



**TxDOT ROW**

**UTILITY WEEK**

*Partners in Coordination*

# **General Session & Round Table Meetings**

**Day 1 – Monday Afternoon, December 2, 2024**

# TxDOT ROW

## UTILITY WEEK

*Partners in Coordination*



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live agendas and other  
conference updates.

## MC for the Day: Sarah Wegenast



Sarah Wegenast is a Utility Auditor for the Texas Department of Transportation, in the Right of Way Division. Sarah started her TxDOT career at the Waco District as a construction records auditor and the District's DBE Coordinator. Prior to joining the TxDOT family, Sarah spent five years as a Research Associate for the Roadside Safety and Physical Security Division at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. Aside from being a crash test technician, her primary focus was contracting, reporting and quality control. Outside of work, Sarah can be found "mommin" with Forrest (the coolest 5-year-old ever), at gym training JiuJitsu, or at a coffee shop.

Time	Topic	Speaker
10:00AM – 12:00 PM	Vendor and TxDOT District Showcase Set-Up	
1:30PM – 4:30PM	<i>Registration and Check-In</i>	
2:00PM – 2:15PM	Conference Welcome & Safety Message	Wayne Robinson Juan Barron (Safety)
2:15PM – 2:45PM	Ethics – Combatting Fraud, Waste & Abuse in TxDOT Utility Relocations	Anthony Thomas
2:45PM – 3:00PM	<i>Networking Break</i>	
3:00PM – 4:30PM	TxDOT Round Table Meeting	Leo Tovar Hosting
3:00PM – 4:30PM	Consultant Round Table Meeting	Aimee Trawick Hosting
4:30PM	<i>Adjourn</i>	
4:30PM – 5:00PM	UESI Leadership Meeting	Jesse Cooper Hosting

# TxDOT ROW

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**RED**  
Electric



**ORANGE**  
Communications



**PURPLE**  
Reclaimed Water,  
Irrigation



**WHITE**  
Proposed  
Excavation



**YELLOW**  
Gas, oil or petroleum

**BLUE**  
Potable Water

**GREEN**  
Sewer

**PINK**  
Temporary Survey



## Presenter: Wayne Robinson



Wayne Robinson is the Utility Portfolio Section Director of the Right of Way Division.

Wayne began his TxDOT career in 2007. For the first six years, he worked in the Mapping, Survey, and Utility Section of the Right of Way Division, specializing in quality assurance of the mapping, utility relocation, and other aspects of the Division's Asset Management program. His accomplishments include implementing the statewide Utility Installation Review (UIR) application. The UIR application created a statewide standard for utility permit applications, effectively improving the experience of utility companies applying for permits, decreasing the cost of resources, and reducing the permit approval cycle time. Wayne later transferred to the Austin District as the District's Utility Coordinator in 2015. While at the Austin District, Wayne took the lead on the utility relocation efforts on many projects, including projects within the Mobility 35 Program, such as the IH 35/US 183 flyover project. Wayne rejoined the ROW Division in 2017. As the lead worker of the Utility Portfolio Section, Wayne led his group in revamping the statewide utility accommodation program.

Wayne holds a Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Planning with a minor in Political Science from Texas State University. While at TxDOT, Wayne obtained his Master's in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.

As the new Director of the Utility Portfolio Section, Wayne's goals are to help set new standards in the utility relocation program and raise awareness of the profession's importance.

**December 2, 2024**

Bathroom Locations:



Refreshments: Will be offered  
during the break



Break Times: From 2:45 PM to  
3:00 PM

## **December 2, 2024**

### **Agenda Overview:**

- Safety Message
- Ethics From 2:15 PM to 2:45 PM
- Networking Break
- TxDOT and Consultant Round Table From 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM.
- Adjourn @ 4:30 PM



## December 2, 2024

Phone Etiquette: Remember to silence your phones and if you need to take a call, please take calls outside the room.



Utilize your time to network!

**December 2, 2024**

**UESI Board Meeting From  
4:30 PM to 5:30**



# Enjoy the Conference!

Reminder: The conference starts tomorrow at 8:00 AM!



