



Federal Circuit Court reverses patent decision

On December 12, 2019, the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit reversed a decision between The Chamberlain Group and Techtronic Industries (TTI), the parent company to brands such as Ryobi, Milwaukee, Hoover, and Oreck. The patent dispute between the two companies began in June 2016, and a unanimous federal jury found in August 2016 that TTI willfully infringed on two Chamberlain patents. After that decision, Chamberlain was awarded \$3.6 million in lost profits.

The latest appeal in December overturned the part of this decision relating to Movable Barrier Operator Having Serial Data Communication, U.S. Patent No. 7,161,319 (319 patent). The patent specification expressly called for the passive infrared detector to be located *in* the wall console unit.

Chamberlain initially claimed that select TTI garage door openers violated the 319 patent. The International Trade Commission (ITC) had originally construed the patent to encompass wall console units “with or without” infrared detectors. The appeal decision held that the scope of the patent did not include wall consoles lacking an infrared detector, and this was the foundation behind the court’s reversed decision. ■

