



Fiscal Year 2024 Final Technical Memorandum

Project Title:

*Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)
Reporting in Texas:
Improving ME Office and
County Performance*

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Subgrantee Agency Name:

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Glossary of Terms

BAC	Blood Alcohol Content
CADES	Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies
CRIS	Crash Records Information System
CRS	Crash Records Section
FARS	Fatality Analysis Reporting System
JP	Justice of the Peace
ME	Medical Examiner
JPs and MEs	Death Investigators
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
TC	Transportation Code
TTI	Texas A&M Transportation Institute
TXDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
TxSTORM	Texas State Trend Over-Representation Model

Disclaimer

The opinions and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not represent those of the Texas Department of Transportation or any subdivision of the state or federal governments. This document compiles the project activities performed during the 2024 fiscal year.

BAC Reporting in Texas: Project Introduction

Through a partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) seeks to improve transportation safety across the state by reducing the staggering problem impaired driving inflicts on Texas communities and peoples' livelihoods. The *Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Reporting in Texas: Improving ME Office and County Performance* project



aims to contribute to this goal by discovering various challenges associated with medical examiners (MEs) and justices of the peace (JPs) reporting toxicology results to TxDOT's Crash Records Section (CRS). The project's overarching target is to improve and assist in reporting BAC and toxicology results to the state. In turn, this strengthens Texas' impaired driving datasets and more accurately represents the impaired driving problem the state faces.

Project tasks were divided into objectives and activities which were completed by target deadlines throughout fiscal year 2024. These objectives included:

- 1. The development of a strategic plan to target counties with the highest numbers, trends, and frequencies of impaired driving fatalities. Additionally, the team was sure to include low socio-economic communities through an Equity Index. This data was provided by TxDOT, and enabled TTI staff to identify high-priority areas of Texas to contact JPs and MEs regarding project efforts.
- 2. The evaluation and analysis of 25 jurisdictions' BAC and toxicology reporting practices with the intent of utilizing results as a reference point for informing future educational materials. The results and findings from the survey are detailed in this report.
- 3. The distribution of 1 educational material to 254 death investigator offices across the state to improve toxicology reporting performance rates. This educational material highlighted reasons why reporting results is integral, reviewed important reporting reminders, and provided information on how to report the results. This material was disseminated via email and was also posted to TTI's Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies (CADES) website.
- 4. The completion of 1 crash analysis to improve BAC reporting performance to TxDOT's Traffic Records Division. Through this 10-year analysis (2014-2023), the TTI team 1) identified BAC and toxicology data as it relates to fatal impaired driving crashes, 2) reviewed reported contributing factors for alcohol and/or drug impaired driving fatal crashes, and 3) determined underreporting, or "missing," toxicology submission rates for crash fatalities in Texas.
- 5. Supporting 15 death investigators with submitting BAC and toxicology results which have been identified by the TTI team as "missing" according to TxDOT's Crash Records Information System (CRIS) database. TTI staff mailed request letters, called, and emailed JPs and MEs to inquire about the potential missing results and provide assistance in submitting them.

As is referenced by a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) report, “high testing rates, accurate and complete reporting, and careful management” are crucial components to consider for BAC reporting measures to be successful (2012). If BAC and toxicology results are not applied to TxDOT’s Crash Records Information System (CRIS) database, the state’s official crash data custodian does not have accurate and complete evidence to clarify whether alcohol and/or drugs were contributing factors to fatal motor-vehicle crashes. Traffic safety professionals depend on this data to apply for program funding and make legislative stands surrounding the impaired driving problem for the state.

The findings from the project’s objectives are detailed in this technical memorandum primarily in the order in which project activities were conducted. The TTI project team summarizes these efforts with an overall evaluation of the project’s activities.

Objective 1: Develop One Strategic Plan to Target High-Priority Communities

TTI staff created a strategic plan as a grant requirement for TxDOT for FY24. This plan highlights how TTI staff plans to communicate the project outreach deliverables to applicable stakeholders. As both the TTI team and TxDOT aim to actively promote project activities in communities with the highest number and frequency of alcohol-involved traffic fatalities in Texas, TxDOT gathered and shared the [data](#) needed to identify these jurisdictions. A list of these communities may be found in Appendix A. The strategic plan was submitted to TxDOT on October 30, 2023, under supplemental # 2024-TTI-SUP-00076; approval was received on December 4, 2023.

Per this grant’s objectives, the TTI team utilized this data to find the communities to prioritize distributing deliverables to. This included:

- **Objective 2:** Evaluate and Analyze 25 Jurisdictions’ BAC and Toxicology Reporting Practices to Inform Future Educational Materials
- **Objective 3:** Distribute 1 Educational Material to 254 Death Investigator Offices to Improve Toxicology Reporting Performance Rates

Three different outreach efforts were carried out during the first quarter of the project’s contract. A table detailing these contact attempts can be found below in Table 1. Additionally, the distributed emails can be found in Appendix B.

Table 1. Death Investigator Outreach Attempts per Strategic Plan Guidance

Contact Date	Stakeholder Count	
	Justice of the Peace (JP)	Medical Examiner (ME)
December 31, 2023	562	0
March 6, 2024	552	0
March 27, 2024	0	19
Total Contact Counts per Stakeholder	1,114	19

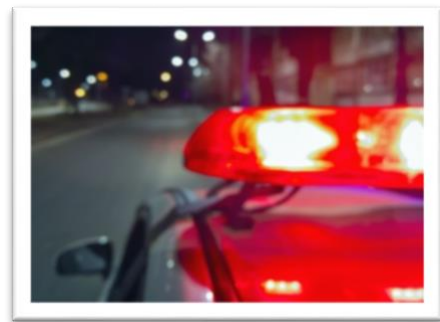
Disclaimer: The high-priority community list data provided by TxDOT does not geolocate specific jurisdictions or stakeholders. Therefore, TTI staff made an educated guess when attempting to contact the jurisdictions listed on the list.

Objective 2: Evaluate and Analyze 25 Jurisdictions’ BAC and Toxicology Reporting Practices to Inform Future Educational Materials

The Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT) database containing BAC and other drug results are oftentimes drawn from law enforcement’s Texas Peace Officer Crash Reports (CR-3), as well as from JP and ME offices across Texas. JPs and MEs are charged with reporting toxicology data to the Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT) CRS. This data is then transmitted to NHTSA through the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).

This crucial data provides insight to decision-makers across the country on the prevalence of impaired driving crashes and fatalities by state and nationwide. Therefore, accurate data is needed to justify continued programming and countermeasure efforts aimed at reducing impaired driving. While federal recommendations include and state the importance behind collecting data from all fatal impaired driving crashes, Texas falls short of reporting all toxicology data to TxDOT, and therefore, to NHTSA.

With the goal of better understanding the challenges and barriers that JPs and ME offices experience when reporting toxicology results to TxDOT, the TTI team distributed and collected survey results regarding current toxicology and BAC reporting practices in fatal impaired driving cases.



Survey Methods

To distribute and collect responses for this survey, the Texas TTI team utilized Qualtrics. The last time TTI investigators released a survey for this project was in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. The FY24 survey included many of the same questions from previous reporting years to measure consistency among responses; however, some questions had been modified or removed based on relativity to the topic. TTI investigators wanted the survey to be concise and easy to complete to increase the number of complete responses which were received. The survey tool was submitted to TxDOT for approval under supplemental # 2024-TTI-SUP-00107 on November 15, 2023, and was approved on November 29, 2023.

The TTI team shared the survey with a total of 47 counties’ JP and ME offices across the state. Contact information for these offices was obtained via an export within the [Texas Office of Court Administration Court Activity Reporting Directory System](#) and by completing internet-related searches. The survey questions for MEs and JPs can be found in Appendices C and D.

Table 2. Jurisdictions Invited to Participate in Survey

Harris	Dallas	Bexar	Travis	Tarrant	Montgomery
--------	--------	-------	--------	---------	------------

Potter	Fort Bend	Midland	Polk	Hays	Collin
Navarro	McLennan	Terry	Hidalgo	Bastrop	Nueces
Lubbock	El Paso	Ector	Brazoria	Webb	Denton
Van Zandt	Stephens	Camp	Parker	Wilbarger	Williamson
Wharton	Mills Co	Anderson	Galveston	Brown	Starr
Wichita	Trinity	Childress	Cameron	Comanche	Houston
Erath	Grimes	Bell	Aransas	Edwards	

The counties listed above were selected by reviewing the [published data](#) from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), as they provided data containing high-priority locations where impaired drivers are crashing and dying based on specific crash counts for each community, the frequency of those crashes against the total number of KA crashes in that community, and by the crash trend in that community using Texas State Trend Over-Representation Model (TxSTORM) data. Additionally, Equity Index data was provided this year to highlight communities with low socio-economic ratings. This data was triangulated into three categories: Crash Count, Crash Frequency, and Crash Trend Data.

The top 25 counties within each of these categories was reviewed. The TTI team wanted to be sure to invite counties within the Equity Index data, and then reached out to counties which were mentioned in 2 or 3 (all) of the categories. The TTI team then added the remaining counties in the 3 categories to the invite list to retrieve as many responses as possible.

Background

This fiscal year, the team sought to collect responses from 25 of the “hot-spot,” high-priority jurisdictions identified by TxDOT to gather BAC and toxicology reporting practices. Collected responses were then analyzed to form commonly found themes along with uniquely reported challenges. These findings are shared in this memorandum.

Within the list of 47 jurisdictions which were contacted, 15 had ME offices, and 32 had JP offices. JPs in counties without an ME (or are not within an ME district), act as death investigators during suspected fatal impaired driving crashes and are charged with reporting toxicology results to TxDOT. This is done in accordance with [Transportation Code \(TC\) Section 550.081](#).

Reports from JP and ME offices conducting death investigations in fatal crashes are used in a few ways. Law enforcement fill out and file the [Texas Peace Officer’s Crash Report \(CR-3\)](#) form when a crash occurs, and information regarding the crash, including any suspicion or known facts regarding impairment, can be included in this form.

These forms are reviewed in conjunction with the [Death / Toxicology Report \(CR-1001\)](#) form to fact-check information to ensure the data which is being applied to the statewide database is accurate and complete. The CR-1001 form is often submitted first as an initial report and is a standardized way for death investigators to notify the TxDOT-CRS if toxicology testing is being requested for the fatal crash. According to statute, this reporting is to be submitted within 10 days following the suspected impaired driver fatality. This report is then submitted again as a supplemental with the full toxicology report once results are available. TxDOT’s preferred method to receive toxicology results is to have both the CR-1001 form with the full toxicology report attached in the event the CRS team needs to reference anything on the toxicology report for confirmation.

Survey Results

Survey Response Rate and Characteristics

The TTI project team made multiple contact attempts to the 47 jurisdictions identified by TxDOT as high-priority locations. The TTI team began by reaching out to 36 counties. After two or more attempts were made to the county, a total of 11 counties were added to the outreach list. As a result of those attempts, 8 completed and 1 incomplete response was received from ME offices, and 22 completed responses were collected from JP offices.

Table 3. Responses Received by Stakeholder Type

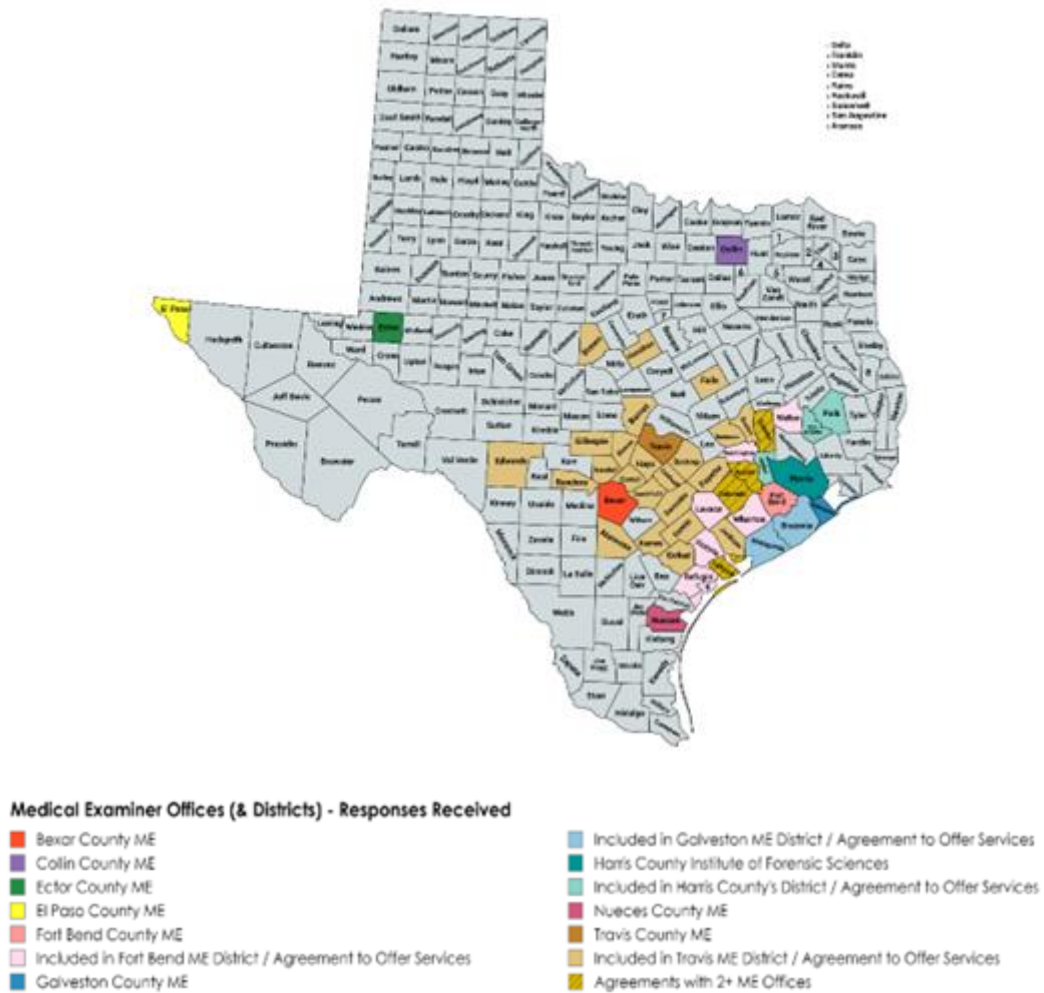
Stakeholder	Number of Complete Responses	Number of Incomplete Responses
Medical Examiner Offices	8	1
Justices of the Peace	22	0

Note: There are a few instances when JPs from different precincts within the same county responded to this survey. The number above is not defined by county responses, but rather the total number of responses received. The TTI team heard from a total of 18 counties where JPs act as death investigators.

