

US ends probe into Tesla allowing video games while vehicles are moving, says feature was disabled

May 30 2023



A worker stands next to a Tesla being charged in Beijing, Tuesday, May 30, 2023. China's foreign minister met Tesla Ltd. CEO Elon Musk on Tuesday and said strained U.S.-Chinese relations require "mutual respect," while delivering a message of reassurance that foreign companies are welcome. Credit: AP

Photo/Ng Han Guan

U.S. highway safety regulators have closed an investigation into Tesla allowing video games to be played on center touch screens while vehicles are moving.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [says in documents posted Tuesday](#) that Tesla disabled the feature called "passenger play" with an online [software update](#) in December of 2021, under pressure from the agency.

The agency said in [documents](#) that removing "passenger play" resolved its concerns about distracted driving that could be caused by the feature.

The software update covered more than 580,000 vehicles from the 2017 through 2022 model years.

One month after software update went out, Tesla reported that 97% of the vehicles had received it.

The agency said it opened the investigation in December of 2021 after getting a complaint from a Tesla owner that games could be played by the driver while the vehicles are moving. The investigation was opened to assess the driver distraction potential.

It says in documents that introducing graphic content into the driver's line of sight that is unrelated to driving "poses the potential to add to driver visual and cognitive distraction."

Tesla had responded that the feature was designed for passenger use only, and that the design didn't create an unreasonable driver distraction risk. The [company](#) said no collisions had been reported while the feature was in use for a year.

NHTSA wrote in documents that data received from Tesla showed that

during the year "passenger play" was operating, it was active during a small number of vehicle trips. The agency didn't say how many trips, but wrote that in about a third of those trips, the feature was used while the vehicles were moving with no one in the passenger seat.

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Citation: US ends probe into Tesla allowing video games while vehicles are moving, says feature was disabled (2023, May 30) retrieved 8 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2023-05-probe-tesla-video-games-vehicles.html>

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