

James Arrowood

[jma@ahattorneys.com](mailto:jma@ahattorneys.com)

## Driverless Cars

As a new decade begins, people are still awaiting the explosion of driverless cars that they have been waiting for since watching *The Jetsons* as children, but the wait will not be much longer. With the advent of cruise control, park assist, and now fully driverless cars it will only be a matter of time until everyday people are whisked away to their next destination just by the press of a button.

Driverless cars offer numerous benefits, including decreased human-caused accidents, reduced upkeep, eradicated road rage and driving under the influences, and less spilled coffee. Additionally, gas bills, battery replacements, and flat tires could become a thing of the past. However, despite these benefits, driverless cars pose a threat to individual privacy.

If a company controls these driverless cars, there is no doubt that these companies will analyze and sell the data on where people drive, how long they stay at a given location, and how often they travel somewhere. Driverless cars could also dictate where people drive to. Just as social media platforms and websites use ads to influence consumer choices, a driverless car could suggest certain stores or restaurants.

Another issue arises when considering who bears the legal liability when driverless cars do have accidents. The list of potentially responsible parties is long: fleet operators, insurance companies, traffic engineers, manufacturers, software developers, telecommunications/data providers, GPS providers, the passenger, or the municipality. The recent case in Arizona shows that multiple parties could be held liable. In this case specifically, both Uber and the city of Tempe were targeted by the family of the woman who was hit by a driverless car and killed. To add another layer of confusion, different states are at very different phases of crafting regulations for driverless cars. Some states have not addressed the legal issues at all.

Society may very well be living like the *Jetsons* soon, but has not fully comprehended the consequences and motives behind companies creating driverless cars.