SURFACE VEHICLE RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

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Recommendations for ADS-DVs to Accommodate the Needs of People with Disabilities

RATIONALE

Recent technological developments have enabled companies to pilot and prepare for the deployment of transportation services provided by Automated Driving Systems-Dedicated Vehicles (ADS-DVs). As ADS-DV deployments mature, the need to accommodate users with various mobility, sensory, and cognitive disabilities will grow. This document is intended to provide recommendations to manufacturers and developers as they strive to accommodate the needs of populations that are traditionally not the focus of vehicle design.

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1. SCOPE

ADS-DVs promise to expand transportation options for individuals who have been historically underserved in personal transportation. However, for this to be truly realized, the unique needs of persons with disabilities (PWDs; including those who are deaf and hard of hearing, blind, have low vision, have upper body limitations, have lower body limitations, are wheelchair users, and have cognitive disabilities) should be understood at the design stage of vehicle development.

This document presents a list of recommendations for use in the design and development of ADS-DVs based on the identified needs of PWDs. It considers the accessibility of services used to interact with the ADS-DV before the trip and the complete trip (including planning the trip and requesting the vehicle, determining a pickup location, finding the vehicle, authenticating the user, entering the vehicle, interacting with the vehicle while inside, determining a drop-off location, exiting the vehicle, and finding the destination). The presented recommendations attempt to address most disabilities and enable independent travel. However, it is understood that certain populations may not be included due to technical or other limitations. The focus is on those who are willing and able to travel independently. Additionally, while some accessibility recommendations can benefit everyone, it is worth acknowledging that some may involve trade-offs among individuals or groups. Although this document does not explicitly address such trade-offs, they should be considered when applying any of the presented recommendations.

2. REFERENCES

2.1 Applicable Documents

The following publications form a part of this specification to the extent specified herein. Unless otherwise indicated, the latest issue of SAE publications shall apply.

2.1.1 SAE Publications

Available from SAE International, 400 Commonwealth Drive, Warrendale, PA 15096-0001, Tel: 877-606-7323 (U.S. and Canada only) or +1 724-776-4970 (outside U.S. and Canada), www.sae.org.

SAE J1725 Structural Modification for Personally Licensed Vehicles to Meet the Transportation Needs of Persons with Disabilities

SAE J2092 Testing of Wheelchair Lifts for Entry to or Exit from a Personally Licensed Vehicle

SAE J2093 Design Considerations for Wheelchair Lifts for Entry to or Exit from a Personally Licensed Vehicle

SAE J2249 Wheelchair Tiedown and Occupant Restraint Systems for Use in Motor Vehicles

SAE J2395 ITS In-Vehicle Message Priority

SAE J2831 Development of Design and Engineering Recommendations for In-Vehicle Alphanumeric Messages

SAE J2988 Guidelines for Speech Input and Audible Output in a Driver Vehicle Interface

SAE J3016 Taxonomy and Definitions for Terms Related to Driving Automation Systems for On-Road Motor Vehicles

SAE J3163 Taxonomy and Definitions for Terms Related to Shared Mobility and Enabling Technologies

SAE J3171 Identifying Automated Driving System-Dedicated Vehicles (ADS-DVs) Passenger Issues for Persons with Disabilities

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3. DEFINITIONS

ADS-DV (Automated Driving System-Dedicated Vehicle): An ADS-equipped vehicle for driverless operation under routine/normal operating conditions during all trips within its given operational design domain (if any) (refer to SAE J3016).

DISABILITY: Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, sensory, or functional limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic, evident or not, that hinders a person's complete and equal participation in society.[1] The following disabilities are covered in this document: Blind, Low Vision, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Cognitive Disability, Upper Body Limitation, Lower Body Limitation, and Wheelchair Users.

