



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[Docket No. NHTSA-2026-1552]

AV Framework Updates and Request for Comments on Interim Guidance

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), U.S. Department of Transportation (Department or DOT).

ACTION: Notice of updates; request for comments.

SUMMARY: In April 2025, DOT and NHTSA announced a new automated vehicle framework designed to prioritize safety, promote innovation, foster American ingenuity, and remove regulatory barriers to the advancement of automated driving system technologies. This notice furthers NHTSA's implementation of this framework by requesting public comment on interim guidance for commercial deployment exemptions for automated vehicles. This notice also summarizes NHTSA's other recent activity relating to the AV Framework.

DATES: Comments are requested on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by the docket number in the heading of this document through any of the following methods:

- *Electronic submissions:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax:* (202) 493-2251.
- *Mail or Hand Delivery:* Docket Management, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E., West Building, Suite W58-213, Washington, D.C. 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 366-9826 or (202) 366-9317 before coming.

Instructions: All submissions must include the agency name and docket number for this notice. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided. Please see the Privacy Act heading below.

Privacy Act: Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the Federal Register published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477-78) or you may visit <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> or the street address listed above. Follow the online instructions for accessing the dockets via internet.

Confidential Business Information: If you claim that any of the information in your comment (including any additional documents or attachments) constitutes confidential business information within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) or is protected from disclosure pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 1905, please see the detailed instructions given under the Public Participation heading of the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Magaletti, Rulemaking Office of Automation Safety by email: andrew.magaletti@dot.gov, or phone: (202) 366-2190, 1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20590.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

On April 24, 2025, DOT and NHTSA announced a new automated vehicle (AV) framework as part of the Department's broader transportation innovation agenda. This framework solidified that advanced vehicle technologies, such as automated driving systems (ADS), are a key priority of the agency. The framework is rooted in three principles: (1) prioritize the safety of ongoing AV operations on public roads; (2) unleash innovation by

removing unnecessary regulatory barriers; and (3) enable the commercial deployment of AVs to enhance safety and mobility for the American public.¹ This notice summarizes NHTSA’s work on the AV Framework over the last year and requests comment on interim guidance for commercial deployment exemptions.

I. Interim Guidance Concerning Commercial Deployment Exemptions

On June 13, 2025, NHTSA announced improvements to the process for adjudicating exemptions under 49 U.S.C. 30113 (“General Exemptions”). General Exemptions issued under section 30113 are for more general purposes than exemptions issued under section 30114(a). Specifically, these General Exemptions, which are implemented in NHTSA’s regulations in 49 CFR part 555, allow manufacturers to produce and sell vehicles to consumers or otherwise commercially deploy vehicles that do not comply with all applicable FMVSS. Applications for General Exemptions under section 30113 may be made on one or more of four bases specified in the statute. The four bases are: (1) “compliance with the standard would cause substantial economic hardship to a manufacturer that has tried to comply with the standard in good faith;” (2) “the exemption would make easier the development or field evaluation of a new motor vehicle safety feature providing a safety level at least equal to the safety level of the standard;” (3) “the exemption would make the development or field evaluation of a low-emission motor vehicle easier and would not unreasonably lower the safety level of that vehicle;” or (4) “compliance with the standard would prevent the manufacturer from selling a motor vehicle with an overall safety level at least equal to the overall safety level of nonexempt vehicles.”² Requests for General Exemptions of ADS-equipped vehicles have typically invoked at least one of the last three bases.

¹ See U.S. Dept. of Transp., *Trump’s Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy Unveils New Automated Vehicle Framework as Part of Innovation Agenda* (Apr. 24, 2025), available at <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/trumps-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-unveils-new-automated-vehicle-framework>.

² See 49 U.S.C. 30113(b)(3)(B).

Section 30113 requires specific procedures and findings when administering General Exemptions. Specifically, NHTSA must publish a notice announcing receipt of an application for exemption, provide an opportunity for public comment, and publish a decision notice. NHTSA may grant a General Exemption on terms it considers appropriate if it finds that the exemption meets one of the four statutory bases and that granting the exemption would be consistent with the public interest and the Safety Act. Both the statute (49 U.S.C. 30113) and NHTSA's implementing regulations (49 CFR part 555) also require specified information to accompany an application for a General Exemption.

