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Google accused of directing motorist to drive off collapsed bridge

🕒 3 hours ago



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By Max Matza

BBC News

The family of a US man who drowned after driving off a collapsed bridge are claiming that he died because Google failed to update its maps.

Philip Paxson's family are suing the company over his death, alleging that Google negligently failed to show the bridge had fallen nine years earlier.

Mr Paxson died in September 2022 after attempting to drive over the damaged bridge in Hickory, North Carolina.

A spokesperson for Google said the company was reviewing the allegations.

The case was filed in civil court in Wake County on Tuesday.

Mr Paxson, a father of two, was driving home from his daughter's ninth birthday party at a friend's house and was in an unfamiliar neighbourhood at the time of his death, according to the family's lawsuit.

His wife had driven his two daughters home earlier, and he stayed behind to help clean up.

"Unfamiliar with local roads, he relied on Google Maps, expecting it would safely direct him home to his wife and daughters," lawyers for the family said in a statement announcing the lawsuit.

"Tragically, as he drove cautiously in the darkness and rain, he unsuspectingly followed Google's outdated directions to what his family later learned for nearly a decade was called the 'Bridge to Nowhere,' crashing into Snow Creek, where he drowned."

Local residents had repeatedly contacted Google to have them change their online maps after the bridge collapsed in 2013, the suit claims.



FAMILY HANDOUT

| The bridge collapsed nine years before the death

Barriers that were normally placed across the bridge entrance were missing due to vandalism, according to the [**Charlotte Observer**](#).

The lawsuit is also suing three local companies, arguing they had a duty to maintain the bridge.

"Our girls ask how and why their daddy died, and I'm at a loss for words they can understand because, as an adult, I still can't understand how those responsible for the GPS directions and the bridge could have acted with so little regard for human life," his wife, Alicia Paxson, said in a statement.

"We have the deepest sympathies for the Paxson family," a spokesman for Google [**told AP News**](#).

"Our goal is to provide accurate routing information in Maps and we are reviewing this lawsuit."

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