
PRESS RELEASE

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Focus on warranties: nationwide consumer protection inspection launched

Last year, the authorities found infringements in two-thirds of the proceedings initiated on the basis of consumer complaints, with fines totalling 94 million forints. Based on this experience, compliance with warranty rules will again be a priority for inspections this year. Under the professional guidance of the NATCP, government agencies with responsibility for consumer protection are investigating whether companies are properly informing consumers about their warranty rights, whether warranty certificates comply with the regulations, and whether consumers are able to exercise their rights in practice.

Based on consumer complaints received last year, 447 procedures were initiated, in 67 percent of which government agencies found that a breach of the law had occurred. The most frequently identified shortcomings were the failure to draw up a report and the incomplete content of reports that had been drawn up. In the case of products covered by a mandatory warranty, warranty certificates were frequently not provided, or the documents provided did not meet the legal requirements. In addition, the authority also identified misleading consumer information, including in relation to warranty and guarantee rights and the enforcement of these rights.

The thematic investigation now getting under way covers three main areas in greater detail than previous ones: the mandatory warranty for new durable consumer goods, the mandatory warranty for repair and maintenance services, and the mandatory warranty for newly built flats and residential buildings. A key focus of the inspections is the compliance of the content of paper-based and electronic warranty certificates issued to consumers, as well as the information contained therein. Among other aspects, the Authority is examining whether the warranty certificate contains information on the rights to which the consumer is entitled under the warranty, as well as the conditions, time limits and location for exercising those rights. Another aspect of the inspections is ensuring that the information is made available to the consumer in a form that is easy to understand, unambiguous, in Hungarian and clearly legible.

Particular attention is given to durable consumer goods covered by a statutory warranty and with a value not exceeding 100,000 forints. It is not compulsory to issue a warranty certificate for these items, but providing consumers with adequate information remains mandatory. Based on the findings of the investigations, the authority is identifying recurring infringements, inadequate information practices and consumer risks, which may also determine the focus of subsequent, targeted inspections.

The NATCP's aim is to ensure that consumers receive accurate, clear and compliant information about their warranty rights and are able to effectively exercise those rights. Where infringements are identified, the authority will take the necessary measures to ensure that the statutory provisions relating to guarantees are fully complied with in business practice.

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National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection