



24 April 2026

FEATURE ARTICLE

The Hidden Warranty Traps in TV Sales

Purchasing a brand-new television should be an exciting and rewarding experience. From the moment it is switched on, it becomes more than just an appliance, it transforms into the centrepiece of the living room, a source of entertainment, connection, and comfort.

However, for many consumers, that excitement is short-lived. What begins as a simple purchase can quickly turn into frustration when faults arise and warranty claims are denied, often on the grounds of “physical damage.” In many cases, consumers are left questioning what went wrong and whether they were ever given the right information to begin with.

This feature article explores the growing concern around denied television warranty claims and highlights how gaps in guidance at the point of sale may be leaving consumers unknowingly exposed to costly outcomes.

The Information Gap

When purchasing a television, consumers are typically provided with only the essentials, an invoice, a warranty card, and occasionally a user manual. **Yet when a fault arises, a new layer of expectations often emerges. Retailers may point to factors such as environmental conditions, handling practices, or storage methods, issues that were rarely, if ever, explained at the point of sale.**

Based on cases reviewed by the Council over the years, traders frequently cite the following as reasons to deny warranty claims:

- Avoiding exposure to direct sunlight
- Keeping the TV away from windows or heat sources
- Ensuring stable and secure mounting or placement
- Protecting the screen during transport

This disconnect highlights a critical gap between what consumers are told when they buy a product and what they are later held accountable for when something goes wrong.

Here is the important truth: *These conditions will not harm your television. In fact, they are simply recommended practices to protect it.* What is unacceptable is for traders to introduce

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlwk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



these as grounds for refusing warranty claims after a fault occurs, when they were never disclosed at the time of sale.

Consumers should not be penalised for failing to follow instructions they never received.

When Does Damage Become A Dispute?

Retailers often rely on “physical damage” as a basis for voiding warranties. While most warranty terms legitimately exclude faults caused by mishandling or impact, disputes arise when the cause of damage is unclear or when retailers attribute faults to environmental factors that are difficult to verify. In many cases, consumers are held to impossibly high standards, that should not be expected of ordinary, reasonable users.

Disagreements commonly occur where:

- Consumers were not advised on proper handling or placement
- The alleged damage cannot be clearly linked to misuse or neglect
- Products were transported without adequate guidance or warnings

For example, placing a television near a window may expose it to prolonged sunlight, which could contribute to panel degradation over time. However, it is unreasonable to expect consumers to anticipate and guard against every possible risk. Warranties exist to provide a level of protection against unforeseen faults, not to shift the entire burden of care onto the consumer.

The “Take It Home Yourself” Dilemma

Another recurring issue arises when consumers choose to transport their televisions themselves rather than using retailer delivery services. Retailers may argue that once the product leaves the store, liability shifts entirely to the consumer. Any damage, whether visible or internal, is then attributed to improper handling.

Transporting a television is not as simple as moving an ordinary household item. Modern flat-screen TVs are highly sensitive to:

- Pressure on the display panel;
- Incorrect positioning, such as laying the TV flat instead of keeping it upright; and
- Vibration and shock during transit.

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlwk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



Without explicit instructions, consumers may unintentionally compromise the product before even switching it on.

Where Do Retailers Fall Short?

Retailers play a critical role in shaping the consumer experience, not only by providing products but also by ensuring that customers are well-informed. Clear and transparent communication is essential in preventing misunderstandings and disputes.

Responsible retail practices should go beyond basic transactions and include:

- Providing clear, verbal explanations of handling and placement requirements;
- Highlighting common risks associated with improper use or environmental exposure;
- Offering simple, easy-to-understand written guidance tailored to the product; and
- Explaining warranty exclusions in practical terms that consumers can relate to.

When such information is not provided, consumers are left to navigate complex products with limited knowledge. Over time, this can lead to repeated disputes, dissatisfaction, and a decline in consumer trust. A warranty is intended to provide reassurance, not create uncertainty or confusion.

Understanding Your Rights as a Consumer

Consumers are protected by fundamental rights that ensure fairness in the marketplace. Products purchased should meet expectations of quality, durability, and suitability for their intended purpose. Equally important is the right to receive accurate and sufficient information to make informed decisions.

When faced with a denied warranty claim, consumers are encouraged to take an active approach. Seeking clarification is both reasonable and necessary. Questions that can help clarify the situation include:

- What specific damage has been identified, and where is it located?
- What evidence supports the conclusion that the damage was caused by misuse?
- Were any instructions or warnings provided at the time of purchase regarding this type of risk?

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlwk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



Maintaining records such as receipts, communication with the retailer, and photographs of the product can strengthen a consumer's position when challenging a claim.

Practical Steps to Protect Yourself

While systemic improvements are needed, consumers can take practical steps to reduce their risk:

- **Ask Before You Buy**

Take the time to ask detailed questions about handling, placement, and transportation. Clear answers can prevent costly mistakes later.

- **Inspect Before Leaving**

Carefully check the product and its packaging before leaving the store, especially if arranging your own transport.

- **Transport with Care**

Always keep the television upright, secure it properly, and avoid applying pressure to the screen or frame.

- **Consider Delivery Options**

Retailer delivery services may offer greater accountability and reduce the risk of damage during transit.

- **Proper Storage, Prior to Being Sold**

Check how the item was stored while it was on sale. For example, some retailers place their TVs in high foot traffic areas where other customers may bump into it, resulting in pre-purchase damage.

- **Document the Process**

Photographs taken during pickup, transport, and installation can serve as valuable evidence in the event of a dispute.

A Call for Greater Accountability

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlwk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



@CCoFiji



Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org



Mobile App

The pattern of similar complaints suggests that this is not an isolated issue but a broader concern within the retail environment. Repeated warranty disputes highlight the need for improved standards in how products are sold and how information is communicated.

Clear, consistent, and practical guidance should form part of every sale. Retailers, manufacturers, and regulators must work together to ensure that consumers are not unknowingly placed at a disadvantage. Strengthening these practices will not only reduce disputes but also enhance consumer confidence and trust in the marketplace.

Final Thought

A television purchase should end with satisfaction, not stress. Bridging the information gap between retailers and consumers is essential in creating a fair and transparent purchasing experience. Until this gap is addressed, the burden will continue to fall disproportionately on consumers, many of whom are simply trying to make informed and responsible choices.

Consumers who experience difficulties with warranty claims or require advice are encouraged to reach out to the Consumer Council of Fiji through the **National Consumer Helpline 155**. Support, guidance, and intervention are available to help ensure that consumer rights are protected and upheld.

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlwk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj