

W I S C O N S I N

Office of Privacy Protection

Safeguarding Information for Your Future

Leave Me Alone!

How to Slow the Flow of Unwanted Communications

Many people today feel overwhelmed by the volume of sales offers they receive at home. You may not be able to completely stop the flow of telephone, fax, mail, or email solicitations, but you can reduce it. You can avoid getting on some marketing lists in the first place. And you can take steps to get off many of the lists you are already on.

Staying Off Marketing Lists

- Do not fill out consumer surveys or marketing surveys.
- Do not fill out surveys attached to product “warranty registration cards.” You do not have to complete and return the cards to enjoy your warranty rights. Just keep a copy of the sales receipt.
- Do not fill out sweepstakes entry forms.
- When you give money to a charity or other group, enclose a note asking them not to share, sell or rent your name to any other organization. Do the same when you order from a catalog.
- Exercise your opt-out rights wherever you can. Your financial institutions are required to notify you of your right to stop them from sharing your personal financial information with outside companies. Read the privacy policies of Websites. They often give you an opportunity to opt out of receiving email ads or having your information shared with other companies.

Telemarketing Calls

- Sign up for Wisconsin’s No Call List. Most telemarketers should not call your number once it has been on the registry for three months. If one does, you can file a complaint with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. You can sign up for the no call list by calling 1-866-966-2255 or on-line at NoCall.Wisconsin.gov. You need to renew your no call registration every two years, though you may do it more frequently if you choose.
- Get an unlisted and unpublished phone number. Unlisted numbers usually get fewer unwanted calls. Or call your telephone company’s business office and ask to have your name removed from its street address directories. Companies typically charge a monthly fee for these services.
- Watch out for do-not-call scams. They may try to steal personal information by posing as a state do-not-call program.

- For more information on reducing telemarketing calls, see Privacy Rights Clearinghouse Fact Sheet 5 at www.privacyrights.org, EPIC's information at www.epic.org/privacy/telemarketing, and Junkbusters' tips and sample letters at www.junkbusters.com/telemarketing.html.

Junk Mail

- Call 888-5OPTOUT (888-567-8688) to stop most unsolicited pre-approved credit offers. Or opt out online at www.optoutprescreen.com. This is good for five years, or you can make it permanent.
- Sign up for the Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service. In three to four months, you should receive less junk mail. This is a voluntary industry program. It will not stop all junk mail. Sign up for free by writing to Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512. It's good for five years. The service is also available online at a cost of \$5 at www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist.
- For more information on stopping junk mail, see Privacy Rights Clearinghouse Fact Sheet 4 at www.privacyrights.org or Junkbusters' tips at www.junkbusters.com/junkmail.html.

Junk Faxes

- Federal law bans sending unsolicited advertisements to a fax machine without first getting the consent of the receiver, unless the sender has an established business relationship with the recipient. It also requires senders of fax advertisements to include a notice and contact formation informing the recipient of how to opt out of future such faxes.
- For more information on stopping junk faxes, see Junkbusters' tips and sample letters at www.junkbusters.com/fax.html. Also see the Federal Communications Commission's information sheet at www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/unwantedfaxes.html.

Junk E-mail (Spam)

- Never respond to spam. Never buy anything advertised in spam. Protect your email address as you would other personal information. Do not post your email address on your Web site. Use a separate email address for newsgroups.
- Sign up with the Direct Marketing Association's e-Mail Preference Service at www.dmaconsumers.org/offemaillist.html. It's free and it's good for two years. This is a voluntary industry program that will not stop all junk email.
- For more tips on controlling spam, see Privacy Rights Clearinghouse Fact Sheet 20 (Anti-Spam Resources) at www.privacyrights.org or Junkbusters' tips, including how to track down spammers and sample letters, at www.junkbusters.com/junkemail.html.

For more information, contact the Wisconsin Office of Privacy Protection at 1-800-422-7128 or email us at WisconsinPrivacy@datcp.state.wi.us. Visit our website at www.privacy.wi.gov.