Bendgate 2.0: Samsung’s $2,000 foldable phone is already breaking

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- Steve Kovach of CNBC had his Galaxy Fold die right along the display crease.
- The Verge’s Galaxy Fold review unit had something press against the back side of the screen, killing several rows of pixels.
- A tweet from Mark Gurman: “The screen on my Galaxy Fold review unit is completely broken and unusable just two days in. Hard to know if this is widespread or not.”
- Gurman says, “The phone comes with this protective layer/film. Samsung says you are not supposed to remove it. I removed it, not knowing you’re not supposed to (consumers won’t know either). It appeared removable in the left corner, so I took it off. I believe this contributed to the problem.”
- From YouTuber Marques Brownlee: “PSA: There’s a layer that appears to be a screen protector on the Galaxy Fold’s display. It’s NOT a screen protector. Do NOT remove it. I got this far peeling it off before the display spazzed and blacked out. Started over with a replacement.”

Samsung's futuristic Galaxy Fold is launching this month, and the device has already made its way to a select group of reviewers and influencers. During the run-up to the device's launch, there were concerns about the durability of the folding display, and now after just a few days with the public, the device is already experiencing problems. There are numerous reports of Samsung's $2,000 device breaking after a single day, sometimes due to poor durability, other times due to user error.

First up, we have a report from Dieter Bohn at The Verge, who had a piece of debris get *under* the Galaxy Fold display (possibly through the hinge?) and press up against the back of the display. In addition to causing an unsightly bump in the OLED panel, it eventually pressed against the display enough to break it, killing a few horizontal and vertical rows of pixels.

Since the Galaxy Fold folds in half, the flexible OLED display quickly forms a visible crease in the middle. People were worried about the durability of folding a display in half like this, and it looks like Steve Kovach of CNBC has experienced everyone's worst fear: his Galaxy Fold display broke right along the fold crease—all the pixels in the folding area went black and the screen started flickering like crazy.

We've also seen some reviewers peel off a layer of the display *on purpose,* thinking it was a removable protective layer that many phones ship with. Bloomberg's Mark Gurman shared a gruesome photo of a removed layer of display film, saying, "The phone comes with this protective layer/film. Samsung says you are not supposed to remove it. I removed it, not knowing you're not supposed to (consumers won't know either). It appeared removable in the left corner, so I took it off. I believe this contributed to the problem." The "problem" Gurman is referring to is his totally dead Galaxy Fold display. After removing the layer of the display, first the left half of the display died, then the display completely

died.

YouTuber Marques Brownlee also tried peeling off this protective layer, thinking it was just a display protector for shipping. After picking at the layout a bit, Brownlee says "the display spazzed and blacked out. Started over with a replacement."

> *After one day of use… pic.twitter.com/VjDlJI45C9*
>
> *— Steve Kovach (@stevekovach) April 17, 2019*

Right now we're at the very edge of viability for folding smartphones, and the Galaxy Fold is the first device from a serious manufacturer that is reaching the hands of the masses. For this first year, foldables are definitely first-generation, early adopter devices, with delicate plastic screen covers, visible display creases, radical new hinge designs, and a variety of competing form factors in development. So far Samsung has been suspiciously protective of the Galaxy Fold, and despite announcing it in February alongside the Galaxy S10, people haven't gotten to even touch the device until this week.

The early hype for the Galaxy Fold seems to have struck a chord with consumers, with Samsung.com citing "overwhelming demand" and selling out of Galaxy Fold pre-orders in just a day. Devices ship to the general public April 26, so if the final production units have the same problems, we'll see a lot more reports then. So far, Samsung has not commented on these durability problems. Place your bets on where this issue will rank among exploding smartphones or S-Pens jamming in devices.

Listing image by Mark Gurman

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