

NHTSA issues a safety recall on nearly 54,000 Teslas over 'rolling-stop' functionality



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Body

March 15 -- On Monday, **Tesla** issued a safety recall for 53,822 vehicles covering all models equipped with "**full-self-driving**" (FSD) software. The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) warned the company that changes to the software that added operational profiles to the FSD feature could cause the car to not stop at stop signs, increasing the risk of a collision.

Tesla added driving profiles to its beta self-driving software back in October. The update included the option to choose from three different driving profiles with more or less self-explanatory names-"Chill," "Average," "**Assertive**." According to the NHTSA, the feature only went live within a "limited early access FSD Beta population."

It is the **Assertive** option that is causing the problem. When acting autonomously and set to this profile, the car will drive more aggressively, including making more frequent lane changes, riding the passing lane, and performing rolling stops. A rolling stop (also called a "California stop") is where the driver slows the vehicle at a stop sign without coming to a complete stop.

"Failing to stop at a stop sign can increase the risk of a crash," says the NHTSA.

The software does make several checks before allowing a rolling stop. First, it has to be enabled in the profile settings. The intersection must be an all-way stop and in an area where the speed limit both ways is 30mph or less. There cannot be any moving cars, pedestrians, or bicycles near the crossing. The sensors also have to have "sufficient" visibility while approaching the intersection. If any of these conditions are not met, the car will come to a complete stop.

Despite the amount of caution applied, California stops are illegal in all states, including California. If performed in the presence of a police officer, chances are high you will get pulled over, and unless he's in a good mood, you'll probably get a traffic citation. So why **Tesla** would even have this as an option in its software is a mystery.

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Tesla has dealt with several recalls for varying reasons in the previous year. This last comes just after a widely publicized criticism alleging **Tesla**'s self-driving software suffered a "critical malfunction" every eight seconds. It is unclear if the NHTSA's recall warning directly resulted from this criticism.

Tesla agreed with the NHTSA and will recall the vehicles voluntarily. However, since this is an issue with software only, customers do not have to take their cars in to be serviced. **Tesla** plans to issue an over-the-air update to all affected systems. It will send out notification letters to customers by March 28; however, it is unclear when **Tesla** will roll out the software update.

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