



Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

# **Accessibility and Disability Policy Webinar Series**

November 21, 2019



Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

## **Accessibility and Disability Policy Webinar Series**

November 21, 2019

# **Texas Driving with Autism Initiative**

presented by

Jennifer Allen, Asperger's 101

Skylar Hearn, Department of Public Safety

Jeremiah Kuntz, Department of Motor Vehicles



# Driving with Autism

## A Texas Initiative

The Driving with Autism initiative is a first-of-its-kind program out of Texas that is improving the interaction between law enforcement and drivers diagnosed with a communication challenge.



# Program Overview

The Driving with Autism initiative is a first-of-its-kind program out of Texas that is improving the interaction between law enforcement and drivers diagnosed with a communication challenge.



# Welcoming Remarks from Governor Abbott

[https://youtu.be/wp3l5tfQT\\_0](https://youtu.be/wp3l5tfQT_0)

# Jennifer Allen

Founder & Executive  
Director @Aspergers101  
and Driving with Autism  
Initiative



# Jeremiah Kuntz

Director of Vehicle  
Titles & Registration at  
the Texas Department  
of Motor Vehicles



# Skylar Hearn

Lt. Colonel Hearn is one of three Deputy Directors for the agency and oversees the Law Enforcement Services Branch of Department of Public Safety .







# Driving with Autism

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**Jennifer Allen**

**Executive Director & Founder**

**Aspergers101 & Driving with Autism Texas Initiative**



# Driving with Autism

## Overview



**Concept:** With the goal of creating better communication between law enforcement and citizens with a communication impediment such as Autism/Asperger Syndrome, the “Driving with Autism” initiative was developed by a mother who was fearful for her son—diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome—driving, and the challenges he certainly would encounter if pulled over by an Officer of the Law.



# Driving with Autism

## Went to my State Representative



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**LYLE LARSON**

DISTRICT 122

June 22, 2015

Mr. Joe Peters  
Assistant Director, Drivers' License Division  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, TX 78773

Dear Mr. Peters:

Thank you for your work on behalf of our great state. I'm writing to request that the Department of Public Safety develop and implement a plan to have a designation on Texas driver licenses that indicates that the license holder has autism.

My office has been working with a constituent whose son has high-functioning autism and who is well-versed with high-functioning autism and Aspergers Syndrome. She is a dedicated advocate for helping parents of those who have high-functioning autism learn how their child can become more independent. She notes that one of the key ways to gain independence is for a person with high-functioning autism, who meets medical standards to be able to drive, obtain a driver license. However, she often hears that parents are apprehensive to pursue a license for their child due to concerns about problems that may arise from a traffic stop if law enforcement is unaware their son or daughter has certain impediments. After consulting with physicians and a number of experts in the autism field, she has indicated that there are many who think such a designation would be helpful to both the driver and law enforcement.

During a traffic stop, an officer interacting with a person who is autistic may not know that the individual they are interacting with has a sensitivity to light or sound, communication impediments, or trouble making eye contact, for example. If the designation were on the driver license, an officer would be alerted to the condition, and be able to adjust their approach to interacting with the individual as appropriate.

The constituent my office has been working with on this issue is very interested in working with DPS to develop this designation and provide any expertise, or answer any questions you may have. She is also interested in working with the Department to get the word out to folks about the designation once it's made available. Her contact information can be found below:

Best,

Lyle Larson



# Driving with Autism

## Presented a Low-Cost Solution!



Texas Department of Public Safety Driver License Division meets with Aspergers101

- Bring “Communication Impediment with a Peace Officer” to the forefront
- Define the term
- Legislation
- Law Enforcement Training
- Keeping Diagnosis Private
- Awareness: Let People Know!

# Driving with Autism

## Three Components

1. Driver License & State ID Optional Code: Communication Impediment with a Peace Officer. Statewide Marketing Effort
2. Law Enforcement Training: Understanding “Communication Impediment”
3. Communication Impediment offered as option when registering vehicle with Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. This alerts the officer of the diagnosis prior to approaching the vehicle in a traffic stop. (TLETS)

Bonus: Driving with Autism Camp







# Driving with Autism

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**#1**

**Driver License & State ID  
Optional Code: Communication  
Impediment with a Peace Officer  
& Statewide Marketing Effort**



# Driving with Autism

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## What Constitutes a Communication Impediment?

A communication impediment is any disorder that affects an individual's ability to comprehend, detect, or apply language and speech to engage in discourse effectively with others. The delays and disorders can range from simple sound substitution to the inability to understand or use one's native language.

Common challenges associated with communication impediment:

- Autism
- Asperger Syndrome
- Mild intellectual disability
- Deafness
- Hard of Hearing
- Speech & languages disorders (Mute-ism, Stuttering)
- Down Syndrome
- Brain Injury
- Parkinson 's disease



# Driving with Autism

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**Samuel Allen, at Texas Capitol Press Conference, explains why the option of “Communication Impediment” code is so important to him.**

<https://youtu.be/rwqWhkvJtJk>



# Legislation HB 1434

HB 1434  
*Texas House Bill*  
**Relating to  
displaying  
informational  
materials and videos  
in driver's license  
offices.**





# Driving with Autism

## 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session – HB1434



Bills Filed	Bills Passed	Vetoed
6,631	1,211	50

Summary of Enactments, 85th Legislature  
Published by the Texas Legislative Council



# Driving with Autism

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**Press Conference: TX Governors Press Room State Capitol**  
**Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Mr. Joe Peters/Asst. Director Texas DPS Driver License Division  
Introduces Texans to “Driving with Autism” initiative

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/Zm3ij1LPcfI?start=59&end=119>



# Driving with Autism - Marketing

Framed posters placed in all Texas DPS Driver License Offices  
English & Spanish Languages

**THE FACE OF  
AUTISM  
IS NOT ALWAYS  
OBVIOUS**

**BUT THE POTENTIAL  
CHALLENGES ARE!**

Help Minimize These Challenges - Alert Peace Officers with:

**COMMUNICATION IMPEDIMENT**

Adding Communication Impediment to your driver license is simple:

- 1 Have your physician complete and sign a Physician's Statement Form (DL101) affirming the autism diagnosis.
- 2 Visit your local driver license office for a driver license application (DL14A/S). Complete Line 7.

For all Driver License forms go to [www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense](http://www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense)

Brought to you by **ASPERGERS101** in conjunction with

**LA CARA DEL  
AUTISMO  
NO SIEMPRE ES  
OBVIA**

**¡PERO LOS DESAFIOS  
POTENCIALES LO SON!**

Ayudar a minimizar estos desafíos-Alerta a los oficiales con:

**IMPEDIMENTO DE COMUNICACIÓN**

Agregar Impedimento de Comunicación a su licencia de conducir es simple:

- 1 Haga que su médico complete y firme el formulario de declaración de un médico (DL101) afirmado el diagnóstico de autismo.
- 2 Visite su oficina local de licencia de conducir para una solicitud de licencia de conductor (DL14A/S). Complete la línea 7.

Por todas las formas de Licencia de Conducir vaya a [www.dps.texas.gov/driverlicense](http://www.dps.texas.gov/driverlicense)


Traído a usted por **ASPERGERS101** En colaboración con





# Driving with Autism -Marketing

## Tri-fold Brochures placed in all Texas DPS Driver License Offices English & Spanish Languages



**Question :**

Why get the "Communication Impediment" Restriction?

Texas Transportation Code §521.125 allows the Texas Department of Public Safety to include a notice on the driver license or identification card of those who indicate they have a health condition that may impede their ability to communicate with a law enforcement officer.

**Medical Reasons Why A Person Might Need The Restriction**

**Communication Impediment**

"In circumstances such as a traffic stop, an individual with Autism who displays these behaviors (see excerpts from DSM- V criteria below) are at risk for being misunderstood by law enforcement officers."

