

Apple lays off 600 workers in California after shuttering self-driving car project

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Apple is laying off more than 600 workers in California, marking the company's first big wave of post-pandemic job cuts amid a broader wave of tech industry consolidation. The iPhone maker notified 614 workers in multiple offices on 28 March that they were losing their jobs, with the layoffs becoming effective on 27 May, according to reports to regional authorities. The workers were cut from eight offices in Santa Clara, according to the filings under the state's Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, also known as Warn. But it is not clear which departments or projects the employees were involved in. In February, Apple canceled its multibillion-dollar plans to build an electric car. Executives at the time reportedly told employees that the company was pivoting its resources towards artificial intelligence programs, and layoffs were expected for some staff. Apple's electric vehicle program originally intended to build a fully self-driving car, but continually shifted its plans and failed to produce a viable product amid staff turnover and missed deadlines. The company's decision to fully shutter the program nevertheless surprised employees, according to Bloomberg. Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment early on Friday. The Cupertino, California, company had been a notable exception as other tech companies slashed their workforces over the past two years. There was a big surge in hiring during the Covid-19 pandemic, when people spent more time and money online, and big tech companies are still larger than they were before the pandemic. Still, as growth slows, companies are focusing on cutting costs. In a recent regulatory filing, Apple said it had about 161,000 full-time equivalent employees. Amazon announced earlier this week a fresh round of layoffs, this time at its cloud computing business AWS. In recent months, the video game maker Electronic Arts said it was cutting about 5% of its workforce, Sony said it was axing about 900 jobs in its PlayStation division, Cisco Systems revealed plans to lay off more than 4,000 workers and the social media company Snap, owner of Snapchat, announced it was slashing 10% of its global workforce.