

The 6 Levels of Vehicle Automation Explained

Level 0 – No Driving Automation



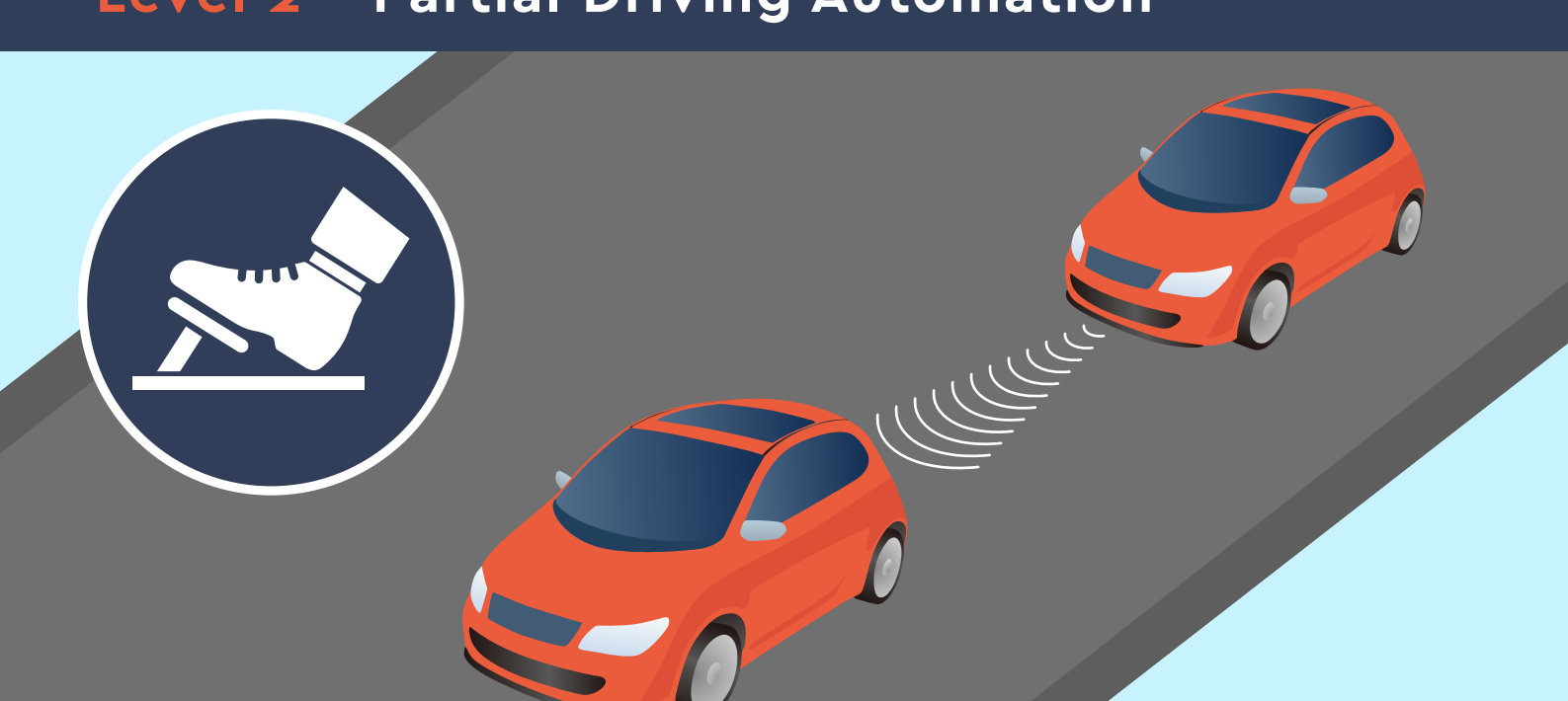
The easiest level to understand, because there is **no automation at all**. Level 0 relates to almost every car you'll see out on the road today. All driving functions are **manually** carried out, and at most there may be some emergency brake systems or cruise control systems implemented.

Level 1 – Driver Assistance



The lowest level of actual automation is driver assistance. The vehicle features a **single automated system**, such as steering or accelerating, but overall the human driver remains responsible for **full control** of the car.

Level 2 – Partial Driving Automation



This relates to the inclusion of **Advanced Driver Assistance Systems**, otherwise known as ADAS. Cars can brake, steer and accelerate on behalf of the driver in certain situations. However, the human driver is still required to be in full control. Level 2 is the final layer of vehicle automation that needs the human to be **fully monitoring** all driving functions.

Level 3 – Conditional Driving Automation



At this point, the vehicle's automated system will begin monitoring the driving environment. The technology jump from Level 2 to Level 3 is the most significant so far and has **'environment detection'** capabilities in place. This means that it can take responsibility for most driving tasks and can even make decisions for itself, such as overtaking slow-moving vehicles. While the driver doesn't necessarily have to have their hands on the steering wheel at all times, they will need to be **fully concentrated** and able to take full control at a moment's notice.

