

Google self-driving van involved in crash in Arizona, driver injured (Update)

May 5 2018, by Elizabeth Weise And Adrian Marsh, Usa Today

A self-driving van that was part of Google's tests in Arizona was involved in an accident Friday when a car being driven by a human swerved to avoid another human-driven car and crashed into it.

Photos taken at the scene show significant damage to the driver's side of the Waymo van and the front of a silver Honda sedan, with pieces of both vehicles scattered across the roadway.

The Honda was driving eastbound in Chandler, Ariz. when it swerved to avoid striking a vehicle that was driving northbound. As the sedan swerved, it struck the Waymo van, which was traveling at low speeds in autonomous, or self-driving, mode, Detective Seth Tyler of the Chandler police said.

There was an occupant in the driver's seat of the Waymo vehicle who suffered minor injuries, Tyler added.

Both the Waymo vehicle and Honda sedan were damaged and had to be towed.

Chandler is a suburb to the southeast of Phoenix where Waymo has been testing its self-driving vehicles. Waymo is autonomous vehicle subsidiary of Alphabet, the parent company of Google.

Accidents involving self-driving cars in Arizona have raised questions about whether the tech is ready for testing with the public. There have

been at least three accidents involving Waymo autonomous vehicles in Chandler in the past two years, involving human drivers who ran into Waymo cars.

On March 18 an Uber self-driving car hit and killed a woman who was walking a bike across a busy street outside any crosswalk into traffic.

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey ordered testing of Uber cars be suspended soon after the fatality, but not all self-driving operations were stopped. Uber suspended self-driving operations elsewhere after the accident while it investigated the crash.

Last month, Waymo CEO John Krafcik said he had confidence that the company's technology was robust enough to handle "situations like that one."

Waymo did not immediately respond to request for comment Friday.

Marsh reporting from Phoenix, Ariz. Weise reporting from San Francisco.

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