



# Stop Telemarketers

Your phone rings or you get a text from a number that you do not recognize. You rush to answer and – it is a telemarketer!

Tired of these interruptions? Sign up on the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry. It is a free service available to residential landline and mobile telephone customers in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's Bureau of Consumer Protection works to enforce the Do Not Call law, protecting Wisconsin residents from unwanted sales calls and texts.

Criminals often use telemarketing as a tool to reach their victims. If your number is on the Do Not Call Registry and you receive an unsolicited sales call, it's probably fraudulent. Help reduce unwanted telemarketing calls and deter fraud by signing up for the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry.

## Sign up for the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry

Register your residential landline and/or mobile phone at no cost by visiting:

[DoNotCall.gov](http://DoNotCall.gov)

1-888-382-1222

You must call from the phone number you wish to register. Residential cell phones, landlines, and voice over internet protocol (VoIP) numbers are eligible for registry. Business numbers may not be registered.

Registration is free and permanent. Wisconsin residents no longer have to sign up every two years. Sign up once, and you're done, as long as you have that number.

Wisconsin residents who sign up for the National Do Not Call Registry are protected by both the federal Do Not Call law and by [Wisconsin's telemarketing laws](#). Once you register your home and/or cell phone number(s), telemarketers covered by the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry have up to 31 days from the date you register to stop calling.



While the program reduces unwanted telemarketing calls and text messages, it does not entirely eliminate them.

Telemarketers are responsible for obtaining the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registration and refraining from calling or texting those numbers under Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.82. To report illegal calls or text messages, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection.

## No-Call exemptions (Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.80(10))

Certain telemarketing solicitations are exempt from the No Call laws. Exemptions include:

1. Tax-exempt nonprofit organizations encouraging you to make a donation.
  - a. Calls encouraging you to purchase property, goods or services from a "nonprofit organization" unless sale proceeds are subject to Wisconsin sales tax or federal income tax.
  - b. Noncommercial telephone calls or texts such as polls, surveys and political messages.

2. Calls or texts made by an individual acting on his or her own behalf and not as an employee or agent of any other person.
  3. Telephone call or text message made in response to recipient's written or verbal consent to contact you.
  4. Companies or businesses with which you are a current client such as your bank, your phone company or your credit card company.
  5. Telephone calls or texts made to a number listed in the current local business telephone directory.
  6. One telephone call or text message to determine whether a former client mistakenly allowed a contractual relationship to lapse.
  7. A telephone call or text message made to determine a former client's level of satisfaction, unless the call or text message is part of a plan or scheme to encourage the former client to purchase property, goods, or services.
  8. A telephone call or text message, made to a party to an existing contract that is necessary to complete the contract.
    - What they are selling or promoting
    - The nature of the goods or services the seller is offering or promoting
- Before you pay for any products or services, you must be told the total cost including the terms and conditions of the sale and any restrictions that apply, Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.06
  - It is illegal to use any automated dialing system or prerecorded voice message to call without the prior express consent, Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.83(2)(b)
  - It is illegal for a telemarketer to withdraw funds from your accounts without verifiable authorization, Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.10
  - You can stop unwanted calls and text messages from legitimate telemarketers by telling them not to call or text you again. If they do, they are breaking the law. Report them to the Bureau of Consumer Protection, Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.16(4). Tell the telemarketer to put you on the company's "Do Not Call" list. Federal law, 16 C.F.R. 310, requires telemarketers to keep such a list. Keep in mind that the telemarketer's "Do Not Call" list applies only to that individual company so you will need to make separate requests of other businesses that you call. Tax-exempt non-profit organizations are not required to keep Do Not Call lists.

## Other telemarketing laws

Additional laws protect consumers who are not on the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry:

- Telemarketers may only call between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m., Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.16(3)
- If you have caller ID, a telemarketer is required to display the phone number for itself or the company it is calling for, and the name, if possible, Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.83(2)(e)
- Any telemarketer making a solicitation must provide its Wisconsin registration number if requested, Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.83(3)
- Before asking any questions the seller making a solicitation must disclose the following before they make their pitch, Wis. Admin. Code ch. ATCP 127.04:
  - The name of the seller
  - The name of the individual making the solicitation

Keeping a log of telemarketing calls and texts is important should you choose to file a complaint. The company's name, phone number, the caller's name and the date and time of all calls will be useful information in getting a company to stop when reporting a violation.

## "Sucker" list

So just how did the telemarketer get your number? Fraudulent telemarketers may get your phone number from a phone directory, mailing list, or "sucker" list. Sucker lists include names, addresses, and phone numbers – even how much money you may have spent on telemarketing scams in the past. Unscrupulous promoters buy and sell sucker lists on the theory that

consumers who have been deceived once are easy prey for more scams.