**A Patricia Del Angel, MD, FAAP ■  
Berenice de la Cruz, Ph.D., BCBA-D ■  
Loree Primeau, PhD, FAOTA, OTR ■**  
Autism Community Network

**Tips for those driving with Autism**

- 1 Practice driving, in a remote location, as often as possible.
- 2 Practice a role-play scenario as if an officer of the law were approaching your vehicle. Practice the steps of rolling down the window, then keeping your hands in view of the officer (a good place is on the steering wheel). Once the officer asks for your driver license, let the trooper know that you are now going to reach for your purse or wallet to get your license.

**"Anxiety can often be reduced (for the driver with Autism) by lots of driving practice in a safe remote location."**

**Temple Grandin, Ph.D.,  
Professor of Animal Science, Inventor, Autism Activist**

**Question :**

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**Medical Reasons Why A Person Might Need The Restriction**

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**A Patricia Del Angel, MD, FAAP ■  
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Loree Primeau, PhD, FAOTA, OTR ■**  
Autism Community Network

**Tips for the Parents**

- 1 Take your time. Just because drivers ed is offered (around age 15-16) at Public High School does not mean your child with an ASD should begin at that time. Typically the emotional side takes a couple of years (or longer) to catch up with the physical years. Each child is different but knowing your child's emotional state and when to launch is as important a step as any.
- 2 Practice, practice, practice! Allow your son or daughter the opportunity to get behind the wheel in a remote setting. The sooner the better! Driving for someone on the spectrum takes a lot of sensory and memory activity and the more you can practice (in the country or abandoned parking lot) prior to taking a drivers education class, the greater the chances are for success.
- 3 Get familiar with the driving instructors. Chances are the instructor has been trained to work with people with impediments, however never assume this and schedule a meeting (I did at the district level) and bring a handout explaining your child's challenges and diagnosis. This will pave the way for your child by preparing all instructors how to best communicate during instruction.
- 4 Keep driving routes as easy as possible. Once the license is obtained and your son/daughter begins driving, find the easiest, less congested route to school, college and work. Keeping it simple and as consistent as possible lessens anxiety for the two of you.
- 5 Driving is not for everyone. For some with ASD the anxiety of getting behind the wheel is too great and you should consider getting familiar with other means of independence such as a consistent mode of public transportation.

**Jennifer Allen  
Founder Aspergers101**

**THE FACE OF  
AUTISM  
IS NOT ALWAYS  
OBVIOUS**




**BUT THE POTENTIAL  
CHALLENGES ARE!**

**Help Minimize These Challenges  
by getting:**

**COMMUNICATION IMPEDIMENT**



added to your driver license.

Brought to you by:



**ASPERGERS101**  
Your Resource for High-Functioning Autism and Aspergers Syndrome  
aspergers101.org

In partnership with:



**LA CARA DEL  
AUTISMO  
NO SIEMPRE ES  
OBVIA**



**LA CARA DEL AUTISMO NO  
SIEMPRE ES EVIDENTE  
PERO LOS DESAFÍOS  
POTENCIALES SON!**

Ayuda a minimizar estos  
retos por consiguiendo:

**IMPEDIMENTO DE LA COMUNICACIÓN**

añadido a su licencia de conducir.



# Driving with Autism – Marketing Statewide

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**:30 PSA: Autism**

**Airing on TV throughout Texas and Social Media**

<https://youtu.be/xOy0Gj763Fk>



# Driving with Autism – Marketing Statewide

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**:30 PSA: Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

**Airing on TV throughout Texas and Social Media**

<https://youtu.be/0b8K8vp-0u8>



# Driving with Autism

## Marketing The “Driving with Autism” to Texas Citizens



- TV Interviews
- News Stories
- Radio
- Print
- Social Media





# Driving with Autism

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**Skylor Hearn**

**Lieutenant Colonel**

**Texas Department of Public Safety**





# Driving with Autism



## Driver License

- The addition of notification of “Communication Impediment” to a Texas DL or ID is a completely voluntary and simple process.
- When applying for a first time, renewal, or replacement DL or ID, the customer must check “yes” on the application form for the question, “Do you have a health condition that may impede communication with a peace officer?” and
- Present a completed DL-101 form (<https://www.dps.texas.gov/internetforms/Forms/DL-101.pdf>)
- No other medical forms are needed for the addition of this notification.