April 18, 2025



**TxDOT ROW**

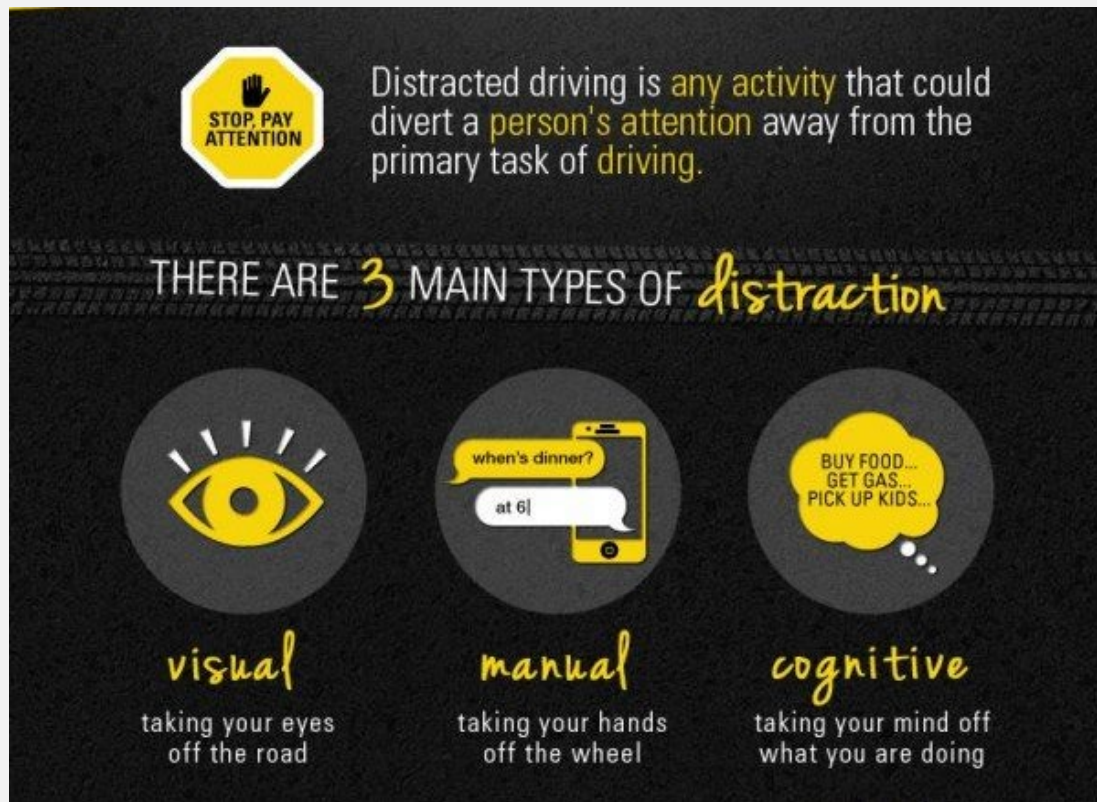
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# **Safety Message**

**Hosted by Juan Barron**

# Distracted Driving





# Types of Distracted Driving

## And How to Avoid Them

### Visual

Taking your eyes off the road

- Looking at maps
- Reading, including text messages
- Billboards
- Mirror

- Pull over to read directions
- Put your phone away
- Keep your eyes on the road

### Manual

Taking your hands off the wheel

- Eating & Drinking
- Searching through your purse/wallet
- Taking off a coat
- Turning knobs

- Make all adjustments before driving
- Keep your phone out of reach
- Don't reach for items while driving

### Cognitive

Taking your mind off what you are doing

- Stress, Road Rage
- Daydreaming
- Listening to a podcast/audio book
- Conversation on a hands-free device

- Keep your emotions in check
- Stay focused on the road
- Avoid phone calls, even hands-free



A banner featuring a stylized, glowing orange and yellow fiber-optic cable or energy burst shape against a red background. The text "TxDOT ROW" is in large white letters, and "UTILITY WEEK" is in white letters inside a white rectangular box.

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# **Combating Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in TXDOT Utility Relocates**

## **Strategies for reducing FWA along the Right of Way (Ethics)**

**Day 1 – December 2nd**

**2:15pm-2:45pm**

## Presenter: Anthony Thomas



Anthony Thomas has overseen Texas Department of Transportation's Investigations Section since March 2012. When originally hired, Anthony was funded to hire a staff of two investigators. Since that time, TxDOT's Investigations Section has grown to a staff of nine with investigators located in Austin, Houston, Dallas and El Paso. Anthony has managed over 1,000 occupational fraud and EEO investigations, as well conducting fraud and ethics training throughout the country.

Prior to TxDOT, Anthony's career has consisted of serving in the US Army, Child Support Enforcement Special Investigator with the Texas Attorney General's Office, Travis County Deputy Sherriff, and the Lead Investigator for the City of Austin Office of City Auditor's Integrity. Anthony is a graduate of Texas State University where he received his bachelor's degree in Social Science.



