

# ***FTC Consumer Alert***

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Division of Consumer & Business Education

## **New Rules for Robocalls**

Businesses now need your written permission before they can call you with prerecorded telemarketing messages — also known as robocalls — regardless of whether you already have a relationship with the business. If a business wants to call you to deliver prerecorded messages, it must tell you clearly that it is asking for your written permission to call you with these kinds of messages. You may refuse, or you may give your permission by signing a paper, responding to an email, pressing a keypad prompt during a live call with a sales agent or clicking a button on a website to show that you will allow these messages from a business. A business can't require you to agree to these calls in order to get goods or services. If you decide that you will accept prerecorded messages, you get to choose the number to which these calls are placed.

If you have agreed to allow prerecorded telemarketing messages, you may also change your mind and ask that they stop. Businesses using prerecorded messages must tell you at the beginning of the message how you can stop future calls; and they must provide an automated opt-out that you can activate by voice or keypress throughout the call. If the message could be left on your voicemail or answering machine, businesses also must provide a toll-free number at the beginning of the message that will connect to an automated opt-out system that you can call to opt out any time.

If you chose to opt out while receiving a prerecorded message, the call should be disconnected immediately, and you should not receive any more calls from the business that sponsored the prerecorded call. If you call a toll-free number to opt out, the business should allow you to opt out by pressing a button on your telephone keypad or asking to opt out — without being required to speak to a sales agent. The business that sponsored the calls must honor your request immediately and prevent future telemarketing calls to your telephone number.

Some prerecorded messages still are permitted under these rules — for example, messages that are purely informational. That means you still will receive calls to let you know your flight's been cancelled, reminders about an appointment, or messages about a delayed school opening. But the business doing the calling isn't allowed to promote the sale of any goods or services. Prerecorded messages from a business that is contacting you to collect a debt also are permitted, but messages offering to sell you services to reduce your debt are barred.

---

Other exceptions include political calls and calls from certain healthcare providers. For example, pharmacies are permitted to use prerecorded messages to provide prescription refill reminders. Prerecorded messages from banks, telephone carriers and charities also are exempt from these rules if the banks, carriers or charities make the calls themselves.

### **How do I report improper robocalls?**

If you receive prerecorded telemarketing calls but have not agreed to get them, file a complaint with the FTC at **donotcall.gov** or by phone at 1-888-382-1222.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit **ftc.gov** or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The FTC enters consumer complaints into the Consumer Sentinel Network, a secure online database and investigative tool used by hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION	ftc.gov
1-877-FTC-HELP	FOR THE CONSUMER