Argo AI assembles panel of outside experts to oversee safety of its autonomous vehicles

As autonomous vehicle testing ramps up, Argo AI announced the formation of a panel of outside experts to oversee the safe deployment of its technology.

The startup, which is backed by Ford and Volkswagen, will "provide feedback on Argo's safety and security practices and policies, including maintaining a world-class safety culture, scaling safely across multiple cities and countries, and responsibly launching and operating commercial driverless services," the company said.

The announcement comes as public opinion seems to be turning on autonomous vehicles (AVs), with recent surveys suggesting nearly half of Americans think that AVs would be a "bad idea" for society. And it comes as the Biden administration continues to scrutinize crashes involving autonomous vehicles as it weighs new regulations for the industry.

"At Argo, our foundational value is safety"
The Argo Safety Advisory Council is aimed at improving the public's perception of AVs, while also bringing more transparency to the work that goes on behind the scenes.

"At Argo, our foundational value is safety," said Bryan Salesky, Argo AI's CEO and founder, in a statement. "Autonomous vehicles have the potential to profoundly and positively impact transportation safety and accessibility in

cities.”

The advisory board will include:

- Christopher “Todd” Doss, senior managing director of cybersecurity at Ankura and former assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Dr. Mitchell Garber, senior managing consultant at ESi and former medical officer for the National Transportation Safety Board
- David Kelly, principal and CEO at Storm King Strategies and former acting administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Annette Sandberg, principal and CEO at TransSafe Consulting and former administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Robert Sumwalt, executive director of the Center for Aviation and Aerospace Safety at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board

Like most AV companies with cars on the road, Argo AI has been involved in a handful of crashes. One of the company’s self-driving cars was involved in an accident in Pittsburgh back in 2018 that sent two people to the hospital. Argo AI reported 10 crashes involving one of its autonomous test vehicles to the National Highway Traffic Administration as part of the agency’s tabulation of AV incidents.

Argo has been testing its fourth-generation vehicles in Miami, Washington, DC, and Austin, Texas, for the last few years, as well as in Pittsburgh, Detroit, and cities in California. The company is also preparing to launch an autonomous micro-transit and delivery service with VW in Germany using its fifth-generation autonomous technology, starting in 2025. Argo is the latest to routinely test its vehicles without human safety drivers behind the wheels, following Waymo, Cruise, and Motional.

https://www.theverge.com/2022/8/4/23292533/argo-ai-safety-experts-advise-autonomous-vehicle