

Elon Musk says Tesla would be “shut down” if its cars were used for spying in China

Elon Musk said Saturday if Tesla vehicles were used to spy in China, the company would be shut down, *Reuters* reported. Musk made the remark while speaking via video link to the China Development Forum, addressing reports that China has barred its military and government personnel from using Tesla vehicles over security concerns.

“There’s a very strong incentive for us to be very confidential with any information,” Musk told the forum. “If Tesla used cars to spy in China or anywhere, we will get shut down.”

The Wall Street Journal reported Friday that people who work for China’s military, government agencies and “state-owned enterprises in sensitive industries” were prohibited from driving Teslas. China is concerned that Tesla’s exterior cameras, which constantly record footage, could be used to gather images to be sent back to the US, according to the *Journal*.

China is a huge market for Tesla and for electric vehicles; according to *Reuters* the carmaker sold 147,445 vehicles in the country last year, which accounted for 30 percent of its global total.

As *Bloomberg* notes, Tesla and its leader have taken a different tone with Chinese authorities than with their US counterparts. For example, last month Tesla apologized that one of its staff had blamed China’s electrical grid for

damaging a customer's vehicle: "We are deeply sorry for the misunderstanding and would like to apologize to the Nanchang Power Grid for the inconvenience caused," Tesla said in a video.

Musk and Tesla have been more aggressive in their responses to US authorities; the CEO once hung up on a call with the chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, and last year he butted heads with authorities in Alameda County, California, where Tesla's Fremont plant is located, over coronavirus restrictions.

<https://www.theverge.com/2021/3/21/22343018/elon-musk-tesla-shut-down-cars-spying-china>