Blocking Unwanted Calls

Wouldn't it be nice to stop intrusive calls before they ever reached your phone? Attorney General Zoeller has joined other Attorneys General urging telephone companies to make more call-blocking services available to consumers. In the meantime, we have compiled a non-exhaustive guide to services available today.

Landline Phones

Some carriers allow you to block a limited amount of numbers or block anonymous callers. Fees vary, depending on your plan. Contact your service provider for details.

Call Blocking Gadgets or Devices
Examples: Digitone Call Blocker Plus, HQTelecom.com Landline Call Blocker; Sentry 2 Dual Mode Call Blocker; CPR Call Blocker Protect
Where to find them: Devices are available for purchase online. Always be cautious when dealing with unknown sellers, and look at customer reviews and return policies. The September, 2015 issue of Consumer Reports featured reviews on several devices.
What you need: Most work with landlines, VoIP, DSL and digital voice services.
How they work: Consult user manual for operating instructions.
Cost range: $50 to $110
Potential downside: Cost; Mixed reviews.

Smart Phones

CTIA-The Wireless Association® has compiled a list of call-blocking apps available on Android, iOS, Windows and Blackberry smart phones. The list is available at: **http://www.ctia.org/your-wireless-life/consumer-tips/blocking-robocalls**. Before you download any app, read the description and customer reviews.

"Call Rejection" for Android Phones
What you need: Wireless phone with Android Operating System
How it works: Varies among phone manufacturers and models. Phone settings allow you to send a call directly to voicemail, reject all calls from a number, or reject private, unknown, or anonymous number calls.
What it costs: Included on Android wireless phones
Potential downside: Doesn't stop the caller; it just sends the call to voicemail.

"Block This Caller" for iPhones
What you need: iPhone with iOS 7 or above.
How it works: Click on "Phone" and "Recents," click the "i" symbol next to the call and scroll down, click "Block this Caller."
What it costs: Included on all iPhones with iOS 7 or above.
Potential downside: Does not work for anonymous or blocked calls.

For other devices, refer to the user manual for that device.

Services Available Through Wireless Providers

AT&T Smart Limits
What you need: AT&T wireless phone and plan
How it works: Manage via online account on computer, tablet or smart phone app.
What it costs: $4.99 per month for one line or $9.99 per month for up to ten lines.
Potential downside: Only blocks up to 30 numbers; Not available on GoPhone.

Blocking calls via MySprint Account
What you need: Sprint wireless phone and plan
How it works: Add numbers to your rejection list through "MySprint" online account.
What it costs: No cost with Sprint wireless plan.
Potential downside: Only blocks up to 50 numbers.

Verizon Wireless Family Base / Usage Controls
What you need: Verizon Family Base/Usage Controls plan.
How it works: Block up to 20 contacts, including domestic and international numbers; block restricted, unavailable or private numbers; restrict calls during certain time of day.
What it costs: $5 per month
Potential downside: Cost; Limited to 20 contacts; Does not work on pre-paid phones.

"Never Allowed" via T-Mobile
What you need: T-Mobile wireless phone and plan
How it works: Block up to 10 numbers
What it costs: No additional cost with applicable T-Mobile plan
Potential downside: Limited to 10 numbers; Cannot block international numbers.

For other blocking options, refer to your wireless provider's website.

VoIP Phones

NoMoRobo.com
What you need: Internet-based telephone service. Examples: AT&T U-Verse, Vonage, Xfinity, Ooma, MagicJack, etc.).
How it works: Uses a Caller ID blacklist to block known spam callers.
What it costs: No charge for non-business users.
How to get it: Visit www.NoMoRobo.com
Potential downside: Phone rings once when a blacklisted number calls.

Phone Call Blocking for AT&T U-verse
What you need: AT&T U-verse phone service
How it works: Once you create a list online, you can use your phone to turn Call Blocking on and off (*60# to turn on and *80# to turn off).
What it costs: Included with service.
Potential downside: Can block only 20 numbers at one time.