



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

**Texas Department of State  
Health Services**

**Welcome to the [Injury Prevention](#) Newsletter!**

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During December, we are highlighting Safe Toys and Gifts Month, the Texas Opioid Risk Index Map, Holiday Travel Safety, and Champions of Texas Injury Prevention.

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### **December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month**

December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month. According to [Safe Kids Worldwide](#), "In 2021, nearly 122,000 children under the age of 15 years were seen in emergency rooms for toy-related injuries." This amounts to 334 children per day, and nearly "60% of those children were younger than 5 years of age."

[Prevent Blindness](#) reminds parents and caregivers to protect children from injury when playing with toys and recommends:

- Only buy age-appropriate toys.
- Show children how to use their toys safely.
- Keep an eye on children when they play.

[Safe Kids Worldwide also recommends](#) checking for small parts or other potential choking hazards when choosing toys, using a bin or container to store toys when playtime is over, and using a helmet for riding toys.

Parents and caregivers can also find information about toy recalls and product safety warnings by visiting the [United States Consumer Product Safety Commission website](#).

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## New Texas [Opioid Risk Index Map](#) Available

[Texas Overdose Data to Action's](#) (TODA) external evaluator, the [Texas A&M Public Policy Research Institute](#) (PPRI), published the [Opioid Risk Index Map](#). This map shows risks and resources for opioid use in Texas counties.

The map uses color to rate each county based on criteria and data derived from public sources. The three criteria are:

- **Scope of Opioid-Related Complications:** Includes opioid-related emergency room visits, death, poisoning center calls, and opioid dispensing rates.
- **Community-Level Drivers of Health:** Derived from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for socioeconomic indicators such as poverty, unemployment, housing burden, high school diplomas, and health insurance.
- **Available Treatments:** Considers what resources are available in each county to combat opioid misuse and drug poisoning.

This map can help identify areas of risk and show where there may be potential opportunities to expand prevention and treatment efforts. Decision makers can use this map to align resources and prevention strategies with community needs.

### Additional Drug Poisoning Prevention Resources:

- [TODA General Resources](#)
- [TODA Naloxone Locator Map](#)
- [Texas Targeted Opioid Response](#)
- [Be Well, Texas](#)
- [Naloxone Texas](#)

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## Holiday Travel Safety

Traveling by car during the holidays has the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation ([National Safety Council](#)).

According to the [Texas Department of Transportation](#) (TxDOT), based on [reportable crashes in Texas in 2024](#), lack of restraint use, driving under the influence of alcohol, and distracted driving were often factors in [fatal crashes](#) throughout the year. Fatal crashes [during holiday periods](#) accounted for 6% of motor vehicle traffic fatalities.

There are steps you can take to make holiday travel safer, including:

- [Buckling up](#) on every ride;
- Avoiding [distracted driving](#); and
- Designating a [sober driver](#).

Additionally, you can:

- [Prepare your car for winter](#);
- Keep an [emergency kit](#) with you; and
- Avoid [drowsy driving](#).

During the holidays and all year long, we can share the message of roadway safety to help prevent injury and death on Texas roadways.

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### **The [Champions of Texas Injury Prevention](#) is Now Available**

The [Champions of Texas Injury Prevention](#) is the [Injury Prevention Unit's](#) new feature which highlights the work of Texas community members that make a difference in the fields of public health, public safety, and injury prevention. These are everyday Texans working to prevent injuries.

In this first edition of our new feature, we highlighted three public health professionals who were nominated because of their passion for injury prevention, as well as their dedication to and support of their local communities. They put injury prevention into practice daily and help create a safer Texas. You can read their full responses and learn more about their work by visiting the [Champions of Texas Injury Prevention webpage](#).

Do you know someone who is a [Champion of Texas Injury Prevention](#)? Submit a nomination through the [Champions of Texas Injury Prevention form](#) or email the Injury Prevention team at [injury.prevention@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:injury.prevention@dshs.texas.gov).

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### **General Injury Prevention Resources**

- Learn more about our programs: [Injury Prevention | Texas DSHS](#)
- Find state and national Injury Prevention resources: [Injury Prevention Resources | Texas DSHS](#)
- Locate more Injury Prevention-related news, events, and observances: [Injury Prevention Calendar | Texas DSHS](#)

Questions? Want to be featured in a future resource newsletter? Email us at [injury.prevention@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:injury.prevention@dshs.texas.gov).

Thank you!

**The Injury Prevention Team**

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