

# Cruise robotaxi appears to hinder emergency crews after mass shooting

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A Cruise self-driving car appeared to hinder first responders as they tried to access the scene of a mass shooting in San Francisco's Mission District on Friday night, raising concerns about robotaxis' ability to safely offer rides throughout the city. Emergency crews were responding to a shooting on 24th Street shortly after 9pm in which nine people were injured. In a video posted to Twitter, a Cruise self-driving car is seen in the road as an officer approaches it and says it's "blocking emergency medical and fire. I've got to get it out of here now." In a statement, Cruise maintained that the car did not block emergency access to the scene "at any point". "Our car initially stopped as it was approaching an active emergency scene, then proceeded to perform a U-turn and pull over," a spokesperson said. "Throughout this time, all vehicles, including emergency response vehicles, were able to proceed around our car." Cruise did not directly respond to questions about how long the car was in place. A spokesperson told the San Francisco Chronicle that a lane of traffic was open beside the car. An employee moved the vehicle within half an hour, the company said. A spokesperson for the San Francisco police department said the department is "aware" of an incident involving an autonomous vehicle and is "actively investigating", but would not provide further details. The incident comes as state and local officials have raised broader questions about whether autonomous vehicles can safely respond to unpredictable situations. Cruise, which is owned by General Motors, and its competitor Waymo, operated by Alphabet, are seeking permission to operate round-the-clock robotaxis throughout San Francisco. Cruise is currently allowed to charge fares for driverless taxi rides between 10pm and 6am in some areas of the city. Waymo can only charge fares if a safety driver is in the car. But California's public utilities commission is considering whether to broaden permissions for both Cruise and Waymo. The commission will vote on 29 June whether to approve draft resolutions that would permit the companies to charge fares for robotaxi rides throughout San Francisco. The resolutions argued that the companies had detailed how they would minimize risk to passengers. Supporters of the proposal pointed to its potential benefits for seniors and people with disabilities. But opponents, including several city officials, have argued the cars often respond unpredictably in new situations. The San Francisco municipal transportation agency, the San Francisco county transportation authority and the mayor's office of disability opposed efforts to expand robotaxi service. They argued for incremental expansions of robotaxi service and said that the self-driving cars should prove they can operate in "the most demanding circumstances without compromising safety, equity, accessibility, and street capacity" before they receive widespread approval. The city has evidence of "dozens – perhaps hundreds or thousands – of incidents" in which self-driving cars blocked traffic, drove erratically or interfered with emergency response vehicles, the officials claimed. The California Transit

Association also expressed concerns about incidents when self-driving cars had blocked transit vehicles and emergency responders. The association pointed to two separate issues last year, one in which a Cruise vehicle obstructed a fire truck on its way to a three-alarm blaze and another when a Cruise car ran over a firehose during an active fire.