# Driving with Autism



## Driver License

- The “Communication Impediment” statement will be displayed on the back of DL or ID. The DL will also have the letter “P” on the face of the card under the restriction codes.
- Once the statement has been added to the card, it will remain there until the customer requests that it be removed.
- As of August 31, 2019, there were more than 9,700 Texas DL and ID cards with the “Communication Impediment” flag.



# Driving with Autism



## TLETS

- DPS facilitates access to both the Driver License database (DPS) and the Vehicle Registration database (DMV) for law enforcement across the state and nation through the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System – or TLETS.
- The “Communication Impediment” notification is visible to law enforcement on DL queries and will be similarly visible on registration queries.



# Driving with Autism



## TLETS

DPS is working to enhance these returns by creating a banner at the top of the record return as depicted below that will draw immediate attention from the officer or communications operator.

**\*\*THE FOLLOWING RECORD INDICATES THE LICENSE HOLDER MAY HAVE A HEALTH CONDITION OR DISABILITY THAT IMPEDES EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION. \*\***

**\*\*THE FOLLOWING RECORD INDICATES THE DRIVER OR OWNER OF THE VEHICLE MAY HAVE A HEALTH CONDITION OR DISABILITY THAT IMPEDES EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION. \*\***



# Driving with Autism

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**Jennifer Allen**

**Executive Director & Founder**

**Aspergers101 & Driving with Autism Texas Initiative**



# Driving with Autism

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# #2

## Law Enforcement Training: Understanding “Communication Impediment”



# Driving with Autism – Training

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**Press Conference: Announcing Texas “Driving with Autism” initiative – Training**  
**Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Major Jason Hester  
Commissioner Texas Commission on Law Enforcement

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/Zm3ij1LPcfI?start=141&end=218>





# Driving with Autism - Training

## Training Texas DPS Trooper Recruits





# Driving with Autism

## Poster: Presented at Texas Psychological Association

### 2-hour ASD Training/ 3 Workshops/ 350 Participating Texas Trooper Recruits



#### Increasing law enforcement officer understanding of autism spectrum disorders

Louise O'Donnell, Ph.D. The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, Jennifer Allen, B.A. and Sam Allen, A.A. Aspergers 101  
Charles Palcer, B.S. Texas Department of Public Safety, Temple Grandin, Ph.D., Colorado State University

#### Introduction

While driving is one of the skills necessary for being independent in young adulthood, successful driving can be a challenge for persons with mild Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In addition to knowledge of traffic rules, safe driving requires cognitive flexibility and the ability to react quickly and appropriately to unpredictable situations (e.g. distracted driver on cell phone weaving into your lane). Peace officers are trained to demand eye contact and expect appropriate interactions from people involved in a traffic stop. Because persons with mild ASD often struggle with understanding social cues and can become extremely anxious when placed in a stressful situation, there is significant potential for an ill-fated encounter during a traffic stop.

The collaborative effort between the Aspergers 101 organization, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio grew from a mother's desire to assist her teenage son who has mild Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with driving safely. Jennifer Allen worked with Charles Palcer of DPS to develop the Driving with Autism State Initiative. This is a multi faceted program which includes the optional placement of a restriction code (Communication Impediment with a Peace Officer) on the person's drivers license. This communication code can be included on the drivers license or state ID card for persons with ASD, Down Syndrome or speech impediment. The second facet of this initiative focused on DPS Trooper recruit training on mild ASD.

