

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION 2025-2026 EDUCATIONAL SERIES

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

- State of Texas Assistance Request (STAR)
- Hurricanes
- Wildland Fire
- Snow and Ice
- All-Hazards Public Information
& DriveTexas.org



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

The importance of a safe and reliable transportation systems is heightened during emergency and disaster situations. In an emergency or disaster, providing safe transportation options is a primary function of the state, making evacuation, search and rescue, health care, and other critical response activities possible. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) maintains readiness for an all-hazards response, with a heavy concentration on the state's imminent large-scale threats. Among other duties, TxDOT assists the public in getting out of harm's way and getting home safely. In addition, TxDOT performs state highway road repairs and debris removal to stabilize emergency and disaster situations.

Interagency coordination of efforts is key to successful emergency management. Before, during, and after an emergency or disaster, TxDOT collaborates with local officials, government agencies, law enforcement, contractors, and relief organizations to minimize impacts and restore and maintain safety for the traveling public. As a member of the State Emergency Management Council, TxDOT provides representation to the State Operations Center, also known as the SOC, as needed and regional representatives to the Disaster District Committee Emergency Operations Centers located in counties and cities directly affected by an emergency or disaster.

In accordance with the National Incident Management System, the state capitalizes on TxDOT's strengths. With its skilled workforce, specialized equipment, material resources, engineering capabilities, and physical or personnel presence in almost every county of the state, TxDOT has taken on special emergency management duties:

- TxDOT is the primary agency for the transportation functions of the State Emergency Support Function 1, Transportation (part of the Texas Homeland Security

Strategic Plan). The State Emergency Support Function 1 Transportation is a program that helps manage transportation systems and infrastructure during emergencies, disasters, or planned events.

- During emergency activations, the TxDOT Emergency Management Coordinator is the State Emergency Support Function 1, Transportation representative at the State Operations Center.
- As a member of the Texas Homeland Security Council, TxDOT provides input and analysis to the Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan and response efforts.
- TxDOT is a member of the State Hazard Mitigation Team, providing input to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and grant-funding processes.
- TxDOT has a supporting role in each of the following functional annexes of the State Emergency Management Plan (to prepare for, respond to, and help the state recover from an emergency or disaster):
 - Communications;
 - Direction and Control;
 - Evacuation;
 - Firefighting;
 - Hazard Mitigation;
 - Hazardous Materials and Oil Spill Response;
 - Public Information;
 - Recovery;
 - Public Works and Engineering; and
 - Transportation (as Primary Agency).

- TxDOT has a supporting role in each of the following hazard-specific annexes of the State Emergency Management Plan:

- Cyber Threat;
- Disaster Area Re-entry;
- Drought;
- Hurricane;
- Terrorism; and
- Wildland Fire.

STATE OF TEXAS ASSISTANCE REQUEST (STAR)

State and federal law require a local jurisdiction to first use its resources in responding to emergencies. A local jurisdiction may request additional assistance from the state when it has depleted its local resources or has identified a resource gap. The local jurisdiction will make an assistance request using the State of Texas Assistance Request process. A local State of Texas Assistance Request can be submitted to the Disaster District Chair/Coordinator level. If it cannot be filled at the local level, it goes to the State Operations Center (SOC) to be filled at the state level.

The State Operations Center works with state agencies, including TxDOT, to fulfill the request. TxDOT assistance to local jurisdictions includes traffic control materials, wildfire support, debris removal, bridge inspection, and transportation of resources.

HURRICANES

During a hurricane event, TxDOT may receive a request to safely expedite traffic flow out of the threatened area, pending the local mayor or county judge's decision to evacuate. TxDOT may not mandate an evacuation. Only a local mayor or county judge has the authority to call for an evacuation. TxDOT, in coordination with law enforcement agencies, provides sign, equipment, and traffic control personnel. TxDOT also pre-stages equipment in or near the affected areas to expedite cleanup upon re-entry into the affected areas.

Safety is TxDOT's main priority. Following a hurricane, TxDOT reminds its employees and the public to be aware of hazardous conditions. Potential dangers that they may encounter include high water, dangerous wildlife, downed power lines, and other hazardous debris. In anticipation of an evacuation, TxDOT assesses and activates methods that best and most safely fit the circumstances.

HIGHWAY PREPARATION

TxDOT may be involved in preparing the state's highways in the affected region. This may involve taking action to minimize road closures, remove obstacles such as abandoned vehicles, sweep roadway shoulders, suspend construction and road maintenance, and arrange for additional traffic control through construction areas.





