

Q&A: The National Do Not Call Registry

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Office of Consumer and Business Education

Tell Me More About the National Do Not Call Registry.

1. Why would I register my phone number with the National Do Not Call Registry?

The National Do Not Call Registry gives you an opportunity to limit the telemarketing calls you receive. If you registered by August 31, 2003, you should be receiving fewer telemarketing calls since October 1, 2003. If you registered after September 1, 2003, telemarketers covered by the National Do Not Call Registry will have up to three months from the date you register to stop calling you.

2. Who manages the National Do Not Call Registry?

The National Do Not Call Registry is managed by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency. It will be enforced by the FTC, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and state law enforcement officials.

3. Why was the National Do Not Call Registry created?

The registry was created to offer consumers a choice regarding telemarketing calls. The FTC's decision to create the National Do Not Call Registry was the culmination of a comprehensive, three-year review of the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR), as well as the Commission's extensive experience enforcing the TSR over seven years. The FTC held numerous workshops, meetings, and briefings to solicit feedback from interested parties and considered over 64,000 public comments, most of which favored creating the registry. You can review the entire record of the Rule review at www.ftc.gov/bcp/rulemaking/tsr/tsrrulemaking/index.htm.

How Does Registration Work?

4. How soon after I register will I notice a reduction in calls?

If you registered by August 31, 2003, you should have started receiving fewer telemarketing calls after October 1, 2003. If you registered after September 1, 2003, telemarketers covered by the National Do Not Call Registry will have up to three months from the date you register to stop calling you.

5. I've already registered on my state's do not call list. Do I need to register on the National Do Not Call Registry?

The answer depends on where you live. Fifteen states have shared their data with the national registry (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, and Oklahoma). If you registered your phone number on one of these state lists before June 26, 2003, you do not have to re-register with the national registry. If you are at all uncertain about your registration, you may wish to visit www.donotcall.gov to verify your status. Also, some state lists have shared or will share their data with the national registry after June 26, 2003. If you want to check whether your telephone number was shared, you can verify by visiting www.donotcall.gov.

6. When I register my phone number, how long until it shows up on the National Do Not Call Registry?

After you register, your phone number will show up on the registry by the next day. Telemarketers will have up to three months to get your phone number and remove it from their call lists.

7. What if I change my mind? Can I take my number off the National Do Not Call Registry?

You can delete your phone number only by calling toll-free 1-888-382-1222 from the telephone number you want to delete. After you contact the registry to delete it, it will be removed from the National Do Not Call Registry by the next day. But telemarketers have up to three months to access information about your deletion and add your number back to their call lists, if they choose to. If you have any particular concern about the deletion process, you may send a question via e-mail to tsrquestions@ftc.gov.

8. If I registered by phone, will I receive a confirmation?

No, but you can verify that your number is on the registry online at www.donotcall.gov or by calling the registry's toll-free number (1-888-382-1222) and following the prompts for verifying that your number is on the registry.

9. I received a phone call from someone offering to put my name on the National Do Not Call Registry. Should I let them?

No. The FTC will not allow private companies or other such third parties to register consumers for the National Do Not Call Registry. Web sites or phone solicitations that claim they can or will register a consumer's name or phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry — especially those that charge a fee — are almost certainly a scam. Consumers are able to register directly, or through some state governments, but never through private companies. For consumers, the National Do Not Call Registry is a free service of the federal government.

What About the Privacy of My Information?

10. If I choose to register my phone number, how will my information be used and disclosed?

We collect your phone number and store it the National Do Not Call Registry so that telemarketers and sellers covered by the FTC's rules can remove your phone number from their call lists. Telemarketers are required to search the registry every three months and delete from their call lists phone numbers that are in the registry. Phone numbers in the registry also may be shared with law enforcement to assure compliance with federal and state law.

If you contact us via the Internet, we also collect your email address to confirm your registration request. We will store your email address in a secure manner, separate from your telephone number. We will not share your email address with telemarketers.

For more information about the privacy of your information, please see our privacy policy at www.ftc.gov/ftc/privacy.

What Phone Numbers Can I Register?

11. Can I register my cell phone number?

Yes.

12. Can I register all my family and friends?

No. You should register only your own telephone numbers.

