

Consumers - Fight Back With FTC's Do Not Call Registry

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The Federal Trade Commission has rolled out its National Do Not Call Registry and the registration site already has over 700,000 registrants. This is great news for consumers who have grown tired of annoying sales calls by pesky telemarketers.

Consumers can register online at www.donotcall.gov.

You can register up to three personal phone numbers at one time. This is a free service established by the FTC and your "do not call" registration is good for a 5-year period.

Additionally, a toll-free number is also available for those who want to register by phone. The toll-free number is 1-888-382-1222. You must call from the phone number you want to register when using the toll free registration service.

The toll free number is only accessible to those states west of the Mississippi River in the initial week of registration. The program will spread nationwide the following week.

Telemarketers will be required to "clean" their call lists by matching their list against the national "do not call" list every 90 days starting in September 2003.

Companies who call listed people will be subject to fines of up to \$11,000 per violation. Enforcement will begin in October 2003. You will be able to file a "do not call violation" complaint online or by phone.

Over two dozen states already have their own "do-not-call" lists and most of these states plan to incorporate their lists into the national registry. If your state is one of them, you do not need to re-register for the national registry.

CAUTION: There have been reports of scam artists and identity thieves calling people to request or confirm personal information for this new registry. The FTC has posted this warning to consumers on their web page:

"The FTC will not allow private companies or other such third parties to "pre-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 a national list – especially those that charge a fee – are a scam. Consumers will be able to register directly with the FTC, or through some state governments, but never private companies."

Consumers should also be aware that some types of telephone solicitation are exempt from the do-not-call protection. Companies from which you have purchased, leased or rented from in the previous 18 months are exempt. Also charities, surveys, and calls on behalf of politicians will be exempt from this service.

The National Do Not Call Registry does not cover business to business calls. About The Author

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