

Police Say Man Drove Tesla Off 250-Foot Cliff On Purpose

A man is facing charges for what authorities say is purposely driving his Tesla off of a cliff in the Devil's Slide area in California.

Courtesy Cal Fire.

Adults being rescued on Monday.

"CHP investigators worked throughout the night interviewing witnesses and gathering evidence from the scene," said the California Highway Patrol in a statement, per a local ABC station.

“Based on the evidence collected, investigators developed probable cause to believe this incident was an intentional act,” the statement added.

All four passengers survived the drop off the 250-foot cliff in a well-known, dangerous stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway. Brian Pottenger, battalion chief at the Coastside Fire Protection District, spoke with *Entrepreneur* via phone Tuesday about the rescue.

“That stretch of road, this is a fairly regular occurrence for us – and, typically, most people succumb their injuries in an accident like this,” he said. He also called the rescue an “absolute miracle.”

Authorities are now claiming the plunge was not an accident.

Related: ‘An Absolute Miracle’: 4 People Survive 250-Foot Cliff Fall in Tesla Car

Dharmesh Patel, now identified as the driver of the car, is a 41-year-old radiologist from Pasadena, California, per the Post. Patel is now facing accusations that he attempted to kill his family, according to a the local ABC affiliate and the *Post*.

The two kids and another adult who were reported to be in the car at the time of the crash have been identified as Patel’s wife, Neha, and the couple’s two children.

Pottenger said that he and his team are sad to hear about the arrest, but they won’t let the news take away from the fact that they were able to rescue four people.

“It’s disheartening,” he said.

Patel’s employer, Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Los Angeles, told the ABC affiliate in a statement that it is “deeply saddened to learn of a traffic incident involving one of our physicians and his family. We are extremely grateful

there were no serious injuries,” and that it will not comment further.

After Patel leaves the hospital, he will be taken to jail on the charges of attempted murder and child abuse, per the CHP.

During the crash Monday, a Tesla ran off the side of the cliff and rolled before landing among the rocks, according to a video statement from several California agencies.

This morning, a vehicle with 2 adults and 2 minors went over cliff at Devil's Slide in @sanmateoco. Witnesses saw the accident and called 911. The car plunged hundreds of feet down the cliff and landed on the beach. All four patients were successfully rescued. Watch the video! pic.twitter.com/HUM2SJ560y

– CAL FIRE CZU (@CALFIRECZU) January 3, 2023

After arriving, rescuers went down, noticed movement in the car, hoisted up the children with stretchers, and the two adults were rescued by helicopter, per Pottenger.

Pottenger told Entrepreneur previously that the car was in “surprisingly decent shape.” He also said he has personally been involved with about 10 rescues in the area in the last two and a half years.

The area is known to be dangerous, per *The San Francisco Chronicle*.

Patel’s neighbors were surprised to hear that the crash was being thought of as intentional, per the ABC affiliate.

“They’re, like ideal neighbors,” Sarah Walker, neighbor, told the outlet. Another called them “lovely people.”

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