# Tesla’s Pursuit of Level 4 “Full Self-Driving” (FSD) – 2022–2025 Evidence Table

| **Stars** | **Source Title** | **Name** (Author/Byline) | **Publication Date** | **Type** | **Publication** | **Tags** | **Summary** | **Hyperlink** |
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| \*\*\*\* | *Next Autopilot trial to test Tesla’s blame-the-driver defense* | Dan Levine, Hyunjoo Jin | Mar 11 2024 | News – Legal/Litigation | Reuters (U.S.) | **Deposition, Internal Email, Safety Risks** | **Internal depositions reveal Tesla** never studied **how quickly drivers can retake control if Autopilot fails**[**[1]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=This%20time%2C%20lawyers%20in%20the,obstacle%2C%20the%20deposition%20transcripts%20show)**. A** 2017 Tesla safety analysis **warned Autopilot might make an “unexpected steering input” at high speed requiring an alert driver**[**[2]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=A%202017%20Tesla%20safety%20analysis%2C,can%20quickly%20apply%20the%20brake)**. Yet Tesla only added driver-monitoring cameras in 2021, three years after first considering it**[**[3]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=One%20witness%20testified%20that%20Tesla,focus%20on%20the%20road%20ahead)**. Plaintiffs cite a** 2016 email from Tesla’s then-president **noting he became so *“immersed in emails or calls”* on Autopilot that he missed exits**[**[4][5]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=,dated%20March%2025%20that%20year) **– suggesting Tesla** knew **the system tempted inattention. Tesla’s designated witness admitted** “I’m not aware of any research” **on drivers’ ability to promptly intervene**[**[6]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=In%20depositions%2C%20a%20Tesla%20employee,take%20over%20when%20Autopilot%20fails)**. This evidence is central to a wrongful-death case (Walter Huang, 2018 crash) testing Tesla’s stance that Autopilot is safe *“if drivers do their part,”* and whether Tesla** foresaw misuse **and failed to prevent it**[**[7]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=Experts%20in%20autonomous,if%20drivers%20do%20their%20part)[**[8]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=,he%20said)**. Federal probes have tracked** 956 crashes\*\* and 23 deaths tied to Tesla automated-driving, and a criminal investigation is examining whether Tesla overstated “self-driving” capabilities[[9]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=The%20crash%20that%20killed%20Huang,reports%20to%20auto%20safety%20regulators)[[10]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=hear). | [Article Link](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/) |
| \*\*\*\* | *Tesla video promoting self-driving was staged, engineer testifies* | Hyunjoo Jin | Jan 18 2023 | News – Litigation/Technology | Reuters (Technology News) | **Misleading Demo, Autonomy Claims** | **Tesla’s 2016 FSD promo video was** staged **to show features (e.g. stopping at lights) that** did not exist **in Tesla’s software at the time**[**[11]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Jan%2017%20%28Reuters%29%20,testimony%20by%20a%20senior%20engineer)[**[12]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Elluswamy%20said%20Tesla%E2%80%99s%20Autopilot%20team,at%20the%20request%20of%20Musk)**. Autopilot director Ashok Elluswamy testified that the video used 3D mapping on a pre-planned route and that** drivers intervened **during test runs; in one take, the Tesla** crashed into a fence **when trying self-parking**[**[13]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=To%20create%20the%20video%2C%20the,in%20Palo%20Alto%2C%20he%20said)**. An internal memo even admitted, *“The intent of the video was not to accurately portray what was available for customers in 2016. It was to portray what was possible…”***[**[14]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Drivers%20intervened%20to%20take%20control,Tesla%E2%80%99s%20parking%20lot%2C%20he%20said)**. Elon Musk nevertheless** touted **the video, tweeting *“Tesla drives itself (no human input at all)… then finds a parking spot.”***[**[15]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=The%20video%2C%20which%20remains%20archived,%E2%80%9D)[**[16]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Reuters)**. This** misled the public **– the engineer confirmed the 2016 production cars could** not **perform as shown**[**[17]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=When%20asked%20if%20the%202016,It%20does%20not)[**[18]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=The%20National%20Transportation%20Safety%20Board,had%20contributed%20to%20the%20crash)**. The U.S. DOJ opened a** criminal probe **(since 2021) into whether Tesla’s self-driving claims and marketing constituted fraud**[**[19]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Tesla%20faces%20lawsuits%20and%20regulatory,over%20its%20driver%20assistance%20systems)[**[20]**](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=The%20U,involving%20Autopilot%2C%20Reuters%20has%20reported)**. *In short:* Tesla** knew\*\* its FSD showcase was exaggerated, yet used it to promote “Tesla drives itself,” an assertion now under regulatory and legal scrutiny. | [Article Link](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/) |
| \*\* | *Elon, or deepfake? Musk must face questions on Autopilot statements* | Hyunjoo Jin, Dan Levine | Apr 27 2023 | News – Legal | Reuters (Legal News) | **Musk’s Claims, Deposition** | **A judge ordered Elon Musk to sit for a deposition** about past statements **touting Autopilot’s capabilities**. Plaintiffs in the Huang case cite a **2016 Musk quote:** *“A Model S and X, at this point, can drive autonomously with greater safety than a person. Right now.”*[[21]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/elon-or-deepfake-musk-must-face-questions-autopilot-statements-2023-04-26/#:~:text=Musk%20will%20likely%20be%20asked,%E2%80%9D). Tesla’s lawyers argued Musk couldn’t recall specifics and even suggested some public remarks might be **“deepfakes”**, a stance the judge called *“deeply troubling”*[[22]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/elon-or-deepfake-musk-must-face-questions-autopilot-statements-2023-04-26/#:~:text=details%20about%20statements)[[23]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/elon-or-deepfake-musk-must-face-questions-autopilot-statements-2023-04-26/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CTheir%20position%20is%20that%20because,%E2%80%9D). The court is also probing Musk’s role in the 2016 promotional video that claimed *“The car is driving itself”* with features that didn’t exist[[24]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/elon-or-deepfake-musk-must-face-questions-autopilot-statements-2023-04-26/#:~:text=The%20plaintiffs%20also%20claim%20that,said%2C%20citing%20multiple%20Tesla%20engineers). Musk has **repeatedly predicted** full autonomy is imminent; the judge’s ruling compels him to **confirm or deny** making such statements rather than evade them. *Significance:* Musk’s **public optimism** about FSD (e.g. claiming it safer than humans “right now”) is under oath scrutiny, as plaintiffs allege these assurances were misleading. | [Article Link](https://www.reuters.com/legal/elon-or-deepfake-musk-must-face-questions-autopilot-statements-2023-04-26/) |
