



IMPAIRED DRIVING

Task Force Newsletter



At the July 25, 2024 meeting of the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, the Executive Committee provided the following updates.

Retail Enforcement and Education: 2024 Spring Break Operations

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission’s Spring Break operations take place in March, when thousands of students from across the U.S. flock to Texas beaches and entertainment districts.



Type of Operation	Description	Number of Operations
Undercover Operation	Focused on detecting underage and intoxicated-related offenses. May include cooperative retail operations (e.g., COPS, fake-out).	254
Underage Compliance Operations	Undercover operation to identify businesses that sell alcohol to minors.	1983
Open/High Visibility Inspections	Visible presence during large events to deter criminal activity.	1468

It is crucial for local police agencies to coordinate with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) before initiating any operations related to alcohol enforcement. By proactively engaging with TABC, your local agency can ensure that its operations are not only effective, but also fully compliant with state regulations.

These operations resulted in 92 Administrative Violations, 87 Criminal Violations, and 9 Arrests.

Impaired Driving Data

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has recommended that Texas establish an impaired driving database. This initiative will be complex and will require data and input from multiple sources. To move forward, the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force (TxIDTF) and the Texas Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC) will collaborate to draft a memo outlining the rationale for creating such a database.

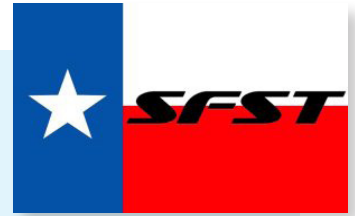
Stakeholders will also address several key aspects, including:

- The contents of the system:** What data and information the database should include.
- Administration:** Who will be responsible for managing and operating the system.
- Location:** Where the database should be housed and maintained.
- Data integration:** How to effectively merge data from various sources, ensuring that public information and protected data are combined appropriately while maintaining confidentiality and security.





Impaired Driving Enforcement Training and Detection



TxSFST Fiscal Year 2024 Program Highlights

The Texas Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (TxSFST) Training Program aims to enhance the administration and consistency of DWI investigations and enforcement by offering FREE training to licensed Texas peace officers. The program's mission is to reduce alcohol-

related crashes, injuries, and fatalities by advancing DWI deterrence and enforcement skills.

All TxSFST training goals for Fiscal Year 2024 have been met!

Course	Description	Courses Completed to Date (7/25/24)	Officers Trained to Date (7/25/24)
8-HR SFST Refresher	This course uses the nationally standardized SFST curriculum and is designed to improve the administration and overall consistency of the SFST battery by keeping officers up to date and proficient.	105	796
24-HR Practitioner	This training course uses the nationally standardized SFST curriculum and prepares Texas Peace Officers to administer and interpret the results of the SFST battery. This course is offered to bridge the gap in officers who attended the Basic Peace Officer Course in Texas prior to January 1, 2005, when this course was mandated to be included in all Texas BPOCs.	7	96
50-HR Instructor	This training follows the nationally standardized SFST curriculum and prepares Texas Peace Officers to instruct fellow officers on how to properly administer and interpret the results of the SFST battery. Prerequisites required.	4	41

If you are interested in attending a training course or hosting a course at your agency, please visit the TxSFST website (www.txsfst.org) for more information!

Texas DRE Fiscal Year 2024 Program Highlights

The Texas Drug Recognition (DRE) Program is funded by a grant from the Texas Department of Transportation. It focuses on training, managing, and promoting the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Drug Evaluation and Classification Program (DECP). The DECP is a systematic, 12-step evaluation used to investigate drivers suspected of impairment by substances other than, or in combination with, alcohol.



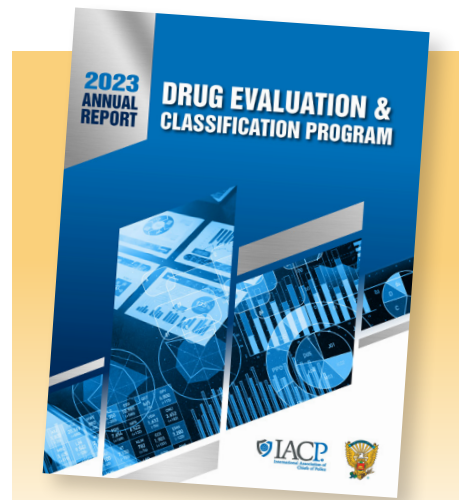
The program offers FREE DRE School and recertification courses to eligible Texas peace officers. The DRE School is structured in three phases: Pre-School, a 7-Day School, and the Certification phase. Upon completion, officers receive 152 hours of TCOLE credit. Additionally, the program supports the development of local DRE programs by providing administrative guidance and best practice policies for using DREs in impaired driving and other investigations.