13. I have more than three personal telephone numbers. How can I register all of those numbers?

You may register up to three telephone numbers at one time on the National Do Not Call Registry Web site. You will receive a separate confirmation email for each number you wish to register online. You must open

each email and click on the link in each one to complete the registration process. If you have more than three personal telephone numbers, you will have to go through the registration process more than once to register all of your numbers. There is a limit on the number of phone numbers you can register in this manner.

You can register only one phone number each time you call the National Do Not Call Registry, and you must call from the phone number you wish to register.

14. What happens if I register more than one number at a time online?

You will get an email for each number you register online. You need to open each email and click on the link in each email within 72 hours to register those numbers.

15. Can I register my business phone number?

The National Do Not Call Registry is only for personal phone numbers. Business-to-business calls are not covered by the National Do Not Call Registry.

When Does My Registration Expire?

16. How long does my phone number stay registered?

Your phone number will remain on the registry for five years from the date you register (unless you choose to take it off the registry or your phone number is disconnected). If you register online, you may want to print the Web page for your records when your registration is accepted.

17. How can I find out when my registration expires?

You can click on the Verify a Registration button any time to check your expiration date. Your registration will expire five years from your registration date. You may want to print the Web page with your registration date for your records.

What If I Move or My Phone Is Disconnected?

18. I moved and got a new phone number. Do I need to register the new number?

Yes.

19. Do I need to take my old phone number off the list when I get a new number?

No. You can if you would like to, but the system will automatically remove numbers that are disconnected for any reason.

20. What happens if my phone number is disconnected and then reconnected?

If your phone number is disconnected for any reason, and then reconnected, you will need to re-register. Here are some examples:

- If you have a vacation home, and you disconnect the service for the months you are not there, then you need to re-register that phone number when you turn your service on again. Each time you re-register, telemarketers have three months to take your number off their call lists.
- If your phone service was disconnected because of a billing issue, then you need to re-register the phone number when service is re-established. Each time you re-register, telemarketers have three months to take your number off their call lists.

Registration and My Email Address.

21. Why do you need my email address?

When you use the registry's Web site to put a phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry, we collect your email address to confirm your request. We will send you an email and you will need to click on the link in the email within 72 hours to finalize your registration. We also collect your email address when you request to verify your registration online so that we can email you a response to your verification request. We will store your email address in a secure manner, separate from your telephone number. We will not share your email address with telemarketers.

22. Can I register online if I do not have an active email address?

No. The online registration process requires an active email address. If you register online, we will send you an email message with a link in it. You need to click on the link in the email within 72 hours to finalize your registration. If you do not have an email address, you can register by phone (1-888-382-1222).

23. Can I reply to the email I got when I was registering?

No. The email address is a one-way mail service. It cannot accept incoming emails.

24. What if my email address changes after I register? Will I still be able to verify my registration on the national registry?

Yes, you will be able to use your new email address to verify your phone number online.

I'm Having Problems with Registration.

25. I called to register my phone number, but the message said my phone number could not be verified. Why not?

When you call to register a phone number, you are asked to enter the number you are calling from. The system tries to match the number you enter to "Automatic Number Identification" or ANI, which is like Caller ID for the telephone network. A small percentage of U.S. phones do not have ANI. If your phone doesn't, the system will have trouble locating your phone number. You can register your phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry Web site at www.donotcall.gov.

26. I called to register my phone number, but the message said that the phone number I was calling from did not match the phone number I entered. What happened?

To register, you must call from the phone you want to register. For example, you cannot register your home phone number by calling from work.

Also, people in certain communities — such as senior living centers or university residences — have phone numbers that are hidden by a PBX (private branch exchange) telephone system and cannot be matched by the National Do Not Call system. If you live in such a community, you can register your phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry Web site at donotcall.gov.

Will All Telemarketing Calls Stop If I Register?

27. If I register my number on the National Do Not Call Registry, will it stop all telemarketing calls?

No. Placing your number on the National Do Not Call Registry will stop most telemarketing calls, but not all. Because of limitations in the jurisdiction of the FTC and FCC, calls from or on behalf of political organiza-

tions, charities, and telephone surveyors would still be permitted, as would calls from companies with which you have an existing business relationship, or those to whom you've provided express agreement in writing to receive their calls.