| \*\*\* | *Tesla offers U.S. customers a month’s trial of its driver-assist technology* | Hyunjoo Jin, Jyoti Narayan | Mar 26 2024 | News – Business | Reuters (Autos News) | **Free FSD Trial, Revenue Push** | **Under sales pressure, Tesla launched a** one-month free trial **of “Full Self-Driving” (FSD) for all eligible U.S. cars**[**[25]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=March%2026%20%28Reuters%29%20,the%20company%27s%20sales%20and%20margins)[**[26]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=,on%20social%20media%20platform%20X)**. Elon Musk announced the promo on X and emailed staff that *“Almost no one actually realizes how well (supervised) FSD actually works,”* directing employees to** demo FSD **to new buyers and service customers**[**[27]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=He%20has%20also%20told%20Tesla,a%20source%20who%20sought%20anonymity)[**[28]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=,emails%2C%20sent%20to%20Tesla%20employees)**. The context: Tesla’s FSD take-rate had** plunged **(only ~14% of buyers opted in Q3 2022 vs 53% in 2019)**[**[29]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=Researcher%20Troy%20Teslike%20said%20the,the%20third%20quarter%20of%202019)**, and vehicle price cuts were squeezing margins**[**[30]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=Tesla%27s%20margins%20have%20been%20hurt,generation%20EV)**. Musk has long touted FSD (a $12,000 add-on) as a future** profit engine**, but full autonomy remains unachieved amid regulatory scrutiny**[**[31]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=competition%20pressure%20the%20company%27s%20sales,and%20margins)[**[32]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=Musk%20has%20long%20touted%20the,of%20Tesla%27s%20safety%20and%20marketing)**. Analysts note Tesla’s aggressive end-of-quarter moves – this free trial is seen as a** “stunt” to boost revenue **and upsell subscriptions while showcasing improvements**[**[33]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=,Sam%20Abuelsamid%20at%20Guidehouse%20Insights)[**[34]**](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/#:~:text=Researcher%20Troy%20Teslike%20said%20the,the%20third%20quarter%20of%202019)**. *Bottom line:* Tesla opened FSD Beta to the masses for a month, indicating it** needed more user engagement (and data) and additional revenue\*\*, even as it reminds customers FSD is a Level 2 system requiring supervision. | [Article Link](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-give-one-month-driver-assist-technology-trial-customers-2024-03-26/) |
| \*\* | *Tesla to offer US customers a free 1-month trial of Full Self Driving* | Eric Walz | Mar 27 2024 | Industry News | Automotive Dive | **FSD Marketing, Earnings, Recall** | Tesla’s free FSD trial aimed to **boost subscriptions** and counter declining margins[[35]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=Tesla%20to%20offer%20US%20customers,trial%20of%20Full%20Self%20Driving)[[36]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=of%20the%20emails%20sent%20to,employees%20and%20viewed%20by%20Reuters). Musk’s emails suggest many consumers **underestimate FSD**, and Goldman Sachs projected FSD could generate **$10–75 billion/year** by 2030[[37]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=Boosting%20FSD%20subscriptions%20could%20help,Goldman%20Sachs%20analyst%20Mark%20Delaney)[[38]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=up%20and%20EV%20prices%20fall,Goldman%20Sachs%20analyst%20Mark%20Delaney). The article notes FSD (and “Enhanced Autopilot”) are still classified as **Level 2 ADAS** requiring full driver attention[[39]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=However%2C%20while%20Enhanced%20Autopilot%20and,and%20actively%20supervise%20the%20systems) despite Tesla’s marketing that *“Your car will be able to drive itself… with minimal driver intervention”*[[40]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CYour%20car%20will%20be%20able,in%20a%20FSD%20system%20description). **Safety remains a concern:** in Feb 2023, Tesla had to **recall 362,000 vehicles** to fix FSD Beta after NHTSA found it didn’t obey traffic laws and could cause crashes[[41]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=focus%20on%20the%20safety%20of,Highway%20Traffic%20Safety%20Administration%20data)[[42]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=In%20February%202023%2C%20Tesla%20recalled,and%20could%20have%20caused%20crashes). (That over-the-air update was Tesla’s largest-ever recall.) *Tags:* **Revenue vs. Safety** – Tesla is aggressively monetizing FSD while regulators flag serious safety deficiencies. | [Article Link](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/) |