In reviewing the exemption process after announcing the AV Framework, NHTSA recognized there are opportunities to expedite the process and streamline reviews for ADS-equipped vehicles. As part of the AV Framework, NHTSA announced two types of improvements to its General Exemption processing times substantially to keep pace with innovation and ensure that General Exemptions remain effective tools.

To modernize the part 555 process, NHTSA focused on key areas that previously have experienced prolonged review times. In particular, because most ADS operations evolve over time as the technology matures, their operations do not easily translate to static terms and conditions for the entire lifespan of an exempted vehicle. In addition, processing applications for ADS-equipped vehicles typically has required extensive follow-up with applicants. NHTSA developed process improvements to mitigate each of these issues.

First, NHTSA adopted a more dynamic and flexible approach to evaluating and overseeing General Exemptions involving ADS. NHTSA's traditional approach to processing part 555 applications has proven inadequate for adjudicating applications involving ADS-equipped vehicles in a timely manner. As announced in the June 2025 letter, NHTSA has adopted a new approach to adjudicating these exemption requests. Under this new approach, the terms and conditions issued at the time of a General Exemption grant will create a foundation for more specific and flexible terms that govern the particular operations of the exempted vehicles.

NHTSA may issue exemptions under 49 U.S.C. 30113 “on terms the Secretary considers appropriate.” Historically, NHTSA has applied terms and conditions to the grant of a General Exemption infrequently and, when it did so, only established a single set of static terms and conditions that would apply for the lifespan of exempted vehicles. However, the statute does not require the terms issued by NHTSA to be static or otherwise prescribe how those terms must be implemented. To the contrary, the statute affords NHTSA the discretion to determine what types of terms and conditions are “appropriate” in satisfying the findings required for an exemption and furthering the purposes of the Safety Act. During the process of applying traditional General Exemption practices to more recent applications involving ADS-equipped vehicles, NHTSA has found that establishing a single set of static terms and conditions that would apply to ADS-equipped vehicles throughout their lifespan is often impractical and inefficient. Static terms also do not always effectively promote motor vehicle safety because they cannot account for the dynamic nature of ADS technologies. Particularly at an early stage in the development of an ADS, capabilities can improve dramatically as the technology improves and operational design domains are updated over the lifespan of a particular vehicle or generation of vehicles. What may start as a small low-speed deployment in a localized area can expand over time to include entirely different capabilities. Therefore, terms and conditions for ADS-equipped vehicles may need to evolve as the technology changes or as safety issues arise.

Accordingly, NHTSA has improved its approach to developing terms that are appropriate for General Exemptions involving ADS-equipped vehicles. This improved oversight structure provides the needed flexibility and can be applied when NHTSA believes that such oversight is necessary or appropriate. This oversight structure would be established via a permanent term or condition in the *Federal Register* decision notice, which subjects the exempted vehicles to continued operational oversight as outlined in operational terms and conditions in an operational authorization.

Within the oversight structure, operational authorizations would be tailored to the individual manufacturer and the ADS's existing capabilities. The first operational authorization would be issued at the same time that the grant notice is published in the *Federal Register* and would contain initial operational terms and conditions. The manufacturer would be able to begin manufacturing and commercially deploying vehicles immediately consistent with the terms and conditions of the initial authorization. The operational permissions could later be modified via additional operational authorizations, such as after a manufacturer requests a change. This approach gives NHTSA flexibility to change operational terms quickly, such as by expanding the scope of the operational permission as the ADS continues to develop, and allows the exemption to mirror real-world ADS development, which often starts with smaller, more limited operations, before expanding over time.

