

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

COMMISSIONERS: **Edith Ramirez, Chairwoman**
 Julie Brill
 Maureen K. Ohlhausen
 Joshua D. Wright
 Terrell McSweeney

In the Matter of

**COURTESY AUTO GROUP, INC.,
a corporation.**

Docket No. 9359

DECISION AND ORDER

The Federal Trade Commission (“Commission”) having heretofore issued its Administrative Complaint charging Respondent Courtesy Auto Group, Inc., hereinafter referred to as Respondent, with violations of Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45 (“FTC Act”), Section 184 of the Consumer Leasing Act, 15 U.S.C. §1667c, and Section 213.7 of Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. §213.7, and Respondent having been served with a copy of the Complaint, together with a notice of contemplated relief; and

Respondent, its attorneys, and counsel for the Commission having thereafter executed an Agreement Containing Consent Order (“Consent Agreement”), containing an admission by Respondent of all the jurisdictional facts set forth in the aforesaid Complaint, a statement that the signing of said Consent Agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by Respondent that the law has been violated as alleged in such Complaint, or that the facts as alleged in such Complaint, other than jurisdictional facts, are true, and waivers and other provisions as required by the Commission’s Rules; and

The Secretary of the Commission having thereafter withdrawn the matter from adjudication in accordance with Commission Rule 3.25(c), 16 C.F.R. § 3.25(c); and

The Commission having considered the matter and having thereupon accepted the executed Consent Agreement and placed such Agreement on the public record for a period of thirty (30) days, now in further conformity with the procedure described in Commission Rule 3.25(f), the Commission hereby makes the following jurisdictional findings and issues the following Decision and Order (“Order):

1. Respondent, Courtesy Auto Group, Inc., is a Massachusetts corporation with its principal office or place of business at 11 Scott Street, Attleboro, MA 02703.
2. The Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction of the subject matter of this proceeding and of the Respondent, and the proceeding is in the public interest.

ORDER

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this order, the following definitions shall apply:

1. Unless otherwise specified, “Respondent” shall mean Courtesy Auto Group, Inc., and its successors and assigns.
2. “Advertisement” shall mean a commercial message in any medium that directly or indirectly promotes a consumer transaction.
3. “Clearly and conspicuously” shall mean as follows:
 - a. In a print advertisement, the disclosure shall be in a type size, location, and in print that contrasts with the background against which it appears, sufficient for an ordinary consumer to notice, read, and comprehend it.
 - b. In an electronic medium, an audio disclosure shall be delivered in a volume and cadence sufficient for an ordinary consumer to hear and comprehend it. A video disclosure shall be of a size and shade and appear on the screen for a duration, and in a location, sufficient for an ordinary consumer to read and comprehend it.
 - c. In a television or video advertisement, an audio disclosure shall be delivered in a volume and cadence sufficient for an ordinary consumer to hear and comprehend it. A video disclosure shall be of a size and shade, and appear on the screen for a duration, and in a location, sufficient for an ordinary consumer to read and comprehend it.
 - d. In a radio advertisement, the disclosure shall be delivered in a volume and cadence sufficient for an ordinary consumer to hear and comprehend it.
 - e. In all advertisements, the disclosure shall be in understandable language and syntax. Nothing contrary to, inconsistent with, or in mitigation of the disclosure shall be used in any advertisement or promotion.

4. “Consumer lease” shall mean a contract in the form of a bailment or lease for the use of personal property by a natural person primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, for a period exceeding four months and for a total contractual obligation not exceeding the applicable threshold amount, whether or not the lessee has the option to purchase or otherwise become the owner of the property at the expiration of the lease, as set forth in Section 213.2 of Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. § 213.2, as amended.
5. “Lease inception” shall mean prior to or at consummation of the lease or by delivery, if delivery occurs after consummation.
6. “Material” shall mean likely to affect a person’s choice of, or conduct regarding, goods or services.
7. “Motor vehicle” or “vehicle” shall mean:
 - a. Any self-propelled vehicle designed for transporting persons or property on a street, highway, or other road;
 - b. Recreational boats and marine equipment;
 - c. Motorcycles;
 - d. Motor homes, recreational vehicle trailers, and slide-in campers; and
 - e. Other vehicles that are titled and sold through dealers.

