

## **South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Frequently Asked Questions about the Do Not Call Registry**

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When the Do Not Call Registry was established in 2003, it gave consumers more control over the telemarketing calls that came into their homes. In 2008, the registry was improved to allow numbers that were placed on the registry to remain there permanently.

In recent years, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission has been hearing increasing concerns from consumers who are experiencing more telemarketing and nuisance calls. This document examines many of the frequently asked questions about the Do Not Call Registry.

### **How do I know if my number is still on the Do Not Call Registry?**

If you registered your number, it will still be on the list. To verify, go to the National Do Not Call Registry website, [www.DoNotCall.gov](http://www.DoNotCall.gov), and type in your number and email address to confirm that your phone number has been registered.

### **I am a business owner. Can I place my business phone number on the Do Not Call Registry?**

No. The Do Not Call Registry is only for personal telephone numbers. Calls to business numbers are not covered.

### **My number is on the Do Not Call Registry. Why am I still receiving telemarketing calls?**

If you recently added your number to the Do Not Call Registry, it can take up to 31 days before you notice a decrease in telemarketing calls. Companies that do telemarketing are required by law to update their Do Not Call lists every 30 days.

There are a few types of calls that are not affected by the Do Not Call Registry. Calls from or on behalf of political organizations or candidates, charities and telephone surveyors are allowed. Calls from companies with which you have an existing business relationship are also allowed. Additionally, a company may call you for 18 months after you make a purchase or three months after you submit an inquiry or application.

Most telemarketers abide by the Do Not Call Registry, but there are some that intentionally don't follow the law. These aggressive telemarketers are, quite simply, criminals seeking to trick you into giving them money or providing personal information they can use or sell for financial gain. They are skilled at deception and often use technology to hide their identity from you and the enforcement agencies that are trying to stop them.

### **What are common telemarketing scams I should be aware of?**

Unfortunately, there are a number of telemarketing scams targeting not only South Dakotans, but consumers from across the country. Your best defense is to be informed, educated and cautious if you find yourself on the receiving end of these calls. These are some of the more common scams:

#### **Caller ID Spoofing**

Spoofing is the act of a caller deliberately changing the number and/or the name displayed on the caller ID to disguise the caller's identity. These numbers can be fictitious, disconnected or working numbers, including a number that may be familiar to you. If you answer one of these calls and determine it is not legitimate, hang up immediately. Do not call the number back. See more information about spoofing from the [Federal Communications Commission](http://www.fcc.gov).

#### **Grandparent Scam**

Grandparents love to receive calls from their grandkids. However, a call from a grandchild stating they are in jail and in quick need of cash should send up worry signals. Scammers often play on fear and the Grandparent Scam does just that. A live caller pretends your grandchild is in trouble

and in need of money. They may ask you to not tell their parents or anyone else. They may hand the phone over to someone they identify as their lawyer or may even pose as your grandchild. If you receive a similar call that requires you to take immediate action, be suspicious and hang up immediately. For your own peace of mind, contact family members directly to be assured your grandchild is okay.

### **Utility Payment Scam**

This scam involves a pushy caller informing you that your utility payment is due and you risk disconnection unless you immediately pay over the phone. If you receive such a call, hang up. This is not how legitimate utility companies operate. While your utility company may call you regarding an overdue bill or loss of service notification, they will not demand immediate payment over the phone. To verify the legitimacy of the call you received, contact your utility company directly using the phone number found on your utility bill or the company's official website.

### **IRS Payment Scam**

In this scam, a caller identifying themselves as a representative of the Internal Revenue Service demands payment for taxes that are due. The IRS will not call you if you owe taxes, rather, they will send a written notice by U.S. mail. Some scammers will spoof the IRS toll-free telephone number to make it appear as if the IRS is calling. Others may be able to recite the last four digits of a victim's Social Security number. If you receive such a call, hang up immediately. For more information visit the [IRS website](#).

### **Can the PUC stop these unwanted calls?**

We try. Finding the culprits is very difficult. Scammers use various techniques and technology to hide their identity and location. Because many of these scams originate from outside the state's borders, and even outside the U.S., the PUC has very little authority or the necessary resources to track down or penalize the offenders. The PUC is in regular contact with the FCC and, working with regulatory agencies across the country, continues to seek ways to stop these unwanted calls.

### **How should I handle scam or unwanted telemarketer calls in the future?**

If you answer the phone and realize it's a scam or an unwanted telemarketer call, hang up immediately. It may feel rude, but the less of your time you give the scammers, the less likely they will continue to call. If you are asked to dial a number, don't. Just hang up. If you have Caller ID and can see that it's an unwanted phone number, simply don't answer. For additional information and tips on how to deal with unwanted call, visit the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission's [Don't Know? Don't Answer](#) website.

### **Should I report unwanted calls?**

Absolutely. Gathering and sharing information is a valuable way to try to stop unwanted telemarketing calls. If your number is listed on the Do Not Call Registry and you receive unwanted telemarketing calls, collect the following information to report:

- the name of the company or organization that called (this information may be displayed on caller ID, if you do not answer the call)
- the phone number, as shown on caller ID, of the unwanted call
- the date and time of the unwanted call

Report this information to the PUC by emailing [PUCConsumerinfo@state.sd.us](mailto:PUCConsumerinfo@state.sd.us) or calling 1-800-332-1782.