

SUBARU VIN
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copy to
NHTSA

Lincoln, Nebraska

Home Email Address:

June 11, 2024

WAZE
240 Hamilton Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear WAZE:

I am writing about an emergency situation involving use of the WAZE app on a Samsung Galaxy A53 5G phone in a (top of the line) Subaru 2021 Legacy XT Touring sedan.

The phone has Spectrum for calls and Internet and WiFi. For security, it has McAfee. For Emails it has Road Runner (rr); for example:

Before I describe specific dangers imposed by the WAZE android app in this situation, I will present some crucial background information.

The 3 year old Subaru Legacy has built-in Satellite NAVIGATION by TOM TOM. This system has always been a miserable failure. We soon stopped using it. For instance, on a short trip to Nebraska City to visit a popular tourist venue, Kimmel Apple farm orchard and vineyard, the Tom Tom became totally confused. With the proper address input, Tom Tom would not recognize the address as a place in Nebraska City. Then it would direct us to a street within a couple of miles and then tell us to take unusual directions. Once, it said to drive down a street for two miles, then stop at an intersection, but then make a U-turn and drive back to where we started. Then it directed us to another street about two blocks away. At that place, we had to drive two miles, but it told us to stop in less than two miles but make another U-Turn and go back to where we started. Thus, more than once did it lead us around in circles. Finally, it stopped us and said we had reached our destination. There was no Apple farm to be seen.

We continued on another mile or so and saw the Farm at a distance about two blocks away. We enjoyed our tour. But as we were leaving, Tom Tom gave us directions that we knew were entirely wrong. We could not possibly find the Interstate to go back home to Lincoln, Nebraska. During the whole trip, Tom Tom had no clue where we were actually located or how to reach our destination, etc. It had lost its mind. We happened to guess right and found the Interstate Highway to go to our home.

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But in Lincoln, when we were about 6 blocks from our house, Tom Tom told us to turn left and take an absurd route that would have us driving around in a neighborhood a few miles away from our home. That was nuts!

Many times Tom Tom could not be trusted to find the best route to our home from an out-of-town location. In fact, if we followed it through strange neighborhoods, it would get us lost and take far longer to reach our home.

Tom Tom was (IS) a miserable excuse for a navigation program. It often seemed totally confused and instructed us to go a mile or two miles ahead, then make a U-turn and drive back to where we started, then it would simply shut off.

Next, I decided to replace the Tom Tom. I added a Garmin DriveSmart 61.

Unfortunately, the Garmin started acting exactly like the Tom Tom with bad directions, crazy antics like unnecessary U-turns and sending us into neighborhoods far from our destinations. Garmin seemed out of its little mind – just like the built-in Tom Tom it had replaced.

On one of our annual driving trips to the Kansas City area, Garmin made the same insane errors as the Tom Tom had done months earlier. It gave bad directions to our motel (Drury Inn & Suites, 10963 Metcalf Avenue, Overland Park, KS 66210.).

Garmin, like the Tom Tom before it, tried to send us on long, circuitous treks with many turns that involved big circles (and almost always included driving to College Blvd that crosses Metcalf one block South of 110th street and Metcalf.

When driving from South I-435 off-ramp to Metcalf Avenue, we should turn left (East) onto 110th Street from Metcalf to the Drury parking lot.

But Garmin yelled instructions that took far longer to reach our motel. (In fact, either the Tom Tom or the Garmin would lead us to the Marriott Hotel across Metcalf Avenue from the Drury Inn. Those navigation directions were preposterous.

One problem with Tom Tom and other programs is that they have no provisions for avoiding Interstate highways. You may choose to avoid toll roads or freeways but not the crowded Interstate Highways in the Kansas City area.

Now I believe I have found the essential problem...and our later experiences with the cell phone app, WAZE, verifies this theory is correct.

WE CANNOT TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY TURN OFF THE HORRIBLE, ultimately dangerous, BUILT-IN TOM TOM NAVIGATION PROGRAM. It is an inextricable part of the Subaru safety program. If the car is in a terrible accident and rolls over, a safety program is supposed to engage and notify 9-1-1 and other authorities of the car's location – through the inaccurate and completely screwed-up Tom Tom program.

