



# Preparing your State Today for the Automated Vehicles of Tomorrow

Automated vehicle technology under development could greatly improve auto safety, mobility, and access, particularly for traditionally disadvantaged populations. While the federal government is responsible for vehicle safety and performance requirements, states also play a major role in the motor vehicle regulatory ecosystem. To realize the benefits of vehicle automation once these technologies are available for commercial deployment, states should begin preparing today.

## 1. Adopting a Standard Vocabulary

- Any proposed automated vehicle policy should use clear and consistent terminology.
- The overarching goal should be fostering effective communication between engineers and lawyers.
- SAE International's Recommended Practice J3016 is the current consensus standard and should be adopted for these purposes.

## 2. Auditing Motor Vehicle Code for Existing Barriers

- Overly prescriptive provisions contained in state motor vehicle codes obstruct the testing and deployment of automated vehicles.
- This is especially true of vehicles with higher-level automation, novel designs, and battery electric propulsion that may preclude any human direction through conventional manual controls.
- These include driver duties upon striking unattended vehicles, prohibitions on following too closely in a platoon, and mandated rear-view mirrors, mufflers, and windshields.
- Lawmakers and regulators can resolve conflicts by explicitly exempting automated vehicles from these provisions.

## 3. Distinguishing Between Vehicle Types

- Low-speed, low-mass, geographically restricted passenger shuttles and last-mile delivery vehicles have very different risk profiles and should not be subject to the same standards as highway vehicles.
- The federal government and many states have traditionally made distinctions between low-speed vehicles and highway vehicles, and this can serve as a regulatory model.

## 4. Avoiding Questionable Legal Frameworks

- Binding legal frameworks based on executive orders or agency guidance documents should be rejected in favor of conventional legislation and regulation.
- Temporarily forgoing a detailed automated vehicle legal framework is better than adopting an ill-conceived and legally dubious policy framework.

---

### TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONTACT

• Marc Scribner, Senior Policy Analyst (Marc.Scribner@reason.org)