Additionally, incomplete responses are included in this analysis up to the point where the questions were no longer reported on.

While ME offices do provide services to the county they are housed in, it was found that half (4) of these offices also provide services to outside and neighboring counties through either an agreement or as part of their medical district. Based on the respondents’ answers, it was also determined that 4 counties have agreements with 2 or more ME offices for which services may be provided. Figure 1 below displays the ME offices and their reported medical districts which are included in this analysis.

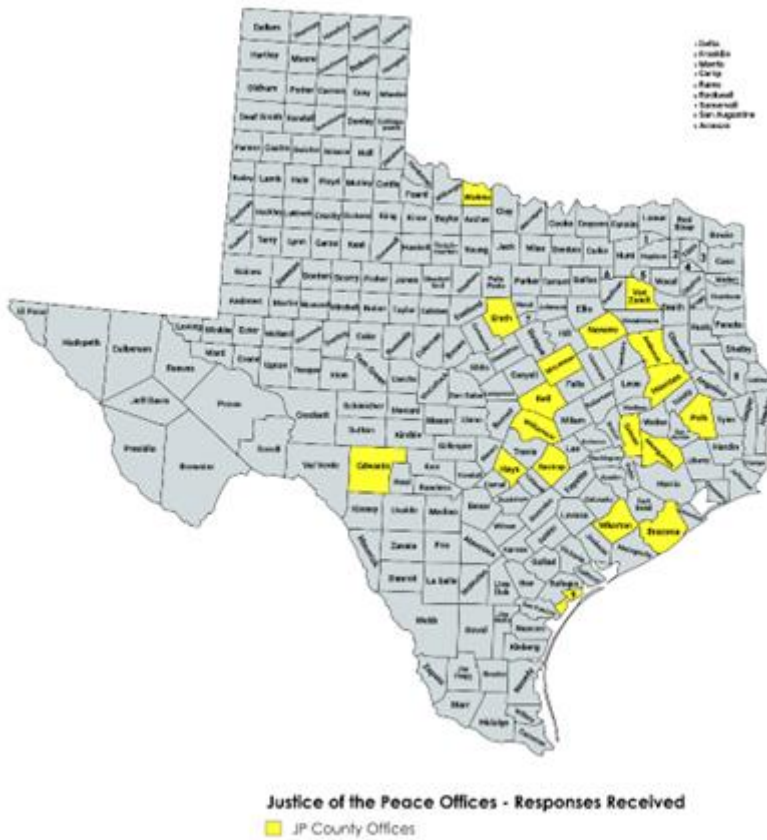
Figure 1. Medical Examiner Offices (& Districts) - Responses Received



A map of the 18 counties the TTI team received responses from can be found in Figure 2 below. Additionally, TTI received more than one response from a few counties, as their individual precincts reported their practices. These counties include:

- Erath (2)
- Wharton (2)
- Williamson (3)

Figure 2. Justice of the Peace Offices - Responses Received

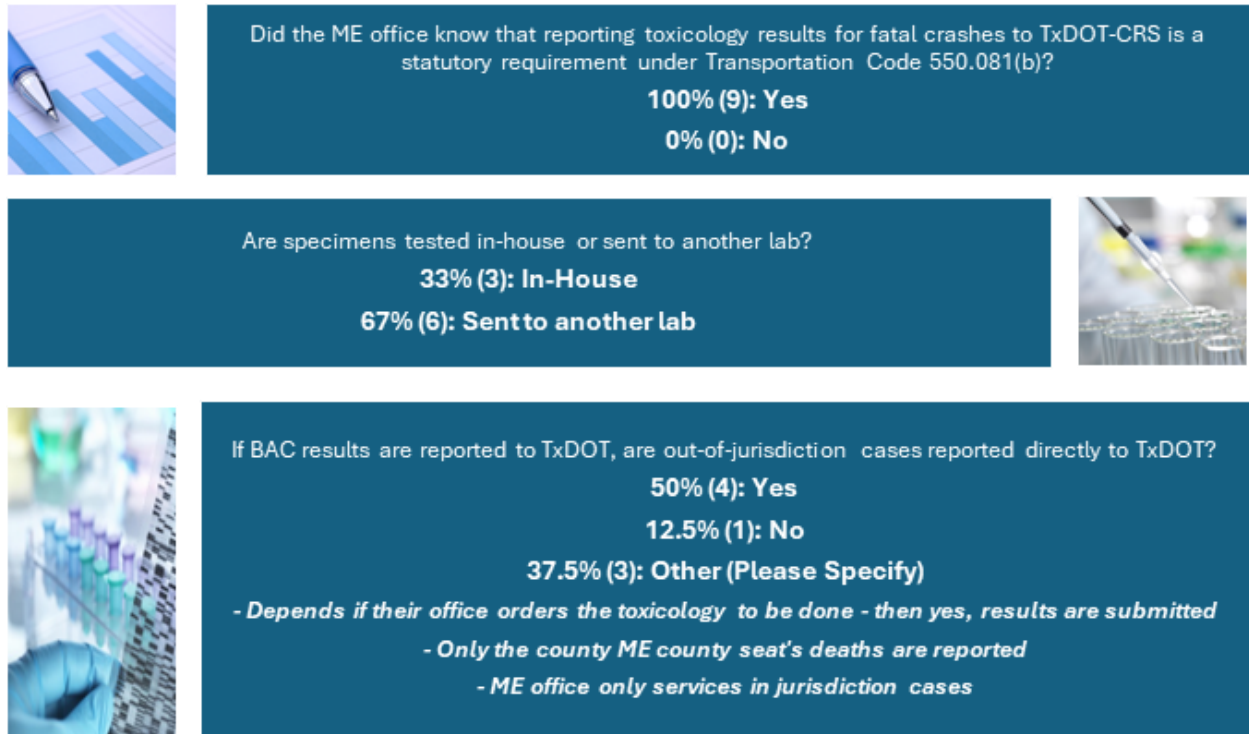


Medical Examiner Offices – Reported Responses

General Questions

ME offices were asked the following general questions in Figure 3 below. Collected responses are also displayed.

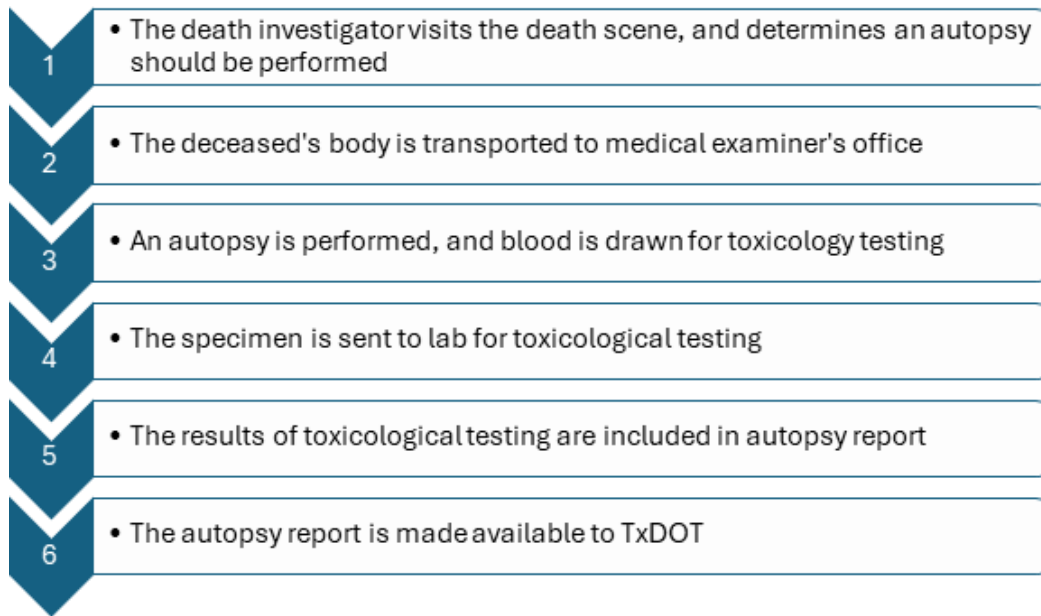
Figure 3. Medical Examiner General Questions and Responses



Testing Procedures

Based on results submitted in former fiscal years’ surveys, the TTI team generated a figure demonstrating commonly reported toxicology testing procedures. Not only did this encourage survey participation by being able to easily agree or disagree with the displayed process, but TTI investigators extended a follow-up question to request additional information on their reporting practices if it did not align with the displayed process. The figure generated by TTI, along with the question and results, is listed below in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Does the ME office follow the same process as shown in the figure for obtaining a biological specimen once a toxicology test for BAC is requested?

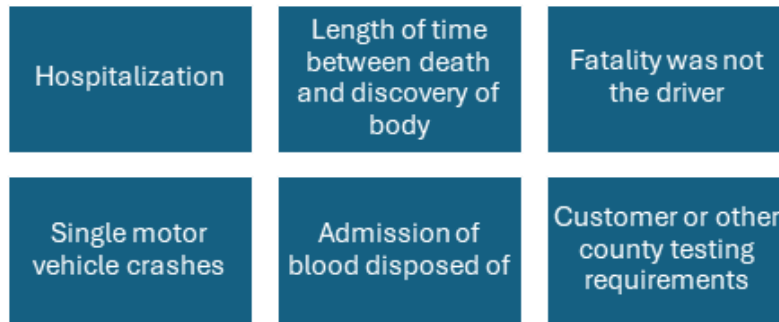


Results:

Yes	89% (8)
No	0% (0)
Other (Please Specify)	11% (1) This ME office follows steps 1-5, but for step 6, it was noted that MVA stats are sent to TxDOT bimonthly.

Additionally, TTI investigators referenced previously reported circumstances in which MEs would not test for BAC or drugs in a fatal crash. The question and results related to this question are displayed below in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Common Circumstances for not Testing for BAC or Drugs in a Fatal Crash – Additional Circumstances for Not Testing?



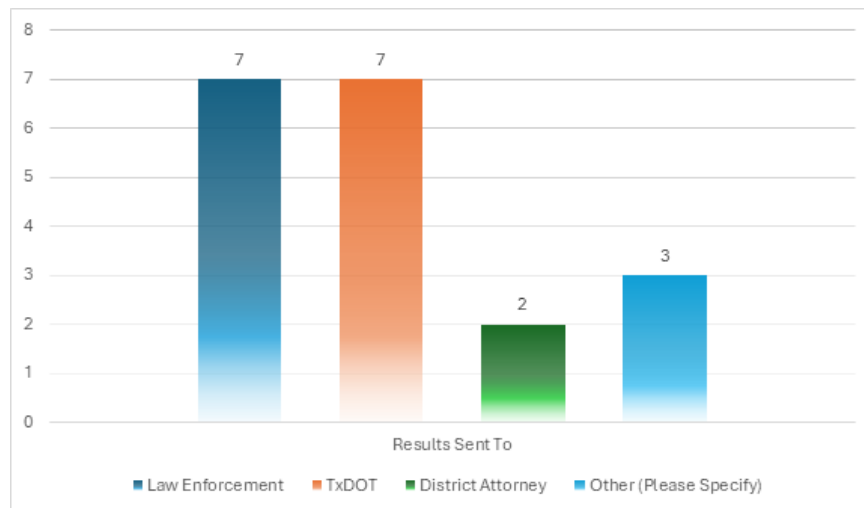
Results:

None	67% (6)
N/A	11% (1)
Additional Circumstances	22% (2) The length of the hospital stay, unless the ME office can get preadmit blood Length of time from hospitalization until the individual died

Reporting Procedures

The TTI team sought to collect answers from ME offices regarding who toxicology and BAC results are automatically disseminated to once those results become available. To do so, TTI investigators posed the following question to ME offices and received the following answers in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Once Toxicology Results are Available to the ME, Results are Automatically Sent To (Select All that Apply Question)



Other (Please Specify):

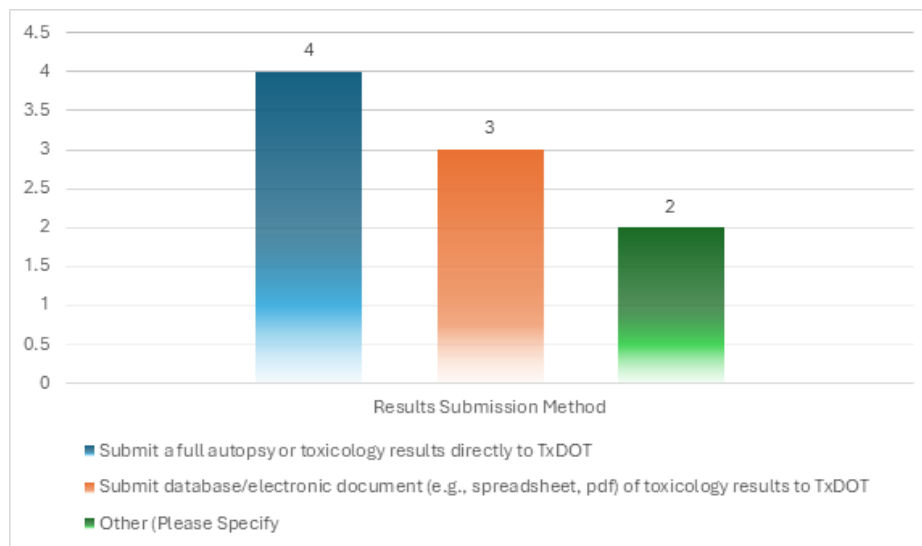
Those who make requests, Next of Kin, Insurance, etc

Any attorney who has submitted a subpoena for the toxicology report

None (results are not automatically sent to any of the above)

The TTI team also inquired about the methods ME offices use to submit toxicology results to TxDOT. The following figure (7) details the question which was asked along with the submitted responses.

Figure 7. How the ME office submits toxicology results to TxDOT (Select All that Apply Question)



Other (Please Specify):

TxDOT forms provided to Office of Medical Examiner (OME)

Results are submitted to the law enforcement agency that investigated the crash; they then submit the results to TxDOT

For those who reported they use a database or electronic document to submit results, TTI investigators requested additional details which included the fields that the ME office collect as well as how and when results are submitted to TxDOT. Responses included:

Fields included: Case number, first name, last name, type (MVA, MVA-Ped, Motorcycle...), Position (driver, pedestrian...), Pronounced date/time, Incident date, City, Tox performed, blood alcohol concentration, If, methamphetamine found, cocaine found, benzoylgonine found, alprazolam found, hydrocodone found, morphine found.

