THIN LINE SOFTWARE
TEXAS NIBRS REPORTING GUIDE

NIBRS reporting for Texas police departments.

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How a Texas agency should run NIBRS as part of normal records work-from the incident through monthly reconciliation.

A practical guide to running Texas NIBRS reporting as part of normal records work-from the incident through monthly reconciliation.

Since September 1, 2023, Texas DPS states that Texas criminal-justice agencies are required to implement a NIBRS-compliant records management system and submit NIBRS data monthly to the Texas DPS UCR Program. House Bill 4879 is the statutory basis for that requirement.

> *NIBRS reporting starts when the incident is documented-not when someone prepares the monthly submission.*

The FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System is the national incident-based standard. Texas DPS maintains additional UCR/NIBRS requirements and specifications. An RMS that "supports FBI NIBRS" may still need to satisfy Texas-specific reporting, validations, and offense-code guidance.

> **CURRENT SPECIFICATION UPDATE**
> Texas DPS announced on September 16, 2026 that it expects to deploy NIBRS Technical Specification v2025 in the coming months. This guide covers how Texas NIBRS reporting works today. Do not switch production submissions until DPS announces that v2025 is live.

For the specification transition, read NIBRS 2025 for Texas Law Enforcement.

Follow the report through the month

NIBRS is not one export button. Different people may own different parts of the work.

> *Incident -> officer entry -> validation -> supervisor review -> records/UCR review -> submission -> DPS response -> correction -> resubmission -> monthly reconciliation*

Texas DPS tells agencies that they are the master record holder for their data and are responsible for submitting accurate and complete reports, correcting validation errors and warnings, maintaining communication with DPS when vendor, product, or point-of-contact changes occur, and staying current with applicable reporting specifications. The vendor provides the reporting machinery. The agency remains responsible for the record.

Capture the facts during the report

Many downstream reporting problems start in the operational record. Required structured information has to be captured. Narrative alone cannot substitute for reportable data. Relationships among offenses, victims, offenders, property, and other entities matter. Missing or inconsistent information can prevent successful reporting.

> *Capture the information once, during the work, rather than reconstructing it later from the narrative.*

That does not mean turning an officer's report into a NIBRS questionnaire. It means the RMS should present the reporting fields that matter at an appropriate point in the work.

Validate at the earliest sensible point

Entry validation is what the RMS can identify while the officer is completing the report. Pre-submission validation is what the agency finds before it sends incidents to DPS. Submission or rejection errors are what DPS returns after it processes the file. Not every NIBRS rule can or should be enforced during initial data entry. The system should help the agency find problems at the earliest sensible point without making report writing unnecessarily difficult.

Review, submit, and own the errors

A supervisor reviewing an incident should be able to tell whether the report is operationally complete and whether obvious reporting problems remain. That does not require every patrol supervisor to memorize the NIBRS specification.

> **Ask during review**
> - Can the supervisor see reporting problems?
> - Can the report be returned to the officer with a reason?
> - Can the officer correct it?
> - Does the history show the correction and review cycle?
> - Can supervisors see reports stalled before approval?

For how to test supervisor and NIBRS workflow in an RMS demonstration, read the Texas Police RMS Evaluation Guide.

After approval, someone still has to review incidents ready for submission, resolve remaining validation problems, transmit the data, review DPS responses, identify rejected incidents, coordinate corrections, resubmit, reconcile the month, and keep evidence that the cycle was completed. In a small agency that function may belong to a records employee, another administrator, a supervisor, or the chief. The function matters even when there is no dedicated job title.

Sent is not the same thing as accepted

Agencies need a working distinction among created, approved, ready for submission, submitted, accepted, rejected or in error, corrected, and resubmitted. Those are operational concepts, not official DPS status names. The file leaving the agency is not proof that DPS accepted every incident in it.

> *"Sent" is not necessarily the same thing as "accepted."*

Treat errors as a queue

The agency should be able to see which incidents have errors, what those errors are, who owns the correction, how long they have been unresolved, whether the correction was resubmitted, and whether DPS subsequently accepted it.

Texas DPS's Texas-specific technical specification includes state-specific validation rules identified with T- error codes. DPS explains that certain Texas validations supersede general NIBRS guidance for state data-quality purposes. Staff should be able to move from an error to the affected incident and field, correct the operational record, and revalidate it without depending entirely on the vendor to interpret the message.

Texas DPS also tells agencies to address validation warnings, not only rejected records. A warning may not block the file, but it can still identify a data-quality issue worth reviewing.