Therefore, TOM TOM can (does) corrupt and poison and distort and dominate any other navigation program in the Subaru Legacy XT Touring Sedan.

On our recent trip to the same Drury Inn on Metcalf Avenue in Overland Park, Kansas from June 7 through June 10, 2024, I tried my Samsung Galaxy A53 5G phone with the highly rated, ordinarily very precise and reliable **WAZE** APP.

First, I downloaded the latest software and maps for the Garmin Smart61 device. At our home in Lincoln, NE, the display looked very nice. I thought I would watch the Garmin display (attached to the windshield) but listen to the precise driving directions on the WAZE phone app.

Second, I found that if I plugged the Samsung phone into the USB receptacles in the car to keep the phone fully charged, I would soon get strange displays. The entire screen on the phone turned bright red. It said there was an Android Bluetooth issue, so the screen was all red. No map or messages from WAZE could be seen. But, a message on the car's center screen said that a device was trying to "launch" but could not complete the Android Bluetooth link. When I pulled the USB plugs, all displays were normal. Thus, I could not use the USB cable to keep the phone charged when using WAZE!

The Garmin Smart61 device was powered by the Garmin "lighter" plug and one of the "lighter" power sockets in the car (with NO USB cable to the Garmin device). There was no screen "black out" and no puzzling messages. That seemed to work OK.

But, I told my son in the back seat to NOT plug in his Samsung Tablet to any USB charging port, as it might foul up our delicate Navigation system to the Garmin and/or to the WAZE phone system.

I told my wife to do the same with her Samsung Phone (same model as mine) or her Samsung tablet.

They weren't happy, but we all wanted to be safe and assure good navigation directions.

I thought that with just the WAZE (or both WAZE for voice directions and Garmin for a nice, large, display) we would have good – NOT TOTALLY CRAZY – Navigation advice.

It turned out that I was wrong. This ill-fated Subaru once again proved itself to be the dumbest "smart" car on the planet. It is **dangerous**.

All the way down to Kansas and Missouri, the Garmin display and the WAZE voice descriptions were in sync. They matched perfectly.

Then disaster struck. **We missed the turn off #17 from I-29 to I-435 West** to go around the Kansas City area to the west side and straight down to Metcalf Avenue very near our destination at 110th street and Metcalf Avenue, the Drury Inn.

Neither the Garmin Drive61 or the WAZE alerted us to get into the right lane as the #17 cutoff was near. #17 came up quickly, and I happened to see it go by.

Then both the Garmin and the WAZE did exactly the same as the Tom Tom had done long ago under the same circumstances. They went crazy – rapidly shouting orders about turn right or turn left or get into another lane....as they tried to find another route using Interstate highway connections and making no attempt to simply find the nearest connection to Metcalf Avenue to drive South to our ultimate destination, the Drury Inn.

The very rapid directions from WAZE seemed panic-stricken and made no sense on how to drive toward the Drury Inn. The Interstate traffic was dense, highly congested, and the rapid lane changes demanded by the WAZE would not have been safe under those circumstances.

After a long time – hoping for some sensible directions from WAZE – I drove off the Interstate. We drove around completely unfamiliar neighborhoods until we spotted a small restaurant. I asked a friendly and helpful young man how to find Metcalf Avenue. He said to continue on that street and we will see Metcalf in 3 to 4 blocks. OK, except that street was Metcalf Lane, not Avenue.

We drove around farther and stopped at a convenience/gas stations – while WAZE was literally yelling at me to drive half a block, stop and do a U-Turn and go to an entirely different area...I told my wife to turn off that crazy woman (WAZE) off because her stupid instructions were so distracting I almost had an accident, and doing a U-Turn would have been very dangerous on that street. In the store, I asked how to reach Metcalf Avenue.

One woman said “Easy as Pie!” She pointed out the window and gestured. Go down there to the stop light. TURN LEFT. Go One Block. Turn Right. Look straight ahead and you’ll see Metcalf Avenue about one block ahead! She was absolutely right.