How and when the results are submitted: Spreadsheet is emailed directly to a contact at TxDOT on even months of the year.

Results are emailed to TxDOT.

Justices of the Peace – Reported Responses

General Questions

TTI investigators requested answers from JP offices regarding the following general questions listed in Figure 8 below. Collected responses are also displayed.

Figure 8. Justice of the Peace General Questions and Responses



Did the JP office know that reporting toxicology results for fatal crashes to TxDOT-CRS is a statutory requirement under Transportation Code 550.081(b)?

77% (17): Yes

23% (5): No

Do you, the Justice of the Peace, visit the scene of a fatal crash?

100% (22): Yes

0% (0): No



Does the JP office send toxicology results to TxDOT?

77% (17): Yes

23% (5): No

TxDOT's preferred method for receiving BAC results is via the TxDOT CR-1001 with the full autopsy and/or full toxicology results. Does the JP office utilize TxDOT's CR-1001 - Death / Toxicology Report?

73% (16): Yes
27% (6): No



Did the JP office know that if you have submitted the CR-1001, you can attach the full report and not complete the toxicology data section of the form? They can instead write "see attachment."

9% (2): Yes
91% (20): No

Did the JP office know that if they submit toxicology results to TxDOT by email, they will receive a confirmation receipt from TxDOT?

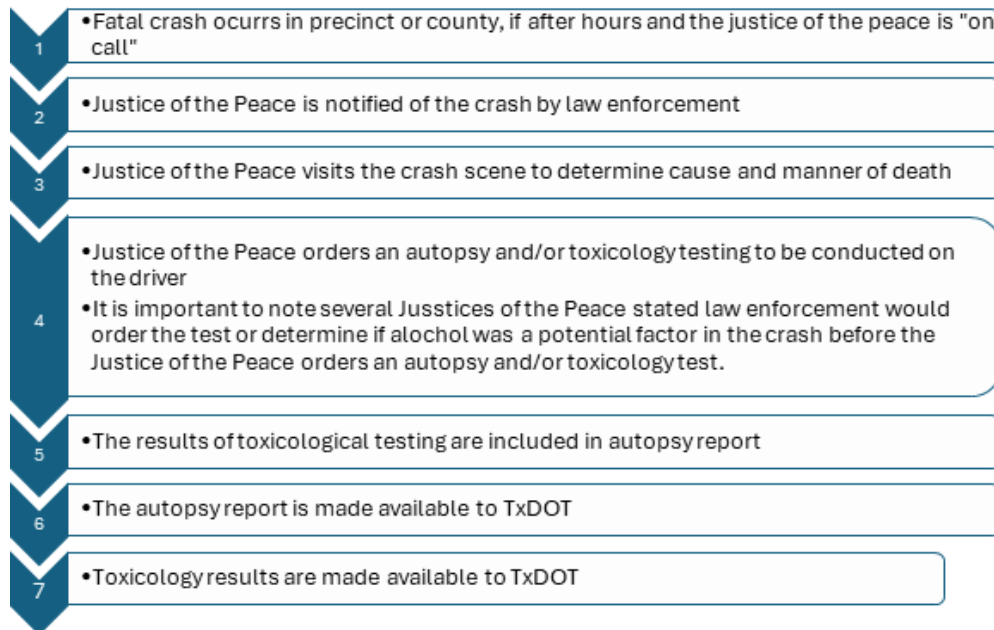
55% (12): Yes
45% (10): No



Testing Procedures

Similarly to how the TTI team generated a figure demonstrating commonly reported toxicology testing procedures among ME offices, the same was done for JPs. The following figure (9) was created by TTI based on previous JP survey results. Responses in agreement or disagreement can be found following Figure 9.

Figure 9. Does the JP office follow the same process as shown in the figure for determining whether a JP requests a toxicology test after visiting the scene of a fatal crash?



Results:

Yes	59% (13)
No	9% (2)
Other (Please Specify)	32% (7) An autopsy or blood testing is not always ordered. It depends on the circumstances and if there is speculation of intoxication or a crime. If the decedant had been transferred by ambulance to an emergency room and dies while on the way or after they arrive, the JP does not always visit the scene. The JP is provided with information from the investigating officer before determining if an autopsy and toxicology testing is needed. Toxicology results are made available to the Department of State Health Services. TxDOT can receive the results via DSHS (interstate agencies). The above steps are all followed, but after speaking with many of the JP admins, many of them were unaware that they had to submit BAC results to TxDOT - this had never been mentioned in the yearly trainings they attend.

To gain further insight into the JP testing practices, TTI investigators requested additional information regarding their own step-by-step process their office utilizes to determine if a toxicology test should be conducted upon visiting a fatal crash scene. Responses included:

Toxicology testing is always ordered for the driver of the crash (4).

The JP will request that staff complete the initial toxicology report if the driver is the fatality.

Same process that is described above in the figure (2).

The JP determines if an autopsy is needed to determine the cause and manner of the death. If the JP suspects a crime or intoxication, then the JP may order an autopsy or a blood draw.

The JP will nearly always order toxicology testing on the driver of any fatal crash.

The JP will consult with law enforcement to determine if toxicology testing is needed if the fatality is the driver or another passenger (2).

Normal policy for the JP is to have an autopsy and toxicology testing done on all fatal crash victims (2).

If there is physical evidence on site, this helps the JP determine if the fatality is sent for an autopsy and toxicology testing (2).

If an autopsy is ordered, toxicology testing is also conducted. If no autopsy is ordered, the JP utilizes a private company to draw blood and complete toxicology labs.

Autopsies are only conducted if they are required or requested. The ME completes both the autopsy and the toxicology testing in these cases.

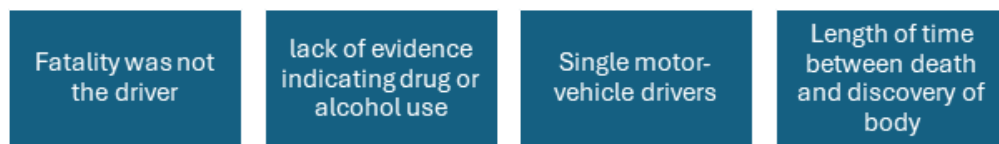
The JP will follow steps 1-5 as they are listed in the figure above and will complete step 6 depending on an analysis. Results are not made available to TxDOT (Step 7).

The JP is notified by County Emergency Communications that there has been a crash fatality. The JP calls law enforcement officers to gather more information. The JP then determines manner and cause of death if possible. If it cannot be determined easily or is not obvious, the JP will order an autopsy and toxicology testing.

The deceased is sent to the ME if an autopsy is determined to be necessary. Toxicology testing is ordered in all cases unless the deceased was taken to the hospital and died several days after the crash. First blood may also be requested from the hospital to conduct testing.

The TTI team again referenced previously reported circumstances in which JP offices would not request toxicology testing or an autopsy in the event of a fatal crash. TTI investigators asked JPs to share if there are additional circumstances in which they might not request toxicology testing. The question and results related to this question are displayed below in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Commonly Found Reasons for not Requesting Toxicology Testing in a Fatal Crash – Additional Circumstances for Not Testing?



Additional Circumstances Reported:

There are no additional reasons why the JP would not request toxicology testing (13).

If the deceased was a child under the age of 12.

If there is no suspicion the driver was driving under the influence or if no crime is apparent (2).

The reasons stated above are considered, but the JP would still order toxicology testing on any fatal driver, regardless of lack of evidence at the scene.

If the deceased was not the driver. If the deceased was the driver and had been transported to a hospital before passing, and the injuries were well documented, the deceased would be sent for an external blood draw for toxicology (if not already done at the hospital). If the hospital conducted toxicology testing or a BAC / urine drug screen, and if the injuries were well documented, these would be sent for a record review by forensics.

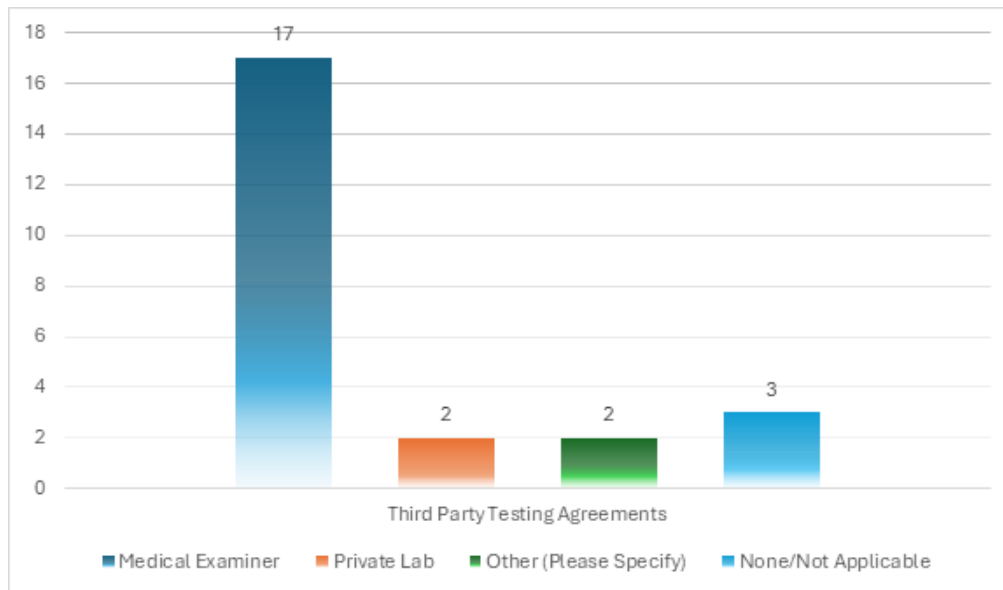
Toxicology tests are always done on all deceased from a fatal crash (2).

The ME completes both an autopsy and does toxicology testing at the same time if an autopsy is ordered. If no autopsy is ordered, then a toxicology report is not requested.

If the deceased died several days (or about a month) following the crash.

TTI investigators requested information on who they have agreements with to conduct toxicology testing in the event of a fatal crash. Most of the JPs (17), reported having an established agreement with a Medical Examiner’s office to facilitate the testing. For those who selected “Other (Please Specify),” explanations are listed below.

Figure 11. JP Office Agreements with Third Party Vendors to Conduct Toxicology Testing (Select All that Apply Question)



Other (Please Specify) Explanations:

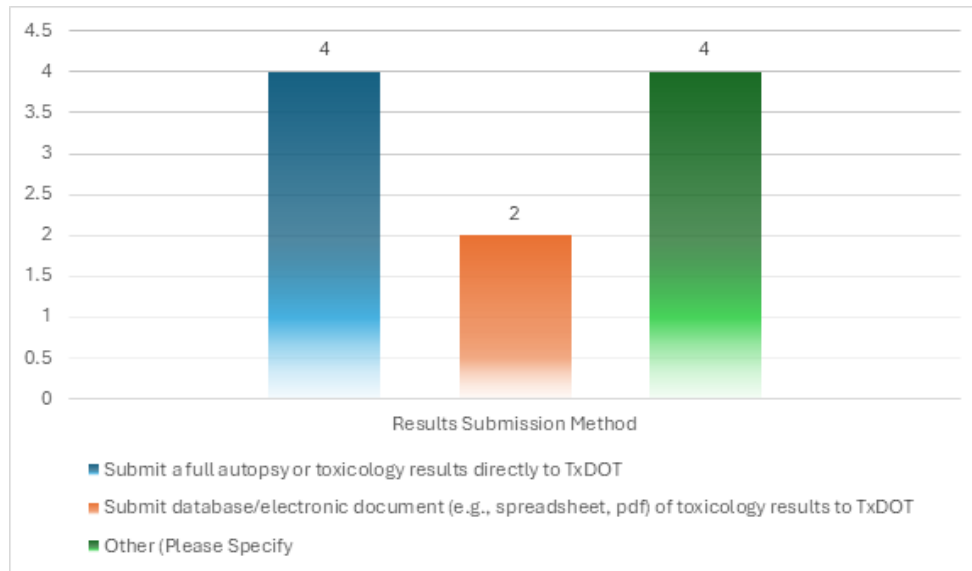
No third party arrangements. The JP will often make the offer to law enforcement and they will retain and send the blood to a lab for testing if they wish to.

All JP cases go through the county's Forensic Services Department if an autopsy or examination is needed. Here, they draw the specimen needed for testing and send them to NMS labs where the testing is performed.

Reporting Procedures

TTI investigators requested additional information from JP offices regarding the methods they utilize to submit toxicology results to TxDOT. The following figure (12) details the question which was asked along with the reported responses.

Figure 12. How the JP office submits toxicology results to TxDOT if the Office Does Not Utilize the CR-1001 – Death / Toxicology Report (Select All that Apply Question)



Other (Please Specify) Explanations:

The JP makes them available

Many of the JP admins were unaware that they needed to submit results to TxDOT

The JP hadn't submitted results up until now - no one ever explained to the JP that this needed to be done

Law enforcement reports BAC results on their crash report

Additional Comments

At the end of the survey, the TTI team wanted to provide MEs and JPs with an opportunity to provide feedback or comments based on the questions in this assessment. No additional comments were submitted on behalf of the ME offices. JPs responded with the following comments:

Submitted Comments:

The JP has to be cautious with their budget for toxicology testing and autopsies. It was expressed that an order would not be placed unless it is needed to determine the cause and manner of death. The JP would order one every time if another agency pays the bill.

When an officer fills out the blood draw lab submission form, the JP who orders the blood draw should automatically receive the results when they are available. Currently, the form requires the officer to input the JP's contact information, and the officer often forgets to include this information. The JP then has to search for the results that were ordered.

Law enforcement submits a request to the JP for BAC results from the autopsy report. Law enforcement then reports the results to TxDOT on their crash report.

The JP was never informed that they needed to submit results to TxDOT. They did not know how to either.

Survey Results Summary

For the state to have an informed understanding of the prevalence of alcohol-impaired driving, the need to have accurate and complete BAC toxicology data in the state's database is crucial. With primarily JPs and MEs conducting death investigations and submitting those results to TxDOT (with the help of law enforcement and their crash reports), an essential piece of this project includes analyzing toxicology testing and reporting practices from these stakeholders, as well as any challenges they face when doing so. TTI investigators accomplished this through the development and dissemination of this survey tool.

Key findings include that of all the ME offices who completed the survey, 100% (9) reported that they did know about the statutory requirement ([Transportation Code \(TC\) Section 550.081](#)) to submit toxicology results to TxDOT while only 77% (17) of JPs who submitted survey responses were aware of the same requirement – despite their yearly trainings they attend. Additionally, it was found that only 55% (12) JP offices knew that if they submitted toxicology results to TxDOT by email, that they would receive a confirmation from TxDOT that they had received the results. There was a mix of JP offices who reported that they would always order toxicology testing on all fatal drivers from a crash; others stated that unless there was evidence at the scene of impairment or a crime (or if law enforcement suggested toxicology testing), they would not request testing to be conducted.

