

The Do Not Call Registry: Preventing Unwanted Telemarketing Calls

Are you tired of your dinner or evening relaxation being interrupted by calls from telemarketers? You now have the power to take charge of the number of telemarketing calls you get at home. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Federal Trade Commission have implemented a national “do not call” registry, making it illegal for telemarketers to contact you if you register your telephone number.

How does the national do not call registry work?

By law, telemarketers must search the registry every 90 days and delete from their call lists any telephone numbers on the registry. If you continue to receive telemarketing calls even after you have registered your number, you will be able to file a complaint with the FCC or FTC. A telemarketer who disregards the do not call registry could be fined up to \$11,000 for each call.

How do I register my telephone number?

You can register free of charge at www.donotcall.gov or by calling toll-free (888) 382-1222. If you register by telephone, you must call from the telephone number you wish to register. All types of phone numbers, including landline, wireless, and Voice over Internet Protocol, may be registered.

Do I have to re-register my number every 5 years?

No. Originally, customers were required to re-register their number after 5 years on the registry, but the FCC recently changed this. Today, telemarketers are required to honor all registrations indefinitely, so the registrations will not automatically expire. Customers no longer need to re-register their numbers to continue their preference not to receive telemarketing calls.

Will this stop all telemarketing calls into my home?

Businesses with which you have an established business relationship are not required to follow the do not call rules. They can call you for up to 18 months from your last purchase, payment or delivery, even if your number is on the national registry. Companies with which you have made an inquiry or submitted an application can call you for three months, but if you ask a company not to call you, it must honor your request.

Callers soliciting charitable contributions do not have to search the national registry. Calls regarding political and religious speech are also not subject to the do not call requirements.

To avoid such calls, read all fine print before filling out sweepstakes or other contest forms. You may be establishing a business relationship, giving the company permission to call you. You can also ask companies and organizations to place you on their internal do not call lists.

What about my wireless phone?

Telemarketing to wireless phone numbers has always been illegal in most cases and will continue to be so. FCC regulations prohibit telemarketers from using automated dialers to call wireless phone numbers. Automated dialers are in standard use in the telemarketing industry, so most telemarketers are barred from calling consumers on their wireless phones without their consent.

Personal wireless phone users can add their numbers to the national registry. The government does not maintain a separate national wireless phone registry.

What is Ohio doing?

If you continue to receive unwanted telemarketing calls, you can file a complaint with the Ohio Attorney General in addition to the FCC and FTC.

Are there other protections against unwanted telemarketing calls?

The telemarketing rules prohibit deceptive and abusive telemarketing practices and protect you from late-night calls.

- Calling times are restricted to 8 a.m. - 9 p.m.
- Telemarketers must promptly tell you who they are calling for and if the call is a sales call or charitable solicitation.
- Telemarketers must disclose all material information about the goods or services they are offering and terms of the sale. They are prohibited from lying about any terms of the offer.
- Telemarketers must transmit caller ID information and are prohibited from blocking caller ID information.
- Express permission must now be obtained in writing before advertisements may be sent to a customer.

If you would like to know more about the PUCO or have utility-related questions or concerns,

contact the PUCO at:

(800) 686-PUCO (7826)

(800) 686-1570 (TDD/TTY)

In Columbus only:

(614) 466-3292

(614) 466-8180 (TDD/TTY)

www.PUCO.ohio.gov

Updated January 3, 2011