

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION 2025-2026 EDUCATIONAL SERIES

SAFETY AND TRAVEL INFORMATION

- TxDOT Programs and Initiatives
- Public Information Campaigns
- Work Zone Safety
- Speed Limits
- Bridge Safety
- Travel Information and DriveTexas.org
- Safety Rest Area Map



Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT): Public website offering information and resources for drivers, businesses, government officials, and anyone interested in learning about TxDOT.



TxDOT 2025-2026 Educational Series: Focuses on key transportation issues affecting TxDOT and Texas.





OVERVIEW

Promoting safety and protecting the lives of the traveling public is a top priority for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) employees. TxDOT's primary objective is to lower the state's traffic fatality rate and the total number of traffic fatalities and injuries. TxDOT seeks to accomplish this through improved designs, the continuous development of a safety culture within and outside of TxDOT, the expanded use of safety construction methods, the improvement of work zone safety, the advancement of an innovative behavioral Traffic Safety Program, and increased coordination between TxDOT and law enforcement. By incorporating safety planning into every aspect of construction and maintenance and working closely with a wide range of transportation safety stakeholders, TxDOT strives to protect the lives of those traveling our roadways and our hardworking employees and contractors.

Texas' traffic fatalities decreased from 2022 to 2023, along with an increase in the Texas population and miles driven on Texas roadways. In 2022, Texas had 4,408 traffic-related fatalities, compared with 4,289 in 2023. Certain factors continue to contribute to traffic crashes. Of the 4,289 fatal crashes that occurred in 2023, 1,120 were intersection-related, or 26 percent of the total for the year.

Single-vehicle drivers running off the road accounted for 1,368 fatalities and driving under the influence of alcohol accounted for 1,090 fatalities in 2023. In 2023, more than 46 percent of those who lost their lives and had the option

to wear a safety belt were not wearing one when the crash occurred (cyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists are not included in this statistic). Although Texas has made notable progress in highway transportation safety, even a single traffic death in the state is one too many. As part of efforts to reach zero traffic fatalities, TxDOT manages various programs that focus principally on improving transportation safety.

TxDOT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

ROAD TO ZERO

In May 2019, the Texas Transportation Commission established the Road to Zero goal to reduce the number of deaths on Texas roadways by half by the year 2035 and to zero by the year 2050. When developing this goal, the Texas Transportation Commission acknowledged that most motor vehicle crashes are preventable and directed TxDOT to develop and implement strategies to achieve the Road to Zero goal.

The Texas Transportation Commission began supporting the Road to Zero goal when it adopted the 10-year Unified Transportation Program (UTP), which allocated an additional \$600 million to Category 8 (Safety Programs) for the first two years of the program. TxDOT evaluates candidate Road to Zero projects by considering roadway safety factors, crash reduction factors, and project completion times. TxDOT is dedicating this Road to Zero funding to targeting and reducing fatalities and suspected

serious injuries in crashes with contributing factors such as lane departure, intersection safety, and pedestrian safety. However, it is important to note that all TxDOT projects have a safety component.

#EndTheStreakTX

At the time of publication of this document, November 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on Texas roadways. That means that for more than two decades, at least one person has died every single day from vehicle crashes on Texas roadways. That adds up to more than 80,000 motor vehicle fatalities since November 7, 2000. To raise awareness of the need to end the streak of traffic deaths in Texas, in 2019, TxDOT and the Texas Transportation Commission re-launched the #EndTheStreakTX campaign to encourage drivers to make safer choices while on the road. While TxDOT continues making improvements to the highway system, all Texans must work toward ending crashes involving distracted driving, speeding, and drunk driving. These crashes are all preventable. Everyone can help by spreading the word and telling loved ones to buckle up, pay attention while driving, get a sober ride home, and drive to conditions.



TEXAS TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAM

The Texas Traffic Safety Program is a federally funded effort to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities through education, training, and enforcement. The program provides grants to state agencies, non-profit organizations, and local jurisdictions to fund projects focusing on various program areas including, but not limited to occupant protection, police, traffic services, impaired driving, distracted driving, and pedestrian/ and bicycle safety. The program's goal is to modify driver and passenger behavior, and the program is a critical component in TxDOT's effort to improve

transportation safety. The Traffic Safety Program's extensive public information and enforcement efforts helped increase safety belt usage to 91 percent in 2023. For 2025, the Texas Traffic Safety Program has budgeted approximately \$103 million for 382 traffic safety projects statewide.

HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Highway Safety Improvement Program is a federal safety construction program to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes. This program allows states to target funds for their most critical safety needs. TxDOT districts submit projects for funding through the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN

The Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan is the state's response to the federal Highway Safety Improvement Plan and is a requirement to obligate federal safety construction funding. The plan identifies the most critical transportation safety issues facing Texas and recommends countermeasures to improve transportation safety. The Texas plan reflects consultation from a variety of stakeholders:

- TxDOT traffic safety personnel who act as the governor's highway safety representatives;
- Representatives of regional and metropolitan transportation planning organizations;
- Representatives from major modes of travel;
- TxDOT personnel responsible for administering the federally funded program to improve safety at railway-highway grade crossings;
- State and local law enforcement officials, including the Texas Department of Public Safety;
- The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles;
- Representatives from university and research organizations;
- Representatives from the state Operation Lifesaver Highway-Rail Crossing Safety Program;
- Officials representing motor carrier safety interests; and
- Other state and local safety stakeholders.

The Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2022-2027 has the following safety emphasis areas:



- Decreasing the number of crashes related to distracted driving;
- Decreasing the number of intersection-related crashes;
- Improving safety for Vulnerable Road Users (Pedestrian and Pedalcyclists);
- Decreasing the incidence of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol;
- Decreasing the number of speed-related crashes;
- Decreasing the number of lane-departure and roadway-departure crashes;
- Decreasing the number of unrestrained injuries and fatalities; and
- Increasing safety through improved post-crash care.

The following are examples of TxDOT's work to improve highway safety in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan emphasis areas:

- Install improvements at intersections, such as designated left and right turn lanes, protected left turn signals, additional signal heads, and pavement markings;
- Install edgeline, centerline, and transverse rumble strips (transverse rumble strips warn drivers of upcoming unexpected changes, such as traffic signals, changes in alignment, or the need to change lanes);
- Install and maintain cable and concrete median barriers;

- Continue strong driver behavior outreach, education, and enforcement campaigns to discourage distracted driving, speeding, and driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol;
- Emphasize driver behavior improvement to increase safety for high-risk transportation users such as pedestrians and older drivers; and
- Improve pedestrian safety by adding complete sidewalk networks and improved pedestrian crossing signals.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

TxDOT has a number of state and federally funded traffic safety public information campaigns. The following campaigns administered by TxDOT in 2023 focus attention on efforts to deter drunk driving, improve motorcycle safety, encourage safety belt use, decrease the incidence of distracted driving, including texting while driving, and change other unsafe driver behaviors.

- Distracted Driving (April).
- Motorists' Awareness of Motorcycles (May).
- Be Safe. Drive Smart:
 - General Topics (all year long) include Turn Around Don't Drown (April), Pedestrian Safety (July and October), Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Laws (August and October), Back To School (August-September), Work Zone Safety (April);

- Energy Sector (June and October); and
- Speed (June).
- Statewide Impaired Driving:
 - Christmas and New Year’s (November - January);
 - Football (October – November)
 - College and Young Adult (March);
 - Faces of Drunk Driving (June - July);
 - Spring Holidays (April - May); and
 - Labor Day (August - September).
- Youth Occupant Protection:
 - Teen Click It or Ticket (February); and
 - Child Passenger Safety (September).
- Adult Click It or Ticket (May).
- Move Over Law (March)

While many of these traffic safety public information campaigns continue from year to year and new campaigns are added, specific campaigns and their timing depend on federal funding and requirements that may change from year to year. For updated information and how you can get involved in helping TxDOT traffic safety public information campaigns, please visit txdot.gov keyword search “traffic safety campaigns.”



Traffic Safety Campaigns



<https://www.txdot.gov/safety/traffic-safety-campaigns.html>



WORK ZONE SAFETY

A primary part of the TxDOT mission is to improve safety and reduce congestion on Texas roadways. On any given day, TxDOT has more than 3,000 active work zones in operation in and near road improvement projects. In 2023, more than 26,000 crashes occurred in these Texas work zones, resulting in 193 fatalities and 806 serious injuries.

Drivers and passengers account for the majority of those involved in fatal work zone crashes. In 2023, 198 motorists and passengers died in work zone crashes. Three construction workers and 40 pedestrians and bicyclists also died. The leading causes of work zone crashes statewide – speeding and driver inattention – are entirely preventable.

