# General Motors' Cruise to Test Robotaxis with Human Safety Drivers in Arizona



General Motors' autonomous vehicle unit, Cruise, announced on May 13, 2024, that it will begin testing robotaxis with human safety drivers on board in Arizona this week. The testing is set to start in Phoenix and will expand to other cities including Scottsdale, Tempe, Mesa, Gilbert, Chandler, and Paradise Valley. The initiative aims to evaluate the performance of autonomous vehicles against the company's stringent safety and performance standards.

The decision for a human presence in the robotaxis is to ensure control can be taken if necessary, as Cruise moves towards resuming operations without drivers. This testing process follows an incident in October when a Cruise autonomous Chevrolet Bolt in San Francisco dragged a pedestrian several meters after the individual was hit by a human-driven vehicle. This incident led to a suspension of Cruise's license in California and a significant restructuring within the company, including leadership changes and layoffs.

Phil Koopman, a professor from Carnegie Mellon University who studies autonomous vehicle safety, commented that Phoenix's broader roads and less congested environment compared to San Francisco make it a suitable location for these tests. The area faces less stringent regulations which may aid Cruise in refining their technology in a less challenging traffic environment.