

Topic of the Month: Roadway safety

As North Texas continues to grow, so does the demand on its roadways. Every day, millions of residents rely on roads both big and small to stay connected across the region. With growth comes an important responsibility: ensuring our roads remain as safe as they are efficient. While progress has been made, roadway safety remains a critical issue - one that calls for continued attention, thoughtful planning and collective action across the region.

For April's Topic of the Month, we're highlighting how these regional priorities are being put into practice through the North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG) ongoing efforts to reduce crashes, prevent injuries and ultimately save lives on our roadways.

Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Distracted driving is often cited as the leading cause of crashes in Texas, underscoring the importance of staying mindful behind the wheel, as even small choices can have a big impact on safety. April's designation as Distracted Driving Awareness Month serves as an added reminder to take a closer look at our driving habits and recommit to safer driving.

This month, NCTCOG is encouraging North Texas residents to reflect on the everyday behaviors that can put themselves and others at risk. Whether it's checking a text, adjusting navigation, or multitasking behind the wheel, even the slightest moment of inattention can have serious consequences.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) defines distracted driving as any activity that takes your attention away from the road.

Common distractions include:

- Texting or talking on a phone (hands-free or handheld)
- Eating or drinking
- Adjusting navigation, radio, or temperature controls
- Grooming
- Reading or watching videos

Even hands-free or voice-to-text devices can impair driving; no form of distracted driving is risk-free.

Here are some safety tips on how to avoid distractions:

- Give driving your full attention at all times.
- Pull over and stop completely before calling or texting.
- Silence, turn off, or use apps to block notifications while driving.

- Let others know you won't respond while behind the wheel.
- Stay focused. Any distraction can increase the risk of a crash.

Encouragingly, recent data shows that safety efforts and increased awareness are making a difference. The number of fatal crashes and fatalities across NCTCOG's 12-county region declined significantly between 2023 and 2025. In 2023, there were 804 fatal crashes resulting in 859 deaths. By 2025, those numbers had dropped to 691 fatal crashes and 734 fatalities - an overall decrease of about 14% in both categories, reflecting meaningful progress in improving roadway safety.

This progress is the result of continued coordination and investment at both the regional and state levels. Since 2021, NCTCOG has partnered with the state's other metropolitan planning organizations, along with additional regional stakeholders, to work with the Texas Department of Transportation in identifying and funding projects that improve safety and reduce fatalities on roadways across Texas.

Roadway Safety Plan

As part of this commitment, NCTCOG has implemented the [Roadway Safety Plan](#), a region-wide strategy aimed at eliminating all roadway fatalities by 2050. The plan uses in-depth regional safety analyses to identify crash types and provide recommendations for countermeasures to prevent and minimize the severity of crashes. The plan also identifies roadways with a history of fatal crashes and uses data for engineering and safety upgrades.

This program aligns with the RTC's policy that not even one death on the transportation system is acceptable and supports the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) vision, a national highway safety strategy that provides a framework for traffic safety planning efforts.

Through these initiatives, the RTC prioritizes focus on eliminating fatalities and serious injuries across all modes of travel.

National Work Zone Awareness Week

Roadway safety is especially important in and around work zones. As temperatures continue to warm, drivers will encounter more crews on the roads. National Work Zone Awareness Week (April 20–24) is a timely reminder to stay alert and exercise extra caution.

Taking a few extra moments to focus behind the wheel can help prevent crashes and protect both workers and fellow drivers.

Tips for driving safely in work zones:

- Slow down: Follow the posted speed limit and adjust for road conditions.
- Merge when directed: Unsafe lane changes are a leading factor in work zone crashes.

- Set aside distractions: Keep your full attention on the road and surroundings.
- Don't tailgate: Leave enough space to stop safely if traffic slows suddenly.

Check for potential work zones along your route at www.drivetexas.org.

Look Out Texans

NCTCOG's Look Out Texans safety campaign is aimed at reminding North Texans to stay alert while driving and "look out" for pedestrians and bicyclists who may be crossing or sharing the road.

A quick glance at a phone or moment of inattention can result in life-altering consequences for people walking, biking and driving around us.

Safety Tips:

- Stop for pedestrians: Always yield at crosswalks and watch carefully when turning.
- Give bicyclists space: Leave at least three feet when passing; change lanes if traveling over 35 MPH.
- Stay alert: Keep your full attention on the road and surroundings.
- Put away distractions: Phones, eating, or other activities can wait until you're safely stopped.

For more safety tips, visit LookOutTexans.org.