We assessed state Trooper's knowledge and attitudes about ASD behaviors, ASD stress reactions and potential for violence prior to and immediately following a 2-hour workshop. The workshop included short video clips from Temple Grandin and other experts discussing ASD behavior, stress reactions and application to traffic stop behavior. A teenager with ASD also shared his experiences with driving.

#### Materials and Methods

Prior to beginning the workshop each officer completed a short questionnaire designed to assess knowledge and attitudes regarding ASD behavior, knowledge of potential ASD reactions to stressful situations and their attitudes about potential for violence with this population.

Pre-workshop Questionnaire-Likert scale 1-5

*How well do you understand the diagnosis and characteristics of high functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome (ASD)*

*e.g. 1 = above average amt of understanding; 5 = no understanding*  
*Are you familiar with the ways a person with ASD reacts to stressful situations?*

*e.g. 1 = above average amt of understanding; 5 = no understanding*  
*Do you believe that persons with ASD often react violently to stressful situations?*

*e.g. 1 = yes they always react violently; 5 = no never react violently*  
*Have you had personal exposure to persons with ASD?*

*e.g. 1 = yes had exposure; 5 = no exposure*  
*Do you feel this program will be helpful for situations in your workplace?*  
*e.g. 1 = yes will be of great help; 5 = no added value*

The 2 hour workshop included short video clips discussing the behavioral characteristics of ASD such as having difficulty understanding sarcasm (e.g., Where is the fire?) and problems with nonverbal communication (poor eye contact), and slow processing speed (needing more time to respond). The workshop also discussed possible stress reactions (panic) when being pulled over and a teenager with ASD shared his experiences of being a new driver. There was also time allotted for questions.

Each Trooper then completed a Post-workshop questionnaire. Four questions were the same as those on the Pre-workshop questionnaire. Three additional questions were asked: "Are you satisfied with this presentation on ASD?", "Do you feel you have gained a working knowledge of ASD that will aid you on the job?" and "Did you have your questions answered in this program". Suggestions for improvement of the workshop were also solicited.

A total of 350 DPS Troopers completed both questionnaires across the three training sessions. A series of paired t-tests were generated for shared items. Results of a stand alone pre workshop question revealed that most troopers had some to little familiarity with ASD ( $X = 3.42$ ;  $SD = 1.60$ ) on a 5- point likert scale with 1 = most familiar to 5 = no familiarity. A few of the officers wrote that they had family members with ASD while others indicated they had no familiarity with the topic.

#### Results

Question	Pre Workshop M	Pre Workshop SD	Post Workshop M	Post Workshop SD	n	r	df
Knowledge of ASD diagnosis	3.36	1.0	1.43	.61	350	.209*	349*
Knowledge of ASD and stress reactions	3.36	1.2	1.28	.60	350	.092*	349*
Belief that persons with ASD react violently to stressful situations	3.42	1.8	4.02	1.29	348	.232*	347*
Program helpful for situations in workplace	1.16	.5	1.07	.33	350	.444*	349*

\*p < .000

#### Conclusions and Next Steps

1. There was a significant difference in ratings for self-perceived knowledge of ASD in general and knowledge of ASD stress reactions. On the Pre-workshop questionnaire, officers indicated they had minimal knowledge of ASD and stress reactions while post workshop ratings reflected significant increases in knowledge about the two topics.
2. On the question regarding potential for violence, the majority of officers felt pre-workshop that there was a mild-moderate tendency towards violence while post survey reflected a decrease in this perception. On average, persons with ASD were viewed as less likely to be violent when stressed than previously thought.
3. Officers were receptive to the workshop as indicated by their positive pre-workshop ratings and gave the workshop high marks post-survey. 99% of the officers saw the workshop as providing added value to their on-the-job work.
4. In answer to the question: "What would you suggest to improve this presentation?" Respondents indicated they wanted additional case presentations and simulated presentations of actual traffic stops with an ASD individual. Jennifer Allen and her son Sam have just completed filming a series of simulated traffic stops. These vignettes will be added to future training workshops.



