

FTC Sends Warning Letters Over Warranty Practices

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The FTC is focused on ensuring that consumers have options when it comes to repairing products. Two years ago, we [summarized](#) an FTC workshop, report, Policy Statement, and three settlements on this issue. Last week, the FTC [announced](#) that they had sent warning letters to eight companies, raising concerns about whether their warranty practices were unlawfully hindering consumers' right to repair their products.

Under the [Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act](#), companies that offer warranties for consumer products that cost more than \$5 generally can't condition their warranties on a consumer's use of any part or service identified by brand name, unless the warranty states that the part or service will be provided for free (or they have a waiver from the FTC). Under the FTC Act, it's also deceptive for companies to create the misleading impression that a consumer will void their warranty by using unauthorized parts or service.

Letters to four air purifier sellers and one treadmill manufacturer raise concerns about the companies' statements that consumers must use specified parts or service providers to keep their warranties valid. And letters to three companies that sell computer equipment raise concerns about stickers stating that a warranty will be void if the sticker is removed, when the inability to remove the sticker would prevent consumers from performing routine maintenance and repairs.

The letters include this warning: "This letter places you on notice that violations of the Warranty and FTC Acts may result in legal action. FTC investigators have copied and preserved the online pages in question, and we plan to review your company's written warranty and promotional materials after 30 days." Recipients of the letters should certainly review their warranty practices to ensure they comply with the law. And if you haven't checked your practices recently, maybe you should, too.