

Elon Musks Tesla fined for serious failure to protect Fremont plant workers from excessive heat

Tesla has disputed nearly all reported violations

Tesla has been fined \$13,500 for a “serious” alleged violation of state labor law, after California’s occupational safety regulator found it failed to protect 50 workers at its Fremont electric car factory from excessive heat.

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need to do so to protect themselves from overheating.”

Under that rule, any worker who takes such a rest must be monitored and asked if they are experiencing symptoms of heat-related illness, and if they are, they cannot be ordered back to work until symptoms have gone away.

The fine was issued in December after the case was opened in July, according to the report.

The case remains open, and it was unclear whether Tesla had paid the fine. The company disputes most labor-related citations, and did not respond to requests for comment Thursday.

California’s workplace-safety regulator, Cal/OSHA, did not immediately respond to questions about Tesla’s payment of fines.

The U.S. Labor Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which reports both federal and state findings about workplace-safety violations, has not cited Tesla, valued at \$1.1 trillion in the stock market, for any purported violations.

The state-level regulatory action comes as Tesla CEO Musk works as a special government employee for President Donald Trump to dramatically — and critics say illegally — slash federal government spending and programs, including in agencies responsible for regulating the operations of Tesla, and of federal government contractor SpaceX, the rocket company he leads as CEO.

The Fremont plant has been the focus of numerous lawsuits over alleged rampant anti-Black racism in the facility, including one legal action by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, an agency expected to receive new commissioners appointed by Trump, potentially affecting the case.

Musk's government position will likely shield him from federal regulatory action, said Stanford Law professor emeritus William Gould, a labor law expert.

"Musk is much less likely to face scrutiny at the federal level," Gould said. "The relatively limited resources of California appear to be his only concern."

California worker-safety regulators also fined Tesla \$23,560 last year over two alleged violations connected to a vehicle accident at the Fremont factory. One purported violation, deemed "serious," related to the driver moving the vehicle when a person was in its path, and netted a \$22,500 penalty. The other related to failure to establish, implement and maintain an effective program to prevent injury and illness. Tesla disputed both findings, according to the Labor Department.

In 2023, state regulators fined Tesla \$149,000 for 11 alleged worker-safety violations, four classed as serious, at the Fremont facility. Tesla disputed all of them.

Tesla in 2022 was fined \$112,065 over 19 alleged workplace safety violations — nearly all contested by Tesla — and four accidents in the Fremont factory. State regulators accused the company of repeated failure to properly train workers and report accidents involving serious injury.