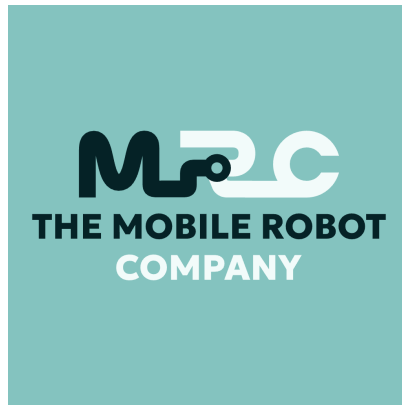




The Mobile Robot Company

Knowledge Center — Robot Will Not Enter Autonomous Mode · 2026-08-04

<https://info.mobilerobot.com/support/troubleshooting/robot-will-not-enter-autonomous-mode>

Robot Will Not Enter Autonomous Mode

The J1600 only drives autonomously when the operator has explicitly handed it a task and [confirmed the mode change](https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/getting-started/manual-and-autonomous-modes/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/getting-started/manual-and-autonomous-modes/>). Most failures to enter autonomous mode come down to one of the preconditions below.

Confirm the key switch position

The [three-position key switch](https://info.mobilerobot.com/safety-compliance/safety-functions/mode-selection/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/safety-compliance/safety-functions/mode-selection/>) selects power off, manual only, or automatic mode. In the manual-only position the robot never drives itself. Turn the key to the automatic position.

Select a task and confirm it

[Autonomous driving](https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/user-guides/autonomous-operation/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/user-guides/autonomous-operation/>) always starts from a task:

1. Create or select a task on the touchscreen, with a saved destination.
2. Execute the task. The robot asks for confirmation to enter automatic mode.
3. Confirm using the physical LED start/resume button. On-screen selection alone does not start autonomous driving.

If the destination you need is not in the list, it has not been saved yet — see [Task and location problems](https://info.mobilerobot.com/support/troubleshooting/task-and-location-problems/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/support/troubleshooting/task-and-location-problems/>).

Step clear of the robot

After confirmation, the interface instructs the operator to step away. The robot's 360-degree safety field must be clear before it moves. If you or anyone else is standing inside the protected area — shown by the blue floor lights — the robot will not drive off. See [Obstacle or safety-field stops](https://info.mobilerobot.com/support/troubleshooting/obstacle-or-safety-field-stops/) (<https://info.mobilerobot.com/support/troubleshooting/obstacle-or-safety-field-stops/>).

Release the tiller

Grabbing or moving the tiller is the [takeover mechanism](https://info.mobilerobot.com/safety-compliance/safety-overview/emergency-stops-and-manual-takeover/) that returns the J1600 to manual control, and [tiller-position switches](https://info.mobilerobot.com/safety-compliance/safety-functions/tiller-detection/) are part of the safety system. Make sure the tiller is released and in its normal position when you confirm automatic mode.

Check the floor

Autonomous mode is a [level-floor application](https://info.mobilerobot.com/applications/planning/route-and-floor-suitability/): automatic gradeability is 0%. Slopes, ramps, and dock plates are manual territory. If the task would send the robot up or down a gradient, [drive that portion manually](https://info.mobilerobot.com/documentation/user-guides/manual-operation/) instead.

Still stuck in manual mode

If all preconditions are met and the robot still refuses the mode change, contact support — see [Submit a support request](https://info.mobilerobot.com/support/contact/submit-a-support-request/). For how the mode handover is designed to work, see [Dual mode](https://info.mobilerobot.com/products/j1600/dual-mode/).