

NATIONAL 'DO NOT CALL' REGISTRY

In 2001, after a comprehensive review of the Telemarketing Sales Rule by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which included seven years of enforcement input and over 64,000 public comments, the decision was made to create a national "do not call" registry. President Bush signed the Do Not Call Implementation Act on March 11, 2003.

The National Do Not Call Registry is open for business, putting consumers in charge of the telemarketing calls they get at home. The Federal government created the national registry to make it easier and more efficient for you to stop getting telemarketing calls you don't want. You can register online at WWW.DONOTCALL.GOV or call toll-free, 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236). Registration is free.

If you register by phone, you must call from the number you want to register. If you register online, you must provide an email address for confirmation. The only identifying information that will be kept in the registry is the phone number you register. You can expect fewer calls within three months of the date you sign up for the registry. Your phone number will stay in the registry for five years or until the consumer deletes it. After five years, registration must be renewed.

The law requires telemarketers to search the registry every three months and to compare their call lists to the registry. If you receive telemarketing calls and you've been registered over three months, you can file a complaint. You must, however, know the company's name or phone number. A telemarketer who disregards the Do Not Call Registry could be fined up to \$11,000 for each call.

The Do Not Call Registry will stop most telemarketing calls, but not all. Some businesses are exempt, such as political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors, and businesses that are regulated by state law. Additionally, businesses that you have done business with can call for up to 18 months after your last purchase, even if your name is on the Do Not Call registry. Companies to which you have made an inquiry or submitted an application can call you for up to three months. However, in these cases, your request directly to the company to not call must be honored immediately.

The Telephone Sales Rule has also been amended to include restrictions on "hang up" calls caused by automatic dialing equipment. Beginning October 1, 2003, telemarketers will be required to connect their call to a sales representative within two seconds of the consumer answering the phone. Also, the telemarketer may not hang up before four rings. On January 29, 2004, telemarketers will be required to transmit their telephone number and, if possible, their name to your caller ID service.

If you think you put your number on the National Do Not Call Registry, and you're still getting telemarketing sales calls, the Federal Trade Commission recommends that you:

- Check to see that your number is on the registry. You can verify that your number is on the registry two ways: online at DONOTCALL.GOV (click on "Verify A Registration"), or by calling 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236) from the phone number you wish to verify. Follow the prompts.
- File a complaint. If your number has been on the registry for at least 31 days, and a telemarketer calls, complain to the FTC. Visit DONOTCALL.GOV or call 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236). You'll need to provide the date of the call and the phone number or name of the company.

Cell Phones

You may place your personal cell phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry. The registry has accepted cell phone numbers since it opened for registrations in June 2003. There is no deadline to register a home or cell phone number on the Registry.

You may have received an email telling you that your cell phone is about to be assaulted by telemarketing calls as a result of a new cell phone number database; however, that is not the case. Federal Communications Commission regulations prohibit telemarketers from using automated dialers to call cell phone numbers. (per Federal Trade Commission website www.ftc.gov.)