

US Postal Service to launch test of self-driving trucks

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The US Postal Service is conducting its first tests of self-driving trucks for deliveries between distribution centers, exploring how the technology can cut costs and improve safety

The US Postal Service said Tuesday it would begin its first tests of self-

driving trucks to deliver mail between two distribution centers in the southwest.

The two-week project is being launched with California startup TuSimple, which will haul postal trailers between centers in Dallas, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona.

"This pilot is just one of many ways the Postal Service is innovating and investing in its future," the [postal service](#) said in a statement.

"We are conducting research and testing as part of our efforts to operate a future class of vehicles which will incorporate new technology to accommodate a diverse mail mix, enhance safety, improve [service](#), reduce emissions, and produce operational savings."

USPS will be working with TuSimple, which was founded in 2015 and has been developing [artificial intelligence](#) and computer vision with a stated "perception range" of 1,000 meters (3,200 feet) to allow up to 35 seconds of reaction time at highway speeds.

"It is exciting to think that before many people will ride in a robo-taxi, their mail and packages may be carried in a self-driving truck," said Xiaodi Hou, founder and president of TuSimple.

"Performing for the USPS on this pilot in this particular commercial corridor gives us specific use cases to help us validate our system, and expedite the technological development and commercialization progress."

During the 1,600-kilometer (1,000-mile) trips, the trucks will have a safety engineer and driver on board "to monitor vehicle performance and to ensure [public safety](#)" during the estimated 22-hour journey, according to a company statement.

The move comes amid stepped-up testing of autonomous driving technology for ride-hailing as well as freight by companies including former Google car unit Waymo, Uber and Tesla.

The needs in [freight transport](#) are expected to grow amid a growing shortage of truck drivers in the United States.

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