

Apple pauses US sale of latest Watch models over patent clash

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Apple hitting pause on US sales of some of its smartwatch models comes as it accuses Masimo Corp. of abusing the patent system to create an opening for a rival product.

Apple on Monday said it will stop selling some of its smartwatch models in the United States while it fights a patent battle over technology for

detecting blood oxygen levels.

The move comes more than a month after the United States International Trade Commission (USITC) recommended banning imports of Apple Watch models that appear to infringe patents held by Masimo Corp.

USITC issued a "limited exclusion order" set to go into effect after Christmas day if not nixed by President Joe Biden.

A presidential review is underway regarding the USITC order regarding imports of Apple Watch models with the blood oxygen sensing feature at issue in the patent dispute.

"While the review period will not end until December 25, Apple is preemptively taking steps to comply should the ruling stand," an Apple spokesperson said in response to an AFP inquiry.

Those steps include pausing US sales of Apple Watch Series 9 and Apple Watch Ultra 2 from the Cupertino-based tech titan's website starting December 21 and from US retail store locations after December 24, according to the spokesperson.

"The ITC's expert judgment in this matter should be respected," a Masimo spokesperson said in reply to an AFP inquiry.

"The decision to exclude certain foreign-made models of the Apple Watch demonstrates that even the world's most powerful company must abide by the law protecting [intellectual property rights](#)."

Apple contends that the ITC finding was in error and should be reversed, something it will ask a [federal court](#) to do if necessary.

The order stemmed from a complaint made to the commission in

mid-2021 accusing Apple Watch of infringing on Masimo's patented technology for "light-based oximetry functionality."

Apple in September released its Apple Watch Series 9, touting increased performance along with features such as the ability to access and log health data.

Apple has been steadily ramping up fitness and health features with each generation of Apple Watch, which dominates the smartwatch category.

"Our teams work tirelessly to create products and services that empower users with industry-leading health, wellness and [safety features](#)," Apple said when the order was issued.

"Masimo has wrongly attempted to use the ITC to keep a potentially lifesaving product from millions of US consumers while making way for their own watch that copies Apple."

Apple late last year filed two patent infringement lawsuits accusing Masimo of copying Apple Watch technology.

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