The findings from this analysis substantiate the continued need to provide education to JPs and MEs on the crucial roles they have as death investigators. The more that is understood about their testing and reporting practices, as well as any barriers they face, enables TTI investigators to create meaningful and impactful education materials – as well as inform TxDOT about the current practices and form recommendations for improvement.

Objective 3: Distribute 1 Educational Material to 254 Death Investigator Offices to Improve Toxicology Reporting Performance Rates

TTI investigators developed and shared an informative document with JP death investigators across the state who are tasked with reporting BAC and toxicology results to TxDOT when a suspected impaired driver dies as a result of a traffic-related crash. This document included specifics related to:

1. Why reporting those results is an integral role the death investigator holds,
2. Reporting before the 11th day of each calendar month is mandated under Texas' Transportation Code 550.081,
3. Reporting results to TxDOT is essential for Texas to comply with NHTSA standards,
4. Important reporting reminders, such as:
 - a. TxDOT's preferred method for receiving results
 - b. If attaching the full report, death investigators may write "see attachment" in the data section.
 - c. If toxicology results are submitted to TxDOT via email, the sender will receive a confirmation email that the results have been received.
5. The various ways to report results.

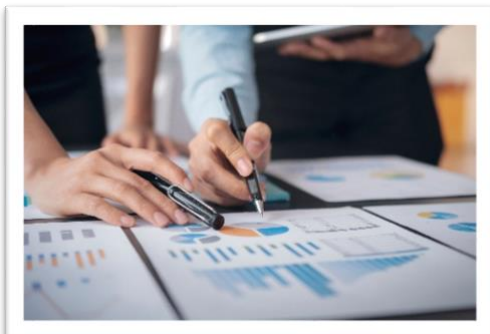


Contact information for the justice of the peace offices was obtained through an export from the Texas Office of Court Administration website through the [Court Activity Reporting and Directory System](#).

This document was uploaded to TxDOT's E-grants system under supplemental # 2024-TTI-SUP-00347 and was approved by TxDOT on May 14, 2024. This document was shared with justice of the peace offices via email on June 28, 2024. The educational material was also posted on TTI's Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies ([CADES website](#)). The material, along with distribution details, can be found in Appendix E of this report.

Objective 4: Complete 1 Crash Analysis to Improve BAC Reporting Performance to TxDOT's Traffic Records Division

TTI investigators conducted an analysis on trends and the prevalence of alcohol and drug-related motor-vehicle crashes and fatalities in Texas between 2014 to 2023. The team also examined toxicology reporting rates for the state during this same ten-year reporting period.



The data to conduct this analysis was obtained by utilizing TxDOT's CRIS data up to June 2024. As CRIS is a "live" database with crash record information being entered every day, reported crash data may vary from TxDOT's annual report numbers.

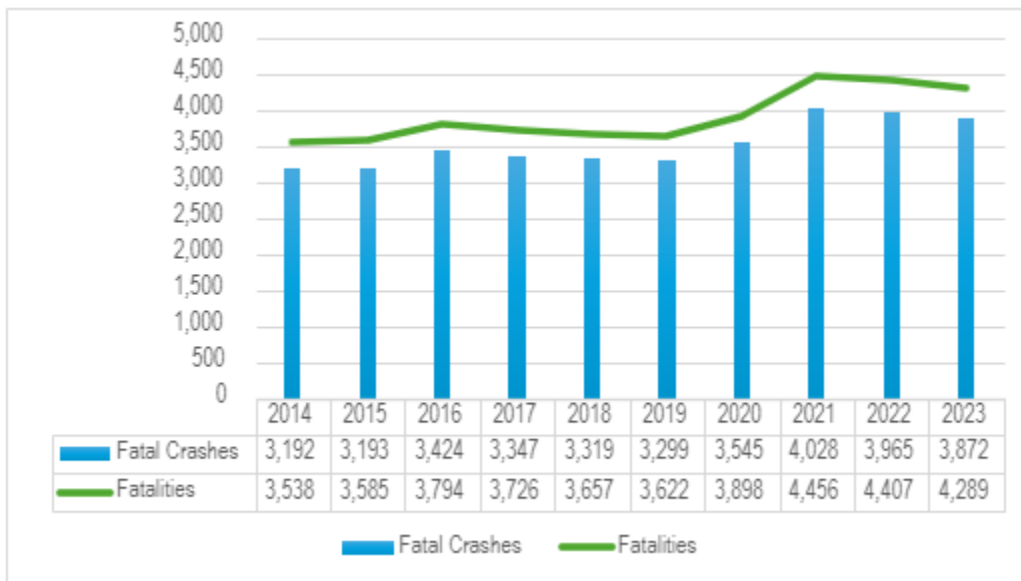
TTI staff then created visuals to represent the data (crash counts, percentages, and rates) and used descriptive statistics to support the crash analysis findings for the state and county levels. I. These findings substantiate the impaired driving trends the state has seen during the reported decade as well as the impacts the underreporting BAC toxicology data has.

Texas Motor-Vehicle Crash Analysis Findings, 2014 - 2023

Section 1: The Prevalence of Alcohol and Drug-Related Motor-Vehicle Fatal Crashes and Fatalities

In the last 10 years (2014 – 2023), the overall number of fatalities and crashes that resulted in deaths has steadily increased; in total, there were 35,184 reported fatal crashes, and 38,972 fatalities in the 10-year reporting period. In 2014, there were 3,192 fatal crashes which occurred, resulting in over 3,500 lives lost. The number of reported fatalities and fatal crashes increased through 2016, where there were 3,424 reported crashes that resulted in 3,794 deaths on Texas roadways. There was a slight decrease in both categories up until 2019 where the number of fatal crashes lowered to 3,299, and the number of fatalities was 3,622. However, those numbers reached new and unfortunate highs in 2021 with over 4,000 fatal crashes and nearly 4,500 fatalities. While the reported numbers from 2023 are still higher than any other year between 2014 and 2020, the reported numbers illustrate the beginning of a decline in fatal crashes and fatalities for Texas. Based on these findings, it is crucial the state continues to implement evidence-based traffic safety programs along with proven motor-vehicle countermeasures to continue efforts focused on reducing traffic-related fatalities. The number of motor-vehicle crashes and fatalities reported between 2014 and 2023 in Texas are displayed below in Figure 13.

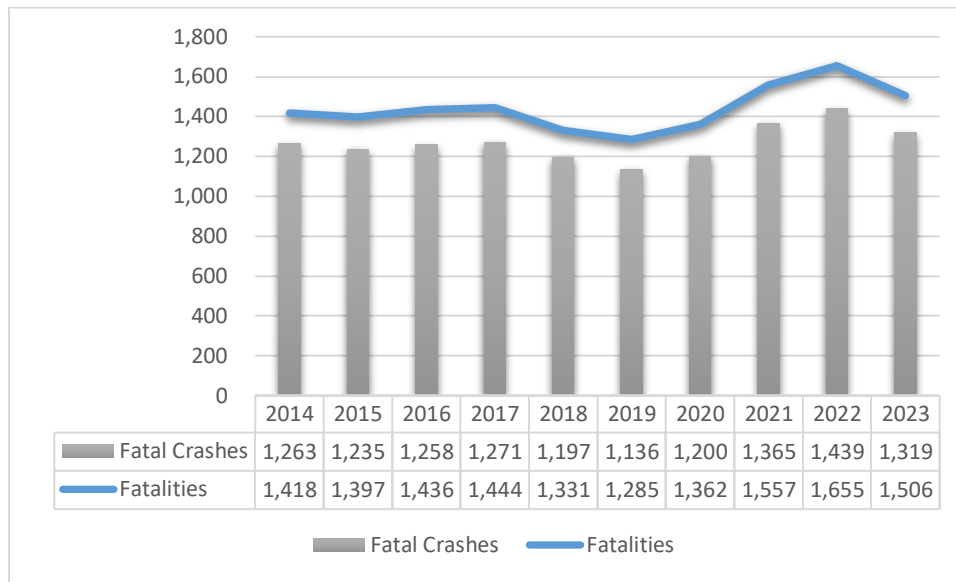
Figure 13. Motor-Vehicle Fatal Crashes and Fatalities, 2014-2023



Alcohol and Drug-Involved Fatal Motor-Vehicle Crashes and Fatalities

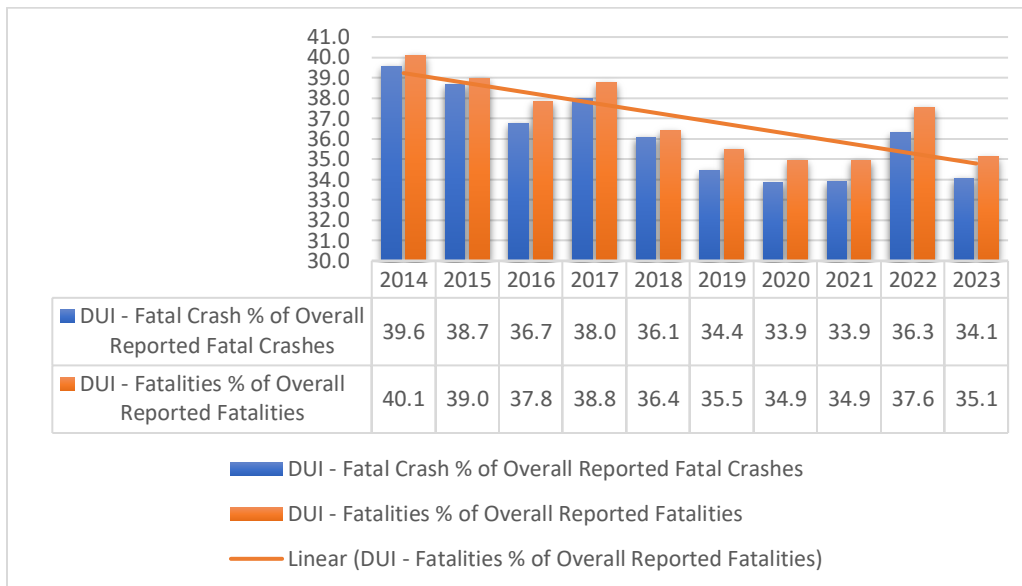
Throughout the 10-year reporting period for this analysis (2014-2023), toxicology results indicated there were a reported 12,683 alcohol and/or drug-related fatal crash incidents that unfortunately resulted in the deaths of 14,391 individuals. Between 2014 and 2020, the reported impaired driving crashes and fatalities remained relatively consistent. In 2021, the number of fatal crashes rose to over 1,300 and there were 1,557 fatalities. In 2022, there was another sharp increase in reported impaired driving crashes (1,439) and fatalities (1,655). In 2023, those numbers began to decline. The number of motor-vehicle crashes and fatalities with contributing factors related to impaired driving are illustrated below in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Fatal Impaired Driving Crashes and Fatalities, 2014-2023



On average, the percentage of fatal crashes where impaired driving was involved compared to the overall number of crashes the state experienced was 36.2%. Similarly, over a third (37%) of the fatalities from the state’s total of 38,972 motor-vehicle deaths were reported to involve alcohol, drugs, or both. Based on the data and the trend depicted below in Figure 15, the frequency of alcohol and/or drug-involved crashes and fatalities has decreased compared to other reported contributing factors for the states’ overall amount of crashes and fatalities.

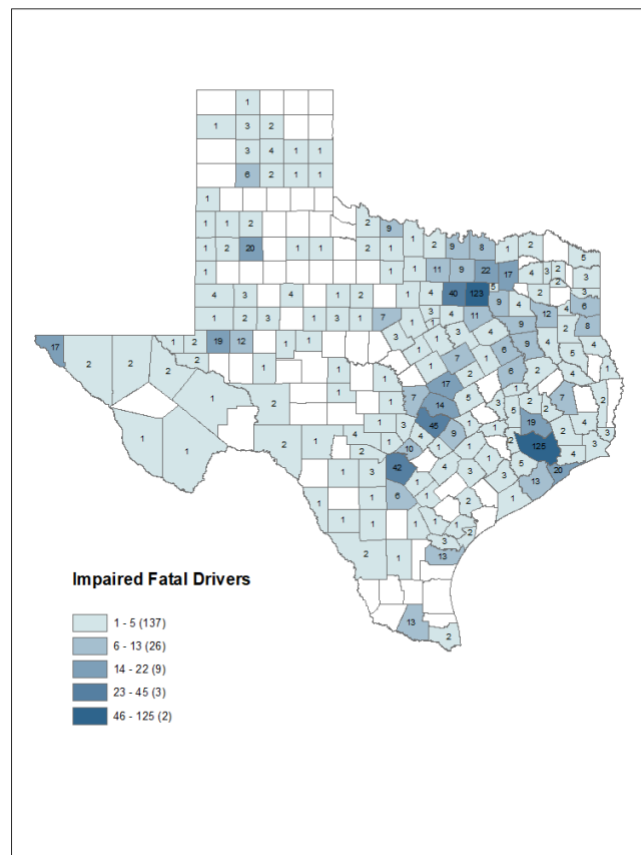
Figure 15. Percentage of DUI Motor-Vehicle Fatal Crashes and Fatalities, 2014-2023



Fatal Crashes by County

Determining where the frequency of impaired driving fatalities is occurring the most helps provide justification to target countermeasures to reduce alcohol and drug-impaired driving in these locations. The data in the illustration below (Figure 16) indicates that in 137 of Texas’ 254 counties, there were between 1-5 impaired driver fatalities. In 10% (26) of counties across the state, between 6-13 driver fatalities were reported. 9 counties reported 14-22 impaired driver crash fatalities, and 3 stated they experienced 23-45. 123 fatalities were reported in 1 county, and an unfortunate 125 fatalities occurred in another county. Counties such as Dallas, Tarrant, Bexar, Travis, and Harris counties experienced these higher counts of impaired driver fatality crashes in 2023.