This approach also enables NHTSA to process General Exemption applications more quickly by allowing the agency to rely on an adaptable oversight framework. In turn, NHTSA's initial review can focus on the current capabilities of the vehicles rather than developing specific terms and conditions that anticipate possible future changes. This improvement also builds on processes that have proven effective for ADS in Special Exemptions issued under NHTSA's Automated Vehicle Exemption Program (AVEP). Because these process improvements relate to the way that NHTSA administers General Exemptions, NHTSA began implementing these improvements immediately upon the June 2025 announcement. Since then, NHTSA has applied these process improvements to the review of General Exemption petitions.

Second, NHTSA has published interim guidance in the docket and on its website that is intended to help prospective applicants better understand the General Exemption process and anticipate the information likely to assist with NHTSA's review of an application.³ In the past, processing times for applications for ADS-equipped vehicles were often lengthened by extensive

³ See NHTSA, *Interim Part 555 Guidance and Enhanced Application Instructions*, available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/part-555-guidance-and-enhanced-application-instructions>.

follow-up with applicants. To mitigate this, NHTSA developed interim guidance to help manufacturers more clearly understand the type of information that would be most helpful to the agency when evaluating an application. This interim guidance is intended to reduce the need for extensive follow-up, reducing burden on both the applicants and NHTSA.

The interim guidance provides more detail about what types of information would be most helpful to the agency, how NHTSA reviews each of the possible grounds for a General Exemption, and whether the exemption furthers the public interest. Although the interim guidance is intended to help all part 555 applicants, it is expected to be especially helpful to manufacturers seeking exemptions for ADS-equipped vehicles because it contains a section dedicated to the information likely to be useful in NHTSA's review of applications for ADS-equipped vehicles.

NHTSA is requesting public comment on the interim guidance and would particularly welcome comments on how the interim guidance could be improved to help prospective applicants understand the types of information that would be most helpful to include in a General Exemption application. NHTSA also welcomes comments on any other aspects of the General Exemption process that could be improved, even if they are not referenced in the interim guidance. In particular, NHTSA is interested in feedback regarding changes that could be made, such as changes in the way that NHTSA adjudicates the applications or changes in its regulations that could be made under NHTSA's existing statutory authority in section 30113.

II. Additional NHTSA Activities

Since releasing the AV Framework in April 2025, NHTSA has: (1) expanded the Automated Vehicle Exemption Program to include vehicles built in the United States; (2) streamlined its Standing General Order on crash reporting for vehicles equipped with automated driving systems and certain advanced driver assistance systems to sharpen the focus on critical safety information while removing unnecessary and duplicative requirements; (3) launched multiple rulemakings to modernize the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for ADS-

equipped vehicles; (4) announced the commencement of work to establish ADS performance requirements; and (5) engaged extensively with stakeholders to develop a foundation for future updates to the framework.

a. Expanded Exemption Opportunities for Domestic Vehicles

Concurrently with the announcement of the AV Framework, on April 24, 2025, NHTSA expanded the exemption opportunities for vehicles manufactured in the United States by announcing that the agency would consider applications for those vehicles to receive exemptions under 49 U.S.C. 30114(a).⁴ This expansion covers all types of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment manufactured in the United States. NHTSA expects the expansion to promote the development of vehicle automation technology in the United States because these exemptions are particularly well suited for ADS research.

As a result of this expansion, exemptions for ADS-equipped vehicles built in the United States are now available through AVEP, which administers section 30114(a) exemptions (“Special Exemptions”) for ADS-equipped vehicles. Section 30114(a) authorizes NHTSA to administer special exemptions for vehicles that do not comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), as long as they meet one of seven particular purposes: research, investigations, demonstrations, training, competitive racing events, show, or display. Historically, NHTSA only administered these exemptions for vehicles imported into the United States. This is because the regulations NHTSA issued to implement its authority in section 30114(a) are specific to imported vehicles.

