

Welcoming the

AUTOMATED VEHICLES ACT

BRIEFING PAPER

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WELCOMING THE AUTOMATED VEHICLES ACT

The Automated Vehicles (AV) Act 2024 marks a significant milestone in the evolution of transport safety within the United Kingdom. PACTS (Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety) welcomes this transformative legislation, recognising its potential to improve road safety in the UK. PACTS encourages the government to commit to continuing to work with all stakeholders to ensure that the deployment of automated vehicles is conducted in a manner that prioritises safety, benefits all road users, and leads to a more sustainable, equitable, and efficient transport system. By adhering to the principles of rigorous testing, continuous learning, and transparency, automated vehicles can make a positive contribution to our road safety objectives.

The Automated Vehicles Act is designed as framework legislation, aimed at establishing high-level principles and powers for the UK government to make regulations in the future. Among other things, it provides for a new authorisation regime under which self-driving vehicles would have to pass a “self-driving test” and satisfy a range of safety standards before they could be used on UK roads.

This Act, reflecting four years of meticulous review and [proposals from the Law Commission of England and Wales and the Scottish Law Commission](#), sets a foundation for rigorous regulatory frameworks that will ensure the safe deployment of self-driving vehicles. Entirely new concepts that the Law Commission recommended are provided for in the Act. This includes the concepts of an **‘Authorised Self-Driving Entity’** (ASDE).

GLOSSARY

Authorised Self-Driving Entity:

An entity that is responsible for vehicles when in automated mode

Transition demands:

A timed demand communicated by the vehicle, requiring the user-in-charge to assume control of the vehicle

User-In-Charge (UIC)

The human driver who, in vehicles which can only self-drive for part of the journey, would be responsible for non-driving responsibilities (road worthiness, maintenance, resuming control of the vehicle if notified of the need to do so), but not for how the vehicle self-drives.

No User-In-Charger (NUIC)

For vehicles which can self-drive for the entire journey, there would need to be a NUIC operator who oversees the non-driving elements of the journey

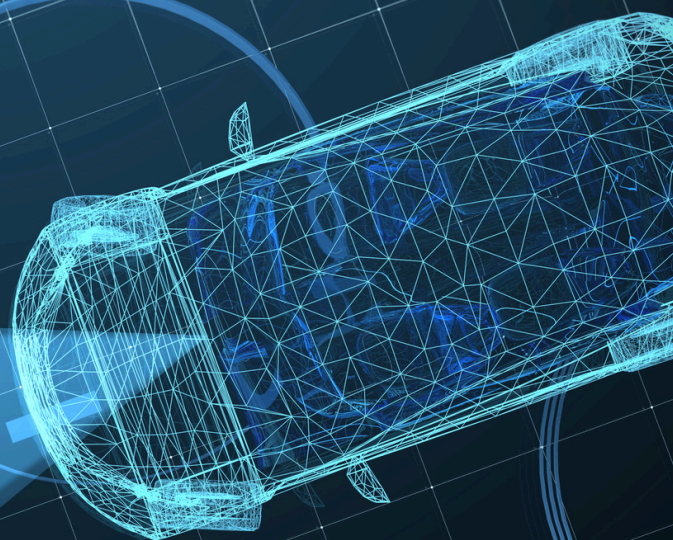
The Act sets out government powers to adapt existing type-approval regulations to set specific vehicle safety standards for self-driving vehicles and establish licensing schemes for wholly automated vehicle journeys. It also provides the government with regulatory and enforcement powers – including the ability to conduct broad investigations if a self-driving car is found to be involved in a road traffic incident.

STATEMENT OF SAFETY PRINCIPLES

A Statement of Safety Principles will set out further details of the safety expectations for self-driving vehicles and will be used to inform safety assessment across the self-driving regulatory framework. This will be designed to ensure that automated vehicles meet, if not surpass, the Lords' amendment to the Bill that 'authorized automated vehicles must achieve a level of safety equivalent to or higher than that of careful and competent human drivers'. This sets a high bar for safety in automated vehicle technology.

The Introduction of Automated Vehicles should improve safety for all road users, particularly the most vulnerable among us. The policy scoping notes published by the Government alongside the Bill highlight that the statement will include a safety principle relating to equality and fairness that would aim to ensure that the introduction of AVs does not adversely impact vulnerable road users.

"...authorized automated vehicles must achieve a level of safety equivalent to or higher than that of careful and competent human drivers"



DATA SHARING

The Automated Vehicles Act 2024 sets out requirements for data sharing for ensuring safety and regulatory compliance. The Act mandates Automated Self-Driving Entities (ASDEs) to collect and share data for three key purposes:

1. Monitoring and Reporting
2. Regulatory Compliance
3. Insurance Claims

Required data includes event data (incidents during self-driving) and exposure data (miles driven). Regulatory and insurance needs include activation/deactivation events, transition demands, and collision detection. Regulations may require ASDEs to share data with insurers, authorising necessary disclosures for legal proceedings, and criminalising unauthorized disclosures.

PACTS supports the principles advocating for transparency and the sharing of data concerning the operation of automated vehicles. The AV Act's emphasis on rigorous testing, continuous learning, and data sharing is crucial for building public trust and assurance of the technology's safety. The AV Act encourages operators to engage in open dialogues and share critical safety data, facilitating a collective effort towards the secure integration of automated vehicles into society.

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CONCLUSION

This Act represents a forward-thinking approach to integrating automated vehicles into the UK's transport ecosystem. By setting high safety standards, emphasizing the importance of data sharing and transparency, and ensuring improvements in safety for all road users, the Act lays the groundwork for a future where automated vehicles contribute positively to our road safety objectives.

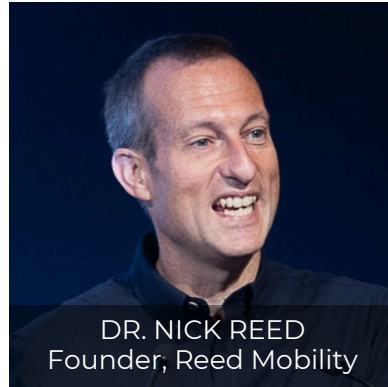
A precursor to AVs already existing as the package of life-saving features now available in the European Union and Northern Ireland. Various advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) are included in the General and Pedestrian Safety Regulations yet these have not been adopted by the UK Government. Simultaneously the first hands-off driving assistance system, for which research is incomplete, have been permitted on UK motorways. The roll-out and monitoring of semi-automated vehicles must be managed in line with research-based recommendations. The public must not be misled into a false sense of security believing vehicles have complete control, when they do not.

The AV Act represents a forward-thinking approach to integrating automated vehicles into the UK's transport ecosystem. To ensure the successful and safe deployment of automated vehicles, several critical questions need addressing: How will the UK ensure that safety metrics are fair and equitable, free from bias? Establishing transparent and inclusive safety measures is essential for public trust. Additionally, how will the UK measure AV safety performance? Standardized metrics, rigorous testing, and monitoring protocols must be developed. Finally, ensuring that different ADS providers' safety performance is measured using a representative, repeatable, and reproducible approach is crucial for consistent safety standards. By addressing these questions, the UK can foster a safer, more equitable transportation system, leading to significant advancements in road safety for all users.

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PACTS is pleased to publish this Briefing Paper, prepared by members of PACTS Vehicle Design Working Party, led by its Chair **Richard Cuerden** and with collaboration from **Dr Nick Reed** of Reed Mobility.



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