

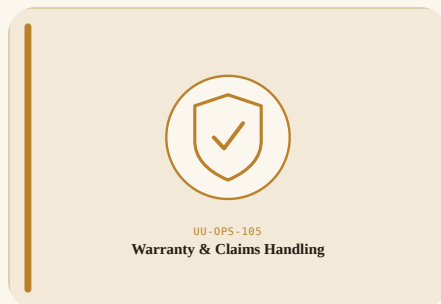
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Shop Operations

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Warranty & Claims Handling: Setting Terms, Managing Vendor Claims

Separating workmanship warranty from material warranty, and a process for handling claims without open-ended liability.



1. Separate two different things customers lump together

"Warranty" conversations usually tangle together two separate commitments that should be handled differently: the shop's own workmanship (stitching, seam integrity, construction) and the material itself (fabric wear, foam performance, hardware). Treating them as one blurry promise is what leads to open-ended liability a shop never intended to take on.

COVERAGE	WHO STANDS BEHIND IT	TYPICAL SCOPE
Workmanship warranty	The shop, directly	Seam and stitch integrity, construction defects attributable to the shop's own work — a defined, limited period (many shops use something in the range of 90 days) is far easier to stand behind consistently than an open-ended promise

COVERAGE	WHO STANDS BEHIND IT	TYPICAL SCOPE
Material warranty	The material manufacturer, with the shop helping the customer navigate the claim	Fabric wear/fading/durability issues, foam performance, hardware failure — governed by the manufacturer's own warranty terms, not the shop's

Shop practice

State in writing, on every quote and invoice, that material claims are the manufacturer's responsibility and that the shop will assist the customer in filing them — this single sentence prevents the most common warranty dispute, where a customer assumes the shop is responsible for a fabric defect it didn't cause and can't control.

2. Setting your written terms

- State the workmanship warranty period explicitly and in writing — don't leave it implied or verbal.
- Defer broader terms to a published Terms & Conditions document (on the shop's website) rather than re-writing bespoke warranty language on every individual quote — this keeps language consistent and makes it easy to update terms shop-wide in one place.
- Exclude normal wear, customer misuse, and damage from conditions outside the shop's control (e.g. pet damage, UV fading on a piece placed in direct sun against the shop's recommendation) explicitly rather than assuming it's obviously excluded.

3. Handling a material claim

1. Confirm the issue is actually a material defect (manufacturing flaw, premature wear inconsistent with normal use) rather than a workmanship or misuse issue — this determines who the claim goes to.
2. Gather what the manufacturer will need: photos, purchase/order records, a description of the issue and how it developed.
3. File or help the customer file the claim directly with the material manufacturer, rather than the shop absorbing the cost of a defect it didn't cause.

4. Keep the customer informed of claim status — manufacturer claims can take time, and a customer left in the dark will call the shop, not the manufacturer, when they get frustrated.

4. Workmanship claims — handled differently

If the issue is genuinely a shop workmanship defect within the warranty period, fix it directly and promptly rather than routing the customer through a claims process built for material issues. A fast, no-friction fix on a legitimate workmanship defect is one of the best tools a shop has for building repeat and referral business.

Sources

General operating framework for warranty and claims handling. Specific warranty terms should be reviewed against your shop's actual risk tolerance and, for anything beyond a standard limited workmanship warranty, counsel.

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