# Driving with Autism - Training

## Poster Results

- Minimal knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorders in pre-test ratings reflected *a significant increase* in knowledge after training.
- Prior law enforcement training on ASD gave a majority of those tested with the false knowledge of autism being an aggressive mental disorder. They believed that there was a mild to moderate tendency toward violence while the post survey reflected a decrease in this perception.



**On average, persons with Autism were viewed as less likely to be violent than previously thought.**



# Driving with Autism – Law Enforcement Training

- 1) What constitutes a “Communication Impediment” designation? – Because it’s more than autism
- 2) What might it look like in a traffic stop
- 3) Methods to better handle situations





## 1. What constitutes a “Communication Impediment” designation?

Medically, each disorder lends itself to its own category. However, for law enforcement training purposes, we will proceed by categorizing “Communication Impediment” disorders into two groups to better prepare officers for a pullover scenario.

**GROUP ONE:** (Think of it as a Slower Processing Speed)

Autism, Asperger Syndrome, Mild Intellectual Disability, Down Syndrome, Parkinson’s Disease, Speech and Language Disorders and Brain Injury

**GROUP TWO:** (Think of this as a Different Language)

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

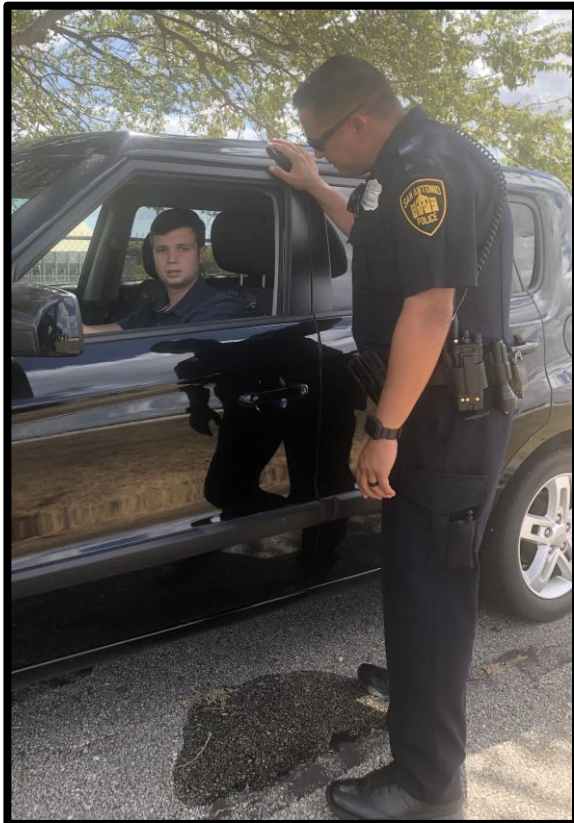




# Driving with Autism

## Group 1: Slower Processing Speed - Autism

**What Autism (and others in Group 1) might look like during a traffic stop?**



- Lack of eye contact or too much eye contact
- No expression/Seemingly bland behavior
- Unusual speaking patterns including direct (sometimes curt) short answers
- Physical display of coping mechanisms (from stress) such as repetitive body movements, crying, holding ears, yelling, singing or fetal position.



# Driving with Autism

## Group 2: Different Language- Deaf or Hard of Hearing

### 2. What Deafness (and others in Group 2) might look like during a traffic stop?



- A deaf person doesn't respond to verbal directions
- Person may reach into his or her pocket to get a card that reads "I am deaf", but the officer believes instead that he or she is reaching for a weapon
- They are probably more scared of a policeman or woman than a non-deaf person, at least in the beginning of an encounter because of their fear of being misunderstood
- They will make eye contact; eye contact is very important to effective communication for this population



# Driving with Autism

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## 3. Methods to better handle a situation

### Texas Law Enforcement Training Video

Group 1: Slower Processing Speed/Autism

Group 2: Different Language/Deaf or Hard of Hearing

<https://youtu.be/b2WnwHvjkSI>

Produced in conjunction with Aspergers101 & San Antonio Police Department for TCOLE





# Driving with Autism

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## Law Enforcement Training - Statewide



To provide a consistent training to ALL Texas Law Enforcement Agencies, Aspergers101 is teaming up with the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to provide them with resources and information on Communication Impediment. TCOLE is reviewing this course and its content as a possible course for officers to utilize for continuing education hours.