At the outset of developing the AV Framework, NHTSA recognized that restricting Special Exemptions to imported vehicles unintentionally provided certain companies who manufacture vehicles abroad with more avenues for innovation than companies that build vehicles in the United States. This is because Special Exemptions are particularly useful for

⁴ See Open Letter from Peter Simshauser, NHTSA Chief Counsel (Apr. 24, 2025), available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2025-04/automated-vehicle-exemption-program-domestic-exemptions-2025.pdf>.

research and development activities, and companies frequently use these exemptions to test novel technologies in prototype vehicles. The AVEP exemption process is designed to be agile and streamlined to facilitate ADS operations that involve vehicles not engaged in commercial deployments. With the growth of vehicle automation in recent years, Special Exemptions have increasingly been used for research and demonstration operations involving imported ADS-equipped vehicles. Through AVEP, from 2016 through 2025, NHTSA processed and issued Special Exemptions for more than 460 imported ADS-equipped vehicles for operations in over 360 projects across 31 States. These exemptions were issued to over 40 applicants operating in more than 130 cities across the United States. As ADS technologies continued to progress, the availability of a streamlined exemption path only for imported vehicles increasingly posed an obstacle to many companies establishing research or manufacturing operations in the United States.

To remove such barriers to American innovation quickly, as a first step of the AV Framework, NHTSA announced that it would begin considering requests for Special Exemptions for domestic vehicles under section 30114(a). Although NHTSA expects this expansion to promote ADS-equipped vehicles, the expansion applies to all motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment manufactured in the United States, not just those equipped with an ADS. Since this announcement in April 2025, NHTSA has received and granted Special Exemption requests for ADS-equipped vehicles manufactured in the United States.⁵ NHTSA has also announced the commencement of rulemaking process to codify this domestic exemption pathway.⁶

NHTSA adjudicates domestic applications consistent with how the agency reviews and oversees Special Exemptions under the agency's AVEP and Box 7 programs. In general, upon

⁵ See NHTSA, *NHTSA Issues First-Ever Demonstration Exemption to American-Built Automated Vehicles*, (Aug. 6, 2025), available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/nhtsa-issues-first-ever-demonstration-exemption-american-built-automated-vehicles>.

⁶ See Spring 2025 Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions, Dept. of Transp., RIN 2127-AM14, *Expansion of Temporary Exemption Program to Domestic Manufacturers for Research, Demonstrations, and Other Purposes*, available at <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaViewRule?pubId=202504&RIN=2127-AM14>.

receipt of an application, NHTSA typically engages in iterative follow-up with an applicant. At the end of the agency's review, NHTSA issues a decision to the applicant in the form of a letter. If the exemption is granted, this letter contains the terms and conditions that govern the exemption. Entities interested in submitting such requests are encouraged to contact the Automation Exemptions Division of NHTSA's Office of Automation Safety at AVExemptions@dot.gov for more information.

In addition, NHTSA has developed an application template to assist with the submission of requests for Special Exemptions for vehicles built in the United States. The template can be found at: https://vpic.nhtsa.dot.gov/mfrportal/SpecialExemptions-Veh_Checklist_2025-05-19.pdf. It lists information that NHTSA has found helpful when reviewing Special Exemptions requests for ADS-equipped vehicles. Although use of the template is not required, providing the listed information may help NHTSA process an application more efficiently. As mentioned previously, NHTSA is also continuing to develop a proposed rule to codify its procedures for Special Exemptions involving vehicles built in the United States.

b. Streamlined Crash Reporting

Upon the announcement of the AV Framework, on April 24, 2025, NHTSA also issued an amendment to Standing General Order 2021-01 (SGO), which requires specified entities to report alleged crashes involving their ADS or certain Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) within a specified amount of time after learning about them.⁷ This amendment took effect starting with the reporting period that began on June 16, 2025.

NHTSA issued the SGO as an enforcement tool, to ensure the agency timely learns of certain crashes involving ADS or ADAS. Prior to the SGO, no such reporting requirement existed, and NHTSA learned of automation crashes in an ad hoc manner, such as through media reports, referrals from law enforcement or other local entities, or companies voluntarily notifying NHTSA of a crash. The SGO provides consistency and timeliness to crash reports, enabling NHTSA to follow-up with companies about incidents quickly, review for trends in crash data, and open formal investigations when necessary. The SGO has been effective in achieving these goals, but after years of reviewing and acting on SGO data, NHTSA identified many aspects of the reporting for which improvements were possible to help NHTSA more efficiently investigate crashes and avoid imposing burdens on companies with little corresponding safety benefit.

