



Preventing Unwanted Telemarketer Calls

Technology has rapidly expanded the ability of scammers to make a massive amount of illegal phone calls from anywhere in the world. Unwanted calls are the number one complaint from consumers when filing complaints with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). While the Do Not Call Registry prohibits sales calls, telemarketers often bypass the registry, by spoofing caller ID information, masking their real phone numbers.

If you are a victim of these harassing phone scams, you have options:

- Tell the unwanted callers that you do not consent to the call. Then make a record of the number and **file a complaint** with the FCC at 1-888-225-5322. There is also a hotline at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to report calls (1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). Option 2 is to speak with a representative).
- Contact your phone provider and ask them to block the number. Also ask them if they charge extra for this service. It doesn't make sense to pay an extra fee to block numbers, being that telemarketers often change Caller ID information.
- Robocall-blocking technology now legally exists and is available for your use. If you use robocall-blocking technology already, let your phone company know which numbers are producing unwanted calls so they can help block those calls for you and others.
- Register with the Do Not Call Registry online at www.donotcall.gov, or by calling toll-free - 1-888-382-1222 - from the phone number you wish to register. You may register up to three numbers at one time.
- Explore free online call blocking services, call blocking boxes, and smartphone apps that block unwanted calls. Don't purchase any service until reviewing the application's privacy policy on protecting your personal information.
- If you have an iPhone, Android, or other type of smartphone, you can also utilize the cell phone's individual call blocking service. For example, for an iPhone, if you determine a number is from a spam caller, tap the "i" on the number that just called your mobile device and scroll to the bottom of the screen and click "block this caller." All phone numbers that are manually blocked will appear under Blocked Contacts. Methods for blocking calls vary according to the specific device; you can contact your provider for further instructions.

Current Efforts to Block Violators' Calls:

- Under a new initiative announced by the FTC, when consumers report Do Not Call or robocall violations to the agency, the robocaller phone numbers consumers provide will be released each day to telecommunications carriers and other industry partners that are implementing call-blocking solutions.
- Filing complaints to the FTC brings more cases. While the FTC does not resolve individual consumer problems, each complaint helps the FTC investigate the company and has led to successful law enforcement action.
- The FTC has been teaming with the private sector, offering rewards for companies that come up with a technical solution to filter out illegal calls. Last year, the FTC challenged contestants to create tools people could use to block and forward robocalls automatically to a honeypot – a data collection system that researchers and investigators can use to study the calls.