# Driving with Autism

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# #3

**Communication Impediment offered as option when registering vehicle with Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. This alerts the officer of the diagnosis *prior to approaching* the vehicle in a traffic stop. (TLETS)**



# Driving with Autism

86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session

## SB 976: Option to place “Communication Impediment” in TLETS



SB 976 will allow a person with a Communication Impediment the option for disclosure when registering their vehicle through the Texas DMV. This will place the diagnosis privately in the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (TLETS) alerting the officer PRIOR to approaching the vehicle in a pull-over scenario. This might not only save lives, it will keep the diagnosis hidden from potential public scrutiny.



# Driving with Autism

86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session

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**Samuel Allen Testimony to Senate Committee on Transportation on why passage of SB 976 might be important to persons with Autism**

<https://youtu.be/niAtktbtf7I>



# Driving with Autism

## SB 976

### A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT

relating to the notification of a peace officer through an indication associated with vehicle registration that a person has a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 502, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 502.061 to read as follows:

Sec. 502.061. REGISTRATION BY OWNER WITH CONDITION THAT IMPEDES EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION. (a) An application for registration must provide space for the applicant to voluntarily indicate that the applicant has a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication with a peace officer. The department may request from a person who makes an indication under this subsection verification of a condition in the form of:

(1) for a physical health condition, a written statement from a licensed physician; or

(2) for a mental health condition, a written statement from a licensed physician, a licensed psychologist, or a non-physician mental health professional, as defined by Section 571.003, Health and Safety Code.

(b) The department shall provide to the Department of Public Safety the vehicle registration information of a person who voluntarily indicated on an application under Subsection (a) that the person has a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication. The department may not provide to the Department of Public Safety information that shows the type of health condition or disability a person has.

(c) The Department of Public Safety shall establish a system to include information received under Subsection (b) in the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System for the purpose of alerting a peace officer who makes a traffic stop that the operator of the stopped vehicle may have a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication.

(d) The Department of Public Safety may not make information received under Subsection (b) available in the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System to a person who has access to the system under a contract unless the contract prohibits the person from disclosing that information to a person who is not subject to the contract.

(e) The department may not issue to a person without the person's consent a license plate with a visible marking that indicates to the general public that the person voluntarily indicated on an application under Subsection (a) that the person has a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication.

(f) Except as provided by Subsection (d), information supplied to the department relating to an applicant's health condition or disability is for the confidential use of the department and the Department of Public Safety and may not be disclosed to any person.

SECTION 2. A Department of Public Safety contract that allows a person to access the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System and that is in effect before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date on which the contract was entered into, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose, except that the contract:

- (1) continues only for the term of the contract; and
- (2) may not be renewed unless the renewed contract

Filed February 21, 2019  
Senator Bryan Hughes

includes the prohibition required by Section 502.061(d),  
Transportation Code, as added by this Act.  
SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.

\* \* \* \* \*





# Driving with Autism

## Resolution 52: The Samuel Allen Law

### CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Samuel Dale Allen has worked tirelessly to improve interactions between law enforcement and Texans with health conditions that may impede communication; and

WHEREAS, A San Antonio native, Samuel Allen was diagnosed with high-functioning autism as a child; he began advocating for others with autism as a student, and he has helped educate the public about the condition; moreover, he has raised vital awareness of the misunderstandings that can occur when an officer makes a traffic stop involving someone with autism, Asperger Syndrome, mild intellectual disabilities, deafness, speech disorders, or other impediments; his accomplishments earned him a Spirit of Giving Award from the *San Antonio Business Journal*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Allen has been a strong voice in support of S.B. 976, which allows a person with a communication impediment the option to disclose this information when registering their vehicle through the Department of Motor Vehicles; this would place the diagnosis in the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunication System, ensuring that an officer is alerted prior to approaching the vehicle, while maintaining the privacy of the driver; and

