WINSTON & STRAWN LLP

What Is the California Unfair Competition Law?

California Unfair Competition Law

The **Unfair Competition Law of California** prohibits false advertising and illegal business practices. The law is also known as the state's UCL. The law describes "unfair competition" as any unlawful, unfair, or fraudulent business act or practice, or false, deceptive, or misleading advertising. To pursue lawsuits under California's unfair competition law, a consumer or business must prove suffering and financial or property losses due to an unfair practice. A plaintiff can take legal action within four years of discovering an illegal practice. The action is taken to stop a specific company practice and to seek restitution. The plaintiff may also ask for attorney fees related to a lawsuit.

For example, under the state UCL a company may be accused of unfair competition if it practices bait-and-switch marketing, manipulates prices, infringes on intellectual property, or performs another deceptive action against competitors that is prohibited under the law.

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