

## Groveland man run over by his electric truck, fatally injured

Guy McCarthy  
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A man died Thursday morning at the bottom of Old Priest Grade below Highway 120 when he stopped his Ford Lightning pickup to close the charge portal on the truck's front left quarter-panel and the truck continued moving, the California Highway Patrol said. The man was dragged under the truck for a distance before it continued rolling downhill across Moccasin Switchback Road and through multiple fences before it came to rest in a yard.

Guy McCarthy / Union Democrat

A 68-year-old Groveland man died Thursday morning at the bottom of Old Priest Grade and below Highway 120 when he stopped his 2023 Ford F-150 Lightning all-electric pickup to close the charge portal on the truck's front left quarter-panel.

The truck continued moving, the California Highway Patrol said, and the man was dragged underneath and came to rest on an embankment between Highway 120 and Moccasin Switchback Road. The truck continued rolling downhill across Moccasin Switchback and through multiple fences before it came to a stop in a yard.

The incident was reported at 8:43 a.m. as a vehicle running over a man.

"He stopped at the end of Old Priest, realized the charging port was open, and he partially got out and tried to close it," CHP Sgt. Randy Matyshock said at the crash scene. "The truck started moving across 120, it looked like it was going to go over the edge, he grabbed the steering wheel and pulled it hard to the left. It made a quasi-U-turn, across both lanes of 120, he was hopping with it, and at some point he fell completely out of the vehicle, and the vehicle drove over him."

The Tuolumne County coroner was working on notifying the man's family, CHP Officer Steve Machado said in a phone interview.

The man had partially exited the truck while it was still in drive and it began to roll forward, Machado said.

The man succumbed to his injuries at the scene. The crash investigation was continuing, and the driver's identity was withheld pending notification of his family. As of 2:30 p.m. Thursday, the deceased man's next of kin had not yet been notified, Sgt. Jake Ostoich with the county Sheriff's Office said.

Brad Crawford, who has lived on Moccasin Switchback Road for 15 years, said he was home but he did not hear or see the incident. He came out about 10 minutes after the incident and learned that another motorist had been behind the Ford Lightning pickup, witnessed what happened, and told the CHP what she saw and heard. Crawford said the woman appeared visibly distraught as she recounted the incident to CHP personnel at the scene.

Ford began producing F-150 Lightning all-electric pickups in April 2022. All F-150 Lightning models come standard with two electric motors and all-wheel drive, according to Car and Driver.

In March 2023, Ford Motor Company recalled certain 2023 F-150 Lightning pickup trucks. The high-voltage battery pack may experience an electrical short-circuit when the battery is fully charged or near fully charged. Dealers were replacing the high-voltage battery pack, free of charge, in the recalled F-150 Lightnings.

Ford says 2023 F-150 Lightning Pro all-electric models come standard with a 2.4 kW Pro Power Onboard generator and Ford Co-Pilot360 2.0 driver assist technologies. It was not clear Thursday afternoon whether the truck involved in the driver's fatality at the bottom of Old Priest Grade was equipped with functioning driver assist technologies.

Ford says driver assist features on all 2023 F-150 Lightning models include a backup camera, brake assist, blind spot monitoring, lane departure warning, lane keeping assist, cross-traffic alert, tire pressure monitoring, and cruise control.

Ford paused shipments of its 2024 F-150 Lightning all-electric pickups in February due to an undisclosed quality issue, according to Automotive News and Kelley Blue Book. In January, Ford said it would reduce production of F-150 Lightnings, because demand for electric vehicles has been lower than expected.

Online forums that include Lightning owners, including [www.lightningowners.com](http://www.lightningowners.com), have posts about the high-voltage battery pack recalls for certain 2023 F-150 Lightning pickups, warranty issues, software updates, and other concerns. Ford Media representatives in Michigan could not be reached for comment Thursday afternoon.

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