NHTSA's website contains a more detailed summary of the differences between the current and prior versions of the SGO.⁸ In general, the most recent third amendment was designed to streamline and refine some of the SGO's reporting requirements to help NHTSA focus on the types of crashes most likely to require agency review, as well as to reduce unnecessary and duplicative reporting burdens. The majority of crashes reportable under prior versions of the SGO remain reportable after the latest amendment. However, NHTSA's

⁷ See NHTSA, *In re: Third Amended Standing General Order 2021-01, Incident Reporting for Automated Driving Systems (ADS) and Level 2 Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)* (Apr. 24, 2025), available at https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2025-04/third-amended-SGO-2021-01_2025.pdf.

⁸ See NHTSA, *Standing General Order on Crash Reporting, FAQ: What are some of the differences between the second and third amended versions of the General Order?*, available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/laws-regulations/standing-general-order-crash-reporting>.

experience reviewing prior SGO reports indicated that certain types of crashes seldom led to agency follow-up or otherwise occurred in circumstances in which the vehicle automation system was unlikely to have contributed meaningfully to the crash. Removing those types of crashes from the reporting data helps NHTSA to pinpoint the crashes that most necessitate closer review. The third amendment also made other important changes to eliminate certain requirements that imposed reporting burdens with little corresponding safety benefit to the agency from the information. Examples of those include eliminating the need for multiple entities to report the same crash and no longer requiring reports from entities every month even when an entity does not have any crashes to report in the month. Finally, the third amended SGO updated some of the timeframes in which reports were required, to align with the agency's review and follow-up timeframes more effectively, as well as refreshed the list of entities responsible for reporting.

NHTSA began receiving reports under the third amended SGO in June 2025. From this time through the end of 2025, NHTSA received reports of 517 alleged crashes involving ADS and 787 alleged crashes involving Level 2 ADAS. NHTSA regularly follows up with entities about the crashes they report. Since the third amended SGO took effect in June 2025 through July 2026, NHTSA's engagement with entities has contributed to the opening of seven formal investigations and prompted seven recalls. NHTSA publishes on its website the crash reports received under the SGO.⁹ NHTSA is developing a proposed rule to codify the SGO reporting requirements into NHTSA's regulations.¹⁰

c. FMVSS Modernization

As part of the AV Framework, NHTSA has initiated multiple rulemakings to modernize the FMVSS for ADS-equipped vehicles. These regulatory actions are designed to ensure that

⁹ See NHTSA, *Standing General Order on Crash Reporting: Download Summary Incident Report Data*, available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/laws-regulations/standing-general-order-crash-reporting>.

¹⁰ See Spring 2025 Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions, Dept. of Transp., RIN 2127-AM63, *Incident Reporting Requirements for Automated Driving Systems and Level 2 Advanced Driver Assistance Systems*, available at <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaViewRule?pubId=202504&RIN=2127-AM63>.

safety standards, many of which were written decades ago for human-driven vehicles, remain current and do not pose unnecessary regulatory barriers to the development and deployment of innovative new vehicle designs, particularly those lacking traditional manual controls. On March 16, 2026, NHTSA published two NPRMs proposing to amend the FMVSS to address the applicability of the standards to ADS-equipped vehicles without manual controls. These rulemakings span FMVSS No. 102, “Transmission shift position sequence, starter interlock and transmission braking effect,”¹¹ FMVSS No. 103, “Windshield defrosting and defogging systems,” and FMVSS No. 104, “Windshield wiping and washing systems.”¹² For FMVSS No. 102, NHTSA is proposing to modify the standard to except vehicles equipped with ADS that do not have manually operated driving controls from the requirement for a transmission shift position display.

