

DECIPHERING AND DECODING THE MOST COMMON DASHBOARD WARNING LIGHTS

We have all experienced that vexing moment when we are casually driving to our destination, and suddenly - out of nowhere - a flashing warning light appears on our dashboard. We're all too familiar with the feelings of sheer panic and confusion that often ensue.

The fact is, for some of us who aren't exactly mechanically-inclined, decrypting those blinking warning lights on our dashboard can be tricky - which, let's face it, is a real issue considering that some of these symbols are designed to flag an urgent and sometimes dangerous underlying problem.

Seeing that these warning signs could be indicating anything from needing a minor top up of fluid to a catastrophic engine meltdown, understanding whether you need to be concerned or act quickly is essential, to say the least.

With this in mind - and to help you better assess if you are driving under the best possible conditions - we have rounded up the most common warning lights that typically pop up on our dashboards to explain what message they are trying to convey.

Here they are:

- **Exclamation in a Jar (or Low Tire Pressure Warning Light):** This symbol looks like an exclamation point in parenthesis. What it alerts to is a significant loss in pressure of one of the vehicle's tires. In other words, at least one of your tires might be getting flat. If the warning light comes on, stop as soon as safely possible and inflate the tires to the recommended pressure shown in the driver's manual.
- **The Aladdin Lamp (or Low Oil Pressure Warning Light):** If this sign - which bears an uncanny resemblance to Aladdin's magic Genie Lamp - comes on,

it means that the engine oil pressure might be low. This may simply mean that the oil levels need to be topped up, or could indicate a more complex issue. According to ACDelco, which sells car parts and fluids for many car makers, low engine oil pressure can cause extensive and costly damage to your engine. If this warning light displays, safely bring your vehicle to a stop and do not restart your engine. Check the engine oil level. If it's not low, or if you're not sure how to check it, note that many vehicles, such as Chevrolets, GMCs and Cadillacs come with region wide roadside assistance (the phone number should be on a sticker on the car window), so call the experts to take a look and advise you on your next steps. Note that most auto insurance policies come with roadside assistance too. Remember, it is important not to operate the engine with the oil pressure warning light on.

- **The Keyed Thermometer (or Temperature Gauge/Light):** this symbol is fairly easy to remember - it looks like a thermometer in water. It basically indicates the temperature of your vehicle's coolant. A reading in the "H" zone of any light means "HOT" and is an indication of trouble. If you receive this notice, simply

pull over to a safe location, shift into neutral (N) and allow the engine to idle. Do not continue to drive if the temperature does not return to normal or the "HOT" light stays on!

- **The Boxing Glove (or Malfunction Indicator Light):** this is known as a 'check engine light', but what exactly are you supposed to check? Well, it could indicate a number of potential issues, which is why, if it remains on while driving then be sure to seek service promptly! But, there's no need to panic if you see this light briefly when you turn the ignition on. As long as it doesn't stay on, it's ok.

- **Winking Robot (or Voltage Gauge/Battery Light):** this light is just a tiny battery and indicates the electrical system's voltage when the engine is running. You need to service your vehicle if the battery light comes on or if the pointer moves to either "HIGH" or "LOW," indicating too much or not enough voltage.

Remember, knowledge is power. Now that you have armed yourself with this pertinent information, you will hopefully no longer find yourself struggling to decipher your dashboard warning lights - instead, you will be able to swiftly take action!



SAMSUNG PREVAILS OVER APPLE IN \$399M PATENT APPEAL

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court on Tuesday overturned a \$399 million patent infringement penalty imposed on Samsung for copying Apple's iPhone design, in a case watched for its implications for technology innovation.

The shorthanded justices ruled 8-0 that Samsung should not be required to forfeit the entire profits from its smartphones for infringing on design components, sending the case back to a lower court.

While the ruling was short on specifics, analysts said it was likely to curb litigation from patent holders expecting to reap big profits from infringement on a component.

A jubilant Samsung hailed the "victory for Samsung and for all those who promote creativity, innovation and fair competition in the marketplace."

The 11-page ruling found that the \$399 million penalty-one element of a major patent infringement case-was inappropriate because it represented "Samsung's entire profit from the sale of its infringing smartphones" for copying the iPhone's "rectangular front face with rounded edges and a grid of colorful icons on a black screen." But the court stopped short of delving into details of how the lower court should determine the penalty.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote in the opinion that "doing so would require us to set out a test for identifying the relevant article of manufacture... and to parse the record to apply that test in this case."

