raised by law enforcement professionals, members noted that available data remain limited, making it difficult to determine the scope of the issue. Challenges include the inability of many existing reporting systems to consistently identify rideshare or delivery drivers involved in crashes or arrests.

Potential next steps include exploring pilot data collection efforts and gathering additional information from law enforcement, prosecutors, and industry partners. The Task Force agreed to continue monitoring the issue and revisit the topic during future meetings.





August 2026 TxIDTF Meeting Updates, Continued.

24/7 Sobriety Monitoring Program Discussion

The Task Force received an update on the [24/7 Sobriety Monitoring Program](#), an evidence-based supervision model designed to support accountability among individuals involved in the criminal justice system. The program requires participants to abstain from alcohol and drugs, monitoring abstinence through twice-daily alcohol testing and random drug testing, while providing swift and certain sanctions for violations.



Members learned that two Texas counties are currently exploring the implementation of the program. Discussion highlighted benefits including enhanced public safety, increased accountability, improved offender supervision, and alternatives to incarceration when appropriate.

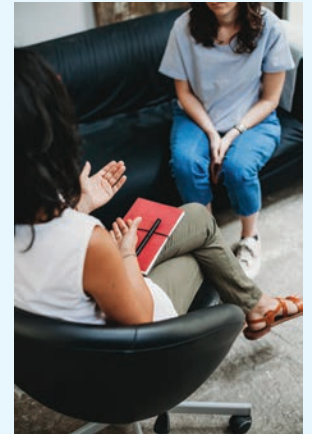
Successful implementation depends on strong stakeholder collaboration, clear program guidelines, and local decision-making regarding participant eligibility and operational procedures. Resources including implementation toolkits, fact sheets, FAQs, and training materials remain available to jurisdictions interested in exploring the program.

Association of Substance Abuse Programs (ASAP) Introduction

Executive Director, Noelle Delgado introduced the Association of Substance Abuse Programs (ASAP), a statewide organization representing treatment, prevention, and recovery service providers throughout Texas. ASAP works to connect partners across behavioral health, healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, and community treatment systems.

The discussion emphasized the importance of collaboration in addressing substance use disorders and highlighted examples of successful cross-system partnerships, including diversion and treatment-focused initiatives. Members also discussed ongoing challenges related to treatment accessibility, workforce shortages, and reductions in available services, particularly for youth, women, and children.

Task Force members welcomed opportunities for future collaboration between ASAP and impaired driving stakeholders throughout Texas.



STREET TALK BLOG HIGHLIGHTS

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force's [Street Talk Blog](#) continues to feature research, best practices, innovative programs, and expert perspectives related to impaired driving prevention and traffic safety.

Visit the [Street Talk Blog](#) for the latest articles and resources:

Recent Highlights Include:

- [More Charges, More Convictions? What Iowa Crash Data Reveals About Impaired Driving Cases](#)
- [What Motivates People to Avoid Impaired Driving? New Research Offers Insights](#)
- [High Drug Concentrations in Impaired Driving Cases: What Harris County Researchers Learned](#)
- [Alcohol-to-Go and Online Ordering: Are ID Checks Keeping Up?](#)
- [Could Knowing Your BAC Make You More Likely to Drive After Drinking?](#)
- [Updating the Playbook for Drug-Impaired Driving Investigations](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

& TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

SEPTEMBER

- [MADD Law Enforcement Recognition](#)
September 15 | Klein, TX
- [NETS Annual Strength IN Numbers® Fleet Safety Benchmark Conference](#)
September 15–17 | Indianapolis, IN
- [NASBLA Annual Conference](#)
September 15–17 | Knoxville, TN
- [SOFT-TIAFT 2026 Joint Meeting](#)
September 19–24 | Chicago, Illinois
- [National Liquor Law Enforcement Association Conference](#)
September 20–23 | New Orleans, LA
- [Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth \(TxSDY\) 2026 Statewide Summit](#)
September 24 | Virtual Series
- [Alcohol Policy Conference](#)
September 29–October 1 | Arlington, VA

OCTOBER

- [Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth \(TxSDY\) 2026 Statewide Summit](#)
October 8 | Virtual Series
- [Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth \(TxSDY\) 2026 Statewide Summit](#)
October 22 | Virtual Series
- [International Association of Chiefs of Police \(IACP\) Annual Conference 2026](#)
October 24–27 | Orlando, FL

NOVEMBER

- [Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth \(TxSDY\) 2026 Statewide Summit](#)
November 5 | Virtual Series
- [Move With MADD Southeast Texas 5k Run/Walk](#)
November 14 | Houston, TX
- [2026 ITS Texas Annual Meeting](#)
November 18–20 | San Antonio, TX
- [Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth \(TxSDY\) 2026 Statewide Summit](#)
November 19 | Virtual Series

JANUARY

- [2027 Transportation Research Board \(TRB\) Annual Meeting](#)
January 10–14, 2027 | Washington, TC
- [2027 Lifesavers Conference on Roadway Safety](#)
March 6–9, 2027 | San Antonio, TX
- [Texas Police Chiefs Annual Conference \(TPCA\) 68th Annual Conference](#)
March 22–25, 2027 | Round Rock, TX
- [Safe Mobility Conference](#)
March 22–24, 2027
- [2027 NASID Conference](#)
April 27, 2027 | Arlington, VA
- [IPTM's Symposium on Traffic Safety](#)
May 17–20, 2027 | Lake Buena Vista, FL

*See the full list of FREE Impaired Driving Training & Detection Courses at [Texas DRE](#), [Texas SFST](#) and [Drug Impairment Training for Educational Professionals \(DITEP\)](#).



Many Thanks and Best Wishes to Retiring Members:

Debra Marable
Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Joseph Thompson
DPS Driver's License Division