In addition, NHTSA proposed modifications to FMVSS Nos. 103 and 104 to except from the standards vehicles equipped with ADS that do not have manually operated driving controls. This latter rulemaking would remove unnecessary regulatory burdens and costs associated with systems intended to provide visibility for a person driving the vehicle. On April 1, 2026, NHTSA published another, similar proposal to amend FMVSS No. 110, “Tire selection and rims and motor home/recreation vehicle trailer load carrying capacity information for motor vehicles with a GVWR of 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds) or less.”¹³ The proposed modification would amend a single section of the standard to enable compliance by affixing the required placard on the left side of the vehicle when there is not a “driver’s side” for vehicles equipped with ADS that do not have manually operated driving controls. In June 2026, NHTSA proposed to amend FMVSS No. 135, “Light vehicle brake systems” to distinguish how its requirements apply to

¹¹ NHTSA, *Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Modernization of FMVSS No. 102 To Accommodate ADS-Equipped Vehicles*, 91 FR 12532 (Mar. 16, 2026).

¹² NHTSA, *Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Modernization of FMVSS No. 103 and FMVSS No. 104 To Accommodate ADS-Equipped Vehicles; Incorporation by Reference*, 91 FR 12537 (Mar. 16, 2026).

¹³ NHTSA, *Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Modernization of FMVSS No. 110 To Accommodate ADS-Equipped Vehicles*, 91 FR 16172 (Apr. 1, 2026).

vehicles with and without manually operated driving controls.¹⁴ These proposed modifications would clarify definitions, telltale requirements, performance requirements, and test procedures in the standard and remove sections that are no longer relevant. Each of these rulemakings would maintain the level of safety performance required by the current standard. NHTSA has several additional rulemakings underway to maintain safety performance while removing unnecessary regulatory barriers.

d. ADS Performance Requirements

On March 10, 2026, NHTSA announced the commencement of a rulemaking process to establish performance requirements for ADS, which is expected to culminate in establishment of one or more FMVSS. As an FMVSS, performance requirements would need to meet the need for motor vehicle safety, be practicable, and be stated in objective terms.¹⁵ Test procedures for an FMVSS would also need to be objective and enable the manufacturer to ensure that the vehicle meets the standard's requirements.

e. Other Activities

Leading up to and since the announcement of the AV Framework, NHTSA has continuously engaged in a robust dialogue with stakeholders about a wide spectrum of issues pertaining to the advancement and oversight of vehicle automation. Through this dialogue, NHTSA has sought to identify opportunities to encourage vehicle safety improvements and understand potential regulatory barriers to the growth of ADS technologies in the United States. Such engagement has helped NHTSA identify prospective regulatory actions and established a strong foundation upon which future actions under the AV Framework will be charted.

NHTSA's stakeholder engagement in 2025 culminated in a public meeting held from November 20–21, 2025 on NHTSA's safety research portfolio. The first day of the public

¹⁴ NHTSA, *Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Modernization of FMVSS No. 135 To Accommodate ADS-Equipped Vehicles*, 91 FR 38593 (Jun. 26, 2026).

¹⁵ See 49 U.S.C. 30111.

meeting consisted of an ADS workshop, which included NHTSA overviews of important agency programs and activities involving ADS, as well as roundtable discussions centered around nine topics of interest: (1) exemptions: AVEP and part 555; (2) emergency responder interactions; (3) FMVSS modernization recommendations for ADS purpose-built vehicles (PBVs); (4) incident and data reporting; (5) State and local jurisdictional concerns; (6) near-term ADS performance assessment; (7) safety case components; (8) general desires and concerns relating to ADS regulation; and (9) other DOT modal discussions. NHTSA’s website contains more information about this public meeting, including recordings of many of the agency’s presentations.¹⁶

On December 11, 2025, NHTSA released the fourth volume of a research effort entitled “FMVSS Considerations for Vehicles with Automated Driving Safety.”¹⁷ This research concluded a multi-year initiative to identify existing FMVSS that pose potential obstacles for certain ADS technologies or for which conformity challenges exist for innovative new vehicle designs equipped with ADS. The research presented options for technical translations of select FMVSS and their test procedures to account better for ADS-dedicated vehicles, including those that lack manually operated driving controls. The final report spanned 23 FMVSS including the braking and electronic stability control (ESC) test methods for FMVSS Nos. 135 and 126; the heavy braking and ESC requirements associated with FMVSS Nos. 105, 121, and 136; the technical translations of FMVSS Nos. 122, 122a, 123, 131, 223, 224, 403, 404, and CFR part 571 subpart A; and potential unconventional seating barriers associated with FMVSS Nos. 201, 202a, 207, 209, 210, 214, 216a, 219, and 226. This research built on extensive engagement with a variety of stakeholders, research team experts, and subject matter experts. Upon the publication of this research, NHTSA published a notice in the *Federal Register* requesting comment on whether any changes have occurred in industry, product plans, new concepts that may have