# Combating Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in TXDOT Utility Relocates

Strategies for reducing FWA  
along Right of Way



# Introduction to Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Utility Relocates



# Definition and Importance of Addressing FWA

## **Fraud**

Obtaining something of value or causing TxDOT to suffer a loss through a willful misrepresentation or an intentional act or omission designed to deceive others.

## **Waste**

Carelessly spending, mismanaging, using, or squandering resources to the detriment or potential detriment of TxDOT. Waste also includes incurring costs because of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

## **Abuse**

Intentionally or knowingly using one's position or Department resources contrary to TxDOT policy or to state and federal law to benefit oneself or harm others.





# Overview of TXDOT's Role in Utility Relocations

## Guidance

The process involves several steps, including data collection, mapping, property descriptions, appraisals, acquisitions, and utility adjustments. Proper management of ROW can significantly reduce project costs and schedule delays.

## Oversight

The ROW Utility Relocation process includes identifying the owners of any utilities in the existing or proposed ROW. This helps in managing the work described in the process, which involves the Project Manager, Regional ROW Project Delivery Workforce, District ROW Utility Coordinator, District Mapping Coordinator, and District Survey Coordinator.

## Funding

Utility relocations along ROW can impact the cost and schedule of highway construction projects. Therefore, it's important to address these relocations effectively to manage project costs.





# Relevance of Right of Way (ROW) in highway construction

## What is Right of Way (ROW)?

Right of Way (ROW) is the area of land that is owned or controlled by the TxDOT and is used for highway construction and maintenance.

## Importance of Right of Way (ROW) in Highway Construction

Right of Way (ROW) plays a critical role in highway construction as it allows TxDOT to control the space needed for roadway, utility relocations, and safety operations. Proper management of ROW can significantly reduce project costs and schedule delays.





# Sources and Types of Fraud in Utility Relocations



# Examples of Common Fraudulent Activities

## False Claims

False claims are one of the most common fraudulent activities in utility relocates. This involves submitting false or inflated invoices or billing for work that was not performed.

## Price Fixing

Price fixing is a fraudulent activity in which contractors collude to set prices for goods or services, resulting in higher costs for the TxDOT and taxpayers.

## Bid Rigging

Bid rigging is a fraudulent activity in which contractors collude to manipulate the bidding process, resulting in higher costs for the TxDOT and taxpayers.



# More Examples of Common Fraudulent Activities

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Conflicts of interest can occur when individuals involved in ROW and utility relocations have competing interests that may influence their decision-making and lead to unfair outcomes.

## **Favoritism**

Favoritism can occur when individuals involved in ROW and utility relocations show preferential treatment to certain parties over others, leading to unfair outcomes and a lack of transparency in decision-making.

## **Misuse of Power/Abuse of Authority**

Misuse of power can occur when individuals involved in ROW and utility relocations abuse their power and authority to gain personal benefit, leading to unfair outcomes and a lack of accountability.



## **Case studies and real-world examples**

This section will provide real-world examples of fraud in utility relocations, including instances of collusion between contractors and utility companies and misappropriation of project funds.



# Preventative measures and detection techniques (Association of Certified Examiners)



## Establishing Strong Internal Controls

Establishing strong internal controls is the first step in preventing fraud in utility relocations. This includes evaluating existing controls and implementing new ones to safeguard assets and prevent unauthorized access.

## Conducting Regular Audits

Conducting regular audits can help to identify potential fraud in utility relocations. Audits should be conducted by independent parties and include a thorough examination of financial records and procedures.

## Training Employees on Fraud Prevention

Training employees on fraud prevention is critical to preventing fraud in utility relocations. This includes educating employees on fraud risks and prevention techniques, as well as providing anonymous reporting mechanisms for suspicious activity.



# Identifying and Mitigating Waste in Utility Relocates



# Types of waste in project planning and execution



## Overproduction

Overproduction is a type of waste that occurs when more is produced than is needed or demanded. This can result in excess inventory, wasted resources, and increased costs.

## Waiting

Waiting is a type of waste that occurs when time is wasted due to delays or waiting for resources. This can result in lost productivity, increased costs, and missed deadlines.

## Defects

Defects are a type of waste that occurs when errors or defects are present in a product or service. This can result in wasted resources, decreased customer satisfaction, and increased costs.