We found Metcalf Ave. We turned left to go South because we were at the far north part of Metcalf, and we wanted to drive all the way south to 10963 Metcalf in Overland Park (actually the intersection of 110th street and Metcalf, where we would turn left (East) toward the Drury Inn. Simple. Traffic all the way on Metcalf was light.

We finally arrived at the Drury Inn about 1 ½ hours later than we expected.

The next day, our son wanted to visit a Comic Book store in the area. I put the address into WAZE. When leaving the Drury Inn, we first went south one block to College Blvd. We turned right (West) and followed the simple directions from WAZE. It was easy and quick.

When we wanted to return to the Drury Inn, I pressed the button for the Drury motel address.

WAZE did not chose to return by the same simple paths we took TO the store.

That meant big trouble! It meant that WAZE wanted to use some more Interstate Highway connections. We tried one, got trapped into the far right lane by very heavy traffic at high speeds, ended up being in a right turn only lane, and had to get off that Interstate Highway. More panic instructions from WAZE – like the craziness we had with Garmin61 and virtually identical to the nerve-wracking directions and lunatic instructions about U-turns on busy streets from the Subaru's Built-in Tom Tom program. (We had entered TVs Twilight Zone.)

After much frustrations and anxiety about near collisions, I decided to stop at a CVS pharmacy. The lady at the checkout said it's simple. She pointed at a street and said that's College Blvd. It will take you to Metcalf Avenue (Yes, I immediately realized where it crosses Metcalf a block South of 110th street where we'll turn towards the Drury Inn parking lot). The nice CVS clerk was absolutely correct. It was simple. WAZE had led us into all sorts of trouble and near collisions on Interstate Highways. Driving on College Blvd to Metcalf was simple and not frustrating or frightening.

Now, we are truly fearful of relying on the Subaru's Tom Tom with or without the additional Garmin61 and with or without the cell phone's WAZE. Those programs are dangerous and often lead us into near collisions and extreme anxiety in the Kansas City and Overland park, Kansas, area (which, ironically happens to be near the world headquarters of Garmin).

In short, I am convinced there are two errors that make this Subaru Legacy XT Touring sedan hazardous to drive around Kansas City.

1. The built-in Tom Tom program in the Subaru sedan dominates any and all other navigation programs/devices a driver tries to use. Without warning, they all can go totally crazy! That makes this car **very dangerous**.
2. The Navigation programs do not have a button to prevent use of Interstate Highways. They may allow avoiding toll roads and Freeways and ferries, etc., but those choices do not include Interstate Highways like the congested and fast traffic highways all around Kansas City.

LAST EXPERIENCES: GOING HOME TO LINCOLN, NEBRASKA WITH THE WAZE APP/Samsung cell phone -

We know how to drive back to Nebraska from the Drury Inn in Overland Park, KS. I turned the WAZE on. I expected it to recognize when we entered I-435 West (eventually going North) that this was the best way home. It didn't work.

I underestimated how insane (or haunted or possessed) the WAZE had become.

It was like HAL in the Space Odyssey movie.

As we drove North, WAZE loudly demanded that I turn off the highway at each OFF ramp we saw. WAZE named various streets we should seek after leaving I-435. Those were the same streets and Interstate Highways that had caused major problems when we had left the Comic Book store a day earlier!

WAZE must have wanted us to go back to the Comic Book store and then try to find our way back to the Drury Inn! It made those demands every time an off-ramp appeared as we drove away from Overland Park and the Kansas City area. That went on for dozens of miles and a dozen or more OFF ramps.

Once again, we were greatly bothered by that phone app that had completely lost its mind. I had to find a place to slow down or stop to turn off the App and turn off the entire cell phone.

I have not turned the WAZE on again since we got home to Lincoln, Nebraska. Heaven only knows what that corrupted and demented app will try to do next.....

Sincerely.



Lincoln, Nebraska

cc: National Highway Safety Admin
Subaru

Lincoln, NE

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