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Final Report - Crash involving Tesla Model S – 10400 South Bangerter Highway

SOUTH JORDAN, UT – On Friday, May 11, 2018, at 6:38 p.m. MDT, the South Jordan Police Department received a report of a traffic crash involving a Tesla Model S and a mechanic truck from the Unified Fire Authority. The crash resulted in minor injuries to both drivers. The incident occurred at 10400 South Bangerter Highway in South Jordan, Utah (intersection of SR-154 and SR-151).

The driver of the Tesla Model S (28-year-old female from Lehi, Utah) was subsequently interviewed by the South Jordan Police and said that she had been using the “Autopilot” feature in the Tesla. While Tesla’s Autopilot feature indicates that a driver must be attentive at all times, the driver admitted that she was looking at her phone prior to the collision. Based upon witness information, the driver of the Tesla did not brake or take any action to avoid the collision.

The driver of the Tesla was transported to a local hospital with a broken right foot. The driver of the Unified Fire Authority vehicle was checked for injuries related to whiplash; however, he was not taken to a hospital for evaluation.

Technicians from Tesla successfully recovered the data from the vehicle. According to Tesla’s report, the vehicle indicated:

- *The driver engaged Autosteer and Traffic Aware Cruise Control on multiple occasions during this drive cycle. She repeatedly cancelled and then re-engaged these features, and regularly adjusted the vehicle’s cruising speed.*
- *Drivers are repeatedly advised Autopilot features do not make Tesla vehicles “autonomous” and that the driver absolutely must remain vigilant with their eyes on the road, hands on the wheel and they must be prepared to take any and all action necessary to avoid hazards on the road.*
- *The vehicle registered more than a dozen instances of her hands being off the steering wheel in this drive cycle. On two such occasions, she had her hands off the wheel for more than one minute each time and her hands came back on only after a visual alert*

was provided. Each time she put her hands back on the wheel, she took them back off the wheel after a few seconds.

- *About 1 minute and 22 seconds before the crash, she re-enabled Autosteer and Cruise Control, and then, within two seconds, took her hands off the steering wheel again. She did not touch the steering wheel for the next 80 seconds until the crash happened; this is consistent with her admission that she was looking at her phone at the time.*
- *The vehicle was traveling at about 60 mph when the crash happened. This is the speed the driver selected.*
- *The driver manually pressed the vehicle brake pedal fractions of a second prior to the crash.*
- *Contrary to the proper use of Autopilot, the driver did not pay attention to the road at all times, did not keep her hands on the steering wheel, and she used it on a street with no center median and with stoplight controlled intersections.*

Based upon the findings of this investigation, the driver of the Tesla was issued a traffic citation for failure to keep proper lookout under South Jordan City municipal code 10.28.030 (traffic infraction).

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) sent an investigation team to Utah to conduct their own review of this incident. Please contact NHTSA with requests specific to NHTSA's involvement NHTSAMedia@dot.gov.

As a reminder for drivers of semi-autonomous vehicles, it is the driver's responsibility to stay alert, drive safely, and be in control of the vehicle at all times. Tesla makes it clear that drivers should always watch the road in front of them and be prepared to take corrective actions. Failure to do so can result in serious injury or death. Check with the vehicle's owner manual to determine if this technology can be used on city streets or not.

The South Jordan Police Department would like to express gratitude to Tesla and their technicians, National Transportation Safety Board, and NHTSA for assisting in this investigation.

For additional information, please contact the South Jordan Police Department at 801-254-4708.

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