## Unnecessary Motion

Unnecessary motion is a type of waste that occurs when unnecessary movements or actions are performed during the project planning and execution process. This can result in wasted time, increased costs, and decreased efficiency.



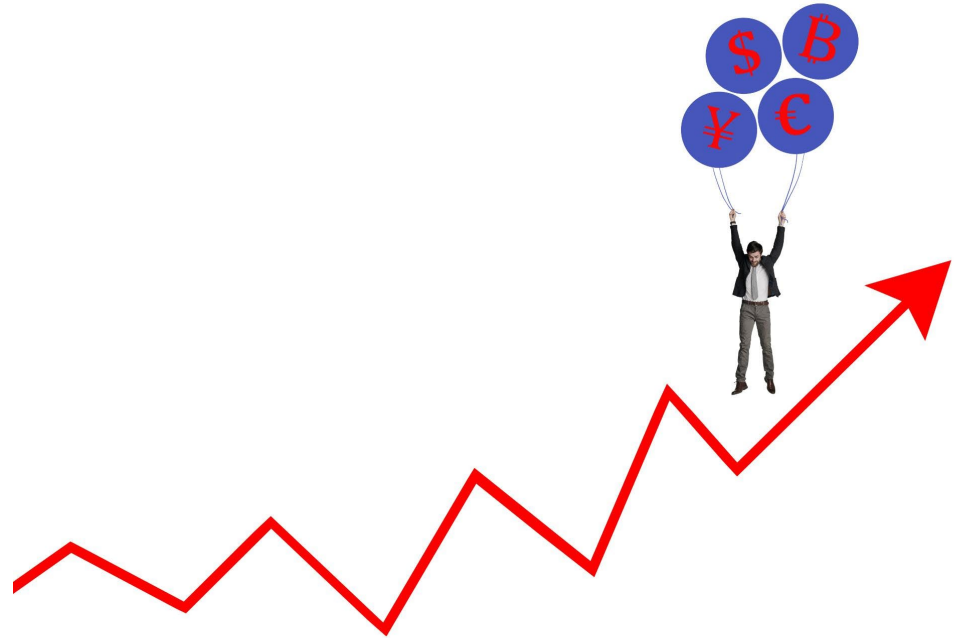
# Impact of Waste and Abuse on Project Cost and Schedule

## Increased Project Costs

Abuse in a project can lead to increased costs, such as the need for additional resources, legal fees or damages resulting from court cases.

## Project Delays

Abuse can also lead to project delays, for example, if a team member is not performing their job properly, or if there is a lack of communication between team members.





# Strategies for reducing waste in utility relocations

## Streamlining Processes

Streamlining processes can help reduce waste in utility relocations by eliminating redundancies, improving communication, and reducing errors.

## Optimizing Resource Allocation

Optimizing resource allocation can help reduce waste in utility relocations by ensuring that resources such as equipment, materials, and personnel are used effectively and efficiently.

## Utilizing Technology

Utilizing technology such as GIS, satellite imaging, and database management can help reduce waste in utility relocations by improving accuracy, reducing rework, and enabling real-time information sharing.



# Utilizing Best Practices and Guidelines to Mitigate Waste



## **Following Established Standards and Guidelines**

Following established standards and guidelines is an important way to mitigate waste in utility relocations. These standards and guidelines can provide guidance on waste reduction practices and help ensure that projects are completed efficiently and effectively.

## **Using Data to Drive Decision-Making**

Using data to drive decision-making can help identify opportunities for improvement and reduce waste in utility relocations. Data can provide insight into project performance and help identify areas where improvements can be made.

## **Identifying Opportunities for Improvement**

Identifying opportunities for improvement is another important way to mitigate waste in utility relocations. This can involve identifying inefficiencies in current practices and processes, exploring new technologies and methods to improve project outcomes.



# Approaches to preventing and addressing abuse



## **Establish Clear Policies and Procedures**

Establishing clear policies and procedures is important in preventing and addressing abuse in utility relocations. This can include guidelines for employee behavior, reporting of abuse, and protocols for investigation and punishment.

## **Train Employees on Ethical Behavior**

Training employees on ethical behavior is crucial in preventing and addressing abuse. This can include education on acceptable and unacceptable behavior and training on reporting procedures.

