

# Texas Impaired Driving Task Force

In 2023, 25.45 percent of all traffic fatalities in Texas involved a driver under the influence of alcohol.

## Authors

**Christine Adams**  
TTI Assistant Research Scientist

**Emmaline Shields**  
TTI Associate Transportation  
Researcher



## Project Need and Approach

Driving under the influence of an impairing substance is a dangerous crime with devastating consequences. Crashes involving intoxicated drivers often result in serious injuries or fatalities. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 11,654 (30 percent) of the 38,824 people killed in U.S. crashes in 2020 were in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. Nationwide, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities rose 14.3 percent from 2019 (10,142) to 2020 (11,654). This upward trend is expected to continue, with early estimates indicating a 5 percent increase in alcohol-related traffic fatalities from 2020 to 2021.

Texas is also seeing a rise in alcohol-impaired driving fatalities. In 2021, fatalities in crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver rose 12 percent, from 958 in 2020 to 1,077 in 2021, accounting for 24 percent of Texas traffic fatalities (4,489). Alcohol-impaired driving remains one of the leading crash-contributing factors in Texas, and in 2020, Texas recorded the highest number of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities in the nation, according to NHTSA.

The issue extends beyond alcohol to drug-impaired driving, a challenge harder to quantify. Unlike alcohol, no reliable method links drug impairment to specific concentrations.

To address this, the Texas Impaired Driving Task Force (TxIDTF) unites experts in education, outreach, enforcement, prosecution, the judiciary, health, probation, treatment and research. This collaboration helps assess statewide issues and close gaps in enforcement, legislation, and prosecution procedures.

The project team oversaw coordination of the TxIDTF, the Texas Impaired Driving Plan, and the Texas Impaired Driving Forum and provided other technical assistance as needed.

## Texas Data – Cannabis Category 2018-2022 Drivers in Motor Vehicle Crashes Involving Drugs

All Crash Severities (No Alcohol)	All Crash Severities With Alcohol Involved
1. Unknown - 33.4%	1. Unknown - 28%
2. Multiple Drugs - 12.4%	2. Multiple Drugs - 14.2%
3. Cannabis - 7.4%	3. Cannabis - 14.1%
Fatality & Serious Injury (No Alcohol)	Fatality & Serious Injury With Alcohol Involved
1. Multiple Drugs - 23.6%	1. Cannabis - 28.2%
2. Cannabis - 21.6%	2. Multiple Drugs - 24.7%

Information represents data collected from Texas Peace Officer's Crash Reports (CR-3) received and processed by the Texas Department of Transportation as of October 19, 2023.

*Cannabis was the top drug in fatal and serious injury crashes when alcohol was also involved—highlighting the dangers of poly-substance use.*



## Project Activities

The TxIDTF produced several reports in 2024, including the critical Texas Impaired Driving Plan. These reports were shared with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) personnel, TxIDTF members, and traffic safety specialists and posted online. Meeting notes and newsletters from quarterly meetings were also made accessible on the TxIDTF website, providing updates on initiatives such as *Reducing Recidivism: Language Barriers Related to Court-Ordered Alcohol Education in Texas*, a white paper addressing language barriers impeding effective driving while intoxicated (DWI) education. This effort stemmed from a subcommittee convened to assist with language barriers faced by Somali and Burmese defendants completing DWI education programs.

The project team coordinated and executed the 2024 Texas Impaired Driving Forum. Stakeholders from across the country and Texas convened in Austin to share their knowledge and insights with stakeholders. As part of the forum, TxIDTF members and TxDOT personnel presented the 2024 Texas Impaired Driving Safety Awards, honoring those who go above and beyond the call of duty in support of the mission to eliminate impaired driving in Texas. Educational resources, including the *K-12 Reference Book*, were developed to provide evidence-based programs to school educators and administrators.

## Benefits to Texas Transportation Safety

The results of this project supported transportation safety in Texas by fostering collaboration among a diverse set of stakeholders to address impaired driving. The results also serve as a resource for the legislature and various state agencies when developing new plans, programs, and policies that have the potential to reduce transportation-related deaths and injuries in Texas.

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## For More Information

**Christine Adams**  
Assistant Research Scientist  
Center for Alcohol and Drug Education  
Studies  
1111 RELLIS Parkway  
Bryan, TX 77807-3135  
(979) 317-2547  
c-adams@tti.tamu.edu

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