BLIND [Disability]: This describes persons with visual acuity that cannot be corrected to better than 20/200 and restricted field vision of less than 20 degrees (American Optometric Association).[2]

LOW VISION [Disability]: This describes a vision problem that makes it hard for an individual to do everyday activities. It cannot be corrected with glasses, contact lenses, or other standard treatments such as medication or surgery (National Eye Institute).[3]

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING [Disability]: Deaf refers to profound hearing loss so severe that there is very little or no functional hearing. Hard of Hearing refers to a hearing loss ranging from mild to severe, where there is enough residual hearing that an auditory device, such as a hearing aid, provides adequate assistance in processing speech (World Health Organization).[4]

COGNITIVE DISABILITY [Disability]: This refers to individuals with limitations or challenges in performing one or more types of cerebral tasks. It includes a broad range of conditions such as intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders, severe and persistent mental illness, brain injury, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and other dementias (Federal Communications Commission).[5] The recommendations in this document are intended to support the design of environments for individuals with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities who are able, willing, and supported by their personal network to travel independently.

UPPER BODY LIMITATION [Disability]: This refers to individuals with limitations or challenges in using their upper body. Primary causes of these limitations include accidents, work-related injuries, old age, disease, congenital disabilities, and other factors, resulting in disorders such as aches and pains in the shoulders, arms, wrists, hands, fingers, and neck, as well as the inability to move limbs or the upper body.

LOWER BODY LIMITATION [Disability]: This refers to individuals with limitations or challenges in using the lower body, specifically the legs, lower back, hips, feet, and pelvis. Examples include people who use walkers, canes, or crutches, as well as those with chronic fatigue.

WHEELCHAIR USERS [Disability]: This refers to individuals who rely on a wheelchair for mobility due to a disability. Some wheelchair users can transfer themselves out of their wheelchairs, stow them within the vehicle, and then reverse the process to exit the vehicle. At the same time, others may be unable to do so independently.

SIGN LANGUAGE: A means by which persons who are profoundly deaf can communicate with others. Sign language is culturally relevant and possesses linguistic characteristics that designers should be familiar with.

BRAILLE DISPLAY OR REFRESHABLE BRAILLE DISPLAY: A refreshable braille display is a device with small pins that electronically moves up and down through six holes, representing a braille cell. They contain a row of these cells, and the number of cells displayed varies. Users move their fingers across the cells as if reading braille on paper. The pins move up and down, reflecting the words on the computer screen. Braille displays can range in size from the length of a computer keyboard to being small enough to be portable, and they can interface with smartphones and tablets.[6]

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[1] Retrieved December 2022 from: Bill C-81 Chapter 10
[2] Retrieved December 2023 from: Definitions of Blindness and Low Vision | National Technical Assistance Center (msstate.edu)
[3] Retrieved August 2024 from: Low Vision | National Eye Institute (nih.gov)
[4] Retrieved December 2023 from: Deafness and hearing loss (who.int)
[5] Retrieved December 2023 from: Cognitive Disabilities | Federal Communications Commission (fcc.gov)
[6] Retrieved December 2022 from: What Is Braille? | American Foundation for the Blind

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SPEECH IMPEDIMENT: Includes people who stutter profoundly and have slurred speech, making voice recognition problematic, if not impossible.

ALTERNATIVE AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATIONS (AAC): This encompasses the communication methods used to supplement or replace speech or writing for those with impairments in the production or comprehension of spoken or written language.[7]

4. MOMENTS IN AN ADS-DV JOURNEY

An ADS-DV journey visualizes the steps a user takes to request an ADS-DV, enabling them to travel from point A to point B. Moments are the points of interaction along this journey that the user navigates to accomplish the goal of traveling from point A to point B. The interaction begins with trip planning and concludes when the user reaches their destination. In this document, nine moments have been identified for the ADS-DV journey. These are:

1. Trip planning and requesting a vehicle
2. Pick-up location
3. Find ADS-DV
4. Authentication
5. Ingress
6. In-vehicle interactions
7. Drop-off location
8. Egress
9. Find the destination

Trip planning and requesting a vehicle: Trip planning and requesting a vehicle is the point when the user goes through the steps to request a trip and monitor the vehicle's progress to the pick-up location. The user enters their location and destination and indicates any additional affordances they may need.

Pick-up location: Pick-up location is where the ADS-DV comes to pick up the user.

Find ADS-DV: Find ADS-DV refers to the process by which users locate and navigate to their requested vehicle.

Authenticate: Authenticate refers to the process by which the user provides information to the ADS-DV to verify their credentials and gain access to enter the vehicle.