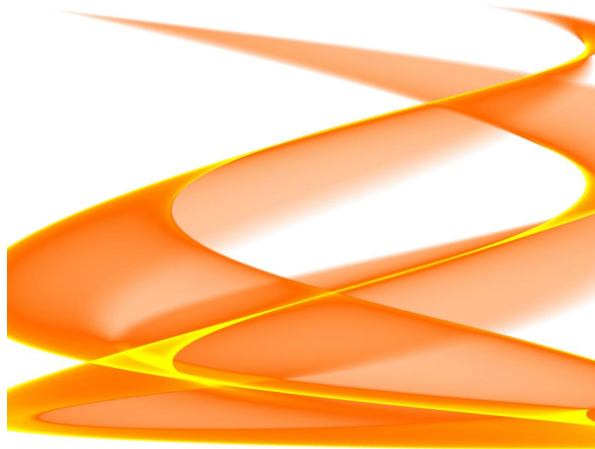
## **Establish a System for Reporting and Investigating Instances of Abuse**

Establishing a system for reporting and investigating instances of abuse is essential in ensuring accountability and preventing future abuse. This can include a hotline or other reporting mechanism, and protocols for investigation and punishment.





# Summary of Key Points



## **Addressing Fraud, Waste, and Abuse**

FWA is a critical issue that can have significant financial and reputational consequences for utility relocations. Addressing FWA requires a comprehensive approach that involves identifying and mitigating sources of fraud, waste, and abuse.

## **Sources and Types of Fraud**

Fraud can occur at any point in the utility relocation and can take many forms, including billing fraud, kickbacks, and identity theft. Identifying and mitigating fraud requires a deep understanding of the sources and types of fraud that exist in the utility relocations

## **Identifying and Mitigating Waste**

Waste is another major issue that can contribute to high relocation costs. By identifying and mitigating waste, organizations can reduce costs and improve the quality of care they provide.

## **Understanding and Preventing Abuse**

Abuse is a third issue that utilities must address. By understanding the types of abuse that exist and developing effective prevention strategies utilities can protect their organization and reduce the risk of financial losses.

## **Integrated Strategies for Comprehensive FWA Management**

Comprehensive FWA management requires an integrated approach that involves identifying and addressing fraud, waste, and abuse at all levels of the utility relocation. By implementing integrated strategies, utilities can reduce costs, and protect their financial and reputational assets.

# Questions





*Thank You!*



# Networking Break

## We will Resume at 3:00 PM



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# **TxDOT Round Table Meeting**

**Hosted by Leo Tovar**



## Presenter: Leo Tovar



Leonel (Leo) Tovar has worked for the Texas Department of Transportation for 5 years serving as the Corpus Christi District's Utility Coordinator, and as of August 2023, Leo joined the ROW Utility Portfolio Section, taking on the position of ROW Utility Specialist assisting various Districts with maintaining compliance with Standard Utility Agreements, Supplemental Agreements, Exception to Policy Requests, and other utility related issues. Prior to working at TxDOT Leo worked as a machinist for a machine shop helping machine various reciprocating gas compressor parts for different pipeline companies located along the Eagle Ford Shale. Leo is NCCER certified and licensed as an Instrumentation & Electrical Tech having attended and completed the 2-year program from the Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend (CTCCB). Leo is blessed to live with his wonderful wife of 5 years and his two children, Brie (3 years old) and Oliver (1 year old). Leo enjoys being a Sunday school teacher at his local church, fishing the various bodies of water located down in Corpus Christi for trout and red drum, and cooking various types of food.





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# **Consultant Round Table Meeting**

**Hosted by Aimee Trawick**

## Presenter: Aimee Trawick



Aimee Trawick is a Project Manager at Lina T Ramey & Associates. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Texas A&M University in 2012. She has over 10 years of experience in utility coordination, utility engineering, and subsurface utility engineering, and has worked on various projects involving transportation, water resources, and land development.

Aimee is the current Treasurer for UESI Texas and has previously served as the Secretary and on the Conference Planning Committee. She was also involved with the development of the UESI Houston chapter.

In her spare time, Aimee trains and competes in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and loves to ride her motorcycle.

A banner featuring a blue cable with a glowing, fiber-optic-like center. The text "TxDOT ROW" is in large white letters, and "UTILITY WEEK" is in white letters on a red rectangular background. Below that, "Partners in Coordination" is written in a white script font.

# TxDOT ROW

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*Thank You!*

The after-hours Networking Opportunity has been rescheduled to Tuesday from 5:00PM-7:30PM at the 6<sup>th</sup> floor lounge.



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# **UESI Leadership Meeting**

**Hosted by Jesse Cooper**