

A look at California's plan to make self-driving cars public

December 17 2015, by Justin Pritchard

California's Department of Motor Vehicles [has unveiled draft regulations](#) that would govern how consumers get access to self-driving cars—once they are ready for the public to use them safely.

What follows is a look at the main provisions, some of which will be the subject of concerted lobbying by automakers and tech giant Google, before the agency finalizes them. That could happen later this year.

SAFETY: Manufacturers would have to self-certify that their car is safe. An independent testing organization would have to verify those claims through a "vehicle demonstration test" of the car's "ability to perform key driving maneuvers that are typically encountered in real-world driving conditions."

LICENSED DRIVERS: A licensed driver would have to be ready to take over immediately, should the car's sensors and computers fail. That means the cars will need a [steering wheel](#), much to Google's consternation. Drivers would be trained in how to use the technology—and to understand its limitations—by the manufacturer. They would receive a special certification from the DMV. These "operators" would be responsible for [traffic violations](#) that the car commits.

THE LEASE YOU CAN DO: Once a model has passed the safety checks, consumers could lease—but not buy—it. For the first three years of its deployment, manufacturers would need to collect safety and

performance information and report that data monthly to the agency.

CYBERSECURITY AND DATA PRIVACY: Drivers would have to agree to let manufacturers collect data "that is not necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle." That's a nod to [privacy advocates](#) who worry the cars will be used to track where [drivers](#) go, what they do inside the car and the like. Self-driving cars also would need to be able to detect and defend against cyber-attacks.

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