

Tesla plunges in Consumer Reports' rankings

Gunjan Bagla of Cerritos charges his Tesla at a supercharger station near Coalinga, Calif., last year. (Ricardo DeAratanha / Los Angeles Times)

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[Tesla Motors Inc.](#), the upstart all-electric automaker that once landed Consumer Reports' best-ever performance rating, has now achieved a far less impressive feat, with a ranking from the reviewer that labels it one the least reliable car companies in America.

The Consumer Reports ranking, released Monday, places Tesla at No. 25 of 29 for reliability, with reviewers saying the Elon Musk-led automaker's new Model X SUV "has been plagued with malfunctions," including with the "falcon-wing doors" that have become its signature.

The rough review, based on annual surveys of the magazine's subscribers, is only the latest hurdle for America's youngest major automaker, which has energized the country's scrawny electric-car industry, but has struggled with repeated production and delivery delays.

Tesla's Model S sedan was recommended by reviewers after its reliability scores improved from what Consumer Reports last year called a "worse-than-average overall problem rate."

But the Model X, which first rolled out to drivers last year and now starts at \$74,000, was panned by drivers frustrated by problems with doors, locks, latches, power equipment, in-car electronics and the climate system. It ranked last for reliability among a dozen luxury mid-sized SUVs.

"It shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that there's been mechanical problems with the Tesla Model X," Jake Fisher, director of automotive testing for Consumer Reports, said in an interview.

"They've taken this very basic platform with the Model X and added so many overly complicated features: The front doors are power automated. The middle-row seats are on power sliders," Fisher said. "All those things add up in a way that can bring the platform down."



[Elon Musk challenges regulators to catch up to Tesla's driverless car technology](#)

Musk, Tesla's billionaire commander, has said himself that the Model X — with its single-pane windshield-roof and air-filtering "bioweapon defense mode" — may have been a bit too ambitious.

"In retrospect, it would've been a better decision to do fewer things with the first version of Model X," Musk said in February. "I think there was some hubris there with the X," he added, before reiterating that it was "the best car ever."

Consumer Reports reviewers also said they had "serious concerns" about how Tesla and other automakers had designed and marketed semi-autonomous technologies such as Tesla's Autopilot, which can accomplish many of the tasks of driving, such as changing lanes and keeping speed on the highway, but not fully drive the car itself.

Crashes by Autopilot-equipped cars, including a fatal Florida crash in May, have led critics to suggest Tesla is dangerously touting the cars' self-driving capabilities. Consumer Reports has placed alerts on Tesla's cars saying "automakers should take stronger steps" to ensure the systems are deployed safely.