

Man and two children burn alive inside a Tesla after it crashed and burst into flames with rescuers unable to work the car's door handles

By ANEZKA PICHRTOVA

A 43-year-old man and two children, both aged nine, burned alive trapped in a Tesla in a tragic accident in Western [Germany](#).

According to police, the [Tesla](#) drove off the road after attempting to overtake another vehicle in Villigst and crashed into a tree before bursting into flames.

'Tragically, it caught fire there, and three people inside the vehicle were burned to death.

Among them were two children and an adult man,' said Bernd Pentrop, press spokesman for the Unna District Police Department for [Ruhr News](#).

A local resident tried desperately to open the door using the vehicle's retractable handles but was unable to, according to [German media outlets](#).

One child was able to escape and was transferred to a hospital in a helicopter.

The retractable door handles on several Tesla models [have previously been reported to](#) have stopped working the moment power is cut off.

According to the German Automobile Association, manual opening of the cars is only possible from the inside, which complicates rescue attempts for emergency services.

The North Rhine-Westphalia Police Department's specialised team will conduct a full analysis of the incident to determine the causes for the tragedy.

'Our goal is to fully reconstruct the course of events and clearly determine the cause,' the district police department stated.



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A 43-year-old man and two children, both aged 9, burned alive in the tragic accident

The Tesla door handles have drawn attention in the past few days as **Bloomberg uncovered** several accidents involving passengers being trapped inside the electric vehicle, after an accident, with emergency services being unable to free them.

Max Walsh, an off-duty firefighter from Virginia, recalled an incident in which he had to smash the window to rescue the driver from a burning Tesla Model Y.

By the time Walsh and other emergency services managed to get to the driver's wife, she suffered lasting lung damage from the smoke and severe burns to her face.

Walsh said that were he able to open the door, he'd be able to get 'them both out before the fire department even got there.'



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Elon Musk, the CEO and founder of Tesla. The company is working on a redesign of its door handles following reports of accidents involving passengers being trapped inside.

Following the report, the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration opened an investigation over reports that electronic door handles can become inoperative, according to [Reuters](#).

The administration noted that the door can be manually opened from the inside, but the instructions in the manual are complex and 'may not be well known to owners,' according to 20 Minuten.

Tesla's design chief, Franz von Holzhausen, told Bloomberg on Wednesday that the company is looking to redesign door handles following the reports of incidents.

Terrified friends burned to death 'trapped inside crashed Tesla after its electronic doors failed'

By [BRITTANY CHAIN](#)

Four friends died in a burning **Tesla** after a crash broke the car's electronic door handles, it is claimed.

A woman in her 20s was the only survivor of the fiery October 24 crash after Rick Harper, a heroic **Canada** Post employee, smashed the window of the blazing Model Y with a metal pole.

Four of her friends, identified as 25-year-old Neelraj Gohil, his sister Ketaba Gohil, 29, Jay Sisodiya and Digvijay Patel all died in the tragedy.

Harper has since told the Toronto Star that the surviving woman 'couldn't open the doors' from the inside of the wreck.

Teslas have a button which the car's driver and passenger push to open a door, instead of a handle. But if the power fails after a crash, the doors can become stuck and won't open.



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A woman who was trapped inside a fiery Tesla with four of her friends was unable to escape the burning car because the electronic door would not open



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Four of her friends, identified as 25-year-old Neelraj Gohil (left), his sister Ketaba Gohil, 29 (right), Jay Sisodiya and Digvijay Patel all died in the tragedy



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The smoke was so thick he didn't realize there were others trapped inside. He has no way of knowing whether they, too, were frantically trying to get out of the Tesla.

'I would assume the young lady would have tried to open the door from the inside, because she was pretty desperate to get out,' Harper said.

'I don't know if that was the battery or what. But she couldn't get out.'

Harper said the woman scrambled out of the car head-first after he smashed the window.

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Harper said the woman scrambled out of the car head-first after he smashed the window



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Digvijay (pictured) died in the tragedy alongside three of his friends



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Police said the car crashed into a guardrail at high speed along Lake Shore Boulevard East in Toronto

Police said the car crashed into a guardrail at high speed along Lake Shore Boulevard East in Toronto.

Investigators are still to determine the exact cause of the crash.

Tesla **boasts of a 'safety-first design'** which makes them 'the safest in the world'. There is a manual override button in Tesla cars but experts say the feature is not widely publicized.

It directs crash victims to pull away a panel in the door and then tug at a cable underneath, which will open the doors.

Safety watchdogs have also highlighted that crash victims may be too panicked or dazed to search for the feature after an accident.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there are nine investigations **involving the Tesla Model Y - which is the same car involved in the tragedy.**

These investigations range from 'unexpected brake activation' to 'sudden unintended acceleration'.

