



## Misleading Statements: NHTSA's Concerns with Tesla's Model 3 Safety Claims

The Tesla Model 3 may not be as safe as Tesla claims it to be.

As reported in the *Observer* and *CNBC* last week, the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) sent Tesla a cease-and-desist letter regarding “misleading statements” it made about the safety rating of Tesla’s Model 3.

The October 17, 2018 letter, obtained by *Plainsite* through a Freedom of Information Act request, revealed that NHTSA ordered “Tesla to stop advertising the Model 3 as the safest car tested by the agency.”

NHTSA specifically took issue with a [blog post](#) published by Tesla in October 2018 in which the company claimed that “not only has Model 3 achieved a perfect five-star safety rating in every category and sub-category” of the NHTSA Government 5-Star Safety Rating program, but NHTSA’s “tests also show that it has the lowest probability of injury of all cars the safety agency has ever tested.”

NHTSA said that Tesla’s use of terms such as “safest” and “perfect” are “misleading, because there are multiple cars rated five stars but the agency doesn’t rank vehicles under the same ratings,” according to the *Observer*.

Although NHTSA referred the matter to the Federal Trade Commission’s Bureau of Consumer Protection for deceptive marketing, Tesla stands firm on its safety claims and has so far declined to remove the blog post, according to *Automotive News*.

Tesla has been linked to using misleading marketing characterizations of Tesla vehicles in past. In fact, according to *Consumer Reports*, consumer groups and safety advocates have taken issue with Tesla “for overhyping the capabilities of technologies, such as the Autopilot driver-assistance system and the company’s ‘Full Self Driving’ feature.”

According to the *Observer*, the NHTSA correspondence obtained by Plainsite also “included subpoena orders that the NHTSA sent to Tesla following several recent crash incidents, including a fatal crash in March of this year (2019) involving a Model 3 car operating on Autopilot.”

To view the NHTSA letter and supporting documents, click [here](#).

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