

Houston Council Safety Professionals

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 9, 2026

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: Deer Park Battle Ground Golf Club

Chairperson: Rihanna Stepp

1. Call to Order and Opening

- Chairperson Rihanna Stepp called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.
- Attendees were welcomed, and a Happy New Year greeting was extended.
- Invocation led by Tom.
- Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- Self-introductions were conducted around the room.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes & Reports

- Copies of the previous Secretary's Report were distributed; motion to approve made by Steve Davis, seconded by Mike. Motion carried.
- Treasurer's report provided by Lonnie Bennett:
 - Starting balance: \$9,915.30.
 - Dues collected: \$818.19.
 - Total funds: \$11,120.69.
 - Expenses included meeting costs (\$1,178.84), Ron's trophies (\$1,067.28), and Joe Atkinson Award (\$663.35).
 - Motion to approve Treasurer's Report carried.

3. Old Business

- Joe Atkinson Award nominations were confirmed as finalized from the previous meeting.
- Past chairpersons voted on the award recipient.

4. New Business & Upcoming Events

- Dates for the Truck Driving Championship (TDC) and annual Golf Tournament to be finalized and distributed by email.
 - Tentative: Golf Tournament in March (Monday), TDC in April.
 - Volunteers are needed; members were encouraged to participate.
 - Proceeds from the Golf Tournament fund scholarships for members' and employees' families.
 - Membership drive continues; members encouraged to invite colleagues and ensure dues are current.

5. Special Reports & Announcements

- Officer Tripp provided an update on the upcoming TDC state challenge (June 8–11, Corpus Christi) and local qualification process.

- Recognition of past Texas state champions present at the meeting.
- Officer Tripp encouraged members to reach out for safety talks and support from Region Two.

6. Presentation of the Joe M. Atkinson Award

- Mike (past recipient) shared the history and significance of the Joe M. Atkinson Award, honoring outstanding safety leadership and mentorship in the Houston area.
- The 2025 Joe M. Atkinson Award was presented to Henry Vargas, Secretary.
- Mr. Vargas expressed gratitude to mentors, family, and colleagues, emphasizing teamwork and mutual support.

7. Program/Speaker

- Guest speaker Kenny Ray delivered an in-depth overview of current trends and regulatory issues in hazardous materials (hazmat) transportation, including:
 - Increase in non-traditional carriers entering hazmat transport.
 - Regulatory complexities at state and federal levels.
 - Key risks related to insurance, training, and compliance.
 - Anticipated changes regarding lithium-ion battery shipments and potential new placarding requirements.
 - Upcoming hazmat training and conferences in Texas.

8. Recap of Prior Meeting

- Recap provided on the previous session's presentation by the Deer Park Fire Chief regarding fire hazards, safety, and extinguishers for both household and vehicle applications.

9. Door Prizes

- Door prize drawing was held; multiple winners announced.

10. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned after all agenda items were addressed.
- Group photos of past Joe Atkinson Award recipients were organized following the meeting.

Minutes prepared by: Henry Vargas/Secretary,

Date: 1/13/2026