

Why can't someone do it for me?.....

Is the convenience worth the cost?

Yes, there are companies that offer to help you get a handle on your junk-mail problem. It may be more convenient to hand over the task to someone else. But keep in mind that these companies can't do everything for you. You may have to send postcards or fill out your own request forms. You'll still have to keep an eye on the mailbox, alerting these services each time you receive more unwanted mail. The convenience may be worth the cost to you...just be sure to read the fine print to find out exactly how much convenience you're promised. There are several options.

Greendimes contacts direct-mail companies for you, requesting your removal from marketing lists. For requests that require a signature, you'll get a stack of postcards to sign and pop in the mail. Plus, Greendimes will plant one tree on your behalf each month. Cost is \$36 a year. Go to Greendimes.com.

41 Pounds chose its name because the average person receives 41 pounds of junk mail each year. This service vows to stop the majority of it by contacting companies on your behalf. You'll get preaddressed postcards to mail for the requests that require a signature. And the company donates more than one-third of your fee to an environmental or community group of your choice. Cost is \$41 for five years. Go to 41pounds.org.

Stopthejunkmail.com offers you the use of its junk mail removal software. When you get unwanted mail, you fill out the information and file your removal request through this site. One tree is planted on your behalf when you subscribe. Cost is \$19.95 a year. Go to stopthejunkmail.com.

Need more help? Try the **Privacy Rights Clearinghouse** at www.privacyrights.org. This nonprofit group's web site offers plenty of solutions for protecting your privacy and personal information. From the main page, click on "Sample Letters" to find the proper wording for your opt out requests.



DON'T START

Avoid getting your name on mailing lists in the first place. Be wary of sweepstakes and surveys that ask you to provide your contact information.

When you send a letter requesting to opt out of a company's mailing list, don't forget to enclose a mailing label. Those labels contain information and coding that the company will need to update the list.

When you get an opt-out form in the mail from companies with which you do business, don't ignore it. Fill it out and send it in. The more opting out you do, the fewer marketing lists you'll land on.

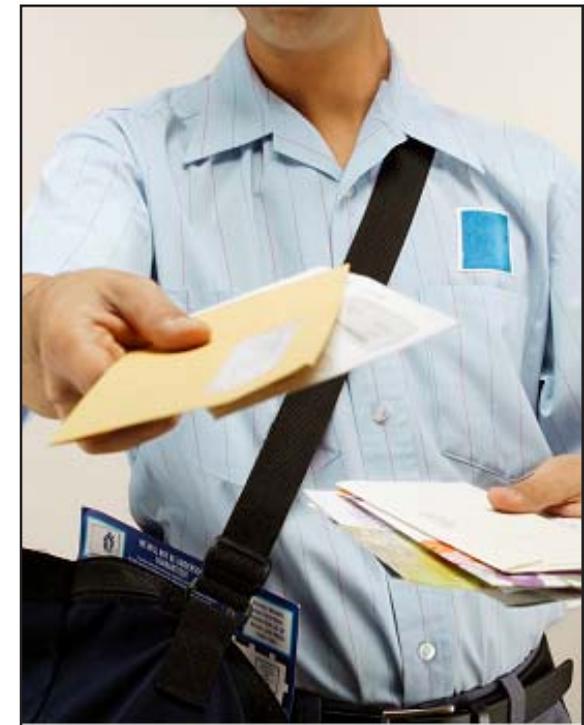


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360.442.5800, emergencies 9-1-1
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Junk Mail

How to make it stop



The information in this publication appeared in the Seattle Times on September 26, 2007 by Alyson Ward, Fort Worth Star-Telegram



Junk Mail

How to make it stop.

Junk mail...piles of it...in your mailbox, every day. You don't want it. Most of the time, you didn't ask for it. But when it arrives, you have to "do" something with it: Shred it. Trash it. Recycle it. You'll probably never eliminate all the mail you don't want. But with a little effort, you can remove your name from enough mailing lists and databases to cut down on some of the clutter. We've rounded up some of the best tips for opting out of the direct-mail deluge. Follow these steps and you will lessen your mail carrier's load. Remember: You won't see results right away because a lot of direct mail is prepared and addressed in advance. So wait at least two or three months before you throw up your hands in disgust. It's a painstaking process — but so is handling all that junk mail, right?

