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Cities Across the U.S. Are Putting Robots to Work.

Robots are starting to do jobs like firefighting, lawn mowing and beach cleaning, among other things

Robots are coming to a town near you—deployed by cities to do work that is labor-intensive, repetitive or dangerous for humans.

Cities have long lagged behind the private sector when it comes to giving jobs to robots. That's because robots are expensive and work best in highly controlled environments, not exactly the definition of city streets. Questions about safety, cybersecurity and job displacement also loom large in public settings. Police robots, for example, have occasionally stirred up fears about surveillance and the potential for lethal force.

So for now, the robots being rolled out in cities are friendly and low-profile—they mow lawns, clean beaches and guide people through buildings, among other things. And they still have to prove their worth, experts say.

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The Wall Street Journal

By Jackie Snow

Oct. 30, 2025

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