Ingress: Ingress refers to the process by which the user enters the vehicle, becomes situated, and is secured. It may include a service animal.

In-vehicle interactions: In-vehicle interactions encompass all the interactions with the vehicle from pick-up to drop-off, primarily through the in-vehicle user interfaces.

Drop-off location: Drop-off location is where the vehicle stops for the user to exit and continue to their destination.

Egress: Egress refers to the process by which the user disembarks from the vehicle upon arrival at the drop-off location. It may include a service animal.

Find destination: Find destination focuses on getting the user oriented to complete their trip.

[7] Retrieved August 2024 from: Augmentative and alternative communication - Wikipedia

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4.1 Document Organization

Many of the recommendations for making ADS-DVs accessible to PWDs are universal. For example, mobile devices are accessible using a variety of modalities such as text-to-speech, haptic feedback, and support augmented communications. For ease of reading, the recommendations in this document have been organized under the moments described above. Recommendations are based on focus groups, interviews, literature reviews, and industry accessibility standards/guidelines. A report from the Ford Motor Company containing the background for most of the recommendations is included in Appendix A. The sections below contain those recommendations.

5. TRIP PLANNING AND REQUESTING A VEHICLE

5.1 All ADS-DV Users

5.1.1 Mobile applications used to interact with a vehicle or service, as well as in-vehicle interfaces, should adhere to accessibility guidelines, such as those set out by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

5.1.2 Developers should ensure that mobile apps used to summon a vehicle adhere closely to device manufacturers' guidelines on accessible design.

5.1.3 Provide remote human assistance or support (not limited to emergencies).

5.1.4 Provide emergency interfaces (including but not limited to emergency stop) in the vehicle and, if relevant, on the app that account for a wide range of potential emergencies and a wide range of accessibility needs.

5.1.5 Developers should seek to provide accessibility by default. Where that is not feasible, developers should consider how users identify themselves or are identified as having special needs. An accessibility profile is recommended to identify the following user accessibility information:

a. Preferred language.

b. Use of walking aids (e.g., assistive canes, crutches, walkers).

c. Use of wheelchair.

d. Use of alternative augmentative communication (AAC).

e. Communication abilities and degree of sensory impairment or sensitivity (e.g., sight, hearing, touch).

Accessibility information is personally identifiable information that may be especially sensitive and must be protected with particular care.

5.2 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

5.2.1 ADS-DV summon websites and mobile applications should provide sign language options, such as American Sign Language (ASL), or other accessible options (e.g., TTY [text-telephony]/RTT [real-time text] or video relay service) where appropriate for deaf persons.

5.2.2 Mobile apps for ADS-DV summons should include non-auditory (visual or haptic) feedback for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

5.2.3 ADS-DV summon websites and mobile apps should use pictures, graphics, or icons/symbols to communicate where appropriate.

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5.3 Cognitive Disability

5.3.1 Follow W3C guidelines for designing for people with cognitive disabilities. ADS-DV summon websites and mobile apps should provide information in plain language.

5.3.2 Use descriptive information and supplement text with images, symbols, and illustrations.

5.3.3 Provide users with multimodal input options (manual, verbal, or haptic).

5.3.4 Provide users adequate time as needed to complete the task.

5.3.5 Provide consistent and predictable steps for users to navigate the trip planning interface.

5.3.6 Ensure trip planning steps do not rely on memory.

5.3.7 Provide support for adaptation and personalization.

5.3.8 Provide destination address prediction, grammar, and spelling software and tools.

5.3.9 Use short sentences and simple language.

5.3.10 Use a bulleted list.

5.3.11 Use one idea per paragraph.

5.3.12 Display text in active voice and avoid unnecessary jargon.

5.4 Blind

5.4.1 Enable the use of a portable braille display interaction.

6. PICK-UP LOCATION

6.1 All ADS-DV Users

6.1.1 Pick-up locations should be:

a. Clear of obstacles.

b. As close as possible to the requested pick-up location.

c. As close as possible to the curb/sidewalk/roadside to enable direct step-in or step-out.

d. On the same side of the road as the user’s requested pick-up location.

e. Such that users do not need to navigate through a parking lot.