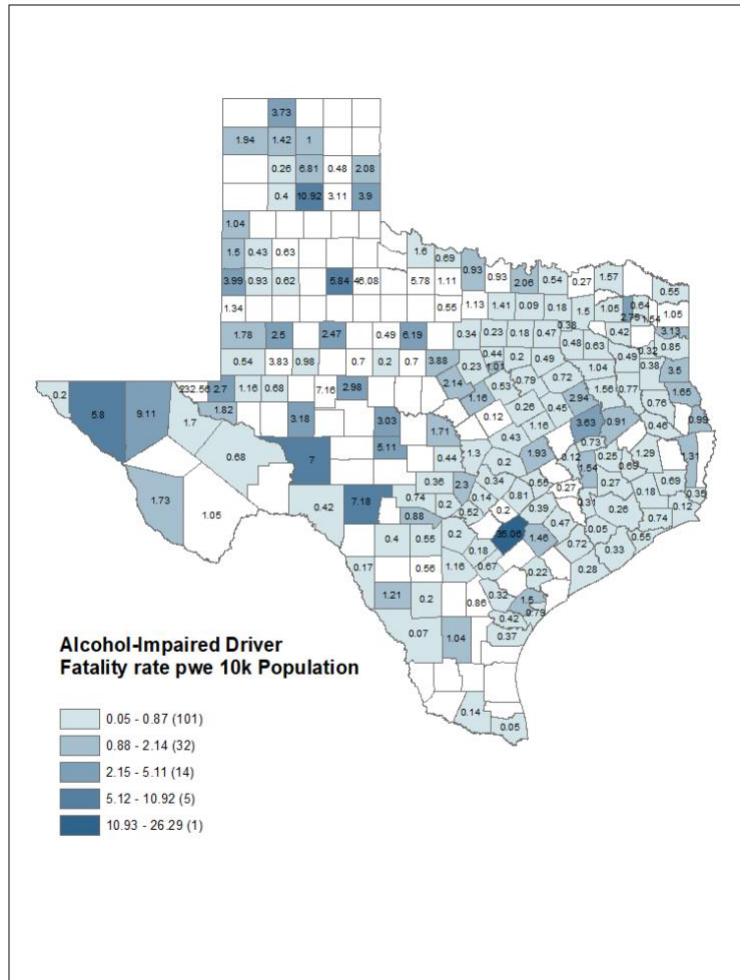
Figure 16. Impaired Driver Fatalities by County, 2023



Additionally, the TTI team reviewed the alcohol-impaired driver fatality rate per 10,000 population, as is depicted by concentration level in Figure 8 below. Through a population-focused lens, traffic safety professionals can again measure the frequency of impaired driving fatality occurrences in various communities across the state. This perspective is particularly important to consider in rural Texas areas where fewer people are. When comparing the population-based data (Figure 8) with the count-focused data (Figure 17), the data substantiates that impaired driving fatalities are befalling in rural and metropolitan communities alike. Higher concentrations of impaired driver fatalities from 2023 were

reported in counties such as Hudspeth, Armstrong, Dickens, Crockett, Edwards, and Gonzalez per 10k population.

Figure 17. Impaired Driver Fatality Rate Per 10k Population, 2023



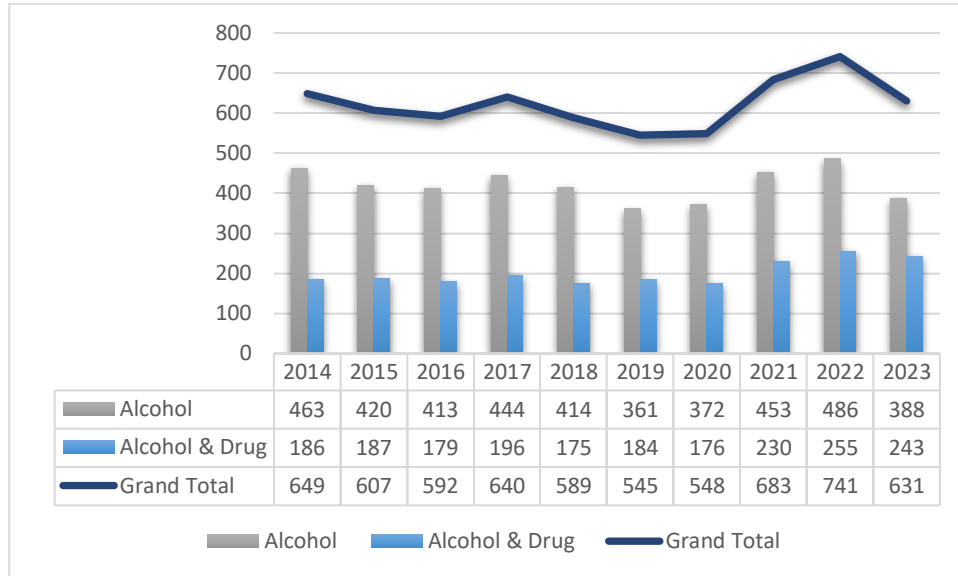
Section II: Blood Alcohol Concentration and Toxicology Reporting Performance in Texas

Reported BAC and Toxicology Results of Fatally Impaired Drivers

TTI investigators reviewed reported BAC and toxicology rates and trends in Texas from 2014 to 2023 through an export from TxDOT’s CRIS database. The review of this data is illustrated below in Figure 18. A distressing total of 4,214 results for a fatal driver’s BAC being greater than 0 were reported in the 10-year reporting period. Furthermore, there were 2,011 reported cases where fatally impaired drivers had a BAC result which was greater than 0 in addition to having a drug present in their system. Altogether, these reported numbers declined from 2014-2016 (649 fatalities to 592). However, in 2017, those numbers jumped again to 640 fatally injured drivers with a BAC greater than 0 or with a reported BAC plus another drug presence. The numbers lowered in 2018 (589), and they stayed relatively consistent through 2020. In 2021, Texas began to see a sharp increase in these reported numbers with 683 fatally

injured alcohol-related drivers. In 2022, the data shows that number increased yet again to a staggering 741 lives. 2023 reported data indicates that those numbers are beginning to decline again (631), as there was an overall decrease of over 100 fatal alcohol-related driver fatalities.

Figure 18. Alcohol-Related Driver Fatalities with Reported BAC >0, 2014-2023

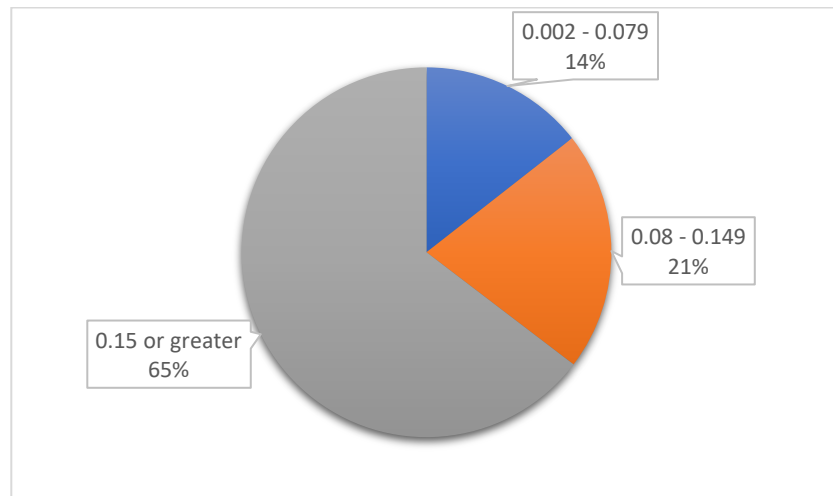


TTI staff then conducted a review of reported BACs by grouping various levels together:

- 1) 0.001-0.079 g/dl – Below the legal threshold in Texas
- 2) 0.080-0.149 g/dL – Defined as being impaired by Texas law
- 3) 0.15 g/dL or more – At least twice Texas’ legal limit

Representing the greatest amount of reported BACs in alcohol-involved driver fatality cases (close to 2/3) is regrettably also the category with the fatalities having at least two times Texas’ legal limit in their systems. While the first category renders the smallest number of fatalities, it is still important to consider those crashes. 14% of drivers who died in a motor-vehicle crash were driving below the legal per se limit of 0.08 g/dL, yet they were still involved in a crash. This could mean these drivers may have still been incapacitated while behind the wheel, despite being within the legal limit, when they crashed.

Figure 19. Alcohol-Involved Driver Fatalities: Reported BAC Level Groups, 2014-2023



To provide more detail regarding the reported BAC levels from 2014-2023, the TTI team included a histogram of BAC frequency levels among fatally impaired drivers (Figure 20) as well as a table detailing statistics from the dataset (Table 4). This data includes instances where alcohol was the only substance present as well as cases where alcohol and another drug was detected (6,225) in the last 10 years.

Figure 20. BAC Levels of Fatal Alcohol-Involved Driver Crashes, 2014-2023

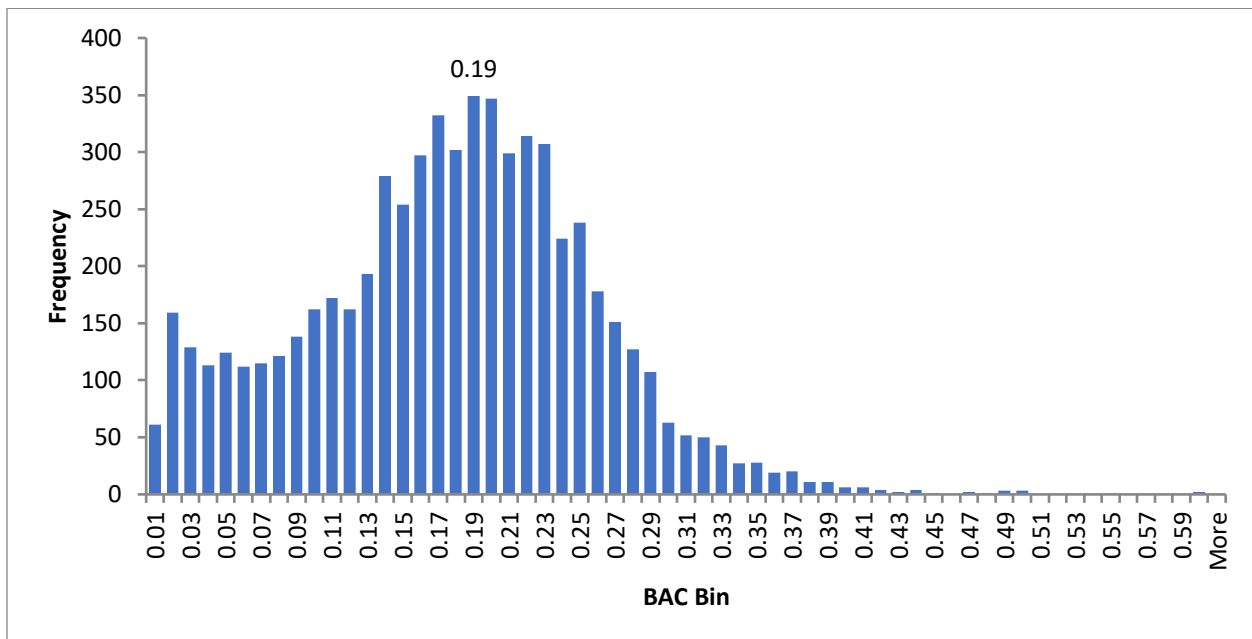


Table 4. Reported BAC Statistics: Alcohol-Involved Driver Fatalities, 2014-2023

Mean (Average)	Median (Middle Value of Dataset)	Mode (Appears Most Frequently in Dataset)
0.17 g/dL	0.18 g/dL	0.2 g/dL

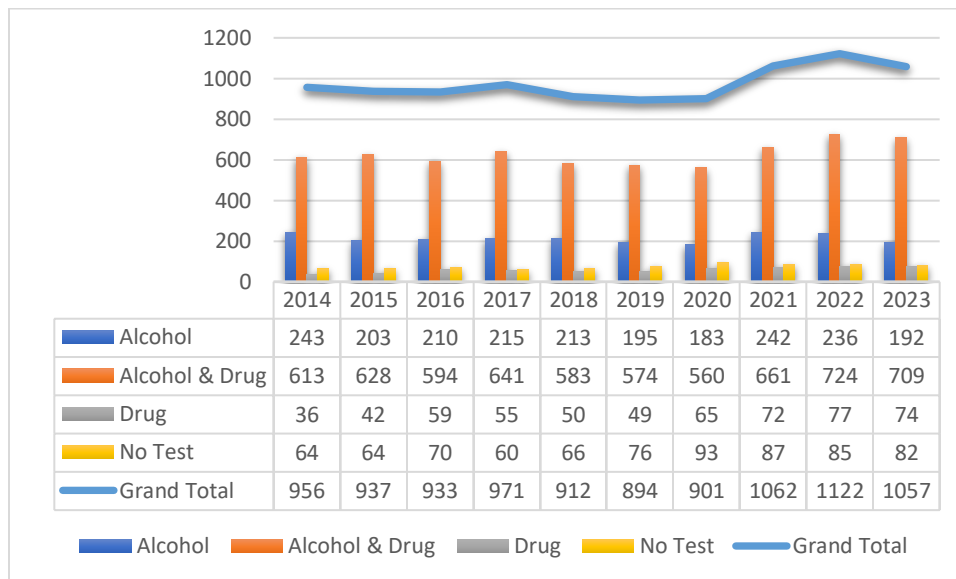
Toxicology Reporting Testing Data on Fatally Impaired Drivers

TTI staff further investigated reported alcohol and drug-related driver fatalities throughout 2014-2023 to determine what types of toxicology tests were administered. A combined total of 8,998 motor-vehicle driver fatalities were tested for alcohol-only, drugs-only, and alcohol and drugs in these 10 years. Nearly 70% (6,287) of the recorded test types were for both alcohol and drugs. About 24% (2,132) of tests screened for only a presence of alcohol, and in approximately 6% (579) of cases, only drugs were tested for.

Consequently, there were also 747 cases where some level of impairment was suspected or was indicated on crash reports, yet a toxicology or BAC report was not requested for the fatality.

The number of alcohol-only test requests were highest in 2014 (243), 2021 (242), and in 2022 (236) with the lowest number of tests occurring in 2019 and 2023. The number of alcohol and drug test requests ranged from 560 to 661 between the years of 2014 and 2020; however, those numbers began to significantly climb beginning in 2021 where there were 661 alcohol and drug tests which were requested. Subsequently, in 2022, that number rose to 724, and in 2023, it slightly lowered again to 709. The frequency of drug-only test requests have increased over the last 10 years, as in 2014, only 36 requests were made in the state of Texas to screen for drugs. 2023 numbers indicate that number has risen to 74. This data can be examined further by viewing Figure 21 below.

