

Chamberlain Group Inc vs Skylink Technologies Inc 381 F.3d 1178 Fed Cir 2004

Chamberlain Group sued Skylink Technologies for allegedly violating the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) by manufacturing and selling universal remote controls compatible with Chamberlain's garage door openers. Chamberlain argued that Skylink's remotes circumvented its rolling code security feature, thereby infringing on its rights under the DMCA.

The United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled in favor of Skylink Technologies. The court held that Skylink's universal remotes did not violate the DMCA because they did not facilitate unauthorized access to copyrighted material. The decision emphasized that the DMCA's anti-circumvention provisions apply specifically to unauthorized access to copyrighted works, and not to the circumvention of technological measures that control access to non-copyrighted functionalities, such as operating a garage door.

This ruling has been significant in discussions about the right to repair, as it supports the notion that consumers and third-party manufacturers can create and use compatible devices without necessarily infringing on the DMCA.

The case, decided in 2004, lasted for about two years.

This ruling is crucial for **right to repair** because it establishes that:

- **Manufacturers cannot use the DMCA to block interoperability** of third-party repair tools or replacement parts.
- **Consumers have the right to repair and maintain their own devices**, even if that means bypassing digital locks that serve no copyright-related function.