

Tesla is reportedly blocking the city of Austin from releasing Robotaxi records

Reuters attempts to gather information on the upcoming trial have been rebuffed.

[andre revilla](#)

[Tesla](#) has been awfully cagey with its self-driving data this week. [Reuters is now reporting](#) that [Tesla](#) is trying to stop the city of Austin from handing over public records involving its robotaxi operations in the city, which are set to expand this month. This comes just a few days after the automaker [asked a judge](#) to prevent the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration from releasing certain data related to crashes that involved its cars with self-driving features.

Reuters says that it requested two years' worth of communications between [Tesla](#) and Austin officials in February, shortly after [Tesla](#) CEO [Elon Musk](#) said that [Austin would play home](#) to the robotaxi experiment.

Dan Davis, an Austin public information officer, told Reuters in April that “third parties” were asking the city to withhold these records in the interest of protecting “privacy or property.” After the publication escalated the matter to the [Texas Attorney General’s office](#), an attorney for [Tesla](#) wrote [Ken Paxton](#) opposing the release of what it called “confidential, proprietary, competitively sensitive commercial and/or trade secret information.”

Reuters also spoke with Neal Falgoust, an Austin Law Department official overseeing public records issues about the matter. Falgoust [told reporters](#) that the city of Austin doesn’t take any particular position on the confidentiality of the materials involved. When Reuters pressed further, asking if the people of Austin have a right to information about the driverless cars that would be traversing their streets, Falgoust did not respond.

[Tesla](#) said just last week that it had been [testing driverless Model Ys in Austin](#) for several days, which Elon Musk [said was a month ahead of schedule](#). This would not be the first fleet of autonomous taxis on the streets of the Texas capital, with [Waymo operating there](#) since 2023 within a specific geofenced area. Waymo has also [partnered with Uber](#) in Austin since March.

By Texas law, the Attorney General's office has 45 business days to decide whether the city of Austin is required to make these records public, which would be next week.

-

- [Transportation](#)

Tesla is trying to stop certain self-driving crash data becoming public

The company claims the information is confidential and that disclosing it may benefit competitors.

[kris holt](#)

Contributing Reporter

·2 min read

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tesla has asked a judge to block a request for the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration to disclose certain data related to crashes involving vehicles that have self-driving features, as [Reuters](#) reports. The company claimed in a filing the information is confidential, and that releasing it publicly would give competitors the ability to analyze the effectiveness of each version of the self-driving tech and potentially figure out the number of crashes that are linked to various systems.

The Washington Post last year filed a lawsuit against the NHTSA last year to obtain access to more details about crashes that happened while driver-assistance systems, such as Autopilot and Full Self-Driving (FSD), were engaged. The agency has said the data being requested is exempt from public records laws. The Post contended that while the NHTSA does publish information regarding crashes, it "withholds critical details about the technologies in use and the circumstances and locations of the crashes."

Tesla has argued that the company and the NHTSA should be able to keep certain information related to crashes private. This includes details about driver behavior and road conditions, as well as specific versions of driver-assistance tech that may have been in use.

However, the Post's lawyers claimed that information about the versions of hardware and software that may have been in use at the time of crashes isn't confidential information, since drivers can access that through their vehicle dashboards. Tesla [argued](#) in its filing this week that, "Even where Tesla's individual vehicle owners might know certain information about their own vehicles, such as the version of the ADAS software installed, where a safety incident occurred, the conditions of the road during the accident, and what they were doing leading up to the accident, this information is shared with Tesla with the expectation that it will be kept private."

According to [Electrek](#), Tesla takes advantage of NHTSA loopholes to have most data relating to crashes involving its vehicles redacted. The company contends that its "self-driving" tech doesn't make its cars autonomous and that drivers are required to actively supervise its use. In other news, Tesla expects to [start deploying](#) its first Robotaxi service in Austin, Texas, this month.

[Until late May](#), Tesla CEO Elon Musk was the de facto head of the Department of Government Efficiency. That initiative is said to have [cut about 10 percent of the NHTSA's staff](#) at the beginning of this year — including about half of a small team that oversees the safety of autonomous vehicles.