6.2 Lower Body Limitation, Wheelchair

6.2.1 ADS-DVs should be directed to accessible onboarding locations. This information includes the location of curb cutouts, accessible entrances, and the ground slope.

6.2.2 An ADS-DV should stop nearer to an accessible entrance of a building, not necessarily the main entrance.

6.2.3 If users choose, the ADS-DV should stop downhill from the user’s origin rather than uphill.

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6.2.4 An ADS-DV should stop clear of obstructions, including curbs or other vehicles, to provide space for users who can transfer out of and load their wheelchairs without assistance.

7. FIND ADS-DV

7.1 All ADS-DV Users

7.1.1 Provide remote human assistance or support (not limited to emergencies).

7.2 Cognitive Disability, Low Vision, Wheelchair

7.2.1 Where possible, pick-up locations should be visually unobstructed for line of sight.

7.3 Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Cognitive Disability, Blind, Low Vision

7.3.1 Users should receive instructions on how to navigate to and from their vehicle. Similarly, the vehicle's location should be accurately detailed for the user. This information should be provided through multimodal feedback.

7.3.2 Mobile apps used to interact with a vehicle or service, as well as in-vehicle interfaces, should adhere to accessibility guidelines, such as those set out by the W3C.

7.4 Blind, Low Vision

7.4.1 Clear verbal instructions should be provided to describe the vehicle, including vehicle type, size, color, and other distinguishing features.

7.4.2 Avoid using maps exclusively to depict location, as this may not be apparent to individuals with sight loss; instead, use turn-by-turn instructions.

7.4.3 There should be a non-visual method to locate the vehicle, such as auditory signals (e.g., horn or other sound).

7.4.4 To the extent possible, the vehicle’s external surface should be marked with tactile and/or braille signage, which should be communicated when the vehicle is booked.

7.5 Cognitive Disability

7.5.1 Include multimodal external display(s) on the vehicle to communicate location and to help riders locate the vehicle.

7.5.2 Mobile apps for communicating ADS-DV’s location information are recommended to follow W3C guidelines for designing for people with cognitive disabilities and provide information in simple, straightforward, easy-to-understand language.

7.6 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

7.6.1 Mobile apps that communicate ADS-DV’s location information to the deaf and hard of hearing should utilize non-auditory (haptic or visual) feedback.

8. AUTHENTICATION

8.1 All ADS-DV Users

8.1.1 Provide a means for ADS-DV to verify the user’s identity and vice versa.

8.1.2 Mobile apps used to interact with a vehicle or service, as well as in-vehicle interfaces, should adhere to accessibility guidelines, such as those set out by the W3C.

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8.1.3 Developers should ensure that mobile apps used to summon a vehicle adhere closely to device manufacturers' guidelines on accessible design.

8.1.4 Provide remote human assistance or support (not limited to emergencies).

8.2 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

8.2.1 Mobile apps for authenticating ADS-DVs to deaf and hard-of-hearing people should utilize multimodal (haptic or visual) feedback.

8.2.2 ADS-DV authentication mobile apps should provide sign language options, such as American Sign Language (ASL), or other accessible options (e.g., TTY [text-telephony]/RTT [real-time text] or video relay service) where appropriate for deaf persons.

8.3 Cognitive Disability

8.3.1 Mobile apps for communicating ADS-DV's location information should provide the information in plain language.

8.3.2 Include multimodal methods to enable access to the vehicle.

9. INGRESS

9.1 All ADS-DV Users

9.1.1 Seats and grab bars, if needed, should be easily identifiable and reachable.

9.2 Blind, Low Vision

9.2.1 Vehicles should provide adequate space for a user accompanied by a service animal to board a vehicle safely.

9.2.2 Adequate time should be provided for the user to settle and, if necessary, to position their service animal safely.

9.3 Wheelchair, Lower Body Limitation

9.3.1 Adequate time should be provided for the rider to ingress, e.g., stow their wheelchair, etc.

9.3.2 A chairlift or a ramp should be provided for those who cannot transfer to gain entry to an ADS-DV.

9.3.3 For those who can transfer, the seat height should allow them to transfer from outside the vehicle, first positioning their buttocks and torso (also known as the two-feet strategy), before moving into the vehicle.

