



No steering wheel. No pedals.

Tesla's Cybercab hits the road

TDT | agencies

Waymo was already offering self-driving rides in US cities.

But its vehicles still had the familiar steering wheel and pedals.

Tesla, however, gets rid of those too.

Its Cybercab has no steering wheel, no pedals and no human driver — and is now entering the US robotaxi race against companies like Waymo and Uber.

First unveiled in October 2024, the gold-coloured Cybercab was designed specifically as a driverless taxi, with space for two passengers.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk recently posted an image of a Cybercab looming over Austin, Texas, with a cloud of dust behind it.

And the futuristic taxis are no longer just a concept.

Cybercabs have been spotted on Austin's streets, while passengers have started seeing the vehicle as an option on Tesla's updated app.

At an invite-only launch event in Austin, attendees reportedly became some of the first people to ride in the driverless Cybercabs. The vehicles are expected to become available to the public from Friday.

Musk has even predicted a "storm of Cybercabs" in the Texas capital.

Tesla says the vehicles could make transportation safer and easier, particularly for elderly and disabled passengers.

But Tesla is not starting from scratch. Last year, the company launched its Robotaxi service in Austin using Model Y SUVs, gradually expanding it to other cities in Texas, Florida and California.



There is, however, a catch.

Some state regulations still require a human supervisor or driver to be ready to take control if necessary.

Waymo, meanwhile, already operates its autonomous-hailing service in

11 US cities. Tesla had registered 314 robotaxis in Texas as of Wednesday, including 45 Cybercabs, according to FSD Database data based on Texas DMV records.

Analysts expect Tesla to take a slow approach to the rollout, learning from early users before expanding the service.

And that sets up a much bigger race. Can Tesla, Waymo and the other robotaxi companies make autonomous rides safe, scalable — and eventually cheaper than a human-driven taxi?

For now, Tesla is just getting started.



Volkswagen plant to be converted for Israeli defence group Rafael

AFP | Frankfurt, Germany

Crisis-wracked German auto giant Volkswagen said yesterday that one of its plants would be sold off and converted to make defence equipment after car production ends there.

It is part of a sweeping overhaul at Europe's top carmaker, which is already pushing through the biggest job-cutting drive in global auto industry history as it battles Chinese competition, US tariffs and patchy electric car sales.

The announcement is also the latest tie-up between Germany's ailing auto industry and the defence sector, which is booming as countries build up their militaries to face an increasingly dangerous world.

VW's Osnabrueck plant, in northwest Germany, is to be sold to Tel Aviv-based investors Aurelius Capital and the German state of Lower Saxony, a major VW shareholder, with an initial air defence project planned for the Israeli firm Rafael Advanced Defence Systems.



the sale price. "With today's agreement, we are taking an important step towards opening up a new industrial future for the site," Volkswagen CEO Oliver Blume said.

"Volkswagen stands by its responsibility for Osnabrueck," he said.

The company is seeking to slash production capacities as it struggles with weak demand, and had already decided in 2024 to end vehicle production at the factory by 2027.

The deal will guarantee that at least 1,200 out of 1,800 jobs are preserved at the factory, VW's works council said.

The project with Rafael

will focus on the potential manufacture of systems and components for air defence systems for Germany and Europe, the carmaker said, without giving further details.

"We are building a long-term industrial relationship with our German partners, with the aim that the technology will be fully produced in Germany, in order to protect Germany and Europe," said Yoav Tourgeman, Rafael's president and CEO.

The Osnabrueck site, which dates back 125 years, currently produces the Volkswagen T-Roc Cabriolet as well as the Cayman and Boxster for its sister brand Porsche.

HOW TO READ A CAR'S VIN NUMBER

A 17-character code that reveals your car's identity

WHERE TO FIND IT?

- On the dashboard (near the windshield)
- On the driver's side door frame
- In the registration papers
- Sometimes under the hood

VIN BREAKDOWN (EXAMPLE)

W A U Z Z Z F 3 4 P N 1 2 3 4 5 6

WMI (1-3) Manufacturer and country	VDS (4-9) Vehicle details (model, body type, engine etc.)	VIS (10-17) Model year, plant and serial number
1-3: WMI (World Manufacturer Identifier) - Identifies the manufacturer - First character often shows the country (e.g. W = Germany, J = USA, J = Japan, S = UK, M = India)	4-9: VDS (Vehicle Descriptor Section) Provides details like model, body style, engine type, safety features etc.	10-17: VIS (Vehicle Identifier Section) 10th character = Model year (e.g. P = 2023, R = 2024, S = 2025) 11th character = Assembly plant - Last 6 characters = Unique serial number of the vehicle

Why it's useful?

- Check vehicle history
- Verify authenticity and prevent fraud
- Find exact parts and recall information
- Useful when buying a used car

HOW TO READ A TYRE'S MANUFACTURING DATE

A 4-digit code that tells you when the tyre was made

UNDERSTANDING THE 4-DIGIT CODE

2423

Week Year

- First two digits = week of manufacture (01-52)
- Last two digits = year of manufacture (23 = 2023)

So, **2423** means the tyre was made in the 24th week of 2023 (June 2023).

WHERE TO LOOK?

- On the sidewall of the tyre (outside only)
- Look for a 4-digit number inside an oval or box, often after the letters "DOT"
- It may be on one side only, so check both sides if needed

WHY IT MATTERS?

- Tyres get harder over time, reducing grip and safety.
- Experts recommend replacing tyres after 6-10 years, regardless of tread.
- Helps you avoid buying old stock.

QUICK TIPS

- Always check the manufacturing date before buying new tyres.
- Choose the latest possible manufacture date.
- Even unused tyres can age over time.
- Keep your tyres in good condition and replace them when needed.

Know the numbers. Drive smarter.

SAFER CARS. HAPPIER JOURNIES.

US safety regulator probes Tesla's Cybercab

Washington, United States

US auto safety regulators have opened an inquiry into Tesla's driverless Cybercab, questioning how the company concluded that a vehicle with no steering wheel, pedals or mirrors meets federal safety rules.

In a filing late Thursday, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said it would examine the process and technical data Tesla relied on when certifying the two-seater vehicle.

The announcement came hours after the company began deploying the Cybercab commercially in Austin, Texas after a launch event.

In the United States, automakers certify their own vehicles as compliant with the federal standards.

Tesla notified the agency it had certified the Cybercab as meeting all applicable standards, and that it planned to widen deployment to more vehicles and more locations.

Tesla had registered 314 robotaxis in Texas as of Wednesday, including 45 Cybercabs, according to FSD Database, based on data from the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.