

The Active Consumer

The National Do Not Call Registry: Reducing Volume Of Calls From Telemarketers

(NAPS)—It's a familiar scene for most families: You've just gotten supper on the table when the phone rings...sure enough it's somebody trying to sell you something.

No matter what they're pushing, telemarketers often seem to call at the most inopportune times. In a sense, this isn't surprising, since these professional salespeople know that dinnertime is a good time to catch people at home.

It's now possible to cut down the number of telemarketing calls you receive. The federal government has created the National Do Not Call Registry, which puts consumers in charge of the telemarketing calls they get at home. You can register for free by phone or on the Web.

The Federal Trade Commission—the nation's consumer protection agency—and individual states will begin enforcing the registry on October 1, 2003. That's when consumers who registered their numbers by August 31, 2003, will notice a downturn in the number of telemarketing calls they get. After August 31, telemarketers will have three months from when a consumer registers to remove the number from call lists.

How does it work?

The new law requires telemarketers to search the registry every three months and "scrub" their call lists to remove phone numbers that are on the registry. If you receive telemarketing calls after your number has been in the registry for three months, you can



There's a new national registry for people who want to receive fewer telemarketing calls.

file a complaint; a telemarketer who disregards the National Do Not Call Registry could be fined up to \$11,000 for each call.

Placing your number on the registry will stop most telemarketing calls, but not all. For example, phone surveys, political organizations and charities are exempt and can call you even if your name is on the registry. However, most calls come from professional telemarketing companies, which are not exempt, even if they're calling on behalf of an exempt company.

For more information, or to register for the National Do Not Call Registry, call 1-888-382-1222 TTY 1-866-290-4236 (from the number you wish to register) or visit the Web site at www.donotcall.gov. To register online, you will need an active e-mail address.