COMFORT STATIONS

To help accommodate the expected heavy influx of evacuees, TxDOT works with local officials and other organizations to provide comfort stations along evacuation routes, which may include TxDOT Travel Information Centers and Safety Rest Areas. These facilities offer additional temporary restrooms, water, and ice. They also may offer other services such as oxygen exchange and snacks.

EVACU-LANES

When needed, TxDOT, in coordination with the Texas Department of Public Safety, can authorize the use of select highway shoulders along the evacuation routes as travel lanes. These shoulders are called evacu-lanes.

CONTRAFLOW

Contraflow is when vehicles travel in the opposite direction of a lane's normal traffic flow. This occurs during an event like a hurricane evacuation when all traffic lanes move toward inland safety and away from the Gulf Coast. Pending a local mayoral or county judicial decision to activate contraflows, TxDOT will work with the Texas Department of Public Safety to initiate contraflow operations according to existing plans. Contraflow lane reversal roughly doubles the number of lanes available for evacuation traffic. As part of the state's evacuation plan, TxDOT provides courtesy patrol vehicles during evacuations to assist motorists with fuel, water, and other essential needs to keep traffic moving out of affected areas.

FUEL

TxDOT's evacuation plans also call for TxDOT to support certain fuel stations with backup generators at regular intervals along evacuation routes. As part of a state fuel team, TxDOT works with the gasoline industry to ensure

fuel availability in times of emergency. During hurricane season, TxDOT strategically stages its fleet of 30 mobile fueling cubes in the Abilene, Bryan, and San Antonio TxDOT districts to aid responders and stranded motorists.

Each of these fuel cubes carries approximately 800 gallons of unleaded or diesel fuel. The fuel cubes can dispense fuel into smaller containers or directly into vehicles. These mobile fuel cubes have redundant power capability, and TxDOT can operate the fuel tanks on six-yard or ten-yard dump trucks.

DEBRIS REMOVAL

After a hurricane, TxDOT's priority is to clear state roads of debris for emergency response operations. TxDOT strike teams consist of operators of front-end loaders, dump trucks, backhoes, sign trucks, and signal trucks. These strike teams work to clear roads, remove tree limbs, and repair traffic signals and highway signs. TxDOT works with the Texas Public Utility Commission and local power companies to address downed power lines in impacted areas. TxDOT uses several on-call debris removal contracts and monitoring contracts to reduce downtime and facilitate a more efficient re-entry process for the public.

REPAIRS AND RESTORATION

TxDOT assesses and repairs damage to roads, bridges, and other state highway transportation infrastructure. TxDOT crews specifically look for damage to pavement, guardrails, signal lights, bridge supports, signs, and driving surfaces. If a bridge or road is unsafe for travel, TxDOT closes the location and notifies the public. Local law enforcement officers assist in patrolling signalized intersections and clearing roads while TxDOT crews make the necessary sign and signal repairs.



WILDLAND FIRE

TxDOT offers assistance to local jurisdictions during wildland fires, providing water for fire suppression and fuel for first responder vehicles. TxDOT may also clear vegetation to create firebreaks and direct traffic where necessary to address road closures or smoky conditions.

TxDOT employees are generally not trained firefighters, but has developed a training course with Texas Tech University, which TxDOT disaster response personnel take as part of their training. This offers best practices for safely providing TxDOT support during a wildland response.

In addition, TxDOT maintains two wildland fire response trailers with personal protective equipment for employees. TxDOT has a trailer for command and communications to support safety operations. TxDOT fleet mechanics deploy with the equipment and operators to ensure the optimum performance of TxDOT assets. During wildland fire responses, TxDOT has successfully used its fleet of 30 mobile fueling cubes to support emergency operations statewide.



SNOW AND ICE

TxDOT uses multiple methods to prepare for and address winter weather, striving to minimize snow and ice accumulation on highways. Preparedness for ice and snow response begins long before the first freeze of the season, and TxDOT employees proactively respond to icy and snowy conditions when the weather arrives.

APPLICATION OF MATERIALS

TxDOT applies materials for anti-icing to prevent ice formation or de-icing material to remove ice and may apply traction materials such as sand, crushed stone, or crushed slag to help prevent vehicle sliding. TxDOT crews carefully time the applications with weather forecasts to maximize the effectiveness of the applications. When able, TxDOT employs pre-treatment strategies in advance of potential winter storms. The application of anti-icing materials in advance of freezing weather can significantly limit or altogether prevent the bonding of ice to pavement and bridges.

Before, during, and after a storm, TxDOT personnel monitor the situation by making on-site observations, reviewing camera images, and checking news reports and feedback from the public.



SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL

TxDOT deploys employees in strategic locations with equipment to plow snow and blade ice so that motorists can use the road. TxDOT follows a four-tier system for treating all primary state highways across the state:

1. Tier I state roadways affect the movement of interstate commerce and receive priority for pre-treatment and de-icing;
2. Tier II state roadways are of high priority locally or regionally, and TxDOT identifies treatment actions in collaboration with local governments;
3. Tier III state roadways are low-volume roadways that primarily service local areas that receive treatment depending on available resources; and
4. Tier IV state roadways are low-volume roadways that primarily service local areas that receive treatment for problem areas.

All 25 TxDOT districts have enough material to pre-treat or de-ice every Tier I roadway under its jurisdiction. TxDOT uses its 30 mobile fueling cubes as needed to keep up with the fleet fuel needs and, if necessary, to refuel stranded motorists. TxDOT conducts emergency exercises to test the mobile fueling stations. The exercises help identify ways to improve the equipment's features for safe and reliable performance during a winter weather response.

During snow and ice operations, TxDOT communications about road conditions include safety messages to the traveling public to stay off slick, icy roads or to be vigilant of the possibility of snow or ice on bridges and roadways. TxDOT also coordinates and amplifies communications with the Texas Division of Emergency Management and members of the State Operations Center, using resources like TxDOT's statewide system of dynamic messaging signs.



Snow and ice - winter weather driving tips

<https://www.txdot.gov/safety/severe-weather/snow-and-ice.html>

ALL-HAZARDS PUBLIC INFORMATION & DRIVETEXAS.ORG

To assist the public during local evacuation orders, TxDOT provides courtesy patrols to assist motorists with fuel, water, and other essential needs to keep traffic moving out of affected areas. TxDOT also keeps the public informed of road closures and changing weather conditions and provides emergency information during emergency and disaster situations through newspapers, television, radio, dynamic message signs, and social media.

Online road condition information is available on the Drive Texas website and interactive map at www.drivetexas.org. Professional travel counselors staff the Texas road condition and travel information phone line and are available during emergency and disaster response. Recorded road condition information on road conditions is also available on a 24-hour basis.

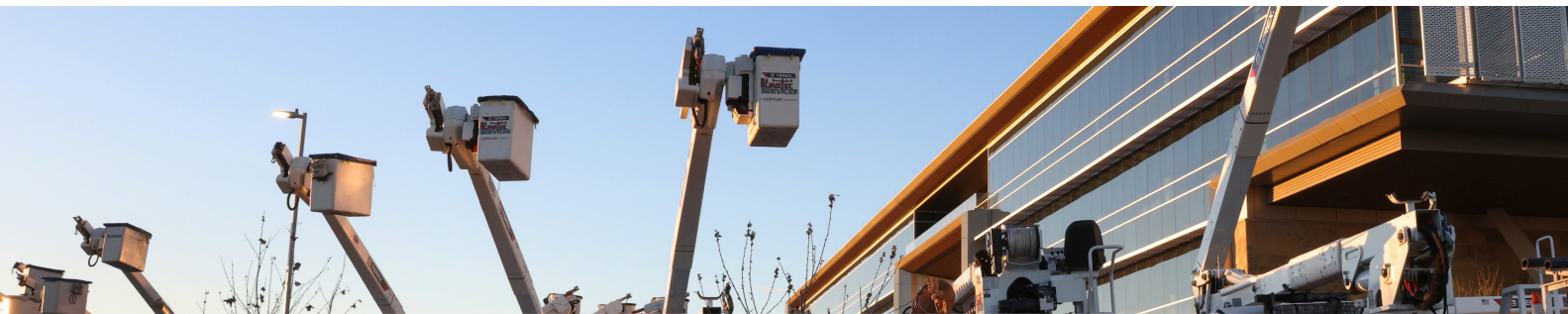
The number is 1-(800) 452-9292.

TxDOT has permanently installed nearly 1,000 dynamic message signs along statewide roadways, including along evacuation routes. During emergencies, TxDOT makes full use of dynamic message signs across the state to convey up-to-date information about fuel and shelter and to warn the public about danger zones. If necessary, TxDOT may also deploy portable, changeable message signs to display information.

The safety of the traveling public is TxDOT's highest priority when responding to emergencies and disasters. TxDOT is ready to provide resources and personnel to prepare, respond, and recover from emergency and disaster events. Because of its network of statewide offices, equipment, and personnel, TxDOT is well-suited for emergency and disaster response. TxDOT will continue to adapt its disaster response and recovery strategies and work with its partners at all levels of state and local government to better serve Texans and the traveling public.



<https://drivetexas.org/>



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.