¹⁶ See NHTSA Safety Research Portfolio Public Meeting: Fall 2025, available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/events/nhtsa-safety-research-portfolio-public-meeting-fall-2025#86141>.

¹⁷ See Stowe, Loren et al., *FMVSS Considerations for Vehicles With Automated Driving Systems: Volume 4* (2025), available at <https://doi.org/10.21949/hq4a-6m74>.

impacted the scope of the documented effort, and whether other issues may have been identified or newly emerged since the effort was carried out.¹⁸ The comment period for the technical translation research notice closed on February 13, 2026.

Next, on January 23, 2026, NHTSA published a notice and request for comments on a proposed Global Technical Regulation (GTR) for ADS.¹⁹ The draft GTR included provisions regarding the following:

- General Requirements for ADS-equipped vehicles: including requirements for the ADS to perform the Dynamic Driving Task, or DDT;
- The safety of interactions between the User and ADS;
- Manufacturer requirements, including the overall Safety Management System under which the ADS was developed;
- The testing system and environment that the manufacturer used to qualify the safe operation of the ADS;
- Requirements for the submission of a valid Safety Case for the ADS; and
- Post-deployment monitoring capabilities.

NHTSA sought comments on the draft GTR to help inform the position of the United States, including how the position could relate to any future actions regarding the safety and performance of ADS. The comment period for the GTR notice closed on March 10, 2026.

The GTR and the complementary U.N. Regulation were adopted on Wednesday, June 24, 2026, with the United States joining China, Japan, and Europe in voting in favor of the measure. This action marks the world's first unified, global regulatory framework for fully driverless, highly automated vehicles (SAE Level 4 and Level 5). Because major markets—including the European Union, China, the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Canada—strongly

¹⁸ See NHTSA, *Technical Translation Research; Request for Comment*, 90 FR 58087 (Dec. 15, 2025).

¹⁹ NHTSA, *Notice and Request for Comment; Proposal for a New United Nations Global Technical Regulation on Automated Driving Systems (ADS)*, 91 FR 2994 (Jan. 23, 2026).

backed and endorsed this GTR, this action offers stakeholders a standardized global roadmap and offers the potential for manufacturers to scale development pipelines across borders without rebuilding the fundamental safety and validation framework for every country.

Finally, NHTSA held a public meeting on March 10, 2026, to further the agency's dialogue with stakeholders regarding the Automated Vehicle (AV) Framework.²⁰ This meeting built upon the foundational technical discussions from the November 2025 ADS workshop and focused on identifying specific pathways for the domestic development and testing of Automated Driving Systems. The morning session featured keynote addresses from DOT leadership concerning current agency activities and the strategic direction of the AV Framework. The event also featured a robust discussion between NHTSA's administrator and AV CEOs from Aurora, Waymo, and Zoox. The afternoon session transitioned into an interactive workshop where NHTSA obtained granular stakeholder input on three primary pillars: (1) enhancing public road safety for current ADS operations; (2) identifying and mitigating regulatory barriers to innovation; and (3) establishing frameworks for commercial deployment to improve public mobility. Updates and additional details on the working group topics are posted at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/events/av-public-meeting-2026>. This engagement is designed to inform the agency's future guidance and potential rulemaking actions as it refines its oversight of evolving vehicle technologies. NHTSA opened a public docket (No. NHTSA-2026-0265) to receive written comments through April 10, 2026, ensuring that the insights gathered from both the meeting participants and the broader public are integrated into the agency's next steps under the AV Framework. The feedback received through these forums has informed NHTSA's subsequent engagement with stakeholders, including fostering dialogue with State and local regulators about how to strengthen coordination across the jurisdictional landscapes and minimize burdens from overlapping regulatory requirements.

