



Ending Illegal Robocalls

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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Illegal Robocalls



- ▶ Telemarketing is a legal and regulated industry
- ▶ Not all robocalls are illegal
 - ▶ Automated message reminding you of your dentist appointment
 - ▶ Emergency school closing announcement
- ▶ Examples of illegal robocalls
 - ▶ Robocalls selling products or services without your permission
 - ▶ Scams – illegal attempts to obtain caller information or other things of value
 - ▶ ID Spoofing

FCC Action



- ▶ Implementation of STIR/SHAKEN –
 - ▶ Secure Telephony Identity Revisited – Working Group developed standards for ID Authentication.
 - ▶ Signature-based Handling of Asserted information using toKENS
 - ▶ Both standards authenticate the ID of the caller (but not the content of the call),
 - ▶ FCC demanded adoption by carriers no later than 2019.
- ▶ Carrier call blocking -new rules allow carriers to block certain calls before they reach their intended recipient
 - ▶ Calls from unassigned, unused, or invalid
 - ▶ Do not originate calls - calls made from a number that the subscriber does not use to make outgoing calls and requests that calls purporting to originate from that number be blocked.

Consumer Applications

Useful information about call blocking and labeling resources as well as tips for businesses for how to avoid blocking legitimate calls can be found at: [Call Blocking Tools and Resources | Federal Communications Commission \(fcc.gov\)](#).

▶ **Third-Party applications**

- [First Orion](#): Tools and services for mobile customers and businesses.
- [Hiya](#): Tools and services for mobile phones; [Hiya Connect](#) for businesses.
- [Nomorobo](#): Tools and services for VoIP landlines and mobile phones.
- [TNS Call Guardian](#): Call analytics solutions for businesses.
- [YouMail](#): Tools and services for individuals and businesses.

▶ **Wireless Device Solutions**

- [Apple](#) iPhones have an opt-in “Silence Unknown Callers” call-screening and blocking feature.
- [Google](#) Pixel phones have a “Call Screen” call-screening and blocking feature; Google offers several free, opt-in, call-blocking tool apps for [Android](#) phones; and [Google Voice](#) users can use a call management tool to block unwanted calls.
- [Samsung partners with Hiya](#) to offer a call-blocking solution called Smart Call to label potentially unwanted calls.

FCC Consumer Complaint Center



FCC Home Complaint Center Home

Sign in

Consumer Complaint Center

File an informal consumer complaint / Tell your story

Search Complaint Center

Para presentar una queja en español, llamar al: 888-CALL-FCC (888-225-5322)

By **filing a consumer complaint** and **telling your story**, you contribute to federal enforcement and consumer protection efforts on a national scale and help us identify trends and track the issues that matter most.

[File an Unwanted Call Complaint](#)

[What Happens After I File My Complaint?](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[How Other Agencies Can Help](#)

Consumers can contact the FCC Consumer Complaint Center to make a complaint about robocalls. The FCC Consumer Complaint Center can be found at:
<https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us>

Enforcement Challenges



- ▶ Many scammers call from foreign countries making them out of reach of law enforcement.
- ▶ Originating callers use VoIP providers who do not maintain updated information with the FCC.
- ▶ Scammers can disappear and reappear under new names/businesses very quickly, making it hard to identify and bring charges against offenders.

Consumer Affairs & Public Information (CAPI)



The Consumer Affairs & Public Information (CAPI) Division at the Department of Public Service advocates for policies that protect consumer interests, educates consumers about utility issues, and helps people and businesses reach an informal resolution of their disputes with regulated and non-regulated utilities.

Informal Consumer Complaint Resolution

- ▶ CAPI attempts to informally resolve disputes between consumers and utilities.
- ▶ Specialists will research consumer complaints about utilities or companies that are subject to utility regulation by the Department and negotiate with utility staff and consumers to informally resolve complaints.
- ▶ If rule violations are found, utilities will be advised and provided training or support to make corrections as needed. When necessary, concerns are escalated.

Make Referrals to and Work with the Attorney General's Consumer Assistance Program

- ▶ The AGO's CAP handles complaints about satellite TV (i.e., Dish and DirectTV) but refers complaints to CAPI about any bundled packages that include the provision of internet service.
- ▶ CAPI flags practices that might be UDAP violations (unfair or deceptive acts or practices in violation of the Consumer Protection Act) for referral back to the AGO's CAP for review or investigation. For instance, false advertising claims or situations where a business is closing are referred to the AGO.
- ▶ CAPI handles wireless complaints as well as internet service provider complaints (even though they aren't regulated by the Department) due to its internal resources and as outlined in our working agreement with the AGO.

Complaints re: Robocalls

The Department logged 7 complaints in 2020 about telemarketing or robocalls. There were 27 complaints logged in 2019.

Referrals to the AGO

The Department referred 29 contacts to the AGO in 2020 and 73 in 2019 about a variety of matters.

Complaints made to CAPI about Robocalls and Telemarketing

Contact Us



- ▶ For the staff person on call at Consumer Affairs dial toll free, 800-622-4496 or 802-828-2332
- ▶ Consumer Contact Email Address:
psd.consumer@vermont.gov
- ▶ Online Consumer Complaint Form at
<https://capi.epsd.vermont.gov/>