| \*\*\*\* | *Tesla leak reportedly shows thousands of Full Self-Driving safety complaints* | Emma Roth | May 25 2023 | News – Tech/Policy | The Verge | **“Tesla Files” Leak, Phantom Braking** | **A massive leak of 100 GB of internal Tesla data** (“Tesla Files”) revealed **thousands of safety complaints** about Autopilot/FSD from 2015–2022[[43]](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving#:~:text=A%20Tesla%20whistleblower%20has%20leaked,Driving%20%28FSD%29%20features). Customers worldwide reported **~2,400 cases of sudden unintended acceleration** and **1,500 braking issues** (including 139 *“unintentional emergency braking”* events and 383 *“phantom stops”*)[[44]](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving#:~:text=The%20complaints%2C%20which%20were%20reported,stops%E2%80%9D%20from%20false%20collision%20warnings)[[45]](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving#:~:text=2015%20to%20March%202022,stops%E2%80%9D%20from%20false%20collision%20warnings). Some drivers regained control; others *“ended up in a ditch, hit walls or crashed into oncoming vehicles.”*[[46]](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20incidents%20mentioned,%E2%80%9D). Internal records show Tesla’s **policy** was to handle these issues quietly: for each incident, technical review notes were marked *“for internal use only”* and staff were instructed **not to copy/paste reports into emails or messages to customers**, only to communicate **verbally**[[47]](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving#:~:text=The%20documents%20obtained%20by%20the,translated%20with%20Google%20Translate)[[48]](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving#:~:text=,prevented%E2%80%9D%2C%20this%20must%20be%20recorded). Vehicle data would not be released without permission, and if lawyers got involved, that had to be logged[[49]](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving#:~:text=employees%20who%20enter%20this%20review,prevented%E2%80%9D%2C%20this%20must%20be%20recorded). Tesla’s response to the leak was to demand the data’s deletion and claim “data theft,” rather than address the safety issues[[50]](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20note%20from,%E2%80%9D). *Implication:* Tesla internally **knew of persistent FSD flaws (phantom braking/accel.) and instructed employees to restrict information**, raising questions of transparency and safety oversight. | [Article Link](https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/25/23737972/tesla-whistleblower-leak-fsd-complaints-self-driving) |
| \*\* | *Report: ‘massive’ Tesla leak reveals data breaches, thousands of safety complaints* | Guardian staff (via Handelsblatt) | May 27 2023 | News – International | The Guardian (UK) | **Data Breach, Customer Complaints** | A German *Handelsblatt* whistleblower provided 100,000+ Tesla internal files, which not only exposed personal data but also **~4,000 customer complaints** about Tesla’s driver-assistance (Autopilot) features[[51]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/26/tesla-data-leak-customers-employees-safety-complaints#:~:text=Tesla%20has%20failed%20to%20adequately,data%20leaked%20by%20a%20whistleblower)[[52]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/26/tesla-data-leak-customers-employees-safety-complaints#:~:text=Citing%20the%20leaked%20files%2C%20the,sudden%20acceleration%20or%20phantom%20braking). These included numerous reports of **phantom braking and sudden unintended acceleration**. Germany’s data regulator called the leak “massive,” and the trove suggested Tesla **failed to protect sensitive data**[[51]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/26/tesla-data-leak-customers-employees-safety-complaints#:~:text=Tesla%20has%20failed%20to%20adequately,data%20leaked%20by%20a%20whistleblower)[[53]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/26/tesla-data-leak-customers-employees-safety-complaints#:~:text=The%20data%20protection%20office%20in,the%20data%20leak%20as%20%E2%80%9Cmassive%E2%80%9D). The revelations were “disturbing,” according to the IG Metall labor union, which urged Tesla to foster a culture where employees can raise safety concerns without fear[[54]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/26/tesla-data-leak-customers-employees-safety-complaints#:~:text=customer%20complaints%20regarding%20the%20Tesla%E2%80%99s,sudden%20acceleration%20or%20phantom%20braking). Tesla’s reaction was to blame a *“disgruntled former employee”* (a service technician) and threaten **legal action** against the leaker[[55]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/26/tesla-data-leak-customers-employees-safety-complaints#:~:text=Brandenburg%20and%20Saxony). *Insight:* The leak underscores Tesla’s **awareness of widespread FSD/Autopilot issues** and a tendency to downplay or conceal them – potentially relevant in claims that Tesla misled regulators and the public about the true state of its “Full Self-Driving” safety. | [Article Link](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/26/tesla-data-leak-customers-employees-safety-complaints) |
| \*\*\*\* | *Tesla ordered by Florida jury to pay $243 million in fatal Autopilot crash* | Jonathan Stempel, Abhirup Roy | Aug 1 2025 | News – Court Verdict | Reuters (U.S.) | **Jury Verdict, Known Misuse Risk** | **In a landmark verdict**, a Florida jury found Tesla liable for 33% of damages in a 2019 crash where a Model S on Autopilot killed a bystander (one of the first cases holding Tesla accountable for Autopilot)[[56]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/tesla-ordered-by-florida-jury-pay-243-million-fatal-autopilot-crash-2025-08-01/#:~:text=Aug%201%20%28Reuters%29%20,Elon%20Musk%27s%20electric%20vehicle%20company)[[57]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/tesla-ordered-by-florida-jury-pay-243-million-fatal-autopilot-crash-2025-08-01/#:~:text=Jurors%20in%20Miami%20federal%20court,according%20to%20a%20verdict%20sheet). Plaintiffs argued Tesla **knew Autopilot was intended only for highways yet did not prevent its use on city streets**, and that Elon Musk **publicly overstated Autopilot’s safety**, saying it drove *“better than humans.”* The family’s lawyer noted Tesla **“deliberately chose not to restrict”** Autopilot to its design domain, *“alongside Elon Musk telling the world Autopilot drove better than humans,”* which together contributed to the fatal misuse[[58]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/tesla-ordered-by-florida-jury-pay-243-million-fatal-autopilot-crash-2025-08-01/#:~:text=,plaintiffs%2C%20said%20in%20a%20statement). The jury awarded $129M compensatory and $200M punitive, signaling Tesla’s **marketing and design decisions** made it partially culpable. Tesla announced it will appeal, claiming the verdict *“jeopardizes… life-saving technology”*[[59]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/tesla-ordered-by-florida-jury-pay-243-million-fatal-autopilot-crash-2025-08-01/#:~:text=Tesla%20said%20it%20will%20appeal)[[60]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/tesla-ordered-by-florida-jury-pay-243-million-fatal-autopilot-crash-2025-08-01/#:~:text=,saving%20technology%2C%22%20the%20company%20said). Experts say this win for plaintiffs may spur more lawsuits and undercuts Musk’s push to pitch Tesla as a leader in autonomous vehicles and robotaxi plans[[61]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/tesla-ordered-by-florida-jury-pay-243-million-fatal-autopilot-crash-2025-08-01/#:~:text=The%20verdict%20could%20also%20impede,to%20start%20producing%20next%20year) – especially since Tesla’s market value hinges on FSD/AI promises. (*Tags:* Tesla **foresaw** drivers would engage Autopilot off-highway and **over-promised** its capabilities – and a jury legally affirmed that). | [Article Link](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/tesla-ordered-by-florida-jury-pay-243-million-fatal-autopilot-crash-2025-08-01/) |