The court sent the case back to the appellate court in Washington to resolve the details. The case is one element of the \$548 million penalty-knocked down from an original \$1 billion jury award-Samsung was ordered to pay for copying iPhone patents.

No clarity

Observers had been watching to see how the court-which had not taken up a design patent case in more than a century-would tip the balance between technological innovation and protecting intellectual property. Dennis Crouch, a University of Missouri law professor and co-director of the Center for Intellectual Property and Entrepreneurship, said the ruling may leave both sides disappointed. "Although the case

offers hope for Samsung and others adjudged of infringing design patents, it offers no clarity as to the rule of law," Crouch said in a blog post.

Crouch said the court allowed for damages at the component level but also indicated that the product as a whole is "an article of manufacture," leaving the matter open to interpretation. "Thus, it will be up to courts to figure out which level (of damages) applies in particular cases," he wrote.

Samsung won the backing of major Silicon Valley and other IT sector giants, including Google, Facebook, Dell and Hewlett-Packard, claiming a strict ruling on design infringement could lead to a surge in litigation.

Apple was supported by big names in fashion and manufacturing. Design professionals, researchers and academics, citing precedents like Coca-Cola's iconic soda bottle. Reacting to the verdict, an Apple spokesman said in an email, "Our case has always been about Samsung's blatant copying of our ideas, and that was never in dispute... We remain optimistic that the lower courts will again send a powerful signal that stealing isn't right." Samsung did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

'Sigh of relief'

Florian Mueller, an intellectual property analyst who writes a closely followed patent blog, wrote that "large parts of the (US and global) tech industry will breathe a sigh of relief now," even if the case is not settled.

Ed Black, president of the Computer & Communications Industry Association, which represents major tech firms, welcomed the ruling. "This was a pivotal court case for the technology industry and it is encouraging to see the law interpreted and applied in a way that makes sense in a modern era and protects both inventors and innovation," Black said.

The lower court's interpretation of design patents, Black said, "would have had a chilling effect on investment and the development of products-especially in the tech sector." Brian Love, a law professor who follows technology at the University of Santa Clara, said it was noteworthy that the top court declined to provide detailed guidance on how to resolve the damage award. —AFP



LAS VEGAS: Screens show the feeds from traffic cameras at the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada's FAST traffic management center on Tuesday, Dec 6, 2016. —AP

CAR COMPANY OFFERING RED LIGHT-READING VEHICLES IN LAS VEGAS PICKED FIRST-IN-THE-NATION

LAS VEGAS: On the theory that a driver who knows when a red light will turn green is more relaxed and aware, vehicle manufacturer Audi is unveiling this week in Las Vegas a technology that enables vehicles to "read" traffic signals ahead and tell the motorist how long the wait will be.

It's a simple display for the driver - a dashboard traffic signal icon and a timer next to the digital vehicle speed and area speed limit displays already common in newer cars. The technology behind it is more complex. It uses 4G LTE cellular communication between the vehicle and a centralized traffic-management control network- dubbed vehicle-to-infrastructure or "V2I." Audi offers it through a subscription service not unlike commercial satellite radio. The company calls it "traffic light information."

Company executive Pom Malhotra terms it "time to green." "You don't have to constantly stare at the traffic light. You have that information right in front of you," Malhotra told reporters who test-drove the system Tuesday in vehicles on and around Las Vegas Strip.

Can't see the light because there's a tour bus ahead? No problem. The icon says you have 37 seconds. "A lot of behavior in the car changes," Malhotra said. "You have time to relax your hands

and shoulders ... time to hand a milk bottle to your child in the back seat ... while knowing you're not taking attention away from the road."

First-in-the-nation

Audi and Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada officials said Tuesday that Las Vegas was picked for the first-in-the-nation debut because it has a single centralized traffic management center covering all jurisdictions in Clark County, a region nearly the size of New Jersey.

Malhotra said Audi hopes to expand the system soon to other big U.S. cities, including places like Los Angeles, which have patchwork traffic management systems run by varying jurisdictions in a sprawling urban landscape.

The Las Vegas-area program, dubbed the Freeway and Arterial System of Transportation, or FAST, collects data and synchronizes 1,300 traffic signals in a region home to more than 2 million people and host to more than 40 million tourists a year. It also has 508 cameras and freeway flow detectors, and controls 106 message signs and freeway on-ramp meters.

