Self-driving cars linked to hundreds of accidents in the U.S.

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Over the course of 10 months, **nearly 400 car crashes**
in the United States involved advanced driver-assist technologies, the federal government's top automotive safety regulator revealed in its first large-scale data release on these burgeoning systems.

In 392 incidents cataloged by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration from July 1 of last year through May 15, **six people were killed and five were seriously injured**
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Tesla's operating with Autopilot, the more ambitious ***Full Self Driving*** mode or any of its associated component features, had 273 accidents. Five of those ***Tesla*** accidents were fatal.

The disclosures are part of a broad effort by the federal agency to **determine the safety of advanced driving systems**
as they become increasingly common.

Beyond the futuristic appeal of driverless cars, dozens of automakers **have released automated components**
in recent years, including features that let you take your hands off the wheel under certain conditions and help you parallel park.
In the release, NHTSA revealed that Honda vehicles were involved in 90 incidents and Subaru vehicles in 10. Ford Motor, General Motors, BMW, Volkswagen, Toyota, Hyundai and Porsche reported five or fewer each.

"These technologies hold great promise for improving safety, but **we need to understand how these vehicles perform**

in real-world situations," said Steven Cliff, the agency's administrator. "This will help our investigators quickly identify potential defect trends as they emerge."**The explanation**

Speaking to reporters ahead of Wednesday's launch, Cliff also cautioned against drawing conclusions from the data collected so far, noting that it **doesn't**
take

into account factors such as how many cars from each manufacturer are on the road and equipped with these types of technologies
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"The data may raise more questions than it answers," he said.

About 830,000 *Tesla* cars

in the United States are equipped with Autopilot or the company's other driver-assist technologies, offering an explanation for why ***Tesla*** vehicles accounted for nearly 70% of reported crashes.
Ford, GM, BMW and others have similar advanced systems that enable hands-free driving under certain road conditions, but far fewer of those models have been sold.
However, these companies have sold millions of cars over the past two decades that are equipped with individual components of driver assistance systems.

The components include so-called lane keeping, which helps drivers stay in their lanes, and**adaptive cruise control**
, which maintains a car's speed and automatically brakes when traffic ahead slows.
Cliff said NHTSA would continue to collect data on crashes involving these types of features and technologies, and noted that the agency would use them as guidance in setting rules or requirements for how they should be designed and used.

The data were collected under an order issued by NHTSA a year ago that required automakers to **report accidents involving**
cars equipped with advanced driver assistance systems, also known as ADAS or Level 2 automated driving systems.

The order was prompted in part by accidents and deaths in the past six years involving Teslas operating on autopilot. Last week, NHTSA expanded an investigation into whether Autopilot has technological and design flaws that **pose safety risks**
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The agency has been investigating **35 crashes that occurred while Autopilot was engaged**
, including nine that resulted in the deaths of 14 people since 2014. It also opened a preliminary investigation into 16 incidents in which Teslas under Autopilot control crashed into emergency vehicles that had stopped and had their lights flashing.

Under the order issued last year, NHTSA also collected data on crashes or incidents involving fully automated vehicles that are still mostly in development **but are being tested on public**
roads.
The manufacturers of these vehicles include GM, Ford, and other traditional automakers, as well as technology companies such as Waymo, which is owned by Google's parent company.

The lessons

These types of vehicles were involved in 130 incidents, NHTSA found. One resulted in a serious injury, 15 with minor or moderate injuries, and 108 with no injuries. Many of the crashes involving automated vehicles **resulted in fender benders or fender benders**
because they are operated primarily at low speeds and in city driving.
Waymo, which operates a fleet of driverless cabs in Arizona, was part of 62 incidents. GM's Cruise division, which just began offering driverless cab rides in San Francisco, was involved in 23.

A minor accident involving an automated test vehicle manufactured by Pony.ai, a startup, **resulted in the recall of three of**
the

company
'

s test vehicles
for correct software.

NHTSA's order was an unusually bold step for the regulator, which has come under fire in recent years for not being more ***assertive*** with automakers.
"The agency is gathering information to determine whether, in the field, these systems constitute an unreasonable safety risk," said J. Christian Gerdes, professor of mechanical engineering and director of the Center for Automotive Research at Stanford University.

An advanced driver-assistance system **can steer, brake and accelerate vehicles**
on its own, although drivers must remain alert and ready to take control of the vehicle at any time.

Safety experts are concerned that these systems allow drivers to relinquish active control of the car and could lead them to believe that their cars are driving them themselves. **When the technology malfunctions**
or cannot handle a particular situation, drivers may not be prepared to take control quickly.

Some independent studies have explored these technologies, but have yet **to show**
whether they reduce accidents or improve safety.

In November, ***Tesla*** **recalled nearly 12,000 vehicles**

that were part of the beta test of ***Full Self Driving***, a version of Autopilot designed for use on city streets, after implementing a software update that the company said could cause accidents due to unexpected activation of the cars. 'Emergency Braking System.
The NHTSA order required companies to provide crash data when advanced driver assistance systems and automated technologies were in use within 30 seconds of impact. While these data provide a broader picture than ever before of the behavior of these systems, it is still difficult to determine whether they reduce crashes or improve safety.
The agency has not collected data that would allow researchers to easily determine whether using these systems is safer than turning them off in the same situations.
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