| \*\*\*\* | *Tesla faces California suspension following DMV suit for false advertising* | Teresa Moss | July 31 2025 | News – Regulatory Hearing | Repairer Driven News (via BI) | **False Advertising, “Full Self-Driving”** | California’s Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has accused Tesla of **misleading advertising** for Autopilot and “Full Self-Driving.” In a July 2025 hearing, DMV lawyers highlighted Tesla’s **website language** that promised the cars were *“designed… to conduct short and long-distance trips* *with no action required by the person in the driver’s seat.”*[[62]](https://www.repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/#:~:text=Driving%20or%20Autopilot%20features). The DMV argues this **falsehood** – Tesla’s tech cannot make the car autonomous – violates consumer protection laws[[63]](https://www.repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/#:~:text=Tesla%20faces%20possible%20suspension%20of,the%20state%2C%20the%20article%20says)[[64]](https://www.repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/#:~:text=The%20DMV%E2%80%99s%20complaint%20states%20that,%E2%80%9D). Tesla’s defense claimed it *“never concealed”* that drivers must remain engaged and not rely on FSD alone[[65]](https://www.repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20article%2C%20Tesla%E2%80%99s,Driving%20or%20Autopilot%20features), pointing to disclaimers that the systems don’t fully drive the car. The stakes are high: the DMV’s 2022 complaint seeks penalties up to **suspending Tesla’s manufacturer/dealer licenses in CA** (Tesla’s largest U.S. market)[[63]](https://www.repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/#:~:text=Tesla%20faces%20possible%20suspension%20of,the%20state%2C%20the%20article%20says)[[66]](https://www.repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/#:~:text=A%20suit%20was%20filed%20by,driving%E2%80%9D%20and%20%E2%80%9Cautopilot.%E2%80%9D), and might require Tesla to pay restitution to owners. An expert witness testified that every driver needs to know *unambiguously* if they or the car is driving[[67]](https://www.repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/#:~:text=Business%20Insider%20reports%20that%20Bryant,%E2%80%9D)[[68]](https://www.repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/#:~:text=The%20article%20reports%20Smith%20testifying%2C,basic%20question%3A%20am%20I%20driving%3F%E2%80%9D) – underscoring how Tesla’s branding (e.g. the name “Full Self-Driving”) **could confuse consumers**. *Status:* No decision yet; a judge will issue a proposed ruling, but Tesla is **formally on notice** that its FSD marketing claims (present and past) are under legal fire for **overstating autonomy**. | [Article Link](https://repairerdrivennews.com/2025/07/31/tesla-faces-california-suspension-following-dmv-suit-for-false-advertising/) |
| \*\* | *The Lidar U-Turn: Elon Musk’s “Fool’s Errand” Becomes Tesla’s Secret Weapon* | Lachlan Colquhoun | June 25 2024 | Tech Analysis/News | CDOTrends (APAC) | **Musk on LIDAR, Vision Strategy** | Elon Musk has long **denigrated LiDAR**, the laser sensor many rivals use for self-driving. Famously, at Tesla’s 2019 Autonomy Day, he called LiDAR *“a fool’s errand”* and later said using it in cars was *“freaking stupid… expensive and unnecessary. You have expensive hardware that’s worthless on the car.”*[[69]](https://www.cdotrends.com/story/4083/lidar-u-turn-elon-musks-fools-errand-becomes-teslas-secret-weapon#:~:text=navigation%20as%20a%20%E2%80%9Cfool%E2%80%99s%20errand%E2%80%9D,future%20use%20of%20the%20technology). Tesla’s approach instead relies on cameras (vision) and AI, which Musk insists can achieve autonomy at lower cost. These harsh anti-LiDAR statements by a “visionary” CEO influenced industry perception and Tesla’s own design – distinguishing Tesla from companies like Waymo or Cruise that use LiDAR for safety. **Ironically**, by 2024 Tesla **quietly began sourcing LiDAR sensors** (it became a top customer of Luminar, a LiDAR maker)[[70]](https://www.cdotrends.com/story/4083/lidar-u-turn-elon-musks-fools-errand-becomes-teslas-secret-weapon#:~:text=A%20few%20years%20later%2C%20however%2C,of%C2%A0Luminar%2C%20a%20major%20Lidar%20manufacturer), perhaps for testing or future use, even though Musk still hasn’t publicly endorsed the tech[[71]](https://www.cdotrends.com/story/4083/lidar-u-turn-elon-musks-fools-errand-becomes-teslas-secret-weapon#:~:text=At%20one%20time%2C%20Elon%20Musk,out%20with%20a%20ringing%20endorsement). *Interpretation:* Musk’s **public dismissal of LiDAR** (and even removal of radar from Teslas in 2021) exemplifies Tesla’s bold-but-risky strategy. It helped market FSD as a sleek, software-driven solution – but also drew criticism that Tesla was prioritizing cost over certain safety redundancies. | [Article Link](https://www.cdotrends.com/story/4083/lidar-u-turn-elon-musks-fools-errand-becomes-teslas-secret-weapon) |
| \*\* | *Musk Says FSD Will Be Safer Than Human Drivers By The End Of 2022* | Dan Mihalascu | Jan 27 2022 | News Blog – EV/Financial | InsideEVs | **Investor Call Promises, Profit Focus** | On Tesla’s Q4 2021 earnings call (Jan 2022), Elon Musk made a **bold prediction**: *“I would be shocked if we do not achieve Full Self-Driving safer than a human this year. I would be shocked.”*[[72]](https://insideevs.com/news/563531/60000-teslas-running-fsd-beta/#:~:text=During%20the%20earnings%20call%2C%20the,if%20Tesla%20didn%27t%20achieve%20that) – effectively **promising Level 4 autonomy by end of 2022**. At the time, Tesla had 60,000 cars in the FSD Beta program (up from 2,000 in Q3 2021) and Musk bragged that FSD Beta had logged **zero accidents** since launch[[73]](https://insideevs.com/news/563531/60000-teslas-running-fsd-beta/#:~:text=%3E%20,vehicles%20in%20the%20US%20today). Tesla’s CFO Zach Kirkhorn, on the same call, emphasized that the **“software side” (like FSD) carries very high margins** and “should be the main focus going forward” – which will be *“very true when FSD and robotaxis finally happen.”*[[74]](https://insideevs.com/news/563531/60000-teslas-running-fsd-beta/#:~:text=Tesla%27s%20head%20honcho%20added%20that,FSD%20and%20robotaxis%20finally%20happen). This signaled to investors that Tesla’s future profitability hinges on successfully rolling out FSD. *(Indeed, Tesla recognized $ deferred revenue from FSD sales, betting on feature completion.)* By prioritizing FSD development over new models in 2022, Tesla essentially told shareholders that solving FSD was **key to its growth** – even as Musk acknowledged later that achieving full autonomy was proving *“much harder than [he] thought.”* (Notably, 2022 came and went without FSD reaching Level 4; the pattern of optimistic timelines continued in ensuing years.) | [Article Link](https://insideevs.com/news/563531/60000-teslas-running-fsd-beta/) |