WHEREAS, Through his dedicated efforts, Samuel Allen is helping to make encounters safer for officers and people with communication impediments, and his contributions have earned the respect and admiration of his fellow citizens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby commend Samuel Allen for his civic engagement and advocacy for individuals with communication impediments and, contingent on the passing of S.B. 976, recognize Section 502.061, Transportation Code, as the Samuel Allen Law.



86R15779 BPG-D

By: Hughes

S.C.R. No. 52



# Driving with Autism

## 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session – SB976

### The Samuel Allen Law



Bills Filed	Bills Passed	Vetoed
7,324	1,229	56

Summary of Enactments, 85th Legislature  
Published by the Texas Legislative Council





# Driving with Autism

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## Marketing The Samuel Allen Law to Texas Citizens

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[https://youtu.be/2\\_QcwtxzHD4](https://youtu.be/2_QcwtxzHD4)



# Driving with Autism

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## Marketing The Samuel Allen Law to Texas Citizens

PSA Airing Across Texas

<https://youtu.be/Kl1uRmPCgmY>



# Driving with Autism

## Marketing The Samuel Allen Law to Texas Citizens



- TV Interviews
- News Stories
- Radio
- Print
- Social Media



# Driving with Autism

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**Jeremiah Kuntz**

**Director of Vehicle Titles & Registration**

**Texas Department of Motor Vehicles**



**Texas Department  
of Motor Vehicles**

HELPING TEXANS GO. HELPING TEXAS GROW.



## Adding a communication Impediment Indicator to a Motor Vehicle Record

- Adding a communication impediment indicator to your motor vehicle record is voluntary and easy.
- The indicator can be added to your motor vehicle record when applying for title or registration or at any other time.
- The indicator will add a remarks that is visible to law enforcement informing them that the driver of the vehicle may have a communication impediment.
- The remark is not available to anyone other than law enforcement.



# Driving with Autism



## Adding a communication Impediment Indicator to a Motor Vehicle Record

**Step 1** – Fill out Form VTR-216 and have your health care provider certify that you have a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication. The form is available at [www.TxDMV.gov/forms](http://www.TxDMV.gov/forms).

**Step 2** – Bring sign form VTR-216 to your county tax assessor collector office.

**Step 3** – The county tax assessor collector office will add the indicator to your motor vehicle record and return the form VTR-216 to you.

**Note:** *You may keep you signed form VTR-216 for future use if you purchase a new vehicle.*





# Driving with Autism

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**Jennifer Allen**

**Executive Director & Founder**

**Aspergers101 & Driving with Autism Texas Initiative**



# Driving with Autism

## Driving with Autism Camp





# Driving with Autism

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## Driving with Autism Camp

Aspergers101 teamed up with the Texas DPS Training Facility in Florence Texas to develop a prototype “Driving with Autism” Day Camp.

[https://youtu.be/3cPkXwaW\\_4Y](https://youtu.be/3cPkXwaW_4Y)



# Driving with Autism

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## Available Camp Forms

- Driving with Autism Camp – Itinerary
- Parent Application Form
- Driving with Autism Camp - Student Assessment
- Driving with Autism Camp – Vehicle Inspection
- Driving with Autism Camp – City Rural Observation



# Driving with Autism

## Final Thoughts:

“Driving with Autism initiative is a success because in our great state of Texas, you can take an idea from a citizen, empower that idea through our State Legislature, engage our great Department of Public Safety and Department of Motor Vehicles, gain total support through our Governors Committee on People with Disabilities, affirm it’s credibility through UT Health San Antonio and suddenly we have forged a program worthy to share. Let’s pass it on and have others build upon it.”

-Jennifer Allen





# Driving with Autism

Q & A

