



Rules and Resources for Consumers Dealing with Unwanted Calls and Texts

The Federal Communications Commission plays a crucial role in helping consumers stop unwanted calls and text messages. Under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, the FCC provides clarity on the law, sets rules, takes enforcement actions, and provides resources for consumers.

Know Your Rights: The Rules on Robocalls and Robotexts

- Telemarketing calls can be stopped by consumers through the Do Not Call registry which protects both landline and wireless phones.
- All non-emergency robocalls, both telemarketing and informational, require a consumer's permission to be made to a wireless phone. These calls can include political, polling, and other non-telemarketing robocalls.
- Robocalls either use a technology with the capacity to autodial or utilize a pre-recorded or artificial voice.
- Calls and text messages have the same protection under FCC rules.
- Phone companies face no legal barriers to offering consumers the use of technologies that block robocalls to any phone. The FCC encouraged the companies to offer this resource.
- Consumers can take back their permission to be called or texted in any reasonable way. A calling company cannot require someone to fill out a form and mail it in as the only way to revoke consent.
- An existing commercial relationship does not constitute permission to be robocalled or texted.
- Consent to be called or texted cannot be a condition of a sale or other commercial transaction.
- Callers are allowed to call a wrong number only once before updating their list. This most commonly comes up when one person consented to be called or texted but then they gave up that number and it was reassigned to someone else. Callers have resources available to them to help them know ahead of time if a number's "owner" has changed.
- Urgent calls or texts specifically for health or fraud alerts may be allowed without prior consent. They must be free, and consumers can say "stop" at any time.
- Congress gave consumers a private right of action against callers that violate the TCPA. The Commission has also enforces the rules proactively, often stemming from consumer complaints.

Take Action: Consumer Resources

- Ask your phone company to offer robocall-blocking technology for which the FCC has now given the legal approval.
- Register your number on the Do Not Call list in order to block telemarketing calls: www.donotcall.gov.
- If you use robocall-blocking technology already, it often helps to let that company know which numbers are producing unwanted calls so they can help block those calls for you and others.
- Tell unwanted callers that you do not consent to the call, make a record of the number and when you made your request not to be called, and let us know.
- Wireless and landline home phones are protected against telemarketing robocalls made without prior written consent from the recipient.
- Congress also explicitly empowered consumers to choose to take legal action.



Filing a complaint

Consumers can file complaints with the FCC. Consumer complaints are used as an important resource in our analysis of trends, in possible investigations, and in guiding enforcement efforts. You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322)
- By mail:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

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