²⁰ NHTSA, *NHTSA Automated Vehicle Safety Public Meeting: March 2026*, 91 FR 5801 (Feb. 9, 2026).

III. Public Participation

As NHTSA implements its AV Framework, NHTSA will continue to seek out and welcome public input. Although NHTSA is requesting comments on the interim part 555 Guidance and Enhanced Application Instructions specifically, NHTSA also welcomes suggestions for other future actions that will allow the U.S. to continue to lead the way toward the safe deployment of automated vehicles.

How do I prepare and submit comments?

Your comments must be written and in English. To ensure that your comments are correctly filed in the docket, please include the docket number indicated in this document in your comments.

Your comments must not be more than 15 pages long (49 CFR 553.21). NHTSA established this limit to encourage you to write your primary comments in a concise fashion. However, you may attach necessary additional documents to your comments. There is no limit on the length of the attachments.

If you are submitting comments electronically as a PDF (Adobe) file, NHTSA asks that the documents submitted be scanned using an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) process, thus allowing NHTSA to search and copy certain portions of your submissions.

How do I submit confidential business information?

You should submit a redacted “public version” of your comment (including redacted versions of any additional documents or attachments) to the docket using any of the methods identified under ADDRESSES. This “public version” of your comment should contain only the portions for which no claim of confidential treatment is made and from which those portions for which confidential treatment is claimed has been redacted. See below for further instructions on how to do this.

You also need to submit a request for confidential treatment directly to the Office of Chief Counsel. Requests for confidential treatment are governed by 49 CFR part 512. Your

request must set forth the information specified in part 512. This includes the materials for which confidentiality is being requested (as explained in more detail below); supporting information, pursuant to section 512.8; and a certificate, pursuant to section 512.4(b) and part 512, Appendix A.

You are required to submit to the Office of the Chief Counsel one unredacted “confidential version” of the information for which you are seeking confidential treatment. Pursuant to section 512.6, the words “ENTIRE PAGE CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION” or “CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION CONTAINED WITHIN BRACKETS” (as applicable) must appear at the top of each page containing information claimed to be confidential. In the latter situation, where not all information on the page is claimed to be confidential, identify each item of information for which confidentiality is requested within brackets: “[].”

You are also required to submit to the Office of the Chief Counsel one redacted “public version” of the information for which you are seeking confidential treatment. Pursuant to section 512.5(a)(2), the redacted “public version” should include redactions of any information for which you are seeking confidential treatment (*i.e.*, the only information that should be unredacted is information for which you are not seeking confidential treatment).

NHTSA is currently treating electronic submission as an acceptable method for submitting confidential business information to the Agency under part 512. Please do not send a hard copy of a request for confidential treatment to NHTSA’s headquarters. The request should be sent to Dan Rabinovitz in the Office of the Chief Counsel at Daniel.Rabinovitz@dot.gov or you may contact him for a secure file transfer link. Manufacturers or any companies that already have a Confidential Business Information (CBI) Portal account or an Enterprise Account with NHTSA should use the CBI Portal for their submission. If you submit a CBI request, please also email a courtesy copy of the request to Andrew Magaletti at Andrew.Magaletti@dot.gov.

Will the Agency consider late comments?

We will consider all comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated above under DATES. To the extent possible, we will also consider comments that the docket receives after that date.

How Can I Read the Comments Submitted by Other People?

You may read the materials placed in the docket for this document (e.g., the comments submitted in response to this document by other interested persons) at any time by going to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for accessing the dockets. You may also read the materials at the Docket Management Facility by going to the street address given above under **ADDRESSES**. The Docket Management Facility is open between 9 am and 5 pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Please note that even after the comment closing date, we will continue to file relevant information on the docket as it becomes available. Further, some people may submit late comments. Accordingly, we recommend that you periodically check the docket for new material.

Issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.95.

Jonathan Morrison,
Administrator.

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