

### **Anthony G.'s Essay**

Imagine you are a passenger in a car casually driving down an open lane on the road. All of a sudden, a large semi-truck makes a turn and pulls out in front of you, causing you to slam into the rear of the vehicle. You are free of injury, but the driver is not. You quickly get out of the car to call for help, assess the damage, and check to see if the driver of the truck is injured. As you approach the vehicle, you see that there is nobody in the driver's seat. It's a self-driving, autonomous vehicle. Now what? How do you explain the cause of the accident and determine who will be liable for the injury of the driver and damage of both vehicles?

Self-driving vehicles have been perceived as futuristic ideas that may never actually become a reality. This misconception is not the way things have turned out to be in the world today. More and more autonomous vehicles are hitting the roads every day. Companies such as Tesla and Google believe that autonomous transportation is the future. However, this comes with a downside. Just like any human driver, automated vehicles are not perfect and are still susceptible to collisions. If a self-driven automobile was to cause an accident, who should be at fault and liable for the damage?

When a large, autonomous vehicle causes a collision with injuries, the situation should be handled nearly the same as if it were a human driving the automated vehicle. It shouldn't matter which automobile caused the collision, if it is that car's fault, then the owner of that vehicle should be responsible for the damage. In the case of a collision involving an automated vehicle, there is one thing that could tell the story of the entire event: the self-driven vehicle's cameras. Every autonomous vehicle has cameras and sensors that read the road and detect surrounding obstacles. These cameras are often used as dash-cams because of their ability to record video. Therefore, it makes perfect sense that in the case of a collision, the vehicle's cameras could be used to record the accident and be used as evidence to determine the cause. The cameras could tell the story of the event from the perspective of the autonomous vehicle, which would actually be more accurate of a story than if two people were to explain the outcome of the collision. Camera recordings would also be helpful in a situation where the owner of the opposing vehicle may be unable to truthfully and accurately tell their side of the story. If needed, the video recordings could be used as concrete evidence in a court trial.

If the cause of the accident is determined to be human error, then the case should be handled as usual by claiming the driver was at fault and responsible for the damage of both vehicles. However, if the collision was caused by a mechanical error or software malfunction, then the case should involve a lawsuit against the manufacturer of that vehicle. For example, if the brakes failed or software crashed, the manufacturer of the self-driven automobile should be liable for all damage and/or injuries. In this case, the attorney of the victim and a representative of the vehicle's manufacturer should either negotiate a settlement or proceed in carrying out a trial.

Though self-driving vehicles are supposed to be less likely to cause a collision, it is absolutely necessary to have a plan if such a case were to occur. Automated vehicles are not yet perfect and still have the chance to cause collisions. There are many benefits to having autonomous vehicles on the road, but accidents caused by these automobiles can result in legal procedures that are much more complicated to handle than collisions involving two human drivers. Automated vehicles seem to be the way of the future, so it is becoming more important to think about these procedures every day.