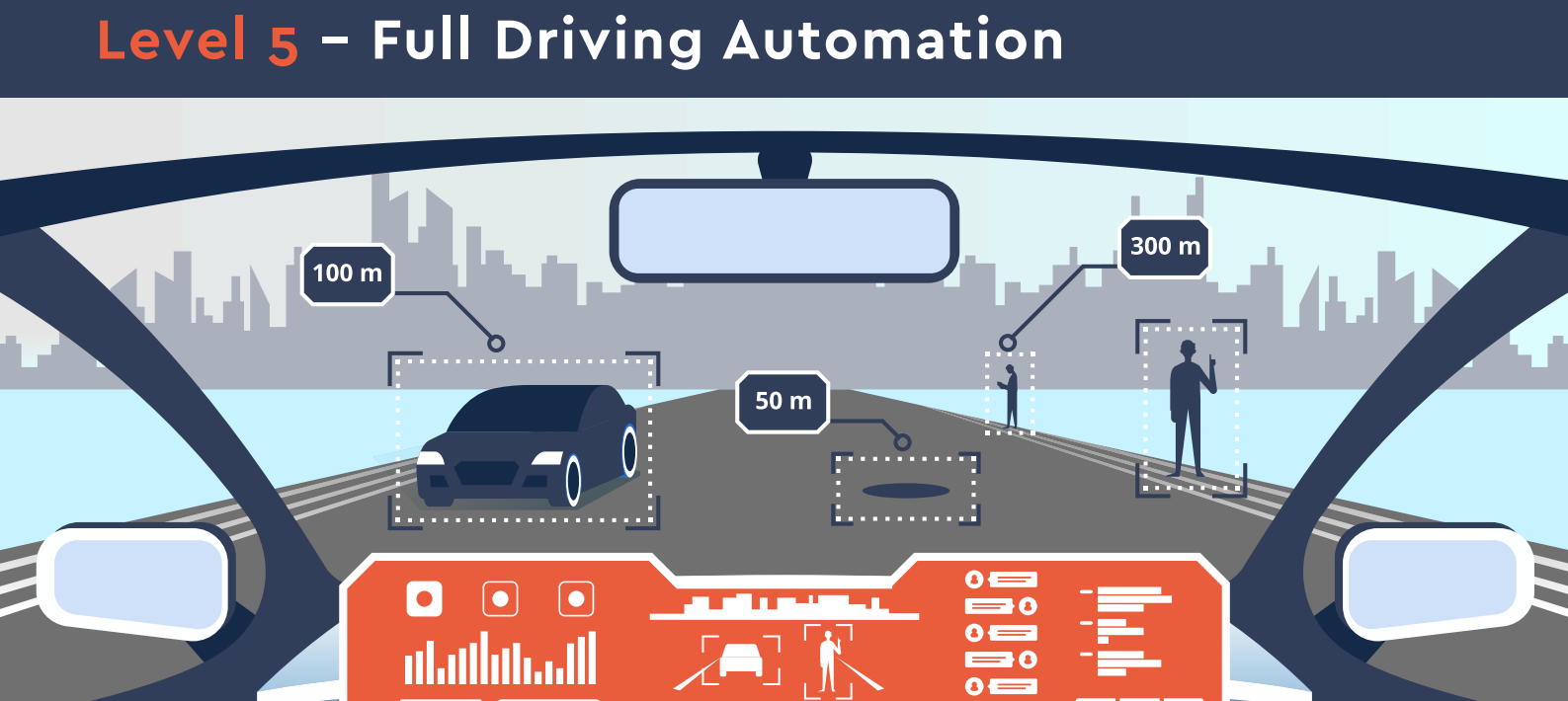
Level 4 – High Driving Automation



The biggest difference between Level 3 and Level 4 is that high driving automation can also **intervene** if something goes wrong or there is a system failure. With this in mind, in the majority of scenarios, the human driver is not required. However, the human can intervene and take control at any time if they wish.

Currently, there are only very few Level 4 autonomous vehicles in existence. This is largely because the **infrastructure and legislation** haven't yet caught up with the technology – meaning they're restricted to certain areas which are predominantly urban. Due to this, the few Level 4 vehicles that do exist are mainly ridesharing companies such as Lyft and Waymo.

Level 5 – Full Driving Automation



The **highest level of automation**, Level 5 vehicles do not currently exist but will be able to handle all driving functions in all conditions. It's estimated that Level 5 vehicles won't even include steering wheels or pedals, and will be able to operate **without human beings** inside them. While the software and hardware is available, we're a while off yet from seeing them on the roads.

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