

Elon Musk Has an Awkward Problem at Tesla: Employee Parking

With more employees competing for limited spaces, cars are often jammed diagonally in spots, propped up on curbs or left on gravelly medians; ‘you’re getting your tires slashed’

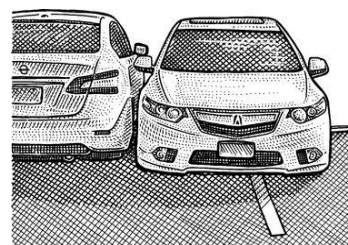
WSJ April 11, 2017 By Tim Higgins

Billionaire entrepreneur [Elon Musk is reimagining the future of transportation](#) by attempting to build self-driving cars, invent a supersonic railway and launch private citizens into outer space. What keeps him up at night, though, is the parking lot outside his office window.



“Parking is, like, one of my biggest nightmares—like, where do we park everyone?” said the [Tesla Inc.](#) chief executive, on a recent earnings call with analysts who were trying to probe concerns about the electric-car maker’s year ahead.

At Tesla’s Palo Alto, Calif., headquarters, uniformed valets dashed about on a recent morning directing traffic and cramming in as many cars as possible. A bumper-to-bumper formation of parked cars snaked through the lanes of the lot, boxing in other vehicles.



At the Tesla factory 30 miles away in Fremont, which has 6,000 employees over the course of various shifts competing for 4,500 vehicle spaces, photos show parking is a free-for-all. Cars are jammed diagonally in spots, propped up on curbs or resting on gravelly medians.

One employee documents [the worst offenders at both locations on Instagram](#), using photos sent in by co-workers and including snarky and often profane comments.



Some workers arrive early to find spaces, and then go back to sleep in their cars until work begins, employees said. Others idle in their cars waiting for co-workers to leave, so they can pounce when spaces come open

[Tesla factory worker Jose Moran, who has spoken out against the company’s working conditions](#), said in an interview he tries to arrive an hour before his 5:25 a.m. shift to find a parking spot. That means leaving

his home in Manteca, about 60 miles from Fremont, at 3:25 a.m.

Getting out of the parking lot is a mess, too. Double-parked cars often box others in, causing employees to blow a gasket. The Instagram account captured a photo of a note left on a windshield that read, with some pointed expletives: “Next time you block 100+ people from getting out of the parking lot you’re getting your tires slashed”—signed, “Everyone.”

Tesla has tried to encourage alternatives to driving, such as biking, public transportation and the shuttle buses provided from around the Bay Area, and the company also tickets the scalawags. Parking offenders at the factory can return to find boots on their tires or their cars towed to a distant overflow lot.