Since Carlos Champion, DRE State Coordinator, assumed leadership of the DRE program in Texas in October 2021, there have been significant increases in the number of DREs in the state:

The number of DREs in Texas has grown by 30 percent since October 2021, bringing the current total to 422.

The number of agencies with at least one DRE has risen by 28 percent since October 2021, with 134 agencies now having a DRE on staff.

In 2023, 643 evaluations were conducted, marking a 31 percent increase compared to 2022.



Drug Evaluation and Classification Program Annual Report – 2023

Texas ranks #5 in total number of DREs.

Texas ranks #9 in total DRE evaluations.

Law Enforcement Award Luncheon – TxDOT Bryan District

On August 5, the Brazos Valley Traffic Safety Coalition held the inaugural [Highway Heroes Impaired Driving Enforcement Awards Luncheon](#). This event was organized to celebrate and honor the dedicated efforts of officers, deputies, and troopers who are committed to ensuring that every individual reaches home safely each day. The honorees, from ten different agencies, who were nominated by their supervisors for their outstanding contributions, were recognized at the event. The award recipients are listed below (left to right):



- **Carlos Champion**, Texas DRE Program Manager (Special Recognition)
- **Officer Kameron Alexander**, Huntsville Police Department
- **Officer Marcelo Aguilon**, Cameron Police Department
- **Officer Zachary Johns**, College Station Police Department
- **Sergeant Troy Metcalfe**, Texas A&M University Police Department
- **Officer Lindsey Kindt**, Somerville Police Department
- **Trooper Eric Williams**, Texas Highway Patrol
- **Officer Delta Pantoja**, Bryan Police Department
- **Deputy Enrique Padron**, Brazos County Sheriff's Office
- **Deputy Gene Osborn**, Grimes County Sheriff's Office
- **Officer Evan Peterson**, Navasota Police Department



Champion and Rhone have been collaborators in the fight against drug-impaired driving, working together to promote the Texas DRE Program and support officers.

BeABlake Foundation Honors Carlos Champion

Jackie Rhone, Founder and CEO of [BeABlake Foundation](#), delivered a powerful keynote address, emphasizing the foundation's commitment to combating drug-impaired driving and enhancing community safety. During the presentation, Carlos Champion, the dedicated TxDOT Executive Committee Member and DRE Program Manager, was honored with the "BeABlake Award." This accolade recognized Carlos's unwavering passion and dedication to educating law enforcement professionals with the ultimate goal of eradicating drug-impaired driving across Texas.



The award presentation was made even more special by the presence of Kailey, Blake Rhone-Subinsky's daughter, who joined Jackie in presenting the honor. Blake, a radiant individual whose life was tragically cut short on August 31, 2021, due to a crash caused by a drug-impaired driver, is remembered through this award and the impactful work of the foundation.

Carlos Champion and Jackie Rhone have been collaborators in the fight against drug-impaired driving, working together to promote the Texas DRE Program and support officers seeking to become DREs through the BeABlake Foundation's travel scholarships. This initiative aims to bridge the gap for agencies lacking the resources necessary to facilitate officer training, thereby advancing their shared mission to ensure safer roads and communities.

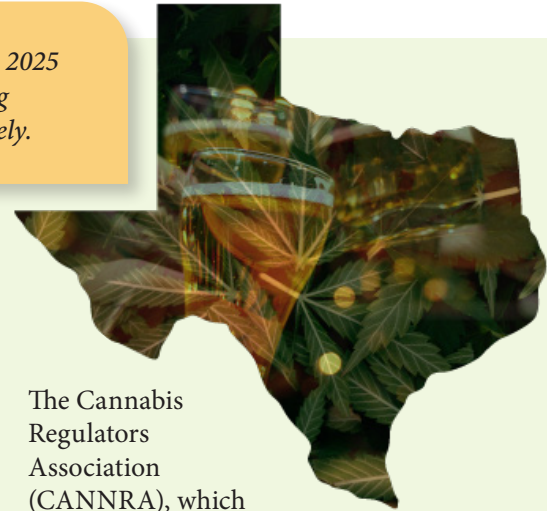
Subcommittee Updates

Cannabis & Alcohol

The TxIDTF has identified hundreds of businesses in Texas that permit on-site consumption of both THC (hemp-derived cannabinoids) and alcohol. This contrasts sharply with other states where adult-use cannabis consumption is allowed, but the sale and consumption of alcohol at the same location are generally prohibited. Some states even bar businesses from holding both liquor and cannabis licenses simultaneously. [Maryland](#) recently became the latest state to ban alcohol consumption at licensed cannabis lounges. To address this issue, the TxIDTF has established a subcommittee focused on educating policymakers of this important issue.