| \*\* | *Elon Musk Believes Tesla’s FSD May Be Solved In 2023: Sound Familiar?* | Steven Loveday | Apr 20 2023 | News/Opinion – EV Technology | InsideEVs | **Recurring Delays, “This Year” Again** | In the **Q1 2023 earnings call**, Musk yet again suggested that *“we’ll do it this year”* – meaning achieve “full self-driving” by the end of 2023[[75]](https://insideevs.com/news/663396/elon-musk-tesla-fsd-potentially-solved-2023/#:~:text=to%20FSD%20beta%20and%20the,for%20full%20autonomy%20this%20year). He tempered his remark by *“hesitating to say it”* and noting FSD Beta’s *“two steps forward, one step back”* iterative progress[[76]](https://insideevs.com/news/663396/elon-musk-tesla-fsd-potentially-solved-2023/#:~:text=%3E%20,we%E2%80%99ll%20do%20it%20this%20year). Still, Musk asserted FSD improvements were *“really quite dramatic”* and trending toward full autonomy[[77]](https://insideevs.com/news/663396/elon-musk-tesla-fsd-potentially-solved-2023/#:~:text=%3E%20,we%E2%80%99ll%20do%20it%20this%20year). This continues a **pattern of optimistic FSD timelines**: Musk has for years predicted Level 4/5 autonomy is just around the corner, only to **push the goalpost** repeatedly (acknowledging that FSD is *“much more difficult”* than expected[[78]](https://insideevs.com/news/663396/elon-musk-tesla-fsd-potentially-solved-2023/#:~:text=Tesla%20%20and%20SpaceX%20CEO,difficult%20than%20he%27d%20ever%20imagined)). The article wryly notes that “solving” FSD has become a moving target; even Musk’s definition of *“Full Self-Driving”* appears fluid (Tesla’s so-called FSD still requires supervision, and Musk sometimes conflates that with true “full autonomy”). *Takeaway:* Musk’s habit of **overpromising** – *“probably this year”* – is a double-edged sword: it keeps investors and fans excited, but also bolsters claims that Tesla **misled customers** about how close it was to delivering hands-free autonomy. | [Article Link](https://insideevs.com/news/663396/elon-musk-tesla-fsd-potentially-solved-2023/) |
| \*\*\* | *Tesla’s ‘Self-Driving’ System Never Should Have Been Allowed on the Road* | Ryan Cooper (Opinion) | June 14 2023 | Analysis/Opinion (Policy) | The American Prospect | **Safety Data, Musk’s “Moral Obligation”** | **Safety advocates argue** that Tesla’s deployment of FSD was premature and dangerous. By mid-2023, NHTSA data (since 2021) showed Tesla’s driver-assist systems involved in **736 crashes and 17 fatalities**, far more than any other automaker[[79]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=Now%20we%20learn%20from%20an,such%20crashes%2C%20causing%2017%20fatalities)[[80]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=problems%2C%20it%20cannot%20possibly%20be,%E2%80%9D). In fact, Tesla’s FSD/Autopilot accounted for *“about 91% of all self-driving-related crashes”* reported[[81]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=This%20result%20shouldn%E2%80%99t%20be%20surprising,crashes%20in%20the%20NHTSA%20data). While Musk claims Tesla’s stats prove Autopilot *reduces* crashes (Tesla has **asserted** FSD’s crash rate is 1/5th that of average driving)[[82]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=The%20primary%20defense%20of%20FSD,%E2%80%9D), independent analysis suggests **the opposite** – one estimate put FSD’s fatality rate at **10× higher** than human driving[[83]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=Yet%20if%20Musk%E2%80%99s%20own%20data,The%20overall%20fatal)[[84]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=accident%20rate%20of%2011,million%20miles%20traveled%20in%202022). Despite these alarming indicators, Musk has argued that **once data show autonomy is safer overall, it’s “morally obligatory” to deploy it**, even if it leads to some crashes: *“At the point where you believe that adding autonomy reduces injury and death, I think you have a moral obligation to deploy it even though you’re going to get sued…”*[[85]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=problems%2C%20it%20cannot%20possibly%20be,%E2%80%9D)[[86]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=human%20drivers%2C%20and%20Musk%20has,%E2%80%9D). In practice, critics say Tesla essentially **uses the public as beta-testers**, releasing FSD Beta widely to collect data while real motorists face the risks. Moreover, Musk’s decision to remove radar (and not use LiDAR) likely made FSD’s object detection worse[[87]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=This%20result%20shouldn%E2%80%99t%20be%20surprising,crashes%20in%20the%20NHTSA%20data) – contributing to hazards like Teslas plowing into motorcycles or emergency vehicles that a human driver or more robust sensor suite might have avoided[[88]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=,system%20apparently%20failed%20to%20recognize)[[89]](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/#:~:text=to%20remove%20LIDAR%20,crashes%20in%20the%20NHTSA%20data). *Conclusion:* Tesla’s **“human experimentation”** approach to FSD – justified by Musk on utilitarian grounds – is under fire as evidence mounts that FSD **was not as safe as claimed**. (NHTSA forced Tesla to recall FSD Beta in early 2023 for precisely this reason, citing crash risks[[90]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=In%20February%202023%2C%20Tesla%20recalled,and%20could%20have%20caused%20crashes).) | [Article Link](https://prospect.org/infrastructure/transportation/2023-06-14-elon-musk-tesla-self-driving-bloodbath/) |