Figure 21. Test Types for Fatal Impaired Drivers, 2014-2023

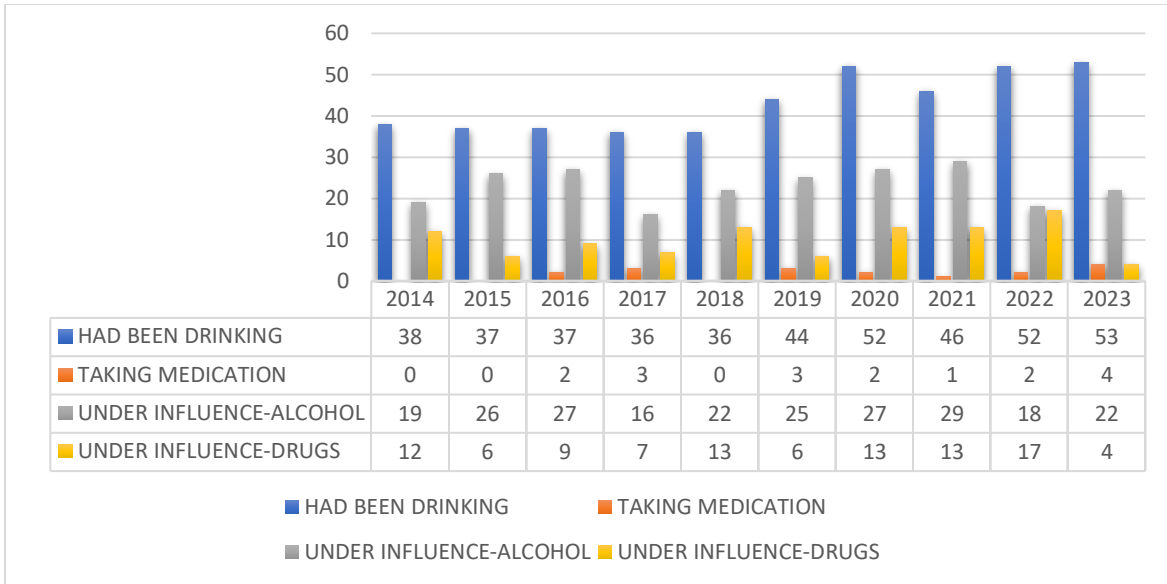


Contributing Factor Analysis on Suspected Fatal Impaired Drivers, No Toxicology Reported

While the data analyzed from toxicology results is telling, another important piece of the puzzle TTI investigators reviewed included details related to contributing factors provided via crash reports. Details related to the listed crash indicators with a missing BAC or drug test result are listed below in Figure 24 by the impairment type. Between 2014 -2018, there had been a relatively consistent amount of reports (mid-30s) where “Had Been Drinking” was listed as a contributing factor in a crash report. By 2019, that

number increased to 44 entries, and in 2023, it has reached 53 driver fatalities. The number of drivers who died where “Taking Medication” was a listed on the crash report has remained the lowest category throughout this 10-year reporting period with an overall total of 17 fatalities where a coinciding toxicology result had not been entered into the CRIS database. In 2023, there were 22 contributing factor entries with missing BAC and drug results for “Under Influence – Alcohol,” and 4 entries for “Under Influence – Drug.”

Figure 22. Listed Contributing Factors for Fatal Impaired Drivers Without a Reported BAC Result: Crash Reports, 2014-2023



Analysis Results

Based on the findings from this 10-year analysis of impaired-driving related traffic fatalities, crashes, and toxicology reporting performance, the evidence suggests there is still much work to be done to curtail impaired driving across the state. Utilizing reported geographical data in various ways, including from 1) an overall count stand-point, and 2) a frequency perspective by population size, can verify that additional programming efforts and countermeasures are being deployed in high-priority locations.

Furthermore, state traffic safety professionals rely on accurate and complete data to both justify the need for additional efforts to be made as well as to target the communities which suffer the most alcohol and drug-involved crashes and fatalities. This in turn leads to maximizing activity efforts aimed at reducing impaired driving. Therefore, it is crucial that the TxDOT-CRS have a complete database where entered crash contributing factors coincide with a corresponding toxicology result.

Objective 5: Support 15 Death Investigators with Submitting Missing BAC and Toxicology Reports

Without accurate data to provide substantiating evidence pointing towards a problem, it is difficult to make claims that a problem needs to be addressed. This is why the TTI team made every effort to increase Texas’ BAC and toxicology reporting performance rates for the 2023 reporting period. With a

more complete picture of where impaired driving motor-vehicle driver fatalities are happening as well as having the option to analyze the data that comes from these crashes provides significant insight into the prevalence of the alcohol and drug-impaired driving problem for the state.

Per the [Transportation Code \(TC\) Section 550.081](#), MEs and JPs (known as death investigators) have a duty to submit BAC and toxicology data to TxDOT's Crash Analysis Division in response to fatal traffic crashes. Additionally, [Texas Senate Bill 760](#) states that a JP may order a specimen to be taken from a motor-vehicle crash driver fatality to identify if the individual was intoxicated at the time. As of September 1, 2023, that bill was broadened to include that the JP may also order the specimen to be drawn to assist in determining the "cause and manner of death while conducting an inquest" (LegiScan, 2023).

Through an analysis of impaired driving fatal crashes, the TTI team discovered there were a total of 29 cases where it was possible results were missing from TxDOT's database. TTI staff reviewed the crash fatality data that had been entered into the CRIS database as of June 2023 to determine which jurisdiction to send a missing BAC inquiry letter to. Death investigators were first notified via mail of the request; follow-up phone calls and emails then took place as the TTI team learned whether results were in fact missing and if another jurisdiction ordered the inquest. Additionally, the team received responses and calls requesting that TTI submit the results on their behalf. The project team also shared the identified cases that TTI would be working to resolve in the CRIS database with the TxDOT Crash Analysis Division. This was done for a few important reasons:

- 1) TTI staff did not want TxDOT Crash Analysis Division personnel to be duplicating efforts TTI was already conducting, as this would enable them to focus their efforts on other data.
- 2) The shared correspondence was beneficial to both parties, as updates were made based on notes and conversations that each entity had already determined regarding these potentially missing results.

TTI staff then ran a second export from the CRIS database in August to again identify the jurisdictions to make a final attempt to determine the status of the potential missing BAC and toxicology results. With TxDOT's CRIS being a "live" database where data is updated daily, the reported record data in this report may vary from TxDOT's annual report numbers.

Identifying Missing Toxicology Data and Contacting JPs and MEs

Based on an export from the CRIS database in June of 2024, a total of 55 counties showed partial entries where a suspected alcohol-involved driver fatality was displaying at least 1 unreported BAC. These counties are displayed below in Table 5.

Table 5. Fatal Alcohol-Impaired Drivers with Unreported BAC Results, 2023

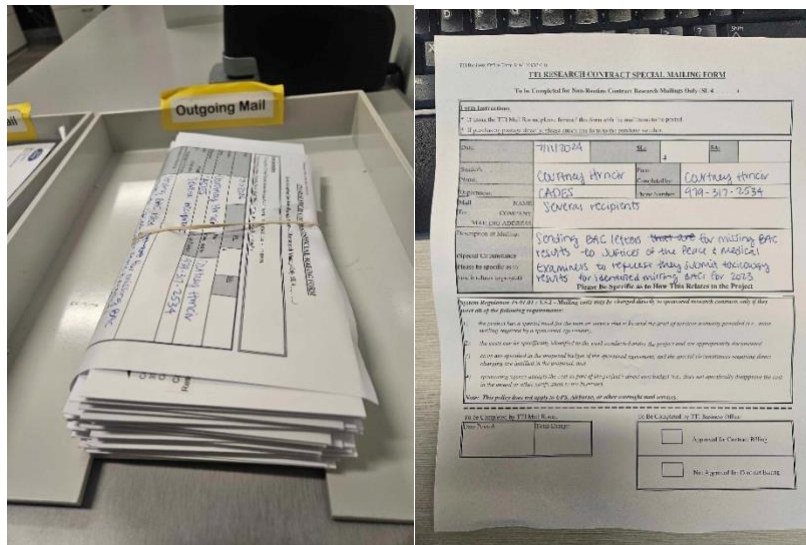
County	Fatal Impaired Drivers	No Reported BAC	Percentage of Fatal Impaired - Alcohol Drivers with Unreported BAC
Anderson	5	1	20%
Angelina	3	1	33%
Atascosa	4	1	25%
Bandera	2	1	50%
Bastrop	7	2	29%
Bee	1	1	100%
Bell	10	1	10%
Brazos	3	1	33%
Coke	1	1	100%
Collingsworth	1	1	100%
Colorado	1	1	100%
Comal	4	1	25%
Concho	1	1	100%
Dawson	3	2	67%
Dimmit	1	1	100%
Ector	12	1	8%
El Paso	16	3	19%
Ellis	8	1	13%
Fort Bend	5	2	40%
Freestone	4	1	25%
Galveston	16	1	6%
Grimes	3	1	33%
Hardin	2	1	50%
Harris	96	1	1%
Hays	2	1	50%
Henderson	6	1	17%
Hidalgo	11	5	45%
Hood	3	2	67%
Houston	2	1	50%
Jefferson	3	1	33%
Johnson	4	2	50%
Kerr	2	1	50%
Leon	4	1	25%
Liberty	1	1	100%
Lubbock	13	2	15%
Menard	1	1	100%
Montgomery	13	3	23%
Orange	3	1	33%
Parker	4	2	50%
Pecos	1	1	100%
Reeves	1	1	100%
San Jacinto	2	1	50%

Smith	9	2	22%
Tarrant	29	4	14%
Taylor	2	1	50%
Titus	1	1	100%
Travis	25	1	4%
Uvalde	1	1	100%
Val Verde	2	1	50%
Van Zandt	2	1	50%
Walker	2	1	50%
Ward	1	1	100%
Webb	2	2	100%
Wharton	3	2	67%
Wilbarger	1	1	100%
Grand Total	711	76	11%

Disclaimer: As BAC and toxicology results are 1) completed by laboratories and reported to TxDOT and 2) added to supplemental reports by law enforcement agencies, these numbers will vary in the CRIS database, as this data was extracted in June 2024.

The TTI project team reviewed the exported CRIS data to identify the suspected impaired driving-related fatal crashes from each of these counties where a biological specimen was obtained for toxicology testing and results had not been reported to TxDOT. To ensure the team had analyzed all cases where a result may be missing, TTI staff also analyzed the narrative entries on crash reports where the *Driver's Alcohol Specimen Type* was listed as *"Other (Explain in Narrative)"* and the *Driver's Alcohol Result* was listed *"No Data."* If drugs or alcohol was referenced in the narrative, the TTI team included the case among the others with potentially missing BAC results.

A total of 29 suspected alcohol-impaired fatalities were identified which did not have a reported BAC result. Contact information for death investigators within the jurisdiction of the crash was obtained via web searches in the counties where the crash occurred. Letters were then distributed to death investigators in these jurisdictions to notify them of the identified potential missing result from TxDOT's CRIS database. Images of these letters being mailed can be found below. With there being multiple death investigators in each jurisdiction, as well as agreements made between counties and ME offices, TTI staff continued outreach efforts when it had been determined the initial request did not go to the death investigator who conducted the inquest. This investigative process consisted of phone calls and emails to various precincts to determine the correct office who knew the status of the potential results. TTI staff was then able to contact the correct personnel to obtain a status update on the toxicology results.



Outreach Activity Results

The TTI team mailed a total of 23 letters to JP and ME offices throughout the state. The cities where TTI staff mailed these letters can be viewed in Table 6. The template letters utilized to complete this activity can be found in Appendices F and G.

Table 6. Counties with Unreported 2023 BAC Results – Letters Distributed in 2024

County	Number of Missing BAC Results
Bandera	1
Bell	1
Brazos	1
Dimmit	1
Ector	1
El Paso	1
Fort Bend	1
Harrison	1
Hidalgo	5
Hood	2
Houston	1
Johnson	1
Montgomery	1
Nacogdoches	1
Orange	1
Pecos	1
Reeves	1
Tarrant	3
Taylor	1
Walker	1
Ward	1

Wharton	1
Total	29

TTI staff followed up with death investigators from each jurisdiction where a missing toxicology result had been identified. These contact attempts were made by making phone calls and sending emails. The following responses were received:

Table 7. Missing Toxicology Results from 2023 and Corresponding Status

# Toxicology Results	Status
1*	Based on the autopsy report, the narrative mentions a presence of alcohol. However, the amount was not provided by the ME. The autopsy report does not indicate any toxicology testing was conducted. Per TxDOT-CRS, their plan to update the database is as follows: Alcohol - not tested
17	Results confirmed to have been submitted to TxDOT.
5	After sending the letter, 2 reminder emails were sent and a phone call attempt to this jurisdiction had been made – no response was received.
1	The JP for this fatality did not conduct an inquest, as the driver died in the hospital. The hospital informed me that a release would need to be signed to receive hospital data.
1*	Toxicology was not conducted on 1 fatality. This update was made in the CRIS database.
1*	Was noted as not being tested due to length of time the individual was in the hospital for. This update was made in the CRIS database.
1*	The death investigator did not conduct an inquest on this individual – believes that the individual who was tested (according to the narrative) was another fatality involved in the crash.
1	1 jurisdiction requested a release be signed before releasing the results, but TTI never received the release form.
1	The office with the results had not yet submitted the results per TxDOT-CRS.

** Note: The CRIS database was updated to indicate that testing for alcohol on these crash fatalities did not occur.*

Outreach Results

To conclude this years’ outreach activities, TTI staff and the TxDOT-CRS team shared final notes regarding confirmed submissions as well as provided final status updates on August 30, 2023. Through

this collaboration, in addition to the final export from CRIS on August 19, 2024, the TTI team was able to make final comparisons from the first export and identify the improvements made regarding BAC result submissions. There were originally 29 fatal crashes with potentially missing BAC results. In 4 of the reported cases, updates were made to the CRIS database to indicate that testing had not been ordered for the fatalities (as are identified in Table 7 above). An updated total of 17 of 25 identified missing BAC results being received and updated in the CRIS database. Thus, this activity led to a 68% improvement in 2023 BAC reporting performance.

Conclusion

Through this project's activities, the TTI team contacted and engaged with JP and ME stakeholders on the importance of submitting toxicology results to TxDOT-CRS.

- With the development and implementation of the strategic plan, TTI staff made conscious efforts to deliver project materials to Texas communities where there are high numbers of DWI-related crash fatalities.
- TTI's evaluation and analysis on 25 jurisdictions' BAC reporting practices served as both an educational opportunity for the JPs and MEs who completed it as well as guided the information which was to be included in future educational materials for distribution.
- An educational document which included reporting reminders, information related to the importance of reporting, and how to submit results was distributed to JP jurisdictions across the state.
- Through a CRIS export and analysis including 2023 BAC, alcohol, and drug reporting on driver fatalities, the TTI team identified relevant trends in reporting characteristics, determined the locations across the state which had the highest amount of alcohol-related crash fatalities, and evaluated missing BAC data.
- Lastly, TTI staff made efforts to improve the 2023 BAC and toxicology data in the CRIS database to make it more complete. This was done by notifying death investigators in jurisdictions with identified missing BAC results, and by making additional attempts to follow-up when applicable. TTI collaborated with TxDOT-CRS to reduce duplications in effort as well as to keep each other informed on the status of various missing toxicology results.

