



PRELIMINARY REPORT

HIGHWAY

HWY18FH014

*The information in this preliminary report is subject to change and may contain errors.
It will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.*

On Friday, June 15, 2018, about 5:30 p.m., Pacific daylight time, a 2014 Tesla Model S electric-powered passenger car, occupied by a 44-year-old male driver, was traveling westbound on Santa Monica Boulevard, in West Hollywood, Los Angeles County, California. Motorists flagged down the Tesla driver because they saw smoke coming from the vehicle. The driver stopped the Tesla next to the north-side curb in the 7800 block of Santa Monica Boulevard and exited the vehicle. A nearby Los Angeles Police Department patrol car also stopped, and the officers directed traffic around the burning car. The Los Angeles County Fire Department responded to the vehicle fire, dispatching an engine unit from station #8, which is located at 7643 Santa Monica Boulevard. The fire was extinguished, and there were no injuries. The vehicle was towed from the scene without incident.

The NTSB obtained a video of the event taken by the driver after he exited the vehicle. The NTSB also obtained a video taken by a bystander. A preliminary examination of the driver's video showed smoke coming from the underside of the Tesla after the driver had stopped it at the curb (see figure 1).



Figure 1. View of the Tesla looking east from the north side of Santa Monica Boulevard. (Source: driver video)

The bystander video recorded that, a few minutes later, flames were coming from under the Tesla on both the left and right sides, aft of the front wheels and extending under the front doors (see figure 2). The video also showed police and fire department personnel, as well as bystanders walking by the vehicle near the smoke during the incident.



Figure 2. View of the left side of the Tesla, showing flames coming from the vehicle's underside. (Source: bystander video)

Smoke and flames were still coming from the vehicle as the fire engine arrived on the scene about 5:40 p.m. Los Angeles County firefighters wearing self-contained breathing apparatus responded to the fire and applied both water and foam. The flames were quickly extinguished, but smoke continued to come from the vehicle. Firefighters removed portions of the vehicle's left front fender and under-hood trim, severed the high voltage cut loop, and applied additional water and foam under the hood and behind the front wheels. The fire captain estimated that less than 300 gallons of water and foam were applied during the event.



Figure 3. View of the Tesla and a firefighter after water and foam had been applied to the vehicle. (Source: Tesla Inc.)

While on scene, the firefighters consulted by telephone with Tesla representatives about how best to contain and secure the vehicle. Tesla advised the firefighters of the possibility of re-ignition until the vehicle's battery was completely cooled. The fire captain decided to remove the vehicle from the scene. According to the fire department event log, the responders cleared the scene at

6:28 p.m., by which time the fire operations were complete, and the vehicle was towed from the scene.

To investigate the circumstances of the fire, Tesla arranged to take possession of the vehicle from the owner. The vehicle was moved to the Tesla service center in Burbank, California. While at the service center, Tesla conducted an initial safety inspection and removed the battery pack and its cover to drain the remaining electrical charge from the battery. The vehicle was then reassembled and relocated for further inspection. The NTSB was provided with information from the initial inspection and participated in the subsequent inspection.

The NTSB initiated an investigation into this incident to obtain information about electric-powered vehicle fires. The NTSB will use information from this and other investigations, including vehicle crashes involving postcrash fires in Lake Forest, California; Mountain View, California; and Fort Lauderdale, Florida; to address safety issues encountered by first responders and others during crash scene stabilization and vehicle recovery operations involving electric-powered vehicles. All aspects of the incident remain under investigation.