I.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Respondent and its officers, agents, representatives, and employees, directly or indirectly, in connection with any advertisement for the purchase, financing, or leasing of motor vehicles, shall not, in any manner, expressly or by implication:

- A. Misrepresent the cost of:
 1. Leasing a vehicle, including but not necessarily limited to, the total amount due at lease inception, the downpayment, amount down, acquisition fee, capitalized cost reduction, any other amount required to be paid at lease inception, and the amounts of all monthly or other periodic payments; or
 2. Purchasing a vehicle with financing, including but not necessarily limited to, the amount or percentage of the downpayment, the number of payments or period of repayment, the amount of any payment, and the repayment obligation over the full term of the loan, including any balloon payment; or

- B. Misrepresent any other material fact about the price, sale, financing, or leasing of any vehicle.

II.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent and its officers, agents, representatives, and employees, directly or indirectly, in connection with any advertisement for any consumer lease, shall not, in any manner, expressly or by implication:

- A. State the amount of any payment or that any or no initial payment is required at lease inception, without disclosing clearly and conspicuously the following terms:
 - 1. That the transaction advertised is a lease;
 - 2. The total amount due at lease signing or delivery;
 - 3. Whether or not a security deposit is required;
 - 4. The number, amounts, and timing of scheduled payments; and
 - 5. That an extra charge may be imposed at the end of the lease term in a lease in which the liability of the consumer at the end of the lease term is based on the anticipated residual value of the vehicle; or
- B. Fail to comply in any respect with Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. Part 213, as amended, and the Consumer Leasing Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1667-1667f, as amended.

III.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall, for five (5) years after the last date of dissemination of any representation covered by this order, maintain and upon request make available to the Federal Trade Commission for inspection and copying:

- A. All advertisements and promotional materials containing the representation;
- B. All materials that were relied upon in disseminating the representation;
- C. All evidence in its possession or control that contradicts, qualifies, or calls into question the representation, or the basis relied upon for the representation, including complaints and other communications with consumers or with governmental or consumer protection organizations; and
- D. Any documents reasonably necessary to demonstrate full compliance with each provision of this order, including but not limited to all documents obtained, created, generated, or that in any way relate to the requirements, provisions, or terms of this order, and all reports submitted to the Commission pursuant to this order.

IV.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall deliver a copy of this order to all current and future principals, officers, directors, and managers, and to all current and future employees, agents, and representatives having responsibilities with respect to the subject matter of this order, and shall secure from each such person a signed and dated statement acknowledging receipt of the order. Respondent shall deliver this order to current personnel within thirty (30) days after the date of service of this order, and to future personnel within thirty (30) days after the person assumes such position or responsibilities.

V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall notify the Commission at least thirty (30) days prior to any change in the corporation(s) that may affect compliance obligations arising under this order, including but not limited to a dissolution, assignment, sale, merger, or other action that would result in the emergence of a successor corporation; the creation or dissolution of a subsidiary, parent, or affiliate that engages in any acts or practices subject to this order; the proposed filing of a bankruptcy petition; or a change in the corporate name or address. *Provided, however,* that, with respect to any proposed change in the corporation about which Respondent learns less than thirty (30) days prior to the date such action is to take place, Respondent shall notify the Commission as soon as is practicable after obtaining such knowledge. Unless otherwise directed by a representative of the Commission in writing, all notices required by this Part shall be emailed to Debrief@ftc.gov or sent by overnight courier (not U.S. Postal Service) to: Associate Director for Enforcement, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20580. The subject line must begin: FTC v. Courtesy Auto Group, Inc.

VI.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent, within sixty (60) days after the date of service of this order, shall file with the Commission a true and accurate report, in writing, setting forth in detail the manner and form of its own compliance with this order. Within ten (10) days of receipt of written notice from a representative of the Commission, it shall submit additional true and accurate written reports.

VII.

This order will terminate on May 1, 2034, or twenty (20) years from the most recent date that the United States or the Federal Trade Commission files a complaint (with or without an accompanying consent decree) in federal court alleging any violation of the order, whichever comes later; *provided, however,* that the filing of such a complaint will not affect the duration of:

- A. Any Part in this order that terminates in less than twenty (20) years;
- B. This order's application to any Respondent that is not named as a defendant in such complaint;

C. This order if such complaint is filed after the order has terminated pursuant to this Part.

Provided, further, that if such complaint is dismissed or a federal court rules that Respondent did not violate any provision of the order, and the dismissal or ruling is either not appealed or upheld on appeal, then the order will terminate according to this Part as though the complaint had never been filed, except that the order will not terminate between the date such complaint is filed and the later of the deadline for appealing such dismissal or ruling and the date such dismissal or ruling is upheld on appeal.

By the Commission, Commissioner McSweeney not participating.

Donald S. Clark
Secretary

SEAL:
ISSUED: May 1, 2014