Work zones present a different environment for drivers to navigate. Drivers are likely to encounter uneven pavement, narrow lanes, concrete barriers, slow-moving heavy equipment, and vehicles that make sudden stops. TxDOT continues to explore options to enhance work zone safety, including the following:

- Internal Traffic Control Plans to control activities behind the cones. (Examples include controlled access points, routes for trucks and equipment, and designated escape routes for workers on foot);
- Temporary traffic signals;
- Movable traffic barrier systems to protect the public and workers;
- Law enforcement presence and speed reductions in work zones;
- Smart work zone technology in various areas;
- Work zone intrusion alarms;
- Traffic queue detection systems;
- Worker detection systems; and
- Construction equipment alerts.



SPEED LIMITS

ESTABLISHING SPEED LIMITS: SAFETY — THE PRIMARY CONCERN

TxDOT's goal is to establish speed zones that maximize safety and that motorists respect and obey. By using sound engineering principles, TxDOT can provide a balanced transportation system that gets motorists to their destinations as safely and as quickly as possible. The large majority of drivers select a speed that they perceive to be prudent and will get them to their destination safely in the shortest possible time.

State law requires that TxDOT set speed limits on state roadways at the state prima facie speed limits based on the type of road unless engineering and traffic investigations show a need to alter a speed limit. From Latin, prima facie means “at first impression” or accepted as correct until proven otherwise. The primary Texas prima facie speed limits as set out in state law in Texas are:

- 15 miles per hour in an urban district alley;
- 15 miles per hour on beaches or county roads adjacent to a beach;
- 30 miles per hour on urban district streets;
- 60 miles per hour on unnumbered highways outside urban districts; and
- 70 miles per hour on numbered highways outside urban districts.



Speed Safety



<https://www.txdot.gov/safety/driving-laws/speed-limits/limits.html>

MAXIMUM SPEED LIMIT

TxDOT may set a speed limit of 75 mph on any portion of the state highway system if an engineering and traffic investigation shows that it is a reasonable and safe speed. TxDOT may set a speed limit of up to 85 mph if an engineering and traffic investigation shows that it is a reasonable and safe speed and if the highway design accommodates that speed.

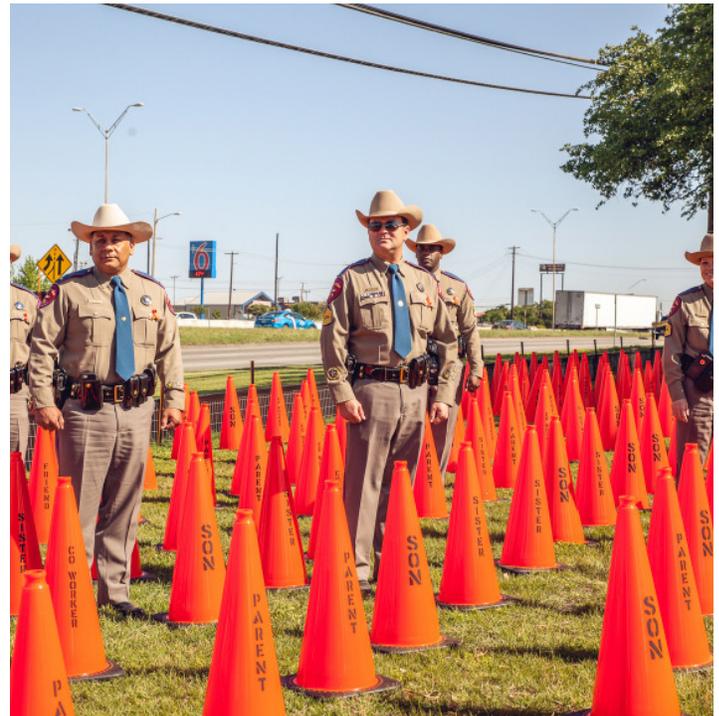
REASONABLE SPEED LIMITS

TxDOT conducts engineering and traffic investigations according to the requirements in the TxDOT manual titled “Procedures for Establishing Speed Zones.” After the speed studies are conducted, TxDOT engineers review them and submit them to the Texas Transportation Commission. The Texas Transportation Commission reviews and approves the regulatory speed limits on state highways. If a speed zone is within city limits, a speed limit can be set by city ordinance with TxDOT approval.

The research has shown that posting speed limits based on the results of an engineering and traffic investigation has a beneficial effect on reducing total crashes and improving driver compliance. Posting speed limits more than 5 miles per hour below the results of an engineering and traffic investigation does not reduce crashes and can have an adverse effect on driver compliance.

VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS

Legislation passed in 2023 gave the Texas Transportation Commission another important safety tool for the traveling public — the authority to establish variable speed limits (or VSLs), allowing the temporary lowering of a speed limit by a maximum of 10 miles per hour to address certain weather, road, and traffic conditions. TxDOT can use VSLs to address roadway construction and maintenance to ensure the safety of workers and the traveling public, as well as inclement weather conditions like heavy fog, ice, or rain. VSL systems use sensors to monitor prevailing traffic or weather conditions and send associated data to trained operators in regional traffic management centers. Based on traffic, weather, and roadway data, VSL operators determine appropriate and enforceable speed limits for given conditions to ensure highway and driver safety, which are displayed on dynamic electronic speed signs. In 2024 TxDOT installed, and tested the VSL equipment, drafted and adopted policies and rules for the use of VSLs, analyzed and identified locations across the state for the deployment of VSL, and deployed the State's first operable VSL system in El Paso. TxDOT will continue to deploy VSLs across the state as appropriate.



SPEED ENFORCEMENT

TxDOT is responsible for building and maintaining the state transportation system and has no authority to cite vehicle violations of any kind. That jurisdiction falls under the Texas Department of Public Safety and local law enforcement authorities.

DRIVING TO CONDITIONS

Observing speed limits means more than driving at the posted speed. It means driving to conditions. When it is raining or foggy, when ice is on the road, when traffic is heavy, or when road construction is ahead, drivers must adjust their speed accordingly for safety.

ROADWAYS OFF THE STATE SYSTEM: CITIES AND COUNTIES

State law requires that local governmental entities base any non-prima facie speed limit on the results of an engineering and traffic investigation. Cities and counties may use the TxDOT Procedures for Establishing Speed Zones manual when altering speed limits on city streets and county roads; however, it is not a requirement.

TxDOT uses the 85th percentile method for speed studies. This method assumes that most drivers are reasonable and prudent, do not want to have a crash, and desire to reach their destination in the shortest possible time. The 85th percentile is the speed at or below which 85 percent of people drive at any given location under good weather and visibility conditions. This speed is considered the maximum safe speed for that location.

TxDOT only has jurisdiction over establishing speed limits on the state highway system. The public should direct any questions about speed limits on city streets or county roads to these local entities' transportation departments.

TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

TxDOT uses a variety of traffic control devices to promote highway safety and efficiency by providing for the orderly movement of all road users. Traffic control devices are defined as all signs, signals, markings, and other devices used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic.

A graphic for TxDOT Manuals. It features a smartphone icon with a magnifying glass over a map of Texas, the text "TxDOT Manuals" in blue, and a QR code. Below the QR code is the URL <https://onlinemanuals.txdot.gov/TxDOTOnlineManuals/>.



BRIDGE SAFETY

The traveling public's safety is one of TxDOT's top priorities, which includes ensuring that the more than 54,000 Texas bridges that are open to public vehicular traffic are safe. This includes bridges on the state highway system and off the system (city- and county-owned bridges).

All Texas bridges open to the public are subject to standardized and regularly scheduled inspections required by federal law. TxDOT conducts bridge inspections according to the TxDOT Bridge Inspection Manual and the National Bridge Inspection Standards. Bridge inspections serve two primary purposes:

1. To ensure the safety of the public; and
2. To catalog accurate data reflecting each bridge's physical attributes and current condition.

In accordance with National Bridge Inspection Standards, TxDOT annually reports statewide bridge inspection data to the Federal Highway Administration to support the National Bridge Inventory.

TxDOT collects bridge inventory and condition data using the following inspection types:

- Initial Inspection — TxDOT performs an initial inspection of all new bridges and when TxDOT first records a bridge in the inventory;
- Routine Inspection — TxDOT performs routine inspections on all bridges according to a regular schedule (also referred to as “routine safety inspections”). These are the most common form of bridge inspections, and they occur on a 24-month inspection frequency for most bridges;
- Fracture Critical Inspection — TxDOT performs fracture critical inspections on non-redundant tensile elements of steel bridges on a 24-month inspection frequency;
- Underwater Inspection — TxDOT performs underwater inspections on bridge elements below the water line on a 60-month inspection frequency;
- Event or Emergency Driven Inspection — TxDOT performs event-driven inspections in response to an incident that might threaten bridge stability (i.e., collision, fire, flood, significant environmental changes, loss of support, etc.). TxDOT sometimes refers to these inspections as “Emergency Inspections” and performs them on an as-needed basis;
- In-Depth Inspection — TxDOT performs in-depth inspections typically as follow-up inspections to better identify deficiencies found in any other type of inspection;
- Special Inspections — TxDOT performs special inspections to monitor a particular feature, deficiency, or changing condition. Unusual bridge features (such as external, grouted, or post-tensioned tendons) may compel TxDOT to pursue a special inspection; and

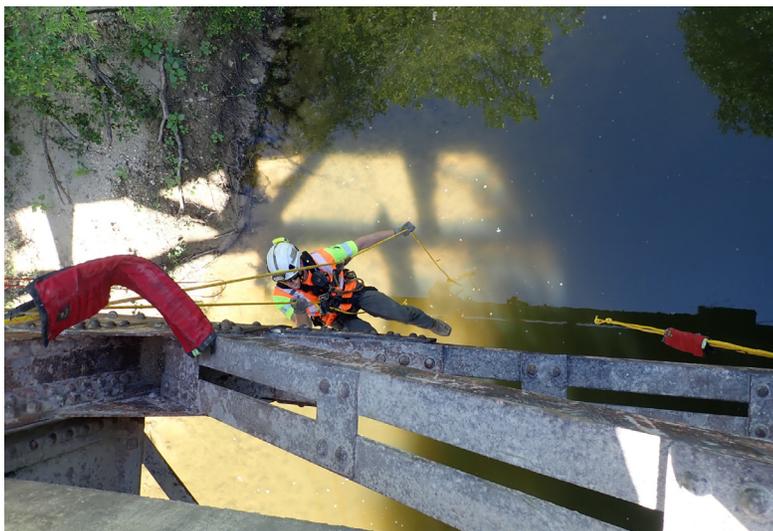
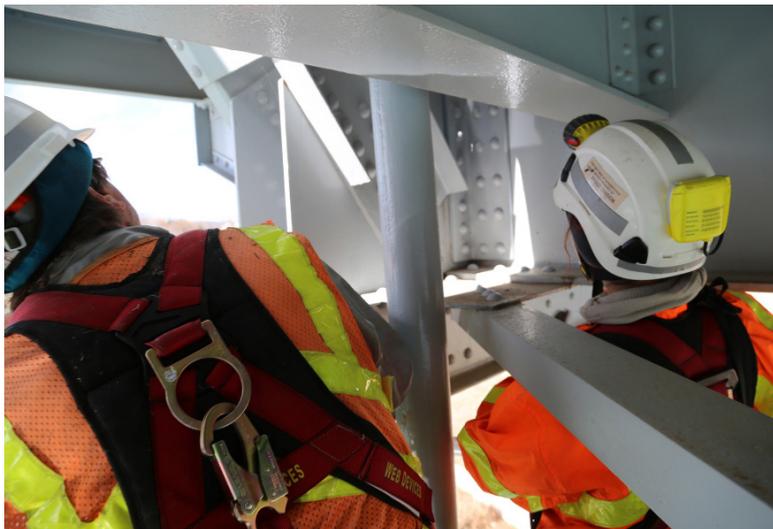
- Condition Assessment Surveys and Damage Assessment Surveys — TxDOT performs conditional assessment surveys and damage assessment surveys to evaluate, to a heightened level of detail, the features, and defects that TxDOT should address in future bridge work. TxDOT typically conducts these inspections in preparation for a bridge repair, rehabilitation, widening, or replacement project.

In addition to these inspections, TxDOT performs additional maintenance inspections of bridges every two years. TxDOT districts use maintenance inspections to identify and plan routine maintenance or improvement work and schedule these inspections between safety inspections.

TxDOT evaluates bridges for safe load-carrying capacity and makes a yearly submission of bridge inventory data to the Federal Highway Administration. TxDOT also monitors the qualifications of individuals performing bridge inspections, including contracted and in-house personnel, to ensure that they meet federal regulatory requirements.

TxDOT publishes a summary of network-level bridge information on TxDOT's website for the public to view. Each report on Texas bridges contains bridge conditions and funding information on a biennial basis.

As part of the National Bridge Inspection Standards, TxDOT assigns condition ratings to various elements and classifies each bridge as good, fair, or poor. Poor-condition bridges may also be structurally deficient. Hearing those bridges are open to traffic after TxDOT has deemed the bridge to be in poor or structurally deficient condition frequently causes concern for the media and the traveling public. That is due largely to the nomenclature that is mandated and used by federal regulators. A poor condition or structurally deficient bridge that is open to traffic needs some maintenance, repair, or rehabilitation, but the bridge is safe to continue carrying traffic. TxDOT will immediately close any bridge that is unsafe for the traveling public. Furthermore, TxDOT places load restrictions on a bridge if an evaluation as part of a bridge inspection reveals a need to do so.





TRAVEL INFORMATION & DRIVETEXAS.ORG

Working together, TxDOT Travel Information Centers and DriveTexas.org (DriveTexas) bring important safety and economic benefits to the State of Texas and the traveling public. DriveTexas provides vital highway conditions information online and through an automated phone system with Travel Information Center travel counselors answering callers' requests for assistance. Travel Information Center travel counselors are experts in answering travelers' questions on travel safety and tourism.

A Visitor Survey by TxDOT and the Governor's Economic Development & Tourism Office showed that TxDOT travel counselors' tourism recommendations generated \$40.8 million in visitor spending, yielding \$2.5 million in state tax revenue, and supporting 408 Texas jobs. The University of Texas at San Antonio and the University of Texas at Austin Center for Transportation Research also have performed numerous Safety and Economic Impact Studies finding that Travel Information Centers have had a positive effect on highway safety in Texas, most notably by Travel Information Center employees communicating highway safety messages to the traveling public.

DRIVETEXAS.ORG

DriveTexas is TxDOT's official public-facing traffic information system for real-time road condition information and is a vital tool for the public during emergencies to distribute information about road closures. The DriveTexas website allows users to customize their views to see recent crashes, road closures, construction, damage, traffic conditions, and other conditions across the state-maintained roadway system.

DriveTexas can handle a large number of users. For example, in February 2021 when Winter Storm Uri struck

Texas, average daily website usage increased from 1,000 sessions to more than 300,000 sessions. TxDOT shared data from DriveTexas with all responding agencies during the storm and its aftermath. Overall, the DriveTexas website received approximately 3.6 million visits during and after Winter Storm Uri.

DriveTexas Toll-Free Interactive Voice Response may be contacted at 1-(800) 452-9292.

Automated travel information is available to the public 24 hours a day with an option to receive personal assistance from a travel counselor during the hours that the Travel Information Centers are open.



TEXAS TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTERS & SAFETY REST AREAS

The first TxDOT Travel Information Centers were established in 1936 at major points of entry into the state as a part of the state's centennial celebration. TxDOT operates Travel Information Centers on TxDOT rights-of-way, and travel counselors welcome approximately two million visitors each year. TxDOT Travel Information Centers are located in Amarillo, Anthony, Denison, Gainesville, Harlingen, Langtry, Laredo, Orange, Texarkana, Waskom, Wichita Falls, and the Old General Land Office Building in the State Capitol Complex. TxDOT travel counselors staff these centers seven days a week.

The objectives of the Texas Travel Information Centers are to actively promote travel to and within Texas, increase public safety, and assist the traveling public by offering professional information and services while supporting the strategic goals of TxDOT. Travel counselors in Texas Travel Information Centers provide highway users with a safe place to rest, advance economic development through the dissemination of printed and consultative travel information and facilitate the safe movement of people and goods by effectively communicating road conditions.