| \*\* | *Tesla Wins First US Autopilot Trial Involving Fatal Crash* | Dan Levine, Hyunjoo Jin | Nov 3 2023 | News – Legal (Trial outcome) | Insurance Journal/Reuters | **Tesla’s Defense, Warnings vs. Misuse** | **Tesla secured a defense verdict** in an Oct 2023 California trial – the first U.S. case about a fatal Autopilot crash – by convincing jurors that the driver bore ultimate responsibility[[91]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=)[[92]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=The%20outcome%20in%20civil%20court,ultimate%20responsibility%20rests%20with%20drivers). In that 2019 incident, a Model 3 on Autopilot veered off a highway and crashed, killing the driver (Micah Lee) and injuring passengers[[93]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=The%20civil%20lawsuit%20filed%20in,in%20the%20span%20of%20seconds). Tesla argued two key points: (1) It’s unclear if Autopilot was even on at the moment (and the driver had alcohol in his system)[[94]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=Tesla%20denied%20liability%2C%20saying%20Lee,the%20time%20of%20the%20crash); and (2) **Drivers are repeatedly told** that these features require supervision – despite names like “Autopilot” and “Full Self-Driving,” Tesla warns that they *do not make the vehicle autonomous*[[95]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=Tesla%20said%20its%20cars%20are,company%20said%20in%20a%20statement)[[96]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=tells%20drivers%20that%20its%20technology,Driving%E2%80%9D%20names). Jurors (in a 9–3 vote) found no manufacturing defect in the Autopilot system and effectively agreed that **Tesla had adequately informed users** of their responsibility[[97]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=was%20engaged%20at%20the%20time,of%20the%20crash)[[98]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=The%2012,3). Notably, during trial plaintiffs presented a **2017 internal Tesla memo** identifying an *“incorrect steering command”* issue (a potential Autopilot defect causing sudden sharp turns)[[99]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=During%20the%20Riverside%20trial%2C%20an,an%20%E2%80%9Cexcessive%E2%80%9D%20steering%20wheel%20angle). A Tesla engineer acknowledged the document but said it was a theoretical study, and Tesla later updated Autopilot to prevent that extreme steering input. Tesla also **denied choosing the name “Full Self-Driving” to mislead**; a Tesla engineer testified he doesn’t believe owners think their cars are fully autonomous[[100]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=On%20the%20stand%2C%20Tesla%20engineer,than%20was%20really%20the%20case). *Result:* Tesla’s “blame-the-driver” strategy has been effective – jurors in this and an earlier 2023 LA trial accepted that human inattention (not system flaw) caused the accidents[[95]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=Tesla%20said%20its%20cars%20are,company%20said%20in%20a%20statement)[[101]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=Bryant%20Walker%20Smith%2C%20a%20University,%E2%80%9D). However, these cases were narrowly focused (e.g. this jury only evaluated manufacturing defects, not design or marketing). More serious allegations – that **Autopilot’s design lulls drivers into misuse** – remain to be tested in future trials, as other lawsuits allege Tesla’s product and branding are defectively misleading[[102]](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm#:~:text=At%20the%20same%20time%2C%20the,at%20Cardozo%20School%20of%20Law). | [Article Link](https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2023/11/03/746754.htm) |
| \*\*\*\* | *OpenAI and Elon Musk* (excerpt: Musk’s 2018 email on FSD) | OpenAI (company blog) | Mar 5 2024 | Corporate Blog / Legal Filing | OpenAI (via court docs) | **Internal Email, Foreknowledge** | In early 2018, Elon Musk privately **acknowledged that true Full Self-Driving was further away than his public statements suggested**. As revealed in OpenAI’s lawsuit documents, Musk emailed OpenAI’s leadership in Feb 2018 suggesting that even on an **“accelerated schedule”** (with OpenAI’s help) Tesla might achieve a *“functioning full self-driving”* system in **“~2–3 years”**[[103]](https://www.reddit.com/r/RealTesla/comments/1b7pilb/in_a_2018_email_from_musk_to_openai_elon_reveals/#:~:text=In%20a%202018%20email%20from,if%20OpenAI%20joined%20with%20Tesla). Yet, around the same time, Musk was publicly telling investors and customers a much rosier timeline – for example, at a March 2018 conference (SXSW) he implied it was roughly 1–2 years out. This disparity implies Musk **knew internally that FSD was not on the brink of completion**, contrary to optimistic marketing. It aligns with a pattern: Musk often gave **aggressive timelines externally** (e.g. “1 million robotaxis next year” in 2019, or FSD by end of 2020, etc.), while **privately conceding the technical hurdles** were significant. This 2018 email shows Tesla’s CEO was **aware of the gap between hype and reality** – a point that could be pivotal in fraud investigations (the DOJ is reportedly examining whether Tesla misled investors about FSD progress[[104]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/#:~:text=Tesla%2C%20based%20in%20Austin%2C%20Texas%2C,have%20contributed%20to%20fatal%20crashes)). *(Note:* The email also suggests Musk saw Tesla’s only hope against Google’s self-driving lead was massive resources – one reason he wanted OpenAI to merge with Tesla’s Autopilot effort.) | [OpenAI Blog – Musk Email](https://openai.com/index/openai-elon-musk/) |
| \*\*\*\* | *Tesla whistleblower says Autopilot not ready, contradicting Elon Musk’s ‘best AI’ remark* | James Farrell | Dec 5 2023 | News – Whistleblower interview | SiliconANGLE (via BBC) | **Whistleblower, “Tesla Files”, Phantom Braking** | **Lukasz Krupski, a former Tesla service technician** turned whistleblower, alleges that Tesla’s Autopilot/FSD technology is **“not ready and should not be used on public roads.”**[[105]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=A%20former%20Tesla%20Inc,be%20used%20on%20public%20roads)[[106]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CI%20don%E2%80%99t%20think%20the%20hardware,%E2%80%9D) In a BBC interview, he said Tesla’s hardware and software aren’t sufficiently safe – effectively, *“we are essentially* *experiments on public roads,”* with even non-Tesla drivers put at risk by Tesla’s test program[[107]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=Speech%20www)[[108]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CI%20don%E2%80%99t%20think%20the%20hardware,%E2%80%9D). Krupski was fired from Tesla (in Norway) after voicing safety concerns internally, and he then leaked over 100 GB of data to *Handelsblatt* – the cache dubbed the “Tesla Files” that documented thousands of issues (including widespread **phantom braking** incidents, where cars brake for obstacles that aren’t there[[109]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=footpath)). His disclosures earned him a European whistleblowing prize[[110]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=driver,%E2%80%9D). Musk did not respond directly, though he tweeted that *“Tesla has by far the best real-world AI”* in defense[[111]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=Tesla%20Chief%20Executive%20Elon%20Musk,world%20AI.