



Written by [David Kelly](#) on October 25, 2023

Driverless Cars Pulled Off California Roads Due to Safety Concerns

Cruise, General Motors' majority-owned autonomous vehicle subsidiary, was ordered on Tuesday by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to immediately remove its driverless cars from state roads, because the vehicles are a "risk to public safety."

The California DMV stated in a [press release](#) that public safety remains their top priority and "the department's autonomous vehicle regulations provide a framework to facilitate the safe testing and deployment of this technology on California public roads." Due to an "unreasonable risk to public safety," the department notified Cruise that they were "suspending Cruise's autonomous vehicle (AV) deployment and driverless testing permits, effective immediately."



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The state agency claimed in the statement that, "based upon the performance of the vehicles, the Department determines the manufacturer's vehicles are not safe for the public's operation." The DMV added that "the manufacturer has misrepresented ... information related to safety of the autonomous technology of its vehicles."

Apparently, the suspected misrepresentation was key to the immediate suspension of the Cruise self-driving vehicles, as the DMV added that the suspension is also based on "any act or omission of the manufacturer or one of its agents, employees, contractors, or designees which the department finds makes the conduct of autonomous vehicle testing on public roads by the manufacturer an unreasonable risk to the public."

The suspension follows recent accidents involving Cruise vehicles that led to last week's [probe](#) by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) "into whether General Motors' self-driving unit Cruise is taking sufficient precautions with its autonomous robotaxis to safeguard pedestrians."

According to [Reuters](#), the NHTSA "received two reports from Cruise of incidents in which pedestrians were injured, and identified two further incidents via videos posted on websites."

Reuters continued:

NHTSA said the reports suggest Cruise vehicles are "encroaching on pedestrians present in or entering roadways, including pedestrian crosswalks, in the proximity of the intended travel path of the vehicles," and the issue "could increase the risk of a collision with a pedestrian, which may result in severe injury or death."

One incident occurred Oct 2 in San Francisco in which a pedestrian was struck by a hit-and-



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run driver, thrown into an adjacent lane and hit a second time by a Cruise robotaxi, which was not able to stop in time and trapped the pedestrian for a period of time.

NHTSA's preliminary evaluation covers about 594 Cruise vehicles and is the first step before the agency could seek to force a recall.

Cruise released an in-depth [blog post](#) on Tuesday that covered their safety review process of the recent injury incidents, stating, "Our teams are currently doing an analysis to identify potential enhancements to the AV's response to rare circumstances like this one. With over 5 million miles of driving, our safety record shows that our AVs are [safer than a human benchmark](#) in dense, urban environments — but our safety work is never done, and we remain deeply committed to continuously improving our safety performance on a daily basis."

In response to the DMV's announcement, Peter Finn, Teamsters Western Region International Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 856, said in a [statement](#) on Tuesday, "The DMV's decision to suspend Cruise's operating license is a step in the right direction, but it's too little, too late. The Teamsters will not be appeased by baby steps or half-measures." He added, "We are also disappointed to see that the DMV is providing Cruise with a pathway to apply for license reinstatement. The agency itself has alleged that Cruise misrepresented information related to the safety of its vehicles. This company doesn't deserve a second chance."

The Teamsters [held a rally](#) outside Cruise's San Francisco headquarters on Tuesday to demand better regulation for driverless cars.

Finn concluded:

If one of the biggest driverless car companies in the world can't safely deploy small passenger cars, it should go without saying that we need to pass legislation that requires human operators in all vehicles over 10,000 lbs.

Regulators and lawmakers need to stop letting Big Tech use California as a playpen for its expensive toys. It's only a matter of time before this results in a fatality.



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