

## **Houston Council Safety Professionals**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** January 9, 2026

**Time:** 12:00 PM

**Location:** Deer Park Battle Ground Golf Club

**Chairperson:** Rihanna Stepp

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### **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.

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**Minutes prepared by:** Henry Vargsa/Secretary,

**Date:** 1/13/2026