DIRECT MARKETING MAIL

The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) maintains lists of addresses for advertising mail. Companies that are DMA members are required to use the "do not mail" lists that purge your name from the system at your request. (Note: this will cost you \$1, whether you do it online or by mail.)

Get off the lists by going to www.dmaconsumers.org/consumerassistance.html or send your address and request to Direct Marketing Association, Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 282, Carmel, NY 10512. Include a \$1 check or money order payable to the Direct Marketing Association.

As backup, contact these other big direct-marketing mailers. There is no charge for these.

Donnelley Marketing is a major compiler of consumer information. Get off the list by sending a removal request to Opt Out, Donnelley Marketing, Database Operations, 416 S. Bell Ave., Ames, IA 50010. Remember to enclose your full name, including middle initial and address.

Equifax (yes, the credit bureau) also does some direct marketing. Get off the list by calling 800-873-7655.

Experian Marketing Solutions is another credit bureau that dips into direct marketing. Get off the list by calling 888-246-2804.

Acxiom is a major provider of consumer information and statistics to direct marketers. Get off the list by going to www.acxiom.com. Click on "Contact Us" and select the "U.S. Consumer Opt Out" form.

CREDIT CARD OFFERS

If you're not shopping for a new credit card, opt out of those pre-approved offers. If you don't want them, they're useless — and they can be a great tool for identity thieves. Shred the applications and remove yourself from the lists of the major credit card bureaus, which supply your credit score and information to companies that want to send you those offers. The Consumer Reporting Credit Industry will let you opt out of all those lists at once. You can opt out for five years, opt out permanently, or opt in again if you change your mind. Get off the list by going to www.optoutprescreen.com or calling 888-567-8688.

CATALOGS

Here's the thing about catalogs. Most of the time, you receive them because you have a relationship with that company so they didn't purchase your name on a list. Maybe you bought something and gave your phone number to the cashier when you checked out. Or you ordered something online or through a catalog. This means you'll have to contact the company directly and ask to be removed. To get off the list, start by calling the customer service number when you receive a catalog. Have the catalog

handy because you'll probably need information that's on the mailing label. If you don't see a phone number, send a letter asking to be removed and enclose the mailing label.

Other catalogs are sent because you bought something from a similar retailer or you're labeled on some marketing list as a sports nut or a do-it-yourselfer. Companies buy that sort of information from one another and that means the catalogs in your mailbox multiply.

Abacus is a company that compiles a database of catalog customers. To get off the list, go to www.abacus-us.com and click on "Privacy." Choose "Opt Out" for a list of instructions.

CHARITIES AND NON-PROFITS

You know how it is. You make one donation and suddenly your box is filled with pleas (and free address labels) from a dozen other non-profits.

To get off the list, when you make a donation, look for a box to check that indicates you don't want your information to be shared or sold. If there's not an option of that sort, then attach a note with your donation: "Please do not sell, rent, trade or lease my personal information."

CIRCULARS, COUPONS AND FLIERS

A lot of circulars and fliers are addressed to "Resident" or "Occupant." It'll be hard getting rid of these because even if you opt out of the company's mailing list, the post office is likely to keep delivering them. Keep trying and contact

your local post office to request that the carrier skip your box with this stuff. Shopwise mailers are sent out weekly accompanied by an address card, usually addressed to "current resident" with a photo of a missing child. To get off the list for five years, go to www.advo.com/consumersupport.html.

Val-Pack coupons arrive in a blue envelope, often addressed to "Resident." To get off the list, go to www.coxtarget.com. Click "Contact us" and follow the link to the Mailing Address Removal Request.

SWEEPSTAKES

You may already be a winner...but it will take a lot of prize money to make up for all the box-clogging these sweepstakes offers cause. To get off the list for Publishers Clearing House, call 800-645-9242 or send a written request to Christopher L. Irving, senior director for Consumer & Privacy Affairs, Publishers Clearing House, 382 Channel Drive, Port Washington, NY 11050. For Reader's Digest Sweepstakes, call 800-310-6261 or send a written request to Reader's Digest, P.O. Box 50005, Prescott, AZ 86301.

SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MAILINGS

If you're getting unwanted pornographic or sexually explicit advertising, the U.S. Postal Service can help. Get off the list, pick up Form 1500 at the post office or download the form at www.usps.com/forms/pdf/ps1500.pdf.