9.3.4 Allow riders to easily store their wheelchair or mobility device in an ADS-DV and allow them to store their wheelchair in the ADS-DV easily.

9.4 Upper Body Limitation

9.4.1 Automated door opening based on user input.

9.4.2 Grab handles that are not located above shoulder height.

10. IN-VEHICLE INTERACTIONS

10.1 All ADS-DV Users

10.1.1 Any onboard systems that require users to interact with a vehicle should be multimodal and be usable by providing spoken commands along with high luminance contrast displays.

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10.1.2 Where feasible, onboard systems should be operable and compatible with a user's portable device.

10.1.3 Mobile apps used to interact with a vehicle or service, as well as in-vehicle interfaces, should adhere to accessibility guidelines, such as those set out by the W3C.

10.1.4 Developers should ensure that mobile apps that interact with a vehicle adhere closely to device manufacturers' guidelines on accessible design.

10.1.5 Provide remote human assistance or support (not limited to emergencies).

10.1.6 Provide a means within the vehicle for users to safely terminate their trip.

10.2 Cognitive Disability, Blind, Low Vision

10.2.1 Make user interfaces apparent and discernible through touch and sound without activating the function (touching the volume knob alone does not change the volume). A screen reader can deliver the sound aspect.

10.2.2 Communicate touchscreen control status through touch and sound without activating the user interface. A screen reader can deliver the sound aspect.

10.2.3 User interfaces should be consistently located across the fleet, i.e., placed to make operation easily identifiable.

10.2.4 Color coding is not recommended as the only means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element.

10.3 Low Vision, Upper Body Limitation

10.3.1 Larger touchscreen targets, e.g., based on those set out by the W3C to enable easier interaction.

10.4 Cognitive Disability

10.4.1 The content of information is recommended not to depend on specific senses (e.g., vision or sound). However, if the content cannot avoid relying on one particular sense (e.g., a red-light image), provision of alternatives (e.g., a word "stop" in text format) is required.

10.4.2 Information should be presented in a means whereby:

a. No prior knowledge or memory is required to understand it.

b. Standard conventions, words, pictures, and symbols used in any information are readily understandable.

c. Consider the user's social, cultural, and geographical background when designing information that will be presented; do not be specific to one group.

d. Use non-linguistic methods (where possible) to make it easier for users who do not understand language adequately.

10.4.3 For users who may be unfamiliar with a specific service (due to developmental or cognitive disabilities or other reasons), optimize the provision of the following information:

a. Ability to store previous trip information (e.g., footpath, station or stop, route or transfer information).

b. Assignment of priority to known routes when planning a new trip.

c. Warning to user, parent, caregiver, or guardian when the user is off a known route.

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10.5 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

10.5.1 In-vehicle interaction should include non-auditory (haptic or visual) feedback.

10.5.2 ADS-DV in-vehicle interaction should provide sign language options, such as American Sign Language (ASL), or other accessible options (e.g., TTY [text-telephony]/RTT [real-time text] or video relay service) where appropriate for deaf persons.

10.5.3 The seating inside ADS-DV should allow users to have a visual line of sight to communicate with other users.

10.6 Upper Body Limitation

10.6.1 All user interfaces should be located below shoulder height and within reach of the left and right hands.

10.6.2 Adjustable key repeat timing (when a control is continuously actuated via press and hold, multiple inputs are repeated) allows users to adjust the time before the repeating starts.

10.7 Wheelchair

10.7.1 User interfaces should be reachable from a secured wheelchair seating position.

10.7.2 Users who remain within their wheelchairs will also require specialized securement for their wheelchairs inside an ADS-DV.

10.8 Low Vision

10.8.1 Onboard information or physical indicators (such as buttons) should be easily identifiable.

11. DROP-OFF LOCATION

11.1 All ADS-DV Users

11.1.1 Drop-off locations should be:

a. Clear of obstacles.

b. As close as possible to the requested destination.

c. As close to the curb/sidewalk/roadside as possible to enable step-out.

d. On the same side of the road as the user’s requested destination.

