



Florida Law Creates Opportunity for AVs in the Sunshine State

Insights

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While many are aware testing of autonomous vehicles (AVs) is currently underway in states like California, Nevada, and Arizona, few realize Florida has created a legal framework to attract companies to build and test AV technology.

In 2012, the Florida legislature passed a law that allows anyone with a valid driver's license to operate an AV. However, before companies could test AVs, they were required to submit proof of \$5 million in insurance coverage.

Since then, however, Florida has continued to create more opportunities for testing and operation in the Sunshine State. In 2016, lawmakers passed new statutes that eliminated some of the previous requirements, including the requirement of \$5 million in insurance coverage. The new law also got rid of the requirement that a human operator be present in the vehicle, as long as the operator can be alerted in case of technology failure and is able to remotely stop the vehicle.

As a result, Florida has created a single statewide standard for autonomous vehicles that should assist the industry in similar ways that Uber and Lyft benefited from Florida's uniform ride-sharing law. There are now no requirements for additional permitting, licensing, or approval from any state or local government body to operate an autonomous vehicle in Florida.

The state's efforts to attract AVs has slowly resulted in companies arriving to test this technology.

For example, Voyage, a self-driving taxi service, has started operating in The Villages in Central Florida. Transdev is starting shuttle service in the autonomous-only community of Babcock Ranch near the Lee-Charlotte county line. An most notably, Ford announced that it is currently operating and testing a fleet of autonomous delivery vehicles to transport food and other products to customers. Ford will benefit from testing the AVs in Miami as the city is home to plenty of businesses that deliver and residents who are already familiar with ordering products online.

Ford has also created key partnerships with Domino's and the on-demand delivery company Postmates to study how people will interact and respond to deliveries from autonomous vehicles. While much of the focus on AVs has surrounded the development of the technology and the regulations that will govern the industry, there are also key questions related to how employees and customers will interact with the technology. For example, how will employees know when to load products into a driverless vehicle? Where will the products be stored in the vehicle? And how will

products into a driverless vehicle? where will the products be stored in the vehicle? And how will AV companies maximize the utilization of their technology? Additionally, will customers be willing to walk out to an autonomous vehicle to pick up their order and if so how will they know where their products are located within the vehicle?

To answer these questions, Ford's deliveries will actually be piloted to customers with a human passenger behind tinted glass, who will observe how customers collect their goods and assist the customers if anything goes wrong.

Ford hopes that the test fleet will provide enough information to successfully launch an autonomous taxi and delivery service by 2021. The information and data Ford and its partners will obtain from delivering products in Miami will likely provide insights into consumer behavior and the role delivery drivers will have in the future. By gaining an understanding of consumer preferences and reactions to autonomous vehicles, employers can begin strategizing about how to best take advantage of autonomous vehicles in the future.

Employers in Florida can monitor developments in autonomous vehicle industry by visiting [Autonomous Florida](#), a program of the Florida Chamber of Commerce.

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