

Unwanted Telephone Calls



Have you ever sat down to your evening meal and just as you are going to take your first mouthful of food, the telephone rings? Someone is trying to sell you double-glazing or some other product you don't want. If this annoys you, read on to find out how you can stop these irritating nuisance calls.

Register for free with the Telephone Preference Service

0845 070 0707

Both BT and KC support the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) in stopping unwanted calls. By law, UK-based companies must not make unsolicited sales and marketing calls to TPS-registered home phone or mobile numbers, even if the call centre is overseas. The TPS won't stop scams, market research calls, calls from companies where you have 'opted in' or calls from companies based abroad. It takes 28 days to activate

If you get an unwanted call after 28 days ask for the person's name and the name of the company – then report them to TPS, who will contact the company. You can do this by telephone or online at www.tpsonline.org.uk A report is also sent to the Information Commissioner.

Keep your name off sales call lists.

Data protection laws prohibit companies from calling you for marketing purposes if you've asked them not to, even if you're a customer.

If you must provide your phone number to a company, for example when signing up to a new service or buying a product online or on the phone, ask the company not to call you for marketing purposes or pass your number on to third parties.

Carefully check the marketing 'opt out/opt in' boxes to see if ticking or unticking them will prevent calls from the company itself or from third parties. If it doesn't, directly ask the company not to call you for sales and marketing purposes.

Contact companies you already receive unwanted sales calls from and ask to be removed from their sales call lists.

Companies should abide by verbal requests to stop calling according to rules around marketing calls. It's a good idea to put your request in writing too so there is a formal record.

Screen your phone calls.

If you have caller display and an answer phone, consider only answering calls from numbers you recognise. Legitimate callers are likely to leave a message. If you're a BT phone customer, BT Privacy at Home gives you free caller display as long as you make some calls with BT.

Don't Accept Anonymous Calls

KC offers their customers a "Reject withheld numbers" service. This will simply block any incoming calls that withhold their number from getting through to you. The person calling you will get a recorded message stating that your number does not accept anonymous calls. Please be aware that this service will stop all types of incoming calls that do not present their number

which could include non malicious or nuisance calls such as GP surgeries or other large companies.

BT offers a similar service, but there is a monthly fee. You can activate this yourself by pressing #227# and can be cancelled by repeating #227#

Relatives and others you want to contact you, such as GP surgeries, simply prefix your number with '141' which releases their number to allow access.

Don't bow to cold calling pressure.

If you receive a cold call, stay calm and don't let the caller intimidate you or pressure you with 'one-day-only' offers. **Never, ever** reveal your name, address or financial details. If it's a legitimate call from a company you're interested in or are already a customer of, you can always call the company directly.

If you suspect a scam, don't press any phone buttons during the call. This could redirect you to a premium-rate number which you will be charged for.

Make a note of the cold call number.

If possible, get the cold call phone number and company name (dial 1471 to check the number if you don't have caller display). These details will help organisations such as TPS, Ofcom, or the Information Commissioner take action.

Report cold calling offenders.

Report TPS rule breaches to the TPS. The TPS will contact the company and pass complaints to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which can take action against repeat offenders.

Remember:

Under government regulation it is illegal for UK companies to call any individual who has indicated they don't want the calls. The Data Protection Act prevents people using your details without your permission.

Information correct at September 2011