

Tesla pursuing police cruiser market with Model S: report

[Stephen Edelstein](#)

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Simulation of Tesla Model S as a police cruiser

As one of the handful of electric cars that is widely available worldwide, the Tesla Model S has taken on many roles since its 2012 launch.

Various taxi services use it, and one company is even trying to convert a Model S into a limousine.

But instead of shuttling people to airports, how effective would the Model S be at chasing down criminals?

DON'T MISS: [LAPD Gets Tesla Model S, BMW i3 Electric Cars As Police Cruisers](#) (Sep 2015)

The Los Angeles Police Department began testing two Model S P85D sedans last year, leading to a speculative report on [Tesla's interest in the police-car market](#) by CNBC.

Electric police cars could save city governments money on fuel, and reduce air pollution.

Their lack of engine noise could also reduce stress among officers, and make it easier to sneak up on the bad guys.



LAPD Tesla Model S P85D

The Model S specifically has some qualities that would seem to make it well suited to police work.

The base Model S 70 is rear-wheel drive (other models are all-wheel drive), the configuration preferred by police departments.

Even with the smallest-available 70-kilowatt-hour battery pack, it has an EPA-rated range of 234 miles.

ALSO SEE: [Is The Tesla Model S Electric Car The Perfect Police Cruiser?](#) (Motor Authority)

The luxury sedan's five-door hatchback body should also offer plenty of space for equipment—and room in back for perps.

In addition, the lack of a central tunnel frees up space in front for computers, radios, and other police equipment.

Space for these items is constrained by the tall center consoles in police cruisers from Ford, Chevrolet, and Dodge.



2016 Tesla Model S

Granted, there are some drawbacks.

The Model S 70 starts at \$71,200, much higher than the prices of traditional police cars bought at municipal-fleet rates.

That would likely strain municipal budgets, and possibly incite the ire of taxpayers who see police officers tooling around in luxury sedans.

MORE: [Electric Police Cars? Seattle Uses Nissan Leafs For Traffic Enforcement](#) (Apr 2015)

It's also unclear whether Tesla Motors would be able to handle larger fleet orders, or how profitable they might prove.

The company's current annual production totals are a mere fraction of those of Ford, Chevy, and Dodge, which regularly deliver fleets of police cars to departments around the country.

Still, many city governments are intrigued by the benefits of electric police cars.



2016 Tesla Model S

In addition to the pair of Teslas, the LAPD is testing a BMW i3, and has already purchased 20 electric scooters and about half a dozen electric motorcycles.

The city government wants electric cars to represent 80 percent of municipal-fleet vehicle purchases by 2025.

Seattle already uses Nissan Leaf electric cars for traffic enforcement.

And even the tiny Mitsubishi i-MiEV is employed by police agencies in Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the U.K.

Is The Tesla Model S Electric Car The Perfect Police Cruiser?

[John Voelcker](#)

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Simulation of Tesla Model S as a police cruiser

The city manager of tony Atherton, California, thinks he'd like some new police cruisers.

In fact, George Rodericks suggested to the [San Jose Mercury News](#), "I'd love to see the [Tesla] Model S be used for Atherton's police cars."

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of millionaires living in the tiny Silicon Valley town, where the median house price is \$6.7 million.

Turns out those are just the people who buy Tesla Model S electric cars. In fact, according to Edmunds data, the Tesla Model S now has a [15-percent market share](#) of the new cars sold in Atherton.

So Rodericks' comment got us thinking: The Tesla Model S sedan would actually make a *great* police cruiser.



2012 Tesla Model S display screen [Photo: Flickr user jurvetson]

Here's why.

- First, the Tesla Model S has rear-wheel drive--the strong preference of most police forces (there's an [all-wheel-drive model reportedly on the way](#) as well)
- It's fast: 0 to 60 mph acceleration in [roughly 4.5 seconds](#) for the 85-kilowatt-hour Performance model, which has a 310-kilowatt (416-horsepower) electric motor
- That same model has an EPA-rated range of 265 miles, so only one Supercharging stop would likely be needed per 8-hour shift, even in high-speed highway duty
- Troopers and other police officers have to eat (no doughnut jokes, please) and make pit stops too, so Supercharging gives them 20 minutes to do that while recharging the battery to 80 percent

- The Model S has no tunnel running down the middle of the car, giving plenty of room for computers and other police hardware (the lack of that space is a complaint about some current patrol-car contenders)
- Its five-door hatchback design offers access to a large load bay for carrying vests, weapons, and whatever else is in the trunks of all those patrol cars
- And if anything bad happens on duty, the Model S got some of the [best safety ratings of any large vehicle tested](#) (meaning no [exploding gas tanks](#), like those suffered by Ford Crown Victoria cruisers)
- The quiet, smooth operation of an electric car is [relaxing to drivers](#) under basically all circumstances--reducing stress and letting officers concentrate on their surroundings
- City planners will love its lack of emissions--clean, green, AND mean!
- It's built in the U.S.--in Fremont, California, in fact.

What do you think? Would the Tesla Model S be your ideal police car?

The only problem we can foresee is that Atherton's very well-heeled citizens may not want their police force to be driving the same electric luxury cars as they are.

Leave us your thoughts in the Comments below.

[hat tip: [Dana Hull](#) via [Brian Henderson](#)]

Electric Police Cars? Seattle Uses Nissan Leafs For Traffic Enforcement

[Stephen Edelstein](#)

[23 Comments](#) Apr 17, 2015



Nissan Leaf electric cars used by Seattle traffic enforcement department.

They may not have the most intimidating presence, but electric cars can play an important role in law enforcement.

Police vehicles spend a lot of time idling or negotiating traffic, particularly in urban areas.

With adequate charging infrastructure, electric cars can be perfectly suited to certain tasks, while radically reducing the emissions of a city's fleet.

CHECK OUT: [Washington State To Give Electric Cars Tax Breaks, Carpool-Lane Access?](#) (Dec 2014)

Seattle, for one, thinks electric cars can be useful in traffic enforcement.

The Emerald City will deploy 28 new Nissan Leaf electric cars for its traffic enforcement department.

That's according to Nissan, which posted a photo on Twitter (via [Seattle Nissan Leaf Owners](#)) showing a group of white cars with the Seattle city seal.



2015 Nissan Leaf

The cars in the photo actually appear to be older 2011 and 2012 models--apparently already in the city fleet--that will be supplemented by those in the latest order.

Urban congestion and the predictability of set patrol routes make electric cars a viable choice for urban law-enforcement work, and Seattle isn't the first to give them a try.

RELATED: [Italy's Crisp Carabinieri Get New Patrol Cars: Tiny Electric Minicars](#) (Sep 2014)

The Leaf has been tested by multiple police agencies, including Portugal's Policia Seguranca Publica (PSP).

Even the tiny Mitsubishi i-MiEV electric car has found police work, with agencies in Hong Kong, Japan, Spain, and the U.K.



2015 Nissan Leaf

It's also used by Italy's Carabinieri, making for quite a contrast to the flashy Lamborghini patrol cars in the police force's fleet.

The New York Police Department uses a fleet of Chevrolet Volt plug-in cars for traffic enforcement, and rosters numerous hybrids as well.

SEE ALSO: [New York City Electrifies NYPD With 2011 Chevrolet Volt \(Jul 2011\)](#)

While you won't see any of these cars engaged in a high-speed pursuit, they can still be useful in some of the less-intense aspects of law enforcement.

The Tesla Model S, on the other hand--especially in its high-performance P85D version--sounds like pretty much the perfect pursuit vehicle to us