11.2 Lower Body Limitation, Wheelchair

11.2.1 ADS-DVs should be provided with accessible off-boarding locations. This information includes the location of curb cutouts, accessible entrances, and ground slope. An ADS-DV should stop nearer to an accessible entrance of a building, not necessarily the main entrance.

11.2.2 An ADS-DV should stop clear of obstructions, including curbs or other vehicles, to provide space for users who can transfer out of and load their wheelchairs without assistance.

11.3 Wheelchair

11.3.1 An ADS-DV should stop nearer to an accessible entrance of a building, not necessarily the main entrance.

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12. EGRESS

12.1 All ADS-DV Users

12.1.1 A vehicle should not depart until the user has either dismissed the ride or left the area.

12.1.2 Seats and grab bars, if needed, should be easily identifiable and reachable.

12.1.3 Users should be given adequate notice of their upcoming arrival and their arrival to the destination.

12.2 Cognitive Disability, Blind, Low Vision

12.2.1 Users should be given additional time to disembark themselves and their service animal.

12.3 Lower Body Limitation, Wheelchair

12.3.1 Adequate time should be provided for the rider to egress, e.g., unload their mobility device, etc.

12.3.2 A chairlift or a ramp should be provided for those who can transfer to exit an ADS-DV.

12.3.3 For those who can transfer, the seat height should allow someone to swing their legs out and stand for egress.

12.4 Blind, Low Vision

12.4.1 Users should be notified when the vehicle has stopped at the destination.

12.5 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

12.5.1 ADS-DV should have doors open automatically or through a non-manual entry method at the drop-off location.

NOTE: This will enable deaf users to continue communicating as they exit the vehicle without stopping their conversation and using their hands to open the door.

12.6 Upper Body Limitation

12.6.1 Grab handles that are not located above shoulder height.

13. FIND DESTINATION

13.1 All ADS-DV Users

13.1.1 Before egress, the user should receive information about the status of the drop-off location, including inclement weather and traffic conditions, as well as known landmarks or directions to the final destination.

NOTE: This information will enable users to orient themselves to the destination so that they can complete the journey.

13.1.2 Mobile apps used to interact with a vehicle or service, as well as in-vehicle interfaces, should adhere to accessibility guidelines, such as those set out by the W3C.

13.1.3 Provide remote human assistance or support (not limited to emergencies).

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13.2 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

13.2.1 Mobile apps for finding a destination should include non-auditory (haptic or visual) feedback for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

13.2.2 ADS-DV destination-finding mobile apps should provide sign language options, such as American Sign Language (ASL), or other accessible options (e.g., TTY [text-telephony]/RTT [real-time text] or video relay service) where appropriate for deaf individuals.

14. NOTES

14.1 Revision Indicator

A change bar (I) located in the left margin is for the convenience of the user in locating areas where technical revisions, not editorial changes, have been made to the previous issue of this document. An (R) symbol to the left of the document title indicates a complete revision of the document, including technical revisions. Change bars and (R) are not used in original publications, nor in documents that contain editorial changes only.

PREPARED BY SAE ON-ROAD AUTOMATED DRIVING (ORAD) COMMITTEE

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APPENDIX A - TECHNICAL REPORT ON ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR HIGHLY AUTOMATED VEHICLES

NOTE: While Appendix A is included for completeness, it does not meet current standards for visual accessibility. We apologize for this barrier and hope to remedy it in future versions.

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Accessibility Guidelines For Highly Automated Vehicles

A Technical Report: 01/17/2024

Author(s): Kristine Guzak, Benjamin Osafo-Yeboah, John Shutko, Rebecca Grier, Chun-Cheng Chang.

ABSTRACT

A Level 4 Automated Vehicle (AV) would enable people who currently are not able to obtain a driver's license to travel at will. This includes people with disabilities. However, for this to be feasible, the vehicle must be designed so that it is accessible to people with disabilities. This project utilized three data collection methods, literature review, interviews, and focus groups, to develop requirements to make AVs accessible to people with disabilities who can enter and exit a standard vehicle without assistance. More than eighty requirements are presented. They are labelled in terms of priority, type of disability the requirement is addressing, as well as applicability to all cars or just AVs.

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