

Tesla driver's complaint being looked into by US regulators

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This Feb. 9, 2019, file photo shows a sign bearing the company logo outside a Tesla store in Cherry Creek Mall in Denver. U.S. auto safety regulators are looking into a complaint from a Tesla driver that the company's "Full Self-Driving" software caused a crash. The complaint says the vehicle, a 2021 Tesla Model Y small SUV, gave the driver an alert halfway through the turn, and the driver tried to turn the wheel to avoid other traffic. Credit: AP Photo/David Zalubowski, File

U.S. auto safety regulators are looking into a complaint from a Tesla driver that the company's "Full Self-Driving" software caused a crash.

The driver was [beta testing](#) the "Full Self-Driving" [software](#), and the Tesla SUV went into the wrong lane and was hit by another vehicle, according to a complaint filed by the driver with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"The car went into the wrong lane and I was hit by another driver in the lane next to my lane," the driver wrote.

The vehicle, a 2021 Tesla Model Y small SUV, gave the driver an alert halfway through the turn, and the driver tried to turn the wheel to avoid other traffic, according to the complaint. But the car took control and "forced itself into the incorrect lane, creating an unsafe maneuver putting everyone involved at risk," the driver wrote.

No one was injured in the crash, but the Model Y was severely damaged on the driver's side, according to the complaint filed with the agency online Monday and posted in its public complaint database.

The crash happened on Nov. 3, and the driver's location is Brea, California, but the location of the crash was not identified. NHTSA does not release names of those who file complaints.

It is likely the first complaint filed with the agency alleging that "Full Self-Driving" software caused a crash. A message was left Friday seeking comment from Tesla, which has disbanded its media relations department.

A NHTSA spokeswoman said Friday night the agency is aware of the [complaint](#) and is communicating with Tesla to get more information. The spokeswoman says people should report safety concerns to the

agency.

The inquiry is another sign that NHTSA is becoming more aggressive in watching autonomous and partially automated driving systems under President Joe Biden. In the past the agency has been reluctant to regulate the systems, saying that it didn't want to delay potentially life-saving technology.

Tesla says that "Autopilot" and "Full Self-Driving" are driver-assistance systems and cannot drive themselves, despite their names. The automaker says [drivers](#) have to be ready to intervene at any time.

Selected Tesla drivers have been beta testing the software on public roads, a practice that critics say endangers others because the software has flaws and the drivers are untrained. Other companies that test on [public roads](#) have human safety drivers on board ready to intervene.

Beta testing is a field test of software done by users before the full commercial release is ready.

Critics have been calling on NHTSA to act after several videos were posted on the internet allegedly showing Tesla's software making mistakes and drivers having to take action.

"Hopefully, this gives @NHTSAGov ammunition it needs to take action on FSD now rather than waiting for Tesla to take its time through partial data releases," Philip Koopman, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, wrote on Twitter.

In June, NHTSA ordered automakers to report any crashes involving fully autonomous vehicles or partially automated driver assist systems. It wasn't clear whether Tesla reported [crash](#) involving the California driver. Two months later it opened a formal investigation into Tesla's Autopilot

partially automated driver-assist system after a series of collisions with parked emergency vehicles.

NHTSA already has asked Tesla for information about the beta testing, including a requirement that testers not disclose information. The agency said that non disclosure agreements could hamper its ability to investigate.

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