Amazon's Zoox robotaxis take to California roads

February 14 2023

Robotaxi services being tested in parts of the United States typically have manual controls so humans can take over driving if needed, but that is not the case in a shuttle that will carry Zoox workers between buildings at its headquarters.

The Amazon subsidiary Zoox on Monday said its self-driving vehicles

with no manual controls took to California public roads over the weekend, calling it a major breakthrough for the robotaxi industry.

Use of the boxy electric vehicles is to be limited to full time employees who will be able to use the service only to travel the short distance between two Zoox headquarters buildings about a mile apart in Foster City, near San Francisco, during regular office hours, the company said in a blog post.

"This is an amazing milestone for Zoox and the autonomous vehicle industry as a whole," said chief executive Aicha Evans.

The service was tested during the weekend and will be made available to Zoox employees beginning in the next few months, according to the company.

"Getting to be the world's first passenger in a robotaxi with no manual controls on open public road...was one of the highlights of my life," Zoox co-founder and chief technology officer Jesse Levinson said in the post.

"I can't wait for everyone to experience that magic."

Zoox robotaxis have no steering wheels or pedals for human drivers.

Other companies, such as Alphabet subsidiary Waymo and General Motors subsidiary Cruise, have been testing robotaxi services in limited areas but vehicles are still built with controls to allow a human drivers to take control as a precaution.

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Citation: Amazon's Zoox robotaxis take to California roads (2023, February 14) retrieved 19

April 2024 from
https://techxplore.com/news/2023-02-amazon-zoox-robotaxis-california-roads.html

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