

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) Issues 13 Notices to E-Commerce Platforms Over Illegal Sale of Licensed Frequency Wireless Devices (Walkie-Talkies)

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The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued thirteen notices to leading digital marketplaces against the listing and sale of walkie-talkies on e-commerce platforms without proper frequency disclosure, licensing information, or Equipment Type Approval (ETA) which constitutes a violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

These platforms include Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, OLX, TradeIndia, Facebook, Indiamart, VardaanMart, Jiomart, Krishnamart, Chimiya, Talk Pro Walie Talkie and MaskMan toys.

Walkie-talkies are being sold on e-commerce platforms without mandatory and clear disclosures regarding the requirement of a wireless operating license or compliance with applicable laws. The product listings for walkie-talkies do not specify whether the device requires a license from the concerned authority for use. The omission of details such as frequency range, licensing obligations under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, or the Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933, and the Use of Low Power, Very Low Power Short Range Radio Frequency Devices (Exemption from Licensing Requirement) Rules, 2018 and the potential legal consequences of unauthorized use, misleads consumers into believing that the devices are freely operable by the general public.

Furthermore, the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 require marketplace e-commerce entities to provide clear and accessible information that enables consumers to make informed decisions at the pre-purchase stage. The sale of non-compliant wireless devices in the absence of essential regulatory disclosures misleads consumers and represents a serious breach of statutory obligations.

The Central Authority observed that several platforms were allowing the sale of walkie-talkies:

- Without clearly specifying the frequency range;
- Without valid Equipment Type Approval (ETA) from the Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) Wing; and
- Without proper disclosure of licensing requirements to consumers.

A preliminary analysis further revealed an alarming volume of such listings across these platforms, including approximately 467 listings on Amazon, 314 on Flipkart, 489 on Meesho, and 423 on TradeIndia, indicating the widespread scale of the issue. Therefore, the Central Authority has requested information regarding the name and contact details of each seller, product URLs and listing IDs of the walkie-talkie devices, details of frequency specifications and any licensing information displayed on the listings, whether ETA/WPC certification details have been collected or verified for these products; and the number of units sold per listing from January 2023 to date.

Further, in view of the rampant non-adherence to existing legal provisions by e-commerce entities, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has found it imperative to issue specific guidelines to ensure compliance with the law and safeguard consumer interests. These guidelines will be issued under Section 18(2)(l) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The Draft Guidelines for the Prevention and Regulation of Illegal Sale and Use of Licensed Frequency Range Wireless Telegraphy Apparatus including Walkie-Talkies on E-Commerce Platforms, 2025 will soon be placed on the website of the Department of Consumer Affairs

for public comments/suggestions/feedback. A letter in this regard has been written to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of Telecommunications to seek their valuable inputs. These draft guidelines aim to:

- Ensure due diligence by platforms before listing such products;
- Mandate verification of seller credentials and certification;
- Introduce automated monitoring and takedown mechanisms for unauthorized listings;
- Promote consumer awareness through proper disclosures; and
- Enforce penalties and platform liability in case of non-compliance

In line with this initiative, the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, organized a stakeholder consultation meeting on 03.05.2025, involving e-commerce and OTT platforms to sensitize them about regulatory requirements, expected compliance, and platform accountability in curbing illegal sales of wireless communication devices. During the stakeholder consultation meeting, participants were sensitised that where the law prescribes specific provisions or particulars regarding the sale and possession of a product, strict adherence to such legal requirements is imperative. E-commerce platforms were directed to proactively monitor listings on their platforms and immediately delist all sellers who fail to comply with the applicable laws, rules and guidelines. The meeting, held under the Chairpersonship of Smt. Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, was attended by various e-commerce platforms including Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, IndiaMart, and Meta.

The Central Authority has consistently adopted a proactive approach in monitoring e-commerce entities. Pursuant to a communication received from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways regarding the illegal sale of critical safety components of motor vehicles on online platforms, the CCPA promptly initiated action and issued an advisory directing e-commerce platforms to delist car seat belt alarm stopper clips and related motor vehicle components. As a result of this intervention, a total of 13,118 such listings were removed from various e-commerce platforms.

The CCPA reaffirms its commitment to ensuring a fair, safe, and transparent digital marketplace for consumers across the country.

Nihi Sharma

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