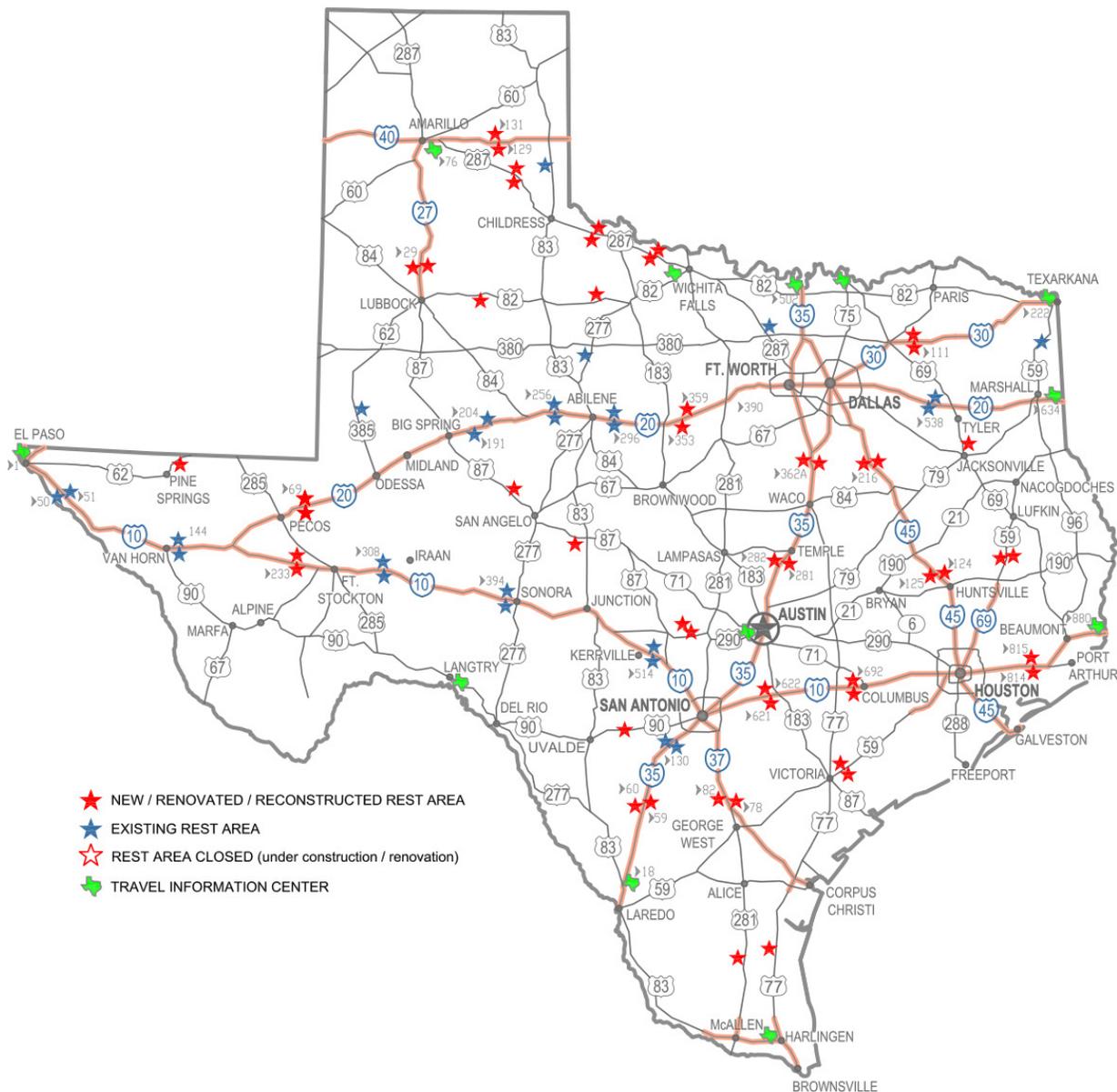
Additionally, Texas Travel Information Center travel counselors hold public awareness events to promote tourism, travel safety, work zone safety, and seatbelt

and child safety seat use. Travel counselors also provide information on the dangers of drunk and distracted driving. In Fiscal Year 2023, Texas Travel Information Centers served approximately 5.8 million highway users.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTERS & SAFETY REST AREAS?

Professional travel counselors staff the Travel Information Centers seven days a week. These travel counselors are experts in providing travel and safety information to the public. TxDOT does not staff the Safety Rest Areas with travel counselors, though there may be contract maintenance personnel on-site.

SAFETY REST AREA MAP





MISSION

Connecting you with Texas.

VISION

A forward thinking leader delivering mobility, enabling economic opportunity, and enhancing quality of life for all Texans.



VALUES

People

People are the Department's most important customer, asset, and resource. The well-being, safety, and quality of life for Texans and the traveling public are of the utmost concern to the Department. We focus on relationship building, customer service, and partnerships.

Accountability

We accept responsibility for our actions and promote open communication and transparency at all times.

Trust

We strive to earn and maintain confidence through reliable and ethical decision-making.

Honesty

We conduct ourselves with the highest degree of integrity, respect, and truthfulness.



PRIORITIES

Safety

Design, build, operate, and maintain our transportation system with safety as our #1 priority.

Delivery

Responsible program execution throughout the transportation life cycle (planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operations).

Innovation

Forward-thinking, technology-focused, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Stewardship

Professional, responsible stewards of resources.

