

The Do Not Call Registry was formed by the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) to offer consumers an option on how they receive telemarketing calls. It was formed in 2003 and telemarketers now have only 31 days from registration to stop calling numbers from the list.

The sign up process is relatively easy and can be used for both land lines and cell phones. You can either call 888.382.1222 from the phone you wish to register or visit their website at www.donotcall.gov

. If you register online, you will need to provide an email address to complete your registration. Once you have registered up to 3 phone's (at a time), it can take up to 31 days for the calls to stop.

As with many things, scammers have attached themselves to this registry. The most prevalent is that they will call you and offer to sign you up for the Do Not Call list. According to the FTC, the only way you should be signing up for this service is by calling the number above or going to the website listed above. You only have to register your phone numbers once. If you move or change phone numbers you will have to register the new # but the FTC purging system will take care of your old disconnected number. Due to an improvement act signed in 2007 the purging of reassigned and disconnected numbers now happens several times a month. As a test I checked on the do not call website to see if I had registered both my home phone and cell phone and sure enough I was sent 2 emails stating that both numbers were on the list and when they were registered. To check your status just click on the verify a registration button on the webpage.

Telemarketers have some very specific guidelines that they must follow when making calls. The most important is probably the hours of the day that they can call. Those hours are 8a-9p. There are some exceptions to the types of calls that will be blocked. These exceptions include: Political organizations (as we are all tired of by now); not for profit organizations; companies conducting surveys, businesses where you have done business in the past 18 months unless you specifically request to be put on their internal do not call list and bill collectors. Also note that calls coming from overseas are regulated by these rules as well because they are calling US consumers.

If you feel that you have received calls from anyone not on the above list or the call is outside of the permitted hours then you do have the right to file a complaint with the FTC. Keep in mind however this one work around that some companies have found. They will call you conducting a survey then ask if they can make a follow up call and when they do, they will try to sell you a

product or service. One company that tried this was slapped with a restraining order but you know that if they can find the gray area of the rules they will. Some journalists and victims of fraudulent calls and Do Not Call list violations have reported widespread inaction and lack of enforcement from the FTC. In fact in the last 2 years, complaints have jumped from 65,000 to more than 212,000

So if you are tired of having your phone ring at 8:55pm then do yourself a favor and register all your phones for this free service.