

Mechanical Alternatives to Electronic Door Buttons

Vehicles with doors that open electronically (push of a button) also have mechanical (aka manual) door-release mechanisms to allow occupants to exit the vehicle when it has no power. During a power failure—which may occur due to an emergency like a crash or fire—is no time to start learning about these backup safety features.

Therefore, CPSTs working with one of these vehicles should alert caregivers to the vehicle’s mechanical-release alternatives and encourage them to review their owner’s manual regarding use. Advise them to read carefully to learn whether it is appropriate to practice opening doors manually in a non-emergency and, if so, how to do so properly.

Remind owners to ensure that anyone who drives their vehicle (nannies, babysitters, grandparents, etc.) also knows about these procedures. Passengers should also be taught how to react in an emergency.

SRN prepared this living document to assist CPSTs in educating families. It highlights owner’s manual information (≤ MY 2025, as of February 2026) on mechanical door-release mechanisms from certain brands with electronic buttons. SRN does not purport that this list is all inclusive and may add other vehicles over time. For some vehicles (especially early MYs), only the front doors can be opened mechanically, so all occupants should plan to exit the vehicle from the front row in an emergency. More often, both front and rear doors have mechanical-release mechanisms, though the mechanisms often vary between the rows.

Tesla—Front Seats of all vehicles with electronic buttons

In vehicles with interior door-release buttons, there are manual-release mechanisms on the front doors’ armrests (in front of the up-down window switches). In newer models, this mechanism has a door icon on it. Grab the release mechanism from its forward edge, pull it toward the back of the vehicle, and push the door open.



Tesla Model 3: Rear Seats (MY2024 and newer)

Tesla Model Y: Rear Seats

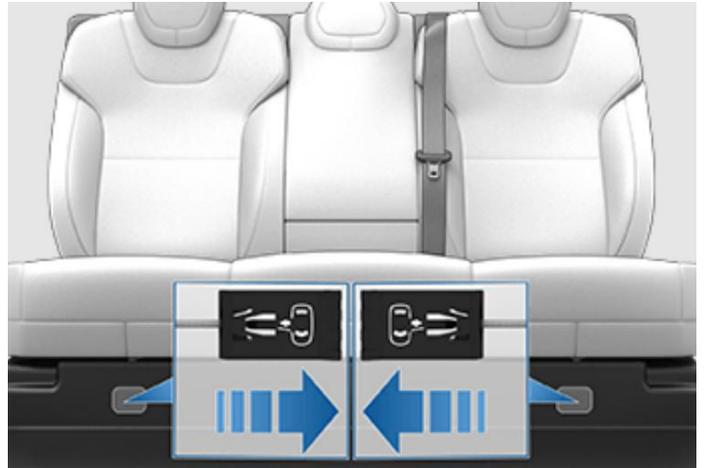
(MY2025 and newer and some MY2020-2024)

The manual release mechanisms are in each doors’ pocket. To expose the release cord in newer vehicles, pull a red button to remove the cover; in older vehicles, pull from the front lip of the cover to pry it up (shown). (Note: The cover might be marked with a door icon and might be covered by a rubber mat that must be lifted to remove.) Then, pull the release cord upward and push the door open.

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Tesla Model S Rear Seats (all model years)

The manual release mechanisms are located on the front edge of the seat bottom (in newer vehicles, marked nearby with a door icon). If necessary, fold the carpet and/or mat back to expose the mechanism. Then, pull the tab toward the center of the vehicle and push the door open.



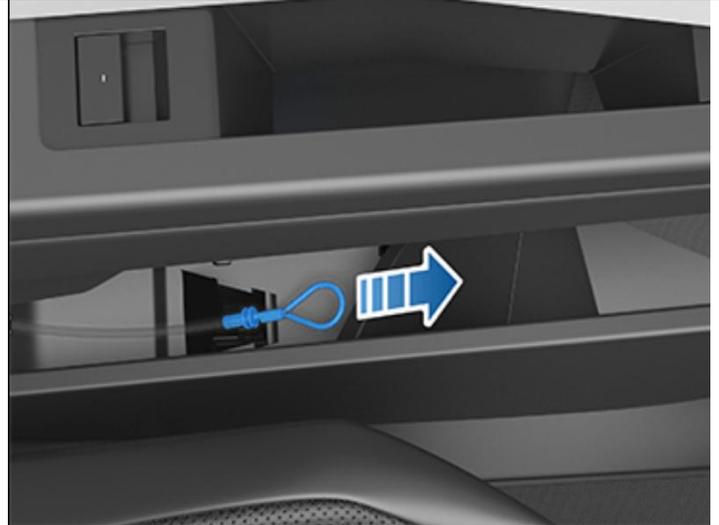
Tesla Model X Rear Seats (falcon doors, all model years)

Manual release mechanisms are located underneath the speaker grilles in the doors. Remove speaker grille by prying it off the plastic clips that secure it. The release bar is a wire with a ball on the end; avoid disrupting nearby electrical wires. (Note: The release wire is flexible and may be found tucked behind a speaker component). Pull the release wire outward and push (hard) on the door to raise it.

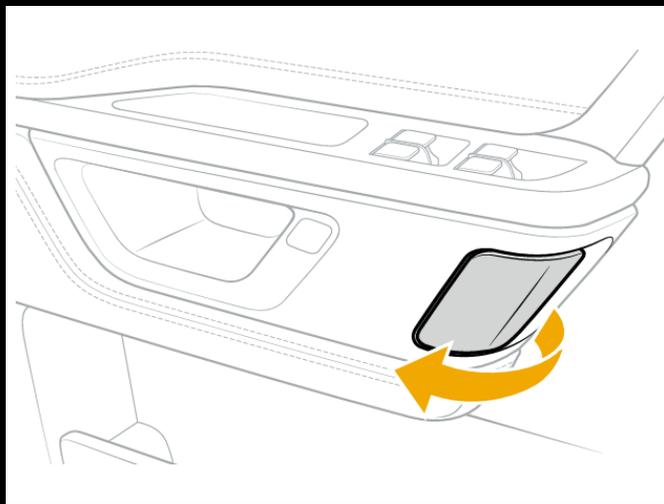


Tesla Cybertruck Rear Seats (all model years)

Manual release mechanisms are in each doors' pocket. To expose the release cord, lift upward on the cover to remove it (in newer vehicles, the cover has a door icon on it); sometimes a rubber mat over the cover must also be lifted. Then, pull the release cord forward and push the door open.



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Rivian R1T and R1S Front seats of vehicles with electronic buttons

In vehicles with interior door-release buttons, there are manual-release handles on the front edge of the doors' armrest. Grab the release handle from its forward edge, pull it toward the center of the vehicle, and push the door open.

Rivian R1T and R1S Rear seats of vehicles with electronic buttons

In vehicles with interior door-release buttons, there are manual-release mechanisms inside the doors, located behind a panel. Remove the panel by prying it outward. Then, pull the release cord downward and push the door open.

