

MEDIA RELEASE

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CCS Issues Guidance on Household Appliance Repair Services to Safeguard Competition and Consumer Choice

1. As part of Singapore's sustainability efforts, the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCS**”) and the National Environment Agency (“**NEA**”) have concluded a study into Singapore’s household appliance industry to assess competition and consumer issues, and to better understand the supply landscape and distribution channels of common household appliances.
2. The study was conducted following feedback received by CCS regarding manufacturers’ refusal to supply repair inputs for household appliances.
3. The study found that despite a few concerns identified, the supply of household appliances is generally well-served by various market players such as manufacturers, distributors, importers and wholesalers, while the after-sales service sector is generally well-supported by repairers.
4. Rather than to exercise legal powers, CCS has in the report provided guidance to manufacturers to safeguard consumers’ ability to seek repair services from alternative repair providers, improve consumer access to information, and support sustainable choices, while offering tips for consumers on how to make informed purchasing and repair decisions.

Access to repair inputs by independent repairers

5. The study found that the conduct of manufacturers restricting access to repair inputs is not widespread in Singapore, with independent repairers generally able to obtain repair inputs. However, independent repairers may face difficulties obtaining certain complex repair inputs that manufacturers do not supply outside

their authorised networks¹, making it more difficult for them to provide repair services.

6. CCS is concerned that manufacturers' refusal to supply repair inputs to independent repairers may affect competition between authorised and independent repairers and could restrict consumer choice for repair services. Manufacturers are encouraged to review their supply practices to ensure compliance with the Competition Act.

Enhancing consumer understanding of warranty information

7. Warranty terms provided by manufacturers² can be quite different across brands, and many consumers may not adequately understand what coverage they might have. Helping consumers better understand the warranty terms at point of purchase facilitates their comparison across different brands. This in turn encourages manufacturers to compete on offering more favourable warranty terms for consumers.
8. To address this, CCS has developed a checklist that consumers can use when enquiring about the warranty for household appliances (see **Annex A**). Manufacturers and retailers are also encouraged to provide warranty information, including warranty duration, coverage and limitations, that is easily understood by consumers.

Supporting durable and sustainable choices by consumers

9. Consumers lack access to adequate information on product durability (including repairability) to choose household appliances with sustainable options. CCS is concerned that the inability of consumers to make informed decisions may adversely affect competition between manufacturers to offer more durable products. Manufacturers are encouraged to provide durability information from accredited third-party testing, such as the estimated product lifespan based on certain testing conditions.
10. CCS also provides tips to consumers in this regard. When choosing a household appliance, consumers may wish to look beyond pricing and features to also consider durability, expected lifespan and safety standards.

¹ These repair inputs are proprietary and brand-specific, such as printed circuit boards and pressure switches.

² For example, the warranty duration for refrigerator compressor for different brands range from 10 to 20 years.

11. When deciding whether to repair or replace appliances, consumers should consider the relative costs involved,³ weigh the advantages of prolonging product lifespan and reducing electrical and electronic waste through repairs, against the safety factors and energy efficiency of replacing with a newer model. Newer models may offer improved energy efficiency with long-term cost savings and environmental benefits, despite requiring higher initial expenditure.

Addressing misleading or false quality environmental claims

12. The study did not find prevalent use of misleading or false environmental claims in the marketing of household appliances. However, it revealed that Singapore consumers are price-sensitive and most are influenced by environmental claims offering long-term cost savings.
13. CCS will monitor developments in the industry and take enforcement action where necessary to maintain competitive markets and protect consumers from unfair trading practices.
14. The full report can be found on CCS website under "[Market Studies](#)".

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³ The study found that consumers consider mainly the costs. Specifically, consumers are more likely to repair their appliances if the costs of repairing are 10% to 30% of the price of buying a new appliance, if not already covered by warranty. Other factors considered by consumers include the appliance age relative to expected lifespan, severity of issues, ease of repair, and practical considerations such as avoiding reinstallation hassles for built-in units such as air conditioners.

Annex A: Suggested Questions Pertaining to Repair and Warranty

Box 1. *Consumer Checklist*

Coverage – What does the warranty cover and for how long?

(Warranties usually only cover defects, and not wear-and-tear or misuse)

Benefits – What extra benefits does the warranty offer?

(Some warranties may include additional benefits such as complimentary maintenance checks, free on-site repair, or free replacement)

Repair – Who can repair, what is the repair process and how long will it take?

(For example, whether warranty repairs are conducted by manufacturers or authorised service centres, steps required by consumers to claim warranty repairs, and typical turnaround times)

Fees – Are there additional fees for warranty repairs?

(For example, service calls, labour or transportation costs)

Conditions – Are there any conditions to keep the warranty valid?

(For example, serial number must not be tampered with, or product must be solely for domestic use in Singapore)

About the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore

The Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCS**”) is a statutory board of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Our mission is to make markets work well to create opportunities and choices for businesses and consumers in Singapore.

CCS administers and enforces the Competition Act 2004 and the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act 2003, to guard against anti-competitive activities and unfair trade practices. Additionally, CCS ensures that businesses observe fair trade measurement practices by administering the Weights and Measures Act 1975, and ensures the supply of safe consumer goods by enforcing and implementing the Consumer Protection (Trade Descriptions and Safety Requirements) Act 1975 and its associated Regulations.

For more information, please visit www.ccs.gov.sg.

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