



Junk Mail and Telemarketers: Declare Independence

Junk mail and unsolicited phone calls are unrequited distractions and what I call CRAP (Clutter that Robs Anyone of Pleasure). Here's how to declare your independence:

Don't Let Marketers Pass Your Name Around:

Any time you order a product by mail, enter a contest, subscribe to a magazine, buy something on-line, send in a warranty card, or otherwise give your name and address and phone number to a company or organization, you may be placed on a mailing list and that includes your email address. To limit your exposure, write "Do not sell my name" or check the box that says you don't want more e-mails. Remember: you don't need to send the warranty card for a new product; it's usually not required, and the warranty will still take effect.

Reduce Junk Mail and Credit Card offers:

DMACHoice.org is a mail preference service operated by the main consumer credit reporting agencies, TransUnion, Experian and Equifax. To opt-out of receiving unwanted mail and phone solicitations, you can call **1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688)** to get your name and address removed from those mailing lists and stop those "prescreened" offers of credit. You can also go to DMACHoice.org and register to have your name removed from their mailing lists.

You can also download PaperKarma.com, an app that lets you take a photo of the unwanted mailing with your smartphone and then attempts to do all the unsubscribing work for you.

Reduce Telephone Solicitations:

Cut down on calls from telemarketers by registering online at donotcall.gov or by calling **1-888-382-1222** from the phone you wish to register. Your registration will not expire according to the Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007, which became law in February 2008.

- Call the number again if you are getting too many telemarketer calls.
- Learn how to block calls on your cell phone.

Credit Card Offers:

Catalogs:

- For catalogs or other mail from specific sources, call the (often toll-free) customer service number of the organization or business. Request that your name be removed from their mailing list. You can make your request via e-mail from the company's website, or via letter or postcard. Use the mailing label from your magazine to identify yourself.
- Register with catalogchoice.org and cut down on future catalog mailings.

Other Tips:

- To opt-out of unwanted email, get in the habit of spamming those emails daily or weekly.
- Google those stores and companies who are Zero Waste and support them.