When an incident requires correction, identify the problem, correct it through the agency's authorized workflow, preserve appropriate history, resubmit as required, and verify the resulting status. Do not silently rewrite the outbound file while leaving the operational record wrong. Reporting corrections should remain explainable.

NIBRS errors can start in officer entry, misunderstanding of the requirement, supervisor review, RMS configuration, software validation, a specification change, transmission, or vendor implementation. Do not automatically blame staff or software. Ask where in the workflow the problem originated and how the agency can keep it from recurring.

Close the month by accounting for reportable activity

A successful month is not "the file transmitted." At the end of the reporting period, the agency should be able to answer which incidents were reportable, which were submitted, which were accepted, which remain rejected or unresolved, whether any approved reports are still waiting, whether any incidents are stalled before approval, and whether corrections were resubmitted.

> *The goal is not merely to send a file. The goal is to account for the agency's reportable activity.*

Where practical, fix the operational record-not merely the export:

1. Identify which incidents belong in the reporting period and whether they have reached the appropriate status.
2. Find missing or invalid reporting information before submission.
3. Correct the actual incident, offense, person, or property data.
4. Generate the applicable monthly NIBRS/Texas reporting file or transmission.
5. Submit through the current DPS reporting mechanism.
6. Review errors and warnings. Do not assume "file accepted" means every record was correct.
7. Correct and resubmit as necessary.
8. Document that the reporting cycle was completed.

Month-end should be submission and reconciliation work, not archaeological work. If records staff are reconstructing fifty incidents from narratives, the problem started earlier in the month.

Texas DPS's Incident Based Reporting Compliance & Training Unit provides statewide NIBRS reporting support, training, audits, quality-control assistance, and technical resources. DPS also encourages agencies and RMS vendors to subscribe to its UCR listserv for specification updates.

Treat Texas requirements and system changes as operational facts

Texas DPS maintains Texas-specific reporting in addition to the national NIBRS specification, including state-specific validations and reporting for Family Violence, Drug Seizures, and Sexual Assault. Texas-specific data is represented through Segment Levels 8 and 9 in applicable flat-file reporting; DPS notes that those segments are used for state reporting and are not forwarded to the FBI as standard NIBRS segments.

Texas DPS may support multiple reporting formats or specification versions during a transition. Agencies should know exactly which NIBRS and Texas-mandated specifications their RMS produces today, which DPS currently accepts, and when a required transition will affect production. Verify current versions against DPS technical documentation rather than relying on a vendor's generic statement that it "supports NIBRS."

For which version is changing and how agencies should prepare, read the Texas NIBRS 2025 Transition Guide.

Texas DPS also maintains Texas UCR offense-code guidance used to map state offenses to reporting classifications. Ask who maintains that mapping, how DPS and legislative changes reach production, and how historical mappings are preserved.

Texas DPS maintains a public list of vendors actively working with Texas agencies to submit NIBRS. DPS says a vendor is added when it is working with a Texas LEA through the certification process and actively submitting live data, and that vendors that stop actively working with any Texas agency for more than six months can be removed. Inclusion does not mean DPS endorsement, product certification beyond what DPS states, CJIS compliance, or successful implementation at every listed agency. Use the list as one due-diligence input.

Vendors actively working with Texas agencies to submit NIBRS (Texas DPS)

A new RMS that can do NIBRS is not a ready agency

Texas DPS maintains a certification process for agencies beginning NIBRS reporting and for agencies re-certifying because of a vendor or product change. Under current DPS procedures, test-file expectations generally differ by vendor history: one whole month of test data when the vendor has previously submitted Texas NIBRS successfully, and three whole months when it has not. Texas-mandated reporting is part of the process. Put certification on the implementation plan.

> *A new RMS being capable of NIBRS is not the same thing as the agency being ready to submit successfully through it.*

Historical conversion and current NIBRS submission are related projects, not the same project. Converted incidents should not become a flood of false new NIBRS records. Ask how the new system distinguishes converted history from current reporting activity, whether historical submissions or error files need to be kept separately, and what happens to historical offense mappings.

For what happens to historical records when the RMS changes, read the Public Safety Data Conversion Guide.

For implementation acceptance and go-live evidence beyond reporting, read the Public Safety Software Implementation Readiness Guide.

Who owns each part of the month

This is an operational assignment aid, not a DPS- or TCOLE-required form.

