

School Program Resources

The DRSR program has created a series of lessons for social studies classes at the elementary and secondary levels that focus on citizenship education and traffic safety.

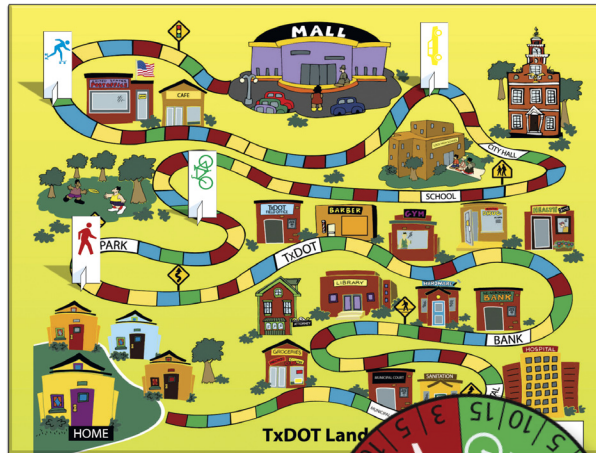
The program is aligned with the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) that all students are tested on in Texas public schools.

Lessons use interactive strategies and online games to teach traffic safety while studying city government, the three branches of government, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Information sheets provide teachers with background information on municipal court and traffic laws. It is recommended that teachers contact local judges, court support personnel, and city prosecutors and ask them to serve as resource persons in the classroom. Resource persons can bring the lessons alive by providing real life or hypothetical examples, accurate descriptions of what the law requires, and serve as positive role models for students.

Sample lessons, handouts, and background materials are available on the TMCEC site: www.tmcec.com. Click on Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives, then click on Driving on the Right Side of the Road.

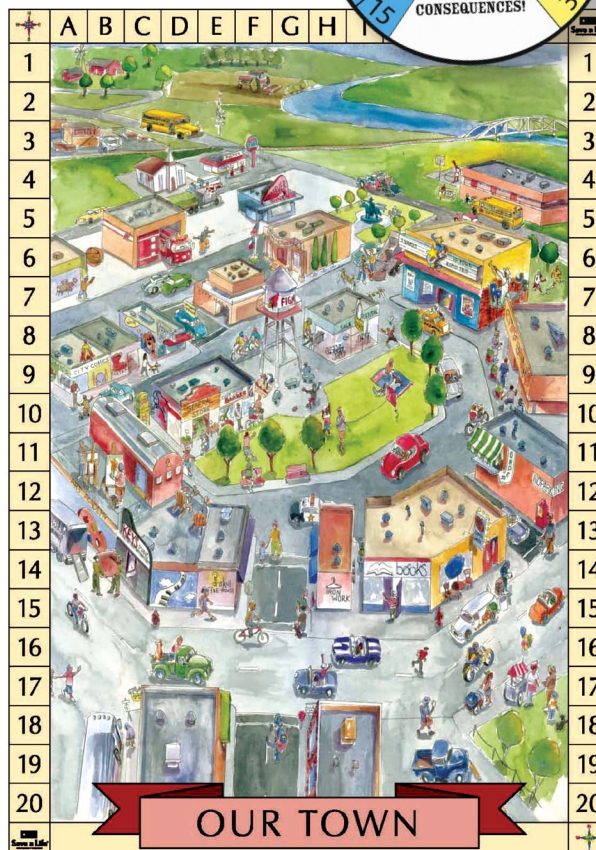
For more information contact Lisa Robinson, TMCEC Safety Grant Administrator, at robinson@tmcec.com or 512.320.8274.

Texas Municipal Courts Education Center
1609 Shoal Creek Blvd. • Austin, TX 78701
512.320.8274 • www.tmcec.com



TxDot LAND game board and spinner.

"Our Town" Map Activity



DRIVING on the RIGHT SIDE of the ROAD

Sponsored by:
Law Focused Education, Inc.
State Bar of Texas
Texas Municipal Courts Education Center
Texas Department of Transportation



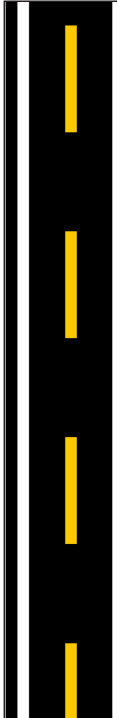
Driving on the Right Side of the Road

Young drivers between the ages of 15 and 20, comprise 6.5% of the licensed population and too often are amongst the high number of Texans injured or killed due to speed, DUI, failure to wear a seat belt and other poor driving habits. In 2007, there were 569 fatalities involving young drivers in Texas (NHTSA, 2007). Underage, intoxicated drivers are over-represented in the state's average for alcohol-related fatalities.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death of 15-20 year olds. NHTSA reported that 26% of the young drivers between the ages of 15 and 20, who were killed in crashes, had a BAC of .08 or higher and 31% had at least a BAC of .01% or higher (NHTSA 2007). Drivers, ages 16-24, represent the highest percentage of drivers holding cell phones to their ears (10%) or manipulating handheld devices (3%) (NHTSA, 2007). The cost of unsafe driving habits is extremely high. For the individual, not only is there payment of the fines and fees related to the offense, but the recent implementation of the Texas DPS Driving Responsibility Program results in surcharges that can last three years. A 1st offense Driving While Intoxicated for a teen can result in a surcharge of 60% to insurance premiums. Over the life of this surcharge, this can add thousands of dollars to the insurance premium (DPS, 2004).

The effects of popular culture, immaturity, no fear of consequences (or lack of awareness), combined with peer pressure to drink and drive or reckless driving must be offset with educational programming about the importance of safe driving habits, recognition of the value of human life, and responsible decision-making.

In FY 2008, juvenile activity in Texas municipal courts (over 180,000 cases) reached an alarming record high with most cases (149,037) involving traffic safety related issues (Annual Statistical Report for the Texas Judiciary 2008). If the number of high school drivers are compared to the number of juvenile cases processed by municipal court, it is estimated that one in every six young drivers appear each year in municipal court. Too often the defendants enter a plea of guilty by mail or appear in a crowded courtroom with a high volume docket where the judge has little opportunity to educate the young drivers about traffic safety issues and personal, social, and economic costs of poor driving habits. A more comprehensive, in-depth, and multifaceted approach is needed, which Driving on the Right Side of the Road provides.



“Driving on the Right Side of the Road,” a collaborative effort between TMCEC, Law Related Education Department of the State Bar of Texas, and TxDOT, provides students in elementary, middle, and high school government with valuable traffic safety information in their classroom through social studies, government, and language arts classes. Municipal judges, clerks, and city officials are valuable resources as persons in the classrooms to partner on this project. Contact TMCEC to see how you can get involved in a project to educate our young children on the importance of traffic safety 512.320.8274.

Speakers' Bureau

TMCEC has set up a speaker's bureau for judges and court support personnel who are interested in making presentations to school age children or partnering on this project.

The materials lend themselves to the use of guest speakers in the classroom. We hope that municipal judges and court support personnel will look at the materials on the TMCEC website and encourage local teachers to use them, as well as offer to participate in the classroom as resource persons. Students will have many questions about traffic laws and municipal judges and clerks are very knowledgeable.

Add me to the Speakers' Bureau

Name: _____

Court: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