Each of these efforts were made to identify issues, alleviate and address challenges in reporting toxicological data, and assist JPs and MEs with transmitting toxicology results to TxDOT-CRS.

Appendix A – Strategic Priority List of Communities

District	Jurisdiction	DWI-KA	DWI-KA%	TxSTORM-DWI-KA
Houston	HOUSTON	75	7.40%	-59.39
Dallas	DALLAS	62	7.48%	-39.06
San Antonio	SAN ANTONIO	60	11.52%	-28.87
Houston	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Harris County	50	7.02%	-34.54
Austin	AUSTIN	45	11.75%	-17.38
Fort Worth	ARLINGTON	33	18.86%	-4.63
Houston	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Montgomery County	27	16.46%	-7.73
Amarillo	AMARILLO	23	18.11%	6.60
Pharr	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Hidalgo County	21	23.86%	-8.39
Houston	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Fort Bend County	17	14.91%	1.96
Austin	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Bastrop County	17	19.77%	0.91
Tyler	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Smith County	17	16.35%	-3.24
Odessa	MIDLAND	16	19.75%	3.99
Corpus Christi	CORPUS CHRISTI	16	16.33%	-7.26
Dallas	IRVING	15	16.13%	-2.97
Lubbock	LUBBOCK	15	20.00%	-2.97
El Paso	EL PASO	15	7.43%	-11.89
Lufkin	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Polk County	12	20.69%	7.36

Austin	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Travis County	12	15.19%	-8.82
Austin	SAN MARCOS	11	21.57%	9.44
San Antonio	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Bexar County	11	12.64%	-2.44
Dallas	PLANO	11	17.46%	-3.09
Odessa	ODESSA	11	28.21%	-4.22
Odessa	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Ector County	11	19.30%	-7.12
Fort Worth	FORT WORTH	11	3.87%	-12.27
Dallas	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Navarro County	10	30.30%	9.28
Dallas	GRAND PRAIRIE	10	15.87%	-1.21
Waco	WACO	10	16.13%	-3.80
Houston	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Brazoria County	10	11.76%	-8.40
Laredo	LAREDO	9	16.36%	1.41
Pharr	MCALLEN	9	20.93%	0.30
Dallas	DENTON	9	15.52%	-0.65
Tyler	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Van Zandt County	9	13.43%	-1.46
Atlanta	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Harrison County	9	16.98%	-2.18
Dallas	GARLAND	9	10.59%	-3.38
Houston	CONROE	8	21.62%	13.69
Tyler	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Anderson County	8	44.44%	6.22
Houston	LEAGUE CITY	7	25.00%	9.46

San Antonio	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Atascosa County	7	20.59%	1.99
Tyler	LONGVIEW	7	14.00%	1.99
Yoakum	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Fayette County	7	21.88%	1.99
Houston	BAYTOWN	7	12.96%	0.69
Pharr	BROWNSVILLE	7	11.29%	0.69
Lubbock	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Lubbock County	7	21.21%	-0.35
Wichita Falls	WICHITA FALLS	7	33.33%	-0.35
Atlanta	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Bowie County	7	20.59%	-1.91
Tyler	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Henderson County	7	17.95%	-1.91
Abilene	ABILENE	7	12.96%	-2.53
Waco	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Bell County	7	19.44%	-3.06
Beaumont	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Chambers County	6	20.00%	1.61
Beaumont	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Liberty County	6	16.22%	1.61
Austin	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Caldwell County	6	22.22%	0.34
Dallas	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Collin County	6	10.71%	-2.09
Lufkin	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Nacogdoches County	6	22.22%	-2.65
Dallas	MESQUITE	6	11.76%	-3.13
Dallas	LEWISVILLE	6	15.00%	-3.55

Dallas	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Kaufman County	6	12.50%	-3.55
San Antonio	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Comal County	6	13.04%	-3.55
Austin	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Williamson County	6	6.82%	-3.93
Paris	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Grayson County	6	19.35%	-3.93
Paris	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Hunt County	6	12.24%	-5.40
Fort Worth	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Johnson County	6	15.79%	-6.28
Waco	BELTON	5	27.78%	5.99
Pharr	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Starr County	4	36.36%	2.78
Brownwood	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Comanche County	4	30.77%	0.86
Lufkin	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Trinity County	4	33.33%	-0.34
Lufkin	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Houston County	4	28.57%	-0.34
Paris	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Lamar County	4	25.00%	-1.17
Waco	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Falls County	4	26.67%	-1.17
Austin	KYLE	4	33.33%	-1.80
Austin	NIEDERWALD	3	60.00%	8.87
Dallas	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Dallas County	3	27.27%	8.87
Fort Worth	STEPHENVILLE	3	21.43%	8.87
Houston	KEMAH	3	42.86%	8.87

San Antonio	CASTLE HILLS	3	25.00%	8.87
Fort Worth	NEWARK	3	100.00%	4.00
Lubbock	BROWNFIELD	3	60.00%	4.00
Dallas	COPPELL	3	33.33%	2.63
Dallas	HUTCHINS	3	30.00%	2.63
Atlanta	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Camp County	3	75.00%	0.48
Waco	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Hamilton County	3	27.27%	0.48
Houston	RICHMOND	2	50.00%	3.00
Austin	TAYLOR	2	50.00%	2.94
Childress	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Childress County	2	33.33%	2.94
Corpus Christi	ROCKPORT	2	28.57%	2.94
El Paso	SOCORRO	2	22.22%	2.94
Fort Worth	COOL	2	66.67%	2.94
Fort Worth	SOUTHLAKE	2	28.57%	2.94
Houston	SHENANDOAH	2	40.00%	2.94
Houston	TOMBALL	2	20.00%	2.94
Houston	ANGLETON	2	18.18%	2.94
Lubbock	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Swisher County	2	22.22%	2.94
Pharr	SOUTH PADRE ISLAND	2	33.33%	2.94
San Angelo	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Edwards County	2	28.57%	2.94
San Antonio	CONVERSE	2	8.33%	2.94

Waco	HEWITT	2	28.57%	2.94
Wichita Falls	VERNON	2	66.67%	2.94
Yoakum	WHARTON	2	50.00%	2.94
Brownwood	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Stephens County	2	100.00%	0.11
Brownwood	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Mills County	2	50.00%	0.11
Brownwood	BROWNWOOD	2	40.00%	0.11
Dallas	FARMERSVILLE	2	40.00%	0.11

Appendix B – Strategic Plan Outreach Messages



BAC & Toxicology Reporting

Dear Judge, Happy New Year!

Impaired driving in Texas continues to be a persistent and challenging problem to counter, as alcohol-related motor-vehicle fatalities have been on the rise. For several years, Texas has been in the fight to eliminate alcohol and drug-impaired motor vehicle crash fatalities. The state, however, lacks a complete picture of the profile of those crashes and fatalities with missing toxicology results from TxDOT's database. Complete data provides evidence of the prevalence of impaired driving. Thus, it is critical that BAC and toxicology results from these fatal crashes be reported. With more collected evidence regarding the impaired driving problem, professionals will be better equipped to advocate for statutory improvements and can employ more effective countermeasures to reduce impaired driving deaths.

As a Justice of the Peace (JP) acting as a death investigator, your role is pivotal to ensuring Texas' database is complete and accurate - leading to Texas' improved evidence of impaired substance(s) in suspected impaired-driving cases.



The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies (CADES), in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), has vouched to improve the evidence that the state collects in alcohol and drug-related motor-vehicle crashes and fatalities. TTI provides technical assistance in submitting these toxicology and autopsy results to TxDOT. CADES also provides educational materials on the importance of testing and reporting the results for the state.

The CADES team will be releasing educational material soon!

We will also reach out to jurisdictions with missing BAC and toxicology results from 2023.



The CADES team will be releasing educational material soon!


We will also reach out to jurisdictions with missing BAC and toxicology results from 2023.

Visit our website

Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies | 1111 RELIS Parkway, Bryan, TX 77807

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 Sent by: c-hmcir@tti.tamu.edu powered by






BAC & Toxicology Reporting


Dear Judge,

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies (CADES), in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), is committed and driven to helping improve the evidence that the state gathers in alcohol and drug-related motor-vehicle crashes and fatalities.

TTI provides technical assistance in submitting toxicology and autopsy results to TxDOT. Additionally, CADES provides educational materials on why toxicology testing and reporting the results for the state is crucial, as the prevalence of impaired driving crashes and fatalities are on the rise.

Without this data, the state lacks accurate and complete evidence needed to justify advocating for statutory improvements for Texas. This data also provides justification to stakeholders who are working to implement effective countermeasures in communities across the state.






As a Justice of the Peace (JP) acting as a death investigator, per Texas' Transportation Code 550.081, your role is pivotal to painting that complete picture that will lead to Texas' improved evidence of impaired substance(s) in suspected impaired-driving cases.

Thank you for doing your part to move the state closer toward eliminating impaired driving in Texas.

The TTI team will also be:

- Reaching out to jurisdictions with missing BAC and toxicology results from 2023.
- Distributing an updated educational material document



The team is here to assist you. Below are the ways you can get in touch with us.

Contact Project Coordinator: Courtney Hmcir

CADES Website: Additional Resources

Leave an Anonymous Request or Suggestion

Visit our website

Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies | 1111 RELIS Parkway, Bryan, TX 77807

[Unsubscribe c-havemann@tamu.edu](mailto:c-havemann@tamu.edu)
[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)
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BAC & Toxicology Reporting

Dear Medical Examiner,

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies (CADES), in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), is committed and driven to helping improve the evidence that the state gathers in alcohol and drug-related motor-vehicle crashes and fatalities.



TTI provides technical assistance in submitting toxicology and autopsy results to TxDOT. Additionally, CADES conducts outreach efforts on why toxicology testing and reporting the results for the state in a timely manner is crucial, as the prevalence of impaired driving crashes and fatalities are on the rise.

Without this data, the state lacks accurate and complete evidence needed to justify advocating for statutory improvements for Texas. This data also provides justification to stakeholders who are working to implement effective countermeasures in communities across the state.



In Texas, Medical Examiners (ME) are required by statute (Texas' Transportation Code 550.081) to submit blood alcohol concentration (BAC) toxicology results to the Texas Department of Transportation's Crash Records Section (TxDOT-CRS). Your role is pivotal to painting that complete picture that will lead to Texas' improved evidence of impaired substance(s) in suspected impaired-driving cases.

Thank you for doing your part to move the state closer toward eliminating impaired driving in Texas.

The TTI team will also be reaching out to jurisdictions with missing BAC and toxicology results from 2023



The team is here to assist you.
Below are the ways you can get in touch with us.

Contact Project Coordinator: Courtney Hrcir	CADES Website: Additional Resources	Leave an Anonymous Request or Suggestion
<div style="background-color: #4a4a4a; color: white; padding: 5px 20px; border-radius: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Visit our website </div>		

Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies | 1111 RELIS Parkway, Bryan, TX 77807

[Unsubscribe c-havemann@tamu.edu](mailto:c-havemann@tamu.edu)

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Appendix C: Texas Medical Examiner's Information Request Survey

Demographic Questions

Texas Medical Examiner's

Information Request 2024

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) and the Texas Department of

Transportation (TxDOT) are collaborating to enhance Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) reporting in Texas. TTI is collecting logistical and procedural insights from ME offices across the state. The data obtained from ME offices will aid TxDOT in identifying ways to enhance the existing system of toxicology reporting to their agency, as mandated by law. **Default Question Block**

Agency Name

What is the primary county you serve?

Does your office provide services to other counties, either as part of a medical district or by agreement?

Yes

No

Please enter the counties that your office provides services for as part of a medical district or by agreement?.

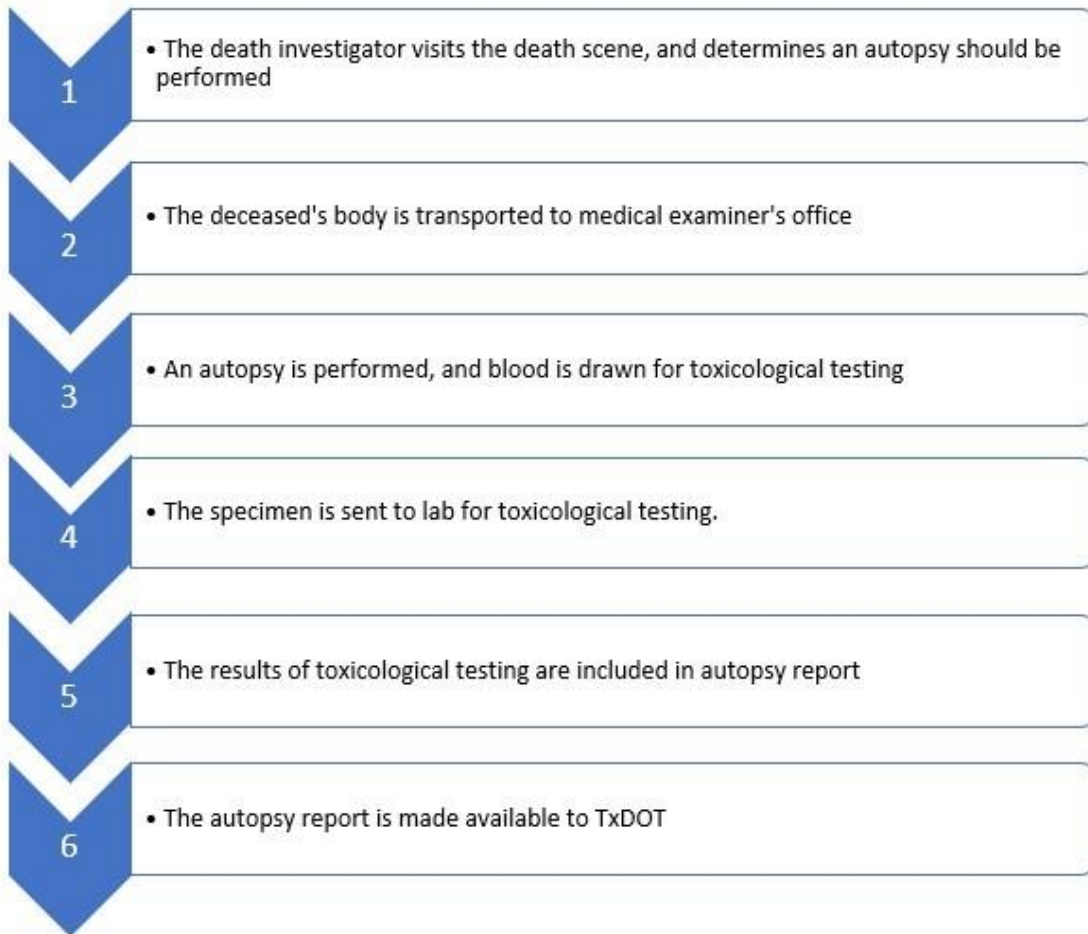
Did you know that reporting toxicology results for fatal crashes to the Texas Department of Transportation Crash Records Section (TxDOT-CRS) is a statutory requirement under [Transportation Code 550.081\(b\)](#)?