Several bills will be introduced in the 2025 legislative session aimed at regulating hemp-derived products more effectively.

Recently, an interim legislative charge from the Lt. Governor's Office has tasked the State Affairs Committee with examining the sale of intoxicating hemp products. The committee is expected to recommend measures to further regulate these products and prevent their marketing to children. You can view the senate hearing on this topic [here](#) (starting at the 7:41 mark). It is anticipated that several bills will be introduced in the 2025 legislative session aimed at regulating hemp-derived products more effectively. The Cannabis & Alcohol Subcommittee, along with the Legislative Subcommittee, will monitor these bills closely.



The Cannabis Regulators Association (CANNRA), which includes regulatory agencies from over 45 states, U.S. territories, Canada, and the Netherlands, has recently released a comprehensive document. This resource aggregates best practices identified by CANNRA members to ensure consumer safety and public health. View this resource [here](#).

Best Practices of Successful State Impaired-Driving Task Forces, published by NHTSA (April 2024)

This report highlights the findings of a study focused on identifying best practices among successful state impaired-driving task forces. We are proud to announce that the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force has been recognized as a model of excellence. Congratulations to all task force members for your outstanding contributions and dedication. To explore the full report and learn more about the successful strategies of state impaired-driving task forces, please click [here](#).



Updates from the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC)

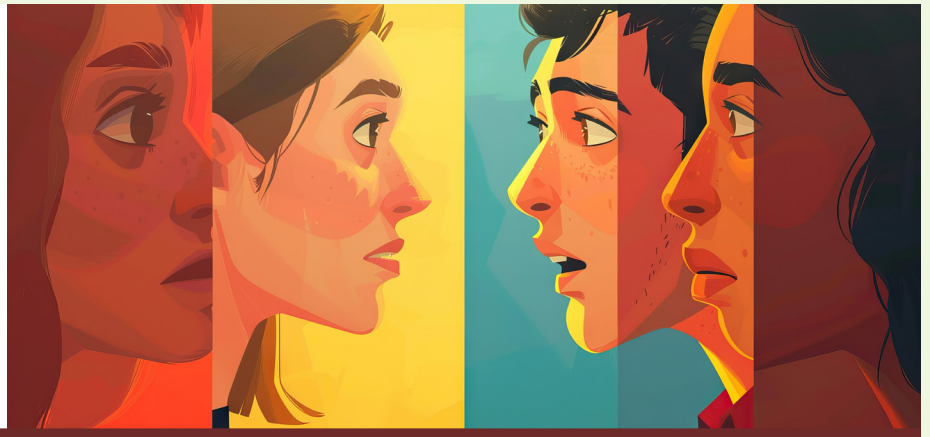
This statewide group of stakeholders uses the TRCC as a forum for the planning, coordination, and implementation of projects to improve Texas' traffic records system. The TRCC promotes projects to improve the accessibility, accuracy, completeness, consistency, timeliness, and uniformity of the traffic records systems in Texas. These projects include efforts to improve individual databases as well as to promote linkages between the core traffic records systems.

To learn more, join the [2024 Annual Stakeholder Virtual Meeting](#) on Friday, September 20, from 10-11am. This meeting is open to anyone interested.

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



Offenders with limited English proficiency who are assigned to court ordered alcohol education face substantial challenges with the communication needs required to complete a course.



Language Barriers

The problem of language barriers in court ordered alcohol education was initially presented to the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force by Judge Hand, Potter County Court at Law #2. Offenders with limited English proficiency who are assigned to court ordered alcohol education face substantial challenges with the communication needs required to complete a course. Further complicating the matter is that instructors and program managers struggle to develop and distribute learning materials to students who lack or have limited ability to communicate in English. The TxIDTF convened a subcommittee to further discuss the issue of equity in DWI Education probation requirements for non-English/Spanish speakers.

