

LTA pauses some Grab self-driving tests after a Grab autonomous vehicle Punggol near miss with a schoolgirl

Description

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The Land Transport Authority (LTA) has told Grab to pause some self-driving tests after a Grab autonomous vehicle Punggol near miss with a schoolgirl at a road crossing on Thursday morning, 05 November 2026. LTA said on Friday, 06 November, that it is investigating. Until that is done, Grab must stop testing at junctions like the one where it happened. A short video of the incident has been circulating on Facebook all weekend, and it is the talk of many Punggol chats.

What happened in the Grab autonomous vehicle Punggol near miss

The incident took place at around 8.11am on Thursday, during the school-run rush. According to LTAâ??s preliminary account, the vehicle was turning left at a junction after its traffic light turned green.

LTA said the vehicle had detected two pedestrians and was tracking their movements throughout. The pair were standing still at first. When the child started to cross, the vehicle began braking and steered to the right.

The safety operator on board then took over, continuing to brake and steer away from the girl. In the video, the vehicle slows after the close call and then carries on.

A test run, not a passenger trip

LTA said the vehicle was testing a new route to prepare for Grabâ??s on-demand, point-to-point service in Punggol. That service is meant to let residents book rides between selected locations instead of following fixed shuttle loops.



Source: Grab

What LTA has ordered Grab to do

LTAâ??s instructions, as stated on 06 November, are short and specific:

- Grab must pause autonomous vehicle testing at such junctions until investigations are completed
- LTA will review whether the way AVs respond to this kind of scenario should be adjusted
- LTAâ??s investigation into the incident itself continues

Grab said safety is its top priority and that it is reviewing the incident with LTA and its technology partner WeRide. LTAâ??s direction, as announced, covers testing at such junctions. It did not announce a suspension of the existing public shuttle routes, so check the Grab app before you plan a ride.

How Punggolâ??s self-driving shuttles work today

Punggol is Singaporeâ??s first town with autonomous shuttles running in a residential neighbourhood. Grab runs two routes under its Ai.R service using vehicles from WeRide, while ComfortDelGro runs one route using vehicles from Pony.ai.

- Grabâ??s fleet uses two WeRide models, the five-seat GXR and the eight-seat Robobus
- Each ride currently has a trained Grab safety operator on board who can take control
- Grab says the vehicles use cameras and LiDAR to see up to 200 metres in every direction
- LTA approved Community Rides in January 2026, followed by Public Rides in April 2026, according to Grab



Source: Grab

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In its 14 September 2026 announcement, Grab said its AVs had logged over 110,000km of autonomous driving and served more than 12,000 unique riders. It also said it would grow the fleet from 10 to 50 vehicles over six months and aims to expand beyond Punggol, subject to regulatory approval.

We covered how the shuttles work in our guide to Punggolâ??s autonomous shuttles earlier this year. Sentosa is also lining up its own on-demand self-driving shuttle pilot with TADA from early 2027, so this incident lands at a sensitive moment for the whole programme.

Who is responsible if an AV hits someone?

This is the question many parents are asking, and LTA addressed it in a reply published in October 2026. AVs on public roads are regulated under a sandbox set out in the Road Traffic (Autonomous Motor Vehicles) Rules 2017.

Under those rules, authorised operators must hold liability insurance covering third-party death, injury and property damage, including passengers. LTA said third parties can claim against that insurance, much like a normal road accident.

LTA and the Ministry of Transport also said they aim to introduce a new AV Act within about a year and have started a public consultation. You can read more about Singaporeâ??s approach on LTAâ??s autonomous vehicles page.



Source: Grab

What this means if you live in Punggol

For now, nothing changes about how you cross the road, but a few habits are worth teaching the kids again:

- At junctions, watch turning vehicles even when the green man is on, because cars can make a discretionary left turn across your path
- Make eye contact with the driver, or with the safety operator in an AV, before stepping off the kerb
- If you see an AV behave unsafely, note the time, place and vehicle number and report it to Grab and LTA

The good news is that the vehicle did detect the pedestrians and the safety operator stepped in. The less comforting part is that a human still had to. We will update this story when LTA shares the findings of its investigation.

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