Uber suffered from self-driving car problems before Sunday's fatal crash

All was not well with Uber's self-driving car project before the fatal crash this past Sunday in Arizona, which has prompted widespread criticism of the ride-hailing giant's approach to autonomous vehicle development and forced the company to pause much of its operations surrounding the technology. The goal of offering driverless ride-hailing services to the general public by the end of the year was quickly falling apart, and Uber's self-driving cars had a record of failing to operate correctly under a number of standard road conditions, according to internal company notes obtained by *The New York Times.*

This included issues that involved operators of the fleet of Volvo XC90s – like the one that killed 49-year-old Elaine Herzberg in Tempe, Arizona on Sunday – to intervene more often than engineers expected, something that seriously threatened to delay the company's implementation of self-driving technology. Further scrutiny of the problem stems from the video released Wednesday by the Tempe Police Department that shows the Uber operator looking down in the moments before the vehicle hit Herzberg, and whether a second operator in the vehicle may have prevented the incident. According to the *The New York Times*' report:

> *When Uber moved to a single operator, some employees expressed safety concerns to managers, according to the two people familiar with Uber's operations. They were worried that going solo would make it harder to remain alert during*

> *hours of monotonous driving. Mr. Kallman said it delayed the start of its single-driver initiative to allow for more training and to make sure drivers felt comfortable for the new role.*

Further issues were found by the *Times*, including operators being distracted or falling asleep while behind the wheel of the self-driving test vehicles, as well as Uber's desire to develop its technology ahead of its trade secrets trial with rival Waymo earlier this year. For now, though, there appears to be larger issues surrounding Uber's self-driving initiative. And the fatality in Tempe is just the surface.

https://www.theverge.com/2018/3/23/17157744/uber-self-driving-problems-before-fatal-crash-tempe-arizona-autonomous-cars