



## Self-Driving Robot Makes Life Easier for Ford Employees

- Ford is using a self-driving robot to deliver parts directly to where they are needed
- Programmed to know the plant layout, the robot nicknamed “Survival” modifies its route after encountering obstacles in its path; is first of its kind to be used in a Ford facility in Europe
- Trials shows “Survival” frees up to 40-employee hours daily, allowing workers to undertake more complex tasks

Autonomous vehicles from Ford are [still a few years away](#), but one little robot is already showing what’s possible.

Nicknamed “Survival”, because of its ability to adapt to its environment, the self-driving robot delivers spare parts around one of Ford’s manufacturing plants, dodging unforeseen objects, changing its route if obstructed and stopping whenever necessary.

Developed entirely by Ford engineers, it is the first of its kind to be used in any of the company’s European facilities.

“We programmed it to learn the whole of the plant floor so, together with sensors, it doesn’t need any external guides to navigate” said Eduardo García Magraner, engineering manager, at Ford’s state-of-the-art body and stamping plant in Valencia, Spain, where the robot is being trialled.

“When it first started you could see employees thinking they were in some kind of sci-fi movie, stopping and staring as it went by. Now they just get on with their jobs knowing the robot is smart enough to work around them.”

Delivering spare parts and welding material to different stations around the plant is a crucial element in keeping Kuga, Mondeo and S-MAX production going. For Ford workers though, the task is time-consuming and relatively mundane. The robot does not replace employees but can save up to 40-employee hours every day by taking over this role, allowing operators to use their time on more complex tasks.

The robot is equipped with an automated shelf that has 17 slots to hold materials of different weights and sizes. To avoid errors, the opening and closing of these slots is automated, meaning operators in each area only have access to the materials assigned to them.

“It’s been on trial for almost a year now and has performed faultlessly to-date. It’s become quite a valuable team member,” said Garcia Magraner. “Hopefully we can put it into full-time use shortly and expand into other Ford facilities.”

“Survival” is one of a number of smart robots employed in Ford’s European facilities, including the “[Robutt](#)” and [co-bots](#) in Cologne, Germany. The self-driving robot uses LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology to visualise its surroundings, a technology also used in Ford’s prototype autonomous vehicles.

### About Ford Motor Company

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*autonomous vehicles and mobility solutions. Ford employs approximately 196,000 people worldwide. For more information regarding Ford, its products and Ford Motor Credit Company, please visit [www.corporate.ford.com](http://www.corporate.ford.com).*

## Ford of Europe

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