

Legal Expert Comments on Tesla's Robotaxi Launch and Implications for Product Liability

As Tesla Robotaxi Launch Nears, Product Defect Expert Warns: "We're Not Ready for This"

BEVERLY HILLS, CA, UNITED STATES, June 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With Tesla set to officially launch its robotaxi pilot program in Austin, Texas, on June 22, product defect attorney Donald R. Fountain, Jr. says the technology may be ready, but the legal system is not.

"There is no question that someday, most vehicles will be self-driving. But the open question is whether the law and the courts are prepared for what happens when things go wrong today," said Fountain, a board-certified civil trial attorney, partner at [Clark, Fountain, Littky-Rubin & Whitman](#), and author of [Defect Safety](#).



Donald R. Fountain, Jr. of Clark, Fountain, Littky-Rubin & Whitman

Tesla, now listed as an autonomous vehicle operator in the City of Austin, has already begun testing driverless vehicles in public. CEO Elon Musk has stated that the robotaxi launch will prove Tesla's Full Self-Driving (FSD) system is so far ahead of competitors that other automakers will be "forced" to license it.

But as Musk looks to reshape the future of transportation, Fountain says the rollout may also expose a troubling gap between innovation and accountability.

Fountain says it's not just the technology that needs scrutiny, it's the legal gray zones it opens up.

"These vehicles are essentially rolling computers," he explains. "They can be hacked, they rely on connectivity and satellite signals, and they're still being trained, not in labs, but on real streets, where people are walking dogs and pushing strollers."

He raises troubling hypotheticals: What if a parent sends a self-driving car to pick up a relative and there's an accident? What if a child manages to activate the vehicle alone? Who's liable if something goes wrong?

"These aren't far-fetched scenarios," Fountain adds. "They're the kinds of cases we're going to start seeing."

Fountain points out that traditional auto defect litigation has centered on mechanical failures: faulty brakes, defective airbags, malfunctioning seatbelts. But with autonomous vehicles, future lawsuits may hinge on software bugs, algorithm bias, or gaps in real-time data interpretation.

"Until recently, there was no such thing as a defect claim based on the idea that your car should've prevented a crash entirely," he says. "This opens a whole new frontier of product defect litigation and we're not ready."

He also raises concerns about how courts and insurers will adapt:

- Will 100's of millions of insurance policies need to be rewritten?
- Will insurance costs and rates change?
- Will innumerable state laws and federal regulations need to be redrafted?

Musk has said the initial rollout will be tightly geofenced and limited to a small fleet in Austin, but plans to scale nationally. He also indicated that existing Tesla owners with FSD capability could eventually convert their vehicles into robotaxis through a software update.

"The legal system was built for drivers and vehicles not for software and liability clouds," Fountain said. "This launch is going to test more than just safety systems. It's going to test the limits of our legal framework."

Fountain is available for legal commentary and analysis on the evolving intersection of product



liability and autonomous vehicle technology. He is a partner at Clark, Fountain, Littky-Rubin & Whitman, a nationally recognized personal injury firm, and the author of the book Defect Safety.

About Don Fountain

Don Fountain has secured over a billion dollars in verdicts and settlements over his 37-year career. His work protecting consumers has led to major safety improvements in vehicles, boats, tires, and everyday products. Double board certified by the Florida Bar and National Board of Trial Advocates, he is a founding partner at Clark, Fountain, Littky-Rubin & Whitman in West Palm Beach, Florida.

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