Yes

No

Does your office follow the same step-by-step process as shown in the figure for obtaining a biological specimen once a toxicology test for BAC is requested?

Figure 1. Process Used by Medical Examiners



Yes

No

According to TTI surveys previously administered to Medical Examiners, the most common circumstances for not testing for BAC or drugs in a fatal crash include hospitalization, length of time between death and discovery of body, fatality was not the driver, single motor vehicle crashes, admission of blood disposed of, and customer or other county testing requests. Please describe other circumstances in which you would NOT test. If no other circumstances, please write "none" below.

Is the specimen tested in-house or sent to another lab (Select all that apply)

In-house

Sent to another lab

Once toxicology results are available, who does your office automatically send the results to? (Select all that Apply)

Law Enforcement

TxDOT

District Attorney

Other (Please Specify)

How does your office submit toxicology results to TxDOT? (Select all that Apply)

Submit a full autopsy or toxicology results directly to TxDOT

Submit database/electronic document (e.g., spreadsheet, pdf) of toxicology results to TxDOT Other (Please Specify)

If you use a database/electronic document, please describe the fields collected and how and when you submit to TxDOT.

If your office reports BAC results to TxDOT, are out-of-jurisdiction cases reported directly to TxDOT?

Yes

No

Would you like to add additional comments regarding BAC toxicology reporting that this survey has not addressed?

Yes

No

What additional comments do you have regarding BAC toxicology reporting that were not addressed?

Appendix D: Texas Justice of the Peace Information Request Survey

Demographic Questions

Texas Justice of the Peace's

Information Request 2024

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) and the Texas Department of

Transportation (TxDOT) are collaborating to enhance Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) reporting in Texas. TTI is collecting logistical and procedural insights from JP offices across the state. The data obtained from JP offices will aid TxDOT in identifying ways to enhance the existing system of toxicology reporting to their agency, as mandated by law.

Default Question Block

Which county do you serve?

Which precinct do you serve? Select all that apply.

Precinct 1

Precinct 4

Precinct 7

Precinct 2

Precinct 5

Precinct 8

Precinct 3

Precinct 6

Did you know that reporting toxicology results for fatal crashes to the Texas Department of Transportation Crash Records Section (TxDOT-CRS) is a statutory requirement under [Transportation Code 550.081\(b\)](#)?

Yes

No

Do you, the Justice of the Peace, visit the scene of a fatal crash?

Yes

No

Does your office follow the same step-by-step process as shown in the figure for determining whether a Justice of the Peace requests a toxicology test after visiting the scene of a fatal crash?

Yes

No

Other (Please Specify)

Please describe the step-by-step process that your office uses to determine whether a Justice of the Peace requests a toxicology test after visiting the scene of a fatal crash.

According to TTI surveys previously administered to Justices of the Peace, the most common circumstances for not testing for BAC or drugs in a fatal crash include 1) fatality was not driver; 2) lack of evidence indicated drug or alcohol use; 3) single motor vehicle drivers; and 4) length of time between death and discovery of body. Please describe other circumstances in which you would NOT test.

If your office has an agreement with a third party to conduct toxicology testing, please let us know with who? (Select all that Apply)

Medical Examiner

Private Lab

Do you send toxicology results to TxDOT?

Yes

No

Unsure

TxDOT's preferred method for receiving BAC results is the [TxDOT CR-1001](#) with the full autopsy and/or full toxicology results. Does your office utilize TxDOT's CR-1001 Death/Toxicology Report?

Yes

No

If your office does not use the CR-1001 - Death/Toxicology Report, how do you report toxicology results to TxDOT? (Select all that Apply)

Submit toxicology results directly to TxDOT

Submit database/electronic document (e.g., spreadsheet, pdf) of toxicology results to TxDOT Other (Please Specify)

Did you know that if you have submitted the CR-1001, you can attach the full report and not complete the toxicology data section of the form? You can instead write "see attachment."

Did you know that if you submit toxicology results to TxDOT by email, you will receive a confirmation receipt from TxDOT?

Yes

No

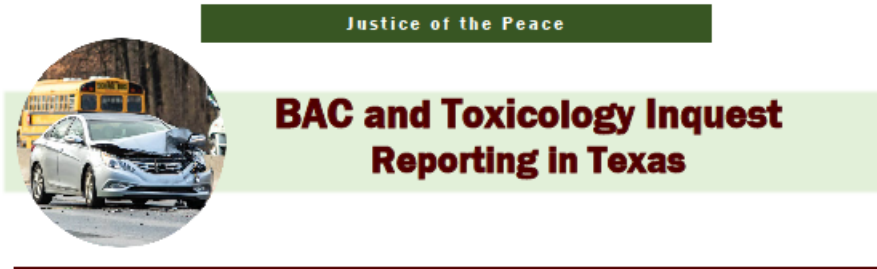
Would you like to add additional comments regarding BAC toxicology reporting that this survey has not addressed?

Yes

No

What additional comments do you have regarding BAC toxicology reporting that were not addressed?

Appendix E: BAC Educational Material Emailed to Death Investigators



Reporting Reminders

- TxDOT's preferred method for receiving BAC results is via the TxDOT CR-1001 with the full autopsy and/or toxicology results.
- When submitting the CR-1001, you can attach the full report and not complete the toxicology data section in the form. Instead, you can write, "see attachment."
- If you submit toxicology results to TxDOT by email, you will receive a confirmation receipt from TxDOT.

- Have questions or concerns regarding reporting?

- Have ideas to partner with Law Enforcement and Medical Examiner offices?

- Do you experience challenges or barriers when trying to submit reports?

We want to hear from you! Please click [HERE](#) to submit feedback.

Comments are anonymous and can help us help you!



Reporting is Integral

As a Justice of the Peace (JP) serving as a primary death investigator during suspected fatal impaired driving crashes, it is crucial that toxicology and Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) results be reported to TxDOT's Crash Data & Analysis Section once they become available. *Reporting before the 11th day of each calendar month is mandated under Texas' Transportation Code 550.081.*

BAC and toxicology data provides quantitative evidence to the state

concerning impaired driving prevalence in Texas communities. It also provides justification to continue developing and employing countermeasures to reduce impaired driving.

Testing and submitting toxicology results in all suspected motor-vehicle impaired driving crashes is not only critical, but also necessary if the state is to see a complete picture of the impaired driving problem. Reporting is mandatory and essential for Texas to comply with NHTSA standards.

How to Report

EMAIL ADDRESS:
TRF_FatalityData@txdot.gov

MAILING ADDRESS: 
 Texas Department of Transportation
 Traffic Operations Division-
 Crash Data & Analysis Section
 P.O. Box 149349 
 Austin, TX 78714

FAX NUMBER 
 512-486-5794



MORE INFORMATION

Courtney Hrcir
 Research Specialist
 Texas A&M Transportation Institute
c-hrcir@tti.tamu.edu
 979-317-2534





BAC & Toxicology Reporting

Dear Judge,

As the number of impaired driving crashes and fatalities continues to be prevalent on Texas roadways, it is pivotal that the state receive and report accurate data to signify the impaired driving problem.

As a Justice of the Peace (JP) acting as a death investigator, your role is crucial to painting the complete picture that will lead to Texas' improved evidence of impaired substance(s) in suspected impaired-driving cases.



The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies (CADES), in partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), is committed to helping improve the evidence that the state collects in alcohol and drug-related motor-vehicle crashes and fatalities. As such, TTI provides technical assistance in submitting these toxicology and autopsy results to TxDOT. In addition, CADES also provides educational materials on the importance of testing and reporting the results for the state.

It is vital that BAC and toxicology results from these fatal crashes be reported. This complete data can be used by professionals as evidence to advocate for statutory improvements and facilitate more effective countermeasures to curb the impaired driving problem.

2024 Educational Material

BAC and Toxicology Inquest Reporting in Texas

Reporting Reminders

- TTI's website resource for reporting BAC results is at <https://ttdot.txdot.gov/transportation-safety/impairment>.
- When submitting your BAC and toxicology results to TxDOT, please include the following information:
 - Name of the driver
 - Date of the crash
 - Location of the crash
 - Name of the law enforcement officer
 - Name of the medical examiner
 - Name of the coroner
 - Name of the funeral home
 - Name of the mortuary
 - Name of the hospital
 - Name of the laboratory
 - Name of the testing facility
 - Name of the testing agent
 - Name of the testing method
 - Name of the testing equipment
 - Name of the testing personnel
 - Name of the testing facility
 - Name of the testing agent
 - Name of the testing method
 - Name of the testing equipment
 - Name of the testing personnel
- If you need assistance, please contact TTI at ttittdot@ttti.tamu.edu or call 1-800-392-7283.

Reporting to Inquest

As a Justice of the Peace (JP) acting as a death investigator, your role is crucial to painting the complete picture that will lead to Texas' improved evidence of impaired substance(s) in suspected impaired-driving cases.

How to Report

TTI ADDRESS
1111 RELLIS PARKWAY
BRYAN, TX 77807
737-783-3333

TTI WEBSITE
<https://ttti.tamu.edu>

CADES ADDRESS
1111 RELLIS PARKWAY
BRYAN, TX 77807
737-783-3333

CADES WEBSITE
<https://www.cades.tti.tamu.edu>

The TTI team will also reach out to jurisdictions with missing BAC and toxicology results from 2023.



Thank you for doing your part to move the state closer toward eliminating impaired driving in Texas.

The team is here to assist you. Below are the ways you can get in touch with us.

- Contact the project coordinator (Courtney Hrcir) at c-hrcir@tti.tamu.edu
- Access the CADES website for resources at <https://cades.tti.tamu.edu/trainings/bac-toxicology/>
- Leaving an anonymous request or suggestion at https://tti.qualtrics.com/ife/form/SV_a94MrobTqWs9Jxl

Visit our website

Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies | 1111 RELLIS Parkway | Bryan, TX 77807 US

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Appendix F: Missing BAC Letter – Medical Examiners



Texas A&M Transportation Institute
The Texas A&M University System
Center for Transportation Safety
3135 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-3135

Fax: 979-845-4872
<http://tti.tamu.edu>

Date
J. Keith Pinckard, M.D., Ph.D.
Travis County Medical Examiner's Office
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, TX 78767

RE: Missing Toxicology Reports, Travis County Medical Examiner's Office

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) has received a Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) project to increase the reporting of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) results from fatal crashes. It is our understanding from peace officer crash reports that toxicology testing was to be conducted on a driver (name and crash date listed below) involved in a fatal crash where alcohol and/or drugs may have been a contributing factor; however, the toxicology results listed below have not been submitted to TxDOT's Crash Records Section (CRS). The CRS must receive documentation prior to December 31, 2023, for the results to be included in the 2022 fiscal year statistics. The State of Texas receives federal funding for traffic safety related programs based on toxicology reporting.

Missing Results:
Driver Name and Date of Death
1.

The Texas Department of Transportation Crash Records Section accepts toxicology results via the autopsy report or the CR-1001- Death/Toxicology Report Form. The autopsy or death/toxicology report form can be emailed directly to TRF_FatalityData@txdot.gov or mailed to the TxDOT Traffic Operations Division- Crash Data & Analysis Section P.O. Box 149349 Austin, TX 78714 or faxed to 512-486-5794.

We appreciate your time in assisting us with increasing toxicology reporting in the State.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Courtney Hmcir
Research Specialist
c-hmcir@tti.tamu.edu
3135 TAMU | College Station, TX 77843
Tel (979) 317-2534

Center for Transportation Safety



Appendix G: Missing BAC Letter – Justices of the Peace



Texas A&M Transportation Institute
The Texas A&M University System
Center for Transportation Safety
3135 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-3135

Fax: 979-845-4872
<http://tti.tamu.edu>

Date
Judge Sheron Collins
Hale County, Justice of the Peace Precinct 1 Place 1
500 Broadway
Plainview, TX 79072

RE: Missing Toxicology Reports, Office of Judge Tommy Hall

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) has received a Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) project to increase the reporting of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) results from fatal crashes. It is our understanding from peace officer crash reports that toxicology testing was to be conducted on a driver (name and crash date listed below) involved in a fatal crash where alcohol and/or drugs may have been a contributing factor; however, the toxicology results listed below have not been submitted to TxDOT's Crash Records Section (CRS). The CRS must receive documentation prior to December 31, 2023, for the results to be included in the 2022 fiscal year statistics. The State of Texas receives federal funding for traffic safety related programs based on toxicology reporting.

Missing Results:

Driver Name and Date of Death

1.

The Texas Department of Transportation Crash Records Section accepts toxicology results via the autopsy report or the CR-1001- Death/Toxicology Report Form. The autopsy or death/toxicology report form can be emailed directly to TRF_FatalityData@txdot.gov or mailed to the TxDOT Traffic Operations Division- Crash Data & Analysis Section P.O. Box 149349 Austin, TX 78714 or faxed to 512-486-5794.

We appreciate your time in assisting us with increasing toxicology reporting in the State. We attempt to identify the Justice of the Peace (JP) that responded to the crash scene based on location, but another JP in your county may have responded based on-call schedules. If you did not respond to the crash listed above, please forward to other JPs in your county.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Courtney Hmcir
Research Specialist
c-hmcir@tti.tamu.edu
3135 TAMU | College Station, TX 77843
Tel (979) 317-2534

Center for Transportation Safety



References

1. Casanova, T., Hedlund, J., & Tison, J. (2012, August). State blood alcohol concentration (BAC) testing and reporting for drivers involved in fatal crashes: Current practices, results, and strategies, 1997-2009. (Report No. DOT HS 811 661). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/811661.pdf>.
2. LegiScan. (2023). Bill Text: TX SB760 | 2023-2024 | 88th Legislature | Enrolled. Retrieved from <https://legiscan.com/TX/text/SB760/id/2805621>