Task	Primary	Backup	Frequency	Where status is tracked
Officer correction				

Supervisor review				
Submission				
Rejected-incident review				
Resubmission				
Monthly reconciliation				
Specification / vendor updates				

A monthly NIBRS close checklist

- [ ] Reportable incidents for the period are identified
- [ ] Officer reports needed for those incidents are complete
- [ ] Supervisor review is complete
- [ ] Pre-submission errors are resolved or assigned
- [ ] The submission occurred through the current DPS mechanism
- [ ] DPS responses were reviewed
- [ ] Rejected incidents are assigned to an owner
- [ ] Corrections were made in the operational record and resubmitted
- [ ] Warnings that deserve review were addressed
- [ ] Unresolved items remain visible
- [ ] Approved reports are not still waiting to be sent
- [ ] The reporting period is reconciled: reportable, submitted, accepted, unresolved
- [ ] Evidence of completion or submission is retained as appropriate

Agency setup

- [ ] We know which NIBRS and Texas-mandated specification versions we produce
- [ ] Someone owns monthly NIBRS reporting and a backup is named
- [ ] Staff know when the submission is due
- [ ] Texas-specific reporting (including Family Violence, Drug Seizures, and Sexual Assault where applicable) is addressed
- [ ] Staff know where current DPS training and technical materials are
- [ ] If we are changing RMS vendors, recertification and first-production validation are on the implementation plan

When the month does not close cleanly

- Too many errors appear at month-end. Investigate whether validation is shown during officer entry or supervisor review, or only when Records generate the file.

- The file was transmitted but unresolved incidents remain. Investigate whether the agency is distinguishing submitted from accepted.
- The same errors recur. Investigate whether the root problem is officer entry, RMS configuration, training, or vendor implementation.
- Only the vendor can interpret the error. Investigate whether staff can get from the error to the affected incident and the field that needs to change.
- Corrections do not stay fixed. Investigate whether the operational record was updated, or only the outbound file.

Questions to bring to every Texas NIBRS demonstration

Print this section and keep it open during vendor demos.

1. Show us a Texas NIBRS incident from officer entry through acceptance.
2. Show us where validation errors appear for the officer, the supervisor, and records.
3. Show us how an officer corrects an error and what history remains.
4. Show us what a supervisor sees that still needs review.
5. Show us what records or UCR staff see that is not ready to submit.
6. Show us rejected incidents, who owns them, and how long they have been open.
7. Show us how a corrected incident is resubmitted and how we know DPS accepted it.
8. Show us how we know what remains unresolved at the end of the month.
9. Show us a Texas-specific validation and the incident that produced it.
10. Show us how warnings are displayed and tracked.
11. Which NIBRS specification version and which Texas-mandated specification do we produce today?
12. Which Texas agencies currently submit through this product?
13. Show us how a recent Texas or NIBRS specification change reached production.
14. What certification or recertification work will our agency need during implementation?
15. Show us how converted historical records are kept out of current NIBRS reporting.

Common NIBRS warning signs when evaluating an RMS

- "We're NIBRS compliant." Follow up with: In Texas? Which specification version? Which agencies are currently submitting?
- NIBRS lives on a separate screen nobody sees until month-end.
- Only the vendor can interpret errors.
- Federal NIBRS is treated as the entire Texas requirement.
- The offense catalog is rarely updated.
- The vendor can't explain recertification after an RMS change.
- Everything is "fixed in the export." If the source incident is wrong, silently changing the outbound file leaves the operational record inconsistent with what the agency reported.

Reporting should improve the record-not compete with it

> *Is NIBRS a product of this month's records work-or a reconstruction of it?*

Official Texas and FBI resources

This guide does not replace current DPS or FBI specifications. Current official requirements always control. Texas DPS's Incident Based Reporting Compliance & Training Unit also publishes current training materials covering topics such as NIBRS overview, Group B offenses, NIBRS errors and warnings, Texas-specific errors, Texas-specific reports, NIBRS for ISD police departments, N-DEx, and Use of Force.

Uniform Crime Reporting Program Overview (Texas DPS)

Incident Based Reporting Compliance & Training (Texas DPS)

NIBRS Technical Documentation (Texas DPS)

NIBRS Certification Procedures (listed on the Texas DPS UCR overview)

Vendors actively working with Texas agencies to submit NIBRS (Texas DPS)

National Incident-Based Reporting System (FBI)

Generated from the Thin Line Software resource library. Read this guide online: https://thinline.software/resources/texas-nibrs-reporting-guide