%E2%80%9D). Meanwhile, regulators have taken note: the U.S. DOJ opened a probe into Autopilot’s safety following Tesla’s marketing of “Full Self-Driving”[[112]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=Musk%20might%20be%20right%20or,Driving%E2%80%9D%20mode), and the California DMV and NHTSA have ongoing investigations into whether Tesla misled consumers and whether Autopilot defects led to crashes[[113]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=Autopilot%20software%20was%20following%20a,Driving%E2%80%9D%20mode)[[114]](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20the%20California%20Department,32%C2%A0a%20%2033%20series%20of). *Insight:* This insider’s testimony underscores that **Tesla employees themselves had doubts about FSD’s safety**, and that those who spoke up were silenced – bolstering claims that Tesla knowingly pressed ahead despite internal warnings. | [Article Link](https://siliconangle.com/2023/12/05/tesla-whistleblower-says-autopilot-not-ready-contradicting-elon-musks-best-ai-remark/) |
| \*\*\* | *U.S. auto regulator expands Tesla emergency-scene crashes probe* | Jacob Knutson | June 9 2022 | News – Regulatory | Axios | **NHTSA Investigation, Driver Inattention** | The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (**NHTSA**) escalated its probe into Tesla Autopilot in June 2022, signaling serious concerns that Autopilot may **encourage driver inattention** and thus increase crash risks[[115]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/09/nhtsa-investigation-tesla-emergency-scene-crashes#:~:text=What%20they%27re%20saying%3A%20NHTSA%20said,effectiveness%20of%20the%20driver%E2%80%99s%20supervision). Initially focusing on **12 crashes** where Teslas on Autopilot struck stopped emergency vehicles, NHTSA upgraded to an Engineering Analysis covering **830,000 vehicles** – a prerequisite to possible recalls[[116]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/09/nhtsa-investigation-tesla-emergency-scene-crashes#:~:text=Why%20it%20matters%3A%20NHTSA%27s%20preliminary,the%20advanced%20driver%20assistance%20system). In its notice, NHTSA noted it would examine *“the degree to which Autopilot… may* *exacerbate human factors or behavioral safety risks by undermining the effectiveness of the driver’s supervision.”*[[115]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/09/nhtsa-investigation-tesla-emergency-scene-crashes#:~:text=What%20they%27re%20saying%3A%20NHTSA%20said,effectiveness%20of%20the%20driver%E2%80%99s%20supervision) In plainer terms, regulators suspect Autopilot’s design can lull drivers into a false sense of security (e.g. McNeill’s email where he became complacent). NHTSA had data on **14 emergency-scene crashes**, with 1 death and 15 injuries, implicating Autopilot[[117]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/09/nhtsa-investigation-tesla-emergency-scene-crashes#:~:text=undermining%20the%20effectiveness%20of%20the,driver%E2%80%99s%20supervision). **Broader scrutiny:** around the same time, NHTSA opened separate probes into *“unexpected phantom braking”* at highway speeds[[118]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/09/nhtsa-investigation-tesla-emergency-scene-crashes#:~:text=car%20is%20in%20motion) and even Tesla’s in-car gaming (which could distract drivers)[[119]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/09/nhtsa-investigation-tesla-emergency-scene-crashes#:~:text=into%20the%20electric%20vehicle%20manufacture%27s,the%20car%20is%20in%20motion). *Outcome:* This expanded investigation put Tesla on notice; indeed, by Feb 2023 NHTSA’s findings led Tesla to recall FSD Beta for safety fixes[[90]](https://www.automotivedive.com/news/tesla-offering-one-month-free-trial-full-self-driving-fsd-elon-musk/711504/#:~:text=In%20February%202023%2C%20Tesla%20recalled,and%20could%20have%20caused%20crashes). It highlights a core issue: Tesla’s system might **work technically**, but its human-interface (overtrust/misuse by drivers) is a safety defect in itself, according to regulators. | [Article Link](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/09/nhtsa-investigation-tesla-emergency-scene-crashes) |
| \*\* | *More than 750 Tesla drivers have complained of unexpected braking* | Erin Doherty | June 3 2022 | News – Automotive/Safety | Axios (via AP/NHTSA data) | **“Phantom Braking” Complaints** | A NHTSA document revealed **758 reports of “phantom braking”** in Teslas as of mid-2022[[120]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/03/tesla-complaints-unexpected-braking-investigation#:~:text=More%20than%20750%20Tesla%20drivers,vehicles%27%20partially%20automated%20driving%20systems). Drivers complained that their cars (mostly Model 3 and Y) would **suddenly brake for no apparent reason** while using Autopilot driver-assist. NHTSA had opened a formal investigation in Feb 2022 after an initial 354 complaints, and by May the number more than doubled[[121]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/03/tesla-complaints-unexpected-braking-investigation#:~:text=Driving%20the%20news%3A%20The%20National,letter%20to%20Tesla%2C%20AP%20reports). ~416,000 Teslas (2021–22 models) were under scrutiny for this issue[[122]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/03/tesla-complaints-unexpected-braking-investigation#:~:text=The%20big%20picture%3A%20NHTSA%20opened,February%20after%20receiving%20354%20complaints). It was the **third safety probe** into Tesla’s automation in a six-month span[[123]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/03/tesla-complaints-unexpected-braking-investigation#:~:text=,month%20period). Regulators sent Tesla an information request and demanded answers by June 20 2022[[124]](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/03/tesla-complaints-unexpected-braking-investigation#:~:text=What%20to%20watch%3A%20NHTSA%20asked,by%20June%2020%2C%20Reuters%20reports). *Tesla’s stance:* The company rarely comments on such probes, but had previously attributed phantom braking to “overly cautious” tuning of its vision system after removing radar. Nonetheless, the sheer volume of complaints suggests many Tesla owners were startled or put at risk by FSD/Autopilot’s glitches. This issue gained national attention, pressuring Tesla to adjust its software (and indeed Tesla pushed updates to reduce false braking). *Key point:* Phantom braking illustrates how Tesla’s **decision to rely on cameras** (without radar) in 2021 introduced new failure modes – one more instance where Tesla’s pursuit of full self-driving has encountered **safety setbacks and customer frustration**. | [Article Link](https://www.axios.com/2022/06/03/tesla-complaints-unexpected-braking-investigation) |