The Language Barriers Subcommittee undertook an investigation to:

1. Identify the barriers to effective communication for defendants ordered to attend court-mandated alcohol education.
2. Assess and recommend solutions to address the language barriers faced by both instructors and participants in these programs.

The subcommittee's inquiry included a review of state regulations governing court-ordered alcohol education, instructional delivery methods, accommodations for non-English speaking learners, and alternative teaching methodologies. The findings led to the following recommendations:

- **Asynchronous Virtual Education Delivery:** Implement a system allowing participants to learn at their own pace using online resources (e.g., videos, slides, audio) through a learning management system (LMS). This approach would require updates to current Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) policies, including adjustments to administrative requirements for asynchronous delivery.
- **Recommended LMS:** The Canvas Learning Management System was identified as a suitable platform. Canvas supports both synchronous and asynchronous training and offers a centralized system for efficient content translation with extensive language options.

- **Language Prioritization:** Use census data to prioritize languages that will effectively reach large populations of offenders needing court-ordered alcohol education.

The subcommittee recommends that the TxIDTF continue collaborating with TDLR and judicial associations to explore the development of a virtual solution hosted on an accessible LMS. This solution aims to provide court-ordered alcohol education in a variety of languages to accommodate a diverse population of offenders.

For more detailed information, view the [White Paper on Language Barriers in Court Ordered Alcohol Education!](#)



SEPTEMBER

- [TxSFST: Kyle 8-HR Refresher Course](#)
September 5 | Kyle, TX
- [Texas DRE: Round Rock – Drug Recognition Expert Instructor Course](#)
September 9–13 | Round Rock, TX
- [Texas DRE: Austin– ARIDE Course](#)
September 10–11 | Austin, TX
- [TxSFST: Kyle 8-HR Refresher Course](#)
September 12 | Kyle, TX
- [Texas DRE: Grand Prairie – Drug Recognition Expert In-Service Course](#)
September 17 | Grand Prairie, TX
- [Texas DRE: El Paso – Drug Recognition Expert In-Service Course](#)
September 24 | El Paso, TX
- [Texas DRE: El Paso – ARIDE Course](#)
September 25–26 | El Paso, TX

OCTOBER

- [Texas DRE: Georgetown – Drug Recognition Expert Basic Certification Course](#), October 7–17 | Georgetown, TX
- [Texas DRE: Mesquite – ARIDE Course](#)
October 8–9 | Mesquite, TX
- [Texas DRE: Jacksboro – ARIDE Course](#)
October 16-17 | Jacksboro, TX
- TxIDTF: Quarterly Meeting
October 17 | Austin, TX
- [Texas DRE: Houston – ARIDE Course](#)
October 21–22 | Houston, TX
- [TxSFST: Hondo 8-HR Refresher Course](#)
October 22 | Hondo, TX
- [TxSFST: Hondo 8-HR Advanced DWI Course](#)
October 24 | Hondo, TX
- [Texas DRE: Conroe – Drug Recognition Expert Basic Certification Course](#)
October 28–November 7 | Conroe, TX



Texas Impaired Driving Safety Awards

The Texas Impaired Driving Task Force — in conjunction with the Texas Department of Transportation — will present the [Texas Impaired Driving Safety Awards](#) at the annual Texas Impaired Driving Forum (February 2025). This is a competitive awarding process meant to honor, celebrate, and encourage those individuals or organizations who go “above and beyond” in support of the mission to eliminate impaired driving in Texas. The Awards Selection Subcommittee, which supports the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force, will review and select winners based on the strength and quality of the nominations received.

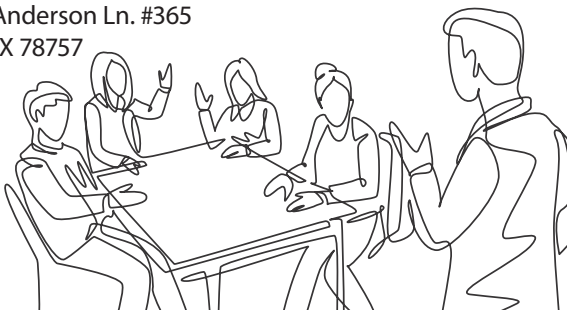
Submission deadline is November 30, 2024. All award recipients will be notified by January 15, 2025. [Apply Today!](#)



TEXAS IMPAIRED DRIVING TASK FORCE

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, October 17, 2024

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



NEWSLETTER



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.