## Handling telemarketing calls and stopping unwanted calls

These tips may help you curb unwanted telephone solicitations.

- The most important action you can take against an unwanted telemarketing call is to **JUST HANG UP!** Better yet, if you have caller ID on your phone and do not recognize a caller's number, do not answer. Do not respond to text message solicitations or prize notices. These are almost always phishing scams.
- **Screen your telephone calls.** Use an answering machine or voice mail or such services as Caller ID or Privacy Manager, which may involve a phone company fee. However, be aware of "Caller ID spoofing". There are technologies being used which can "spoof" the phone number or name appearing on your Caller ID. Spoofing means the number or name appearing on your Caller ID is not that of the actual caller or person texting you.
- Do not believe criminal telemarketers when they say you have won something but that you have to pay taxes or a fee in order to get it. **Hang up** if they ask you to pay for a prize – what is free is free!
- Many telemarketing criminals are not located in the United States, but are calling from a foreign country. They may be attempting to entice you into participating in a lottery or claim a prize.
- Do not send money – cash, check or money order – by Western Union, courier, or overnight delivery to anyone who insists on immediate payment. Prepaid money cards (e.g. Green Dot Moneypak) are also like cash, so use the same caution as with these other payment methods.
- Resist high-pressure sales tactics. With the current economy, people are more susceptible to work-at-home offers, "free gift" with a purchase or investment opportunities. Legitimate businesses respect the fact that you are not interested.
- Take your time. Ask for written information about the product, service, investment opportunity, or the charity involved.

- Before you respond to a phone solicitation about a financial service or investment, talk to a friend, family member or financial advisor. Your financial investments may have consequences for your future and people you care about.
- Check out testimonials to make sure they are genuine – not statements that have been paid for.
- Keep information about your bank accounts and credit cards to yourself unless you know with whom you are dealing. Do not give out account numbers to a caller or send this kind of information in response to a text message if you did not make the initial contact.
- Before you buy anything from a telemarketer, check out the company with the Bureau of Consumer Protection.
- **Take yourself off the telemarketer's list.** Tell the telemarketer to put you on their "Do Not Call" list.
- **Register for the Do Not Call Registry.** Register your home and mobile residential numbers on the Do Not Call Registry at no cost by visiting:

[DoNotCall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov)

1-888-382-1222

1-866-290-4236 TTY

You must call from the phone number you wish to register.

It will take up to 31 days from the date you register for telemarketers to stop calling you. Once you have registered your number, it will remain on the registry indefinitely unless you choose to remove it or you change telephone numbers.

- **Take your name off credit bureau marketing lists by calling 888-5OPT-OUT.** Contact credit bureaus to remove your name from their marketing lists. Three major credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian and Trans Union share a single contact to assist consumers in removing their names:

888-5OPT-OUT / 888-567-8688

[optoutprescreen.com](https://www.optoutprescreen.com)

- Protect your phone number. Do not print your phone number on your checks. Do not give your home phone number when signing up for contests, drawings or sweepstakes.

- Protect your privacy when calling toll-free. If you are calling companies using a toll-free number such as “800”, “888”, “877”, “866” etc., tell them you do not want your name, address and phone number shared. Also tell them not to call you in the future.
- Protect your personal information. If you are contacted out of the blue and asked for your personal information, someone may be “phishing.” “Phishing” is a tactic used by identity thieves to obtain your personal information (e.g., Social Security Number, financial account numbers, credit card numbers, PIN numbers) by pretending they are someone they are not. While most “phishing” scams occur through the Internet or via e-mail, telemarketers can also use the same tactics when calling or sending a text message on the telephone.

Legitimate credit card companies, your bank or other companies may contact you if there are unusual transactions or a pattern of transactions indicating someone else may be using your account. A legitimate company may ask about specific transactions but they will **never** request specific personal information.

If you are suspicious, ask for the person’s name, the name of the company, the address and phone number. Then get the main number from the phone book, Internet or directory assistance and call back to find out if the person is legitimate.

Be wary of anyone claiming they are calling on behalf of a government agency.

Area codes of phone numbers can also be misleading. Scammers can send e-mails or text messages asking you to call a phone number to update your account or obtain a “refund” or “prize”. With the newer technologies available, the area code you call does not reflect where the callers really are. If you need to contact a company you do business with, call the number available on your statement or look up a general number.

*For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact:*

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,  
Trade and Consumer Protection  
*Bureau of Consumer Protection*  
2811 Agriculture Drive, PO Box 8911  
Madison, WI 53718-8911

Email: [DATCPHotline@wi.gov](mailto:DATCPHotline@wi.gov)

Website: [datcp.wi.gov](http://datcp.wi.gov)

PHONE: (800) 422-7128      TTY: (608) 224-5058

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