| \*\*\*\* | *Tesla must face California’s false-marketing claims concerning Autopilot* | Jonathan Stempel | June 10 2024 | News – Legal (Regulatory) | Reuters (Legal News) | **DMV Case, Investor Fraud Probe** | **Tesla’s attempt to quash California’s false-advertising case was denied.** A state administrative judge ruled that the DMV’s allegations – that Tesla **overstated Autopilot/FSD capabilities in marketing** – warrant a full hearing[[125]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/#:~:text=June%2010%20%28Reuters%29%20,driving%20capabilities)[[126]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/#:~:text=The%20DMV%20had%20in%20July,now%2C%20operate%20as%20autonomous%20vehicles). The DMV’s July 2022 complaint cites Tesla ads implying its cars were or soon would be autonomous, when in reality they *“could not… and cannot now, operate as autonomous vehicles.”*[[126]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/#:~:text=The%20DMV%20had%20in%20July,now%2C%20operate%20as%20autonomous%20vehicles). Potential penalties include suspending Tesla’s sales license in CA or forcing it to compensate customers[[127]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/#:~:text=vehicles.). In parallel, Tesla also **faces a federal class-action lawsuit** by customers who say they were misled into paying for “Full Self-Driving” based on Musk’s promises of imminent autonomy – a judge in May 2024 refused to dismiss that case[[128]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/#:~:text=formally%20reviewed%20before%20the%20OAH,9). Critically, Reuters reports that **federal prosecutors are investigating whether Tesla defrauded investors by making deceptive statements about its self-driving tech**[[104]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/#:~:text=Tesla%2C%20based%20in%20Austin%2C%20Texas%2C,have%20contributed%20to%20fatal%20crashes). This DOJ *investor fraud* probe is separate from the safety inquiries, indicating criminal scrutiny of Tesla’s communications to shareholders. Tesla’s official line remains that Autopilot “requires active driver supervision” and is not autonomous[[129]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/#:~:text=Tesla%20has%20said%20Autopilot%20lets,traffic%20signals%20and%20change%20lanes) – yet it’s exactly the **gap between those disclaimers and Tesla’s hype** that regulators and plaintiffs are targeting. *Implication:* By mid-2024, Tesla is under **full-spectrum legal assault** – consumer protection agencies, civil litigants, and the DOJ/SEC – over claims it oversold the readiness of FSD, showing **Tesla’s knowledge of FSD’s shortcomings** may have been willfully downplayed to the public and investors. | [Article Link](https://www.reuters.com/legal/tesla-must-face-californias-false-marketing-claims-concerning-autopilot-2024-06-10/) |
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[[1]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=This%20time%2C%20lawyers%20in%20the,obstacle%2C%20the%20deposition%20transcripts%20show) [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=A%202017%20Tesla%20safety%20analysis%2C,can%20quickly%20apply%20the%20brake) [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=One%20witness%20testified%20that%20Tesla,focus%20on%20the%20road%20ahead) [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=,dated%20March%2025%20that%20year) [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=,dated%20March%2025%20that%20year) [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=In%20depositions%2C%20a%20Tesla%20employee,take%20over%20when%20Autopilot%20fails) [[7]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=Experts%20in%20autonomous,if%20drivers%20do%20their%20part) [[8]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=,he%20said) [[9]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=The%20crash%20that%20killed%20Huang,reports%20to%20auto%20safety%20regulators) [[10]](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/#:~:text=hear) Next Autopilot trial to test Tesla's blame-the-driver defense | Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/next-autopilot-trial-test-teslas-blame-the-driver-defense-2024-03-11/>

[[11]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Jan%2017%20%28Reuters%29%20,testimony%20by%20a%20senior%20engineer) [[12]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Elluswamy%20said%20Tesla%E2%80%99s%20Autopilot%20team,at%20the%20request%20of%20Musk) [[13]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=To%20create%20the%20video%2C%20the,in%20Palo%20Alto%2C%20he%20said) [[14]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Drivers%20intervened%20to%20take%20control,Tesla%E2%80%99s%20parking%20lot%2C%20he%20said) [[15]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=The%20video%2C%20which%20remains%20archived,%E2%80%9D) [[16]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Reuters) [[17]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=When%20asked%20if%20the%202016,It%20does%20not) [[18]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=The%20National%20Transportation%20Safety%20Board,had%20contributed%20to%20the%20crash) [[19]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=Tesla%20faces%20lawsuits%20and%20regulatory,over%20its%20driver%20assistance%20systems) [[20]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/#:~:text=The%20U,involving%20Autopilot%2C%20Reuters%20has%20reported) Tesla video promoting self-driving was staged, engineer testifies | Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/tesla-video-promoting-self-driving-was-staged-engineer-testifies-2023-01-17/>

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