28. Are calls from political organizations or calls soliciting for charities covered?

Political solicitations are not covered by the TSR at all, since they are not included in its definition of "telemarketing." Charities are not covered by the requirements of the national registry. However, if a third-party telemarketer is calling on behalf of a charity, a consumer may ask not to receive any more calls from, or on behalf of, that specific charity. If a third-party telemarketer calls again on behalf of that charity, the telemarketer may be subject to a fine of up to \$11,000.

29. What about telephone surveys?

If the call is really for the sole purpose of conducting a survey, it is not covered. Only telemarketing calls are covered — that is, calls that solicit sales of goods or services. Callers purporting to take a survey, but also offering to sell goods or services, must comply with the National Do Not Call Registry.

30. My number is on the National Do Not Call Registry. After I bought something from a company, a telemarketer representing that organization called me. Is this a violation?

No. By purchasing something from the company, you established a business relationship with the company. As a result, even if you put your number on the National Do Not Call Registry, that company may call you for up to 18 months after your last purchase or delivery from it, or your last payment to it, unless you ask the company not to call again. (In that case, the company must honor your request not to call. If they subsequently call you again, they may be subject to a fine of up to \$11,000.)

An established business relationship with a company also will be created if you make an inquiry to the company, or submit an application to it. This kind of established business relationship exists for three months after the inquiry or application. During this time, the company can call you.

If you make a specific request to that company not to call you, however, then the company may not call you, even if you have an established business relationship with that company.

31. Are telemarketing calls from overseas covered?

Yes. Any telemarketers calling U.S. consumers are covered, regardless of where they are calling from. If a company within the U.S. solicits sales through an overseas professional telemarketer, that U.S. company may be liable for any violations by the telemarketer. The FTC can initiate enforcement actions against such companies.

Other Ways to Limit Telemarketing Calls.

32. I'm happy to have the choice to limit telemarketing contacts, but there are some telemarketing calls I don't mind receiving. Is there a way to allow only certain companies to call?

Yes. If you give a company your written permission to call you, they may do so even if you have placed your number on the National Do Not Call Registry.

33. If I don't want to put my number on the National Do Not Call Registry, can I still stop telemarketers from calling?

Yes. Even if you do not register with the National Do Not Call Registry, you can still prohibit individual telemarketers from calling by asking them to put you on their company's do not call list.

34. What is the relationship between the state do not call lists and the National Do Not Call Registry in terms of coverage?

The National Do Not Call Registry requirements are at least as stringent as most state laws. Most unwanted telemarketing calls will be covered by the National Do Not Call Registry. States also can continue to enforce their laws, which will not be limited by the FTC. However, the FCC's requirements impact some state laws. For information on the FCC's rule, visit www.fcc.gov.

Filing a Do Not Call Complaint.

35. When would I file a do not call complaint?

If your number has been on the National Do Not Call Registry for at least three months and you receive a call from a telemarketer that you believe is covered by the National Do Not Call Registry, you can file a complaint at the registry's Web site at www.donotcall.gov. To file a complaint, you must know either the name or telephone number of the company that called you, and the date the company called you.

36. When can I file a do not call complaint?

If you registered your phone number between June 27 and August 31, 2003, then you could file a complaint at any time if a telemarketer has called you.

If you registered your phone number after August 31, 2003, then you must wait three months before most telemarketers must stop calling. After three months, you can file a do not call complaint on the registry's Web site at www.donotcall.gov or by calling the registry's toll-free number at 1-888-382-1222.

37. How do I file a do not call complaint? What do I need to file a complaint?

You can file your complaint on the registry's Web site, www.donotcall.gov, using the File a Complaint page. You must know either the name or the phone number of the company that called you. You also must provide the date that the company called you and your registered phone number. You may provide your name and address, but it's not required for you to submit a complaint. You also may also call the registry's toll-free number at (1-888-382-1222) to file a complaint.

38. What happens to my complaint?

Do not call complaints will be entered into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies worldwide. While the FTC does not resolve individual consumer problems, your complaint will help us investigate the company and could lead to law enforcement action.

39. What if I get a telemarketing call, but can't get the telemarketer's name or phone number?

For law enforcement officials to take action on your complaint, they need either the telemarketer's name or phone number, as well as the date of the call. If you want to report a do not call violation, please get that information.