Tina Quigley, transportation commission general manager, said other car companies will be able to tap into the Las Vegas data, which

she said should improve mobility and safety - particularly in the congested Las Vegas Strip tourist corridor and around McCarran International Airport.

About 150 Audi owners are using the system in Las Vegas, Malhotra said. The car company official called the debut of the commercial service "a small step forward in V2I," but a key demonstration of the kind of technology that will enable vehicle-to-vehicle communication and driverless cars.

Using cellular communication for smart car systems differs from vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-traffic signal programs using dedicated short-range communication.

DSRC has been tested since 2012 at the University of Michigan, said Debra Bezzina, senior program manager for the Ann Arbor Connected Vehicle Test Environment. The university Transportation Research Institute program is backed by several federal traffic safety, research, trucking and transit agencies, and pilot programs are slated for Wyoming, New York and Tampa, Florida. Bezzina said properly equipped vehicles with DSRC are able to detect traffic signal phase signals at intersections. "If the light has turned yellow, it can tell the driver, 'You're not going to make the light,'" Bezzina said. —AP



SEOUL: This file photo taken on October 26, 2016 shows people on an elevator as the logo of Samsung Electronics is seen on a glass door at a flagship store. — AFP

NEW ZEALAND PASSPORT ROBOT TELLS APPLICANT OF ASIAN DESCENT TO OPEN EYES

SYDNEY: A New Zealand man of Asian descent had his passport photograph rejected when facial recognition software mistakenly registered his eyes as being closed. Richard Lee's attempt to renew his passport was blocked after he submitted the picture to an online passport photo checker run by New Zealand's department of internal affairs.

The automated system told the 22-year-old engineering student the photo was invalid because his eyes were closed, even though they were clearly open, according to a copy of the notification posted on social media site

Facebook. "No hard feelings on my part, I've always had very small eyes and facial recognition technology is relatively new and unsophisticated," Lee told Reuters. "It was a robot, no hard feelings. I got my passport renewed in the end."

Up to 20 percent of passport photos submitted online are rejected for various reasons, an Internal Affairs spokesman said. "The most common error is a subject's eyes being closed and that was the generic error message sent in this case," he said. The lighting in Lee's first photo was uneven, but a later one was accepted, he added. — Reuters

MALLS TAKE THE SANTA EXPERIENCE HIGH-TECH

NEW YORK: Hop on a virtual sleigh ride to the North Pole. Stand on the "Naughty or Nice O'Meter." Snap a selfie and see your face on a dancing elf. The Santa experience has gotten a makeover as many malls install shows and games they hope will lure shoppers who are buying more online.

About 40 malls in the US and one in London have the high-tech Santa displays, most of them located near major cities that tend to house pricier stores. Taking photos on Santa's lap costs about \$30 and up, around the same as at other malls, but most of the malls say people can walk through without purchasing anything. "It was a half-hour of entertainment that was free," says Katie Mass, who took her twin daughters through Santa's Flight Academy, a 3,000-square-foot setup at The Mall at Short Hills in New Jersey.

She had gone to the mall to return some dresses, but had to stop when her 2-year olds saw the spectacle. "They started running," says the stay-at-home mom from Westfield, New Jersey. The girls tapped touch screens, pulled levers and watched as flight suits were

virtually fit over their bodies on a screen. The final stop was a two-story tall enclosed sleigh that dropped fake snow upon them. One girl made snow angels on the floor while her sister danced under the colorful lasers. "It was extravagant and well done," says Mass.

Malls are hoping the over-the-top Santa visits remind people what brick-and-mortar stores can offer. They're increasingly trying to offer special experiences as they compete with online rivals, says Howard Davidowitz, chairman of New York-based retail consulting group Davidowitz & Associates. "The parents love it, the kids love it and Amazon can't do it," says Davidowitz.

Santa's Flight Academy was developed by mall operator Taubman Centers Inc., which spent two years on the idea. After testing it last year at The Mall of San Juan in Puerto Rico, the company rolled it out to 11 other Taubman malls this year, replacing a low-tech ice palace that had housed Santa for years. Like other malls with elaborate Santa sets, Taubman declined to say how much it spent on Santa's Flight Academy. — AP



ALPHARETTA, Georgia: In this Sunday, Nov 20, 2016, photo, mall shoppers line up to visit the "Adventure to Santa," a DreamWorks DreamPlace experience at North Point Mall. —AP