

# Please Don't call!

New national roster launched today lets consumers have their name taken off most telemarketers' lists

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Some of Canada's largest users of telemarketing services say they welcome the National Do Not Call List.

They believe it will make their industry more efficient by eliminating wasted calls to consumers who don't want to be contacted, said Wally Hill, vice-president of public affairs for the Canadian Marketing Association.

And they don't see it hurting the telemarketing business, which they say creates 155,000 indirect jobs and \$25 billion in benefits to the Canadian economy in terms of the services and products sold through by this method.

Asked about possible layoffs at telemarketing firms, Hill said he hadn't heard of any such plans.

"There are organizations who are probably getting ready to adapt to the new list. That doesn't necessarily mean there will be a reduction," he said.

In fact, some companies are considering getting back into the game now that the rules are clearer.

Some companies will start using other strategies to reach consumers, including mass advertising, direct mail and online marketing, Hill said.

In fact, companies may start making greater use of their websites to ask consumers for permission to call them, Hill said.

If the consumer agrees, the company can go ahead and contact them even if that consumer has signed on to the National Do Not Call List, Hill explained.

The biggest users of telemarketing tactics are generally phone

companies, especially cell-phone service providers, magazine and newspaper publishers and registered charities.

The list, which comes into effect today, was created by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and allows consumers to have their name taken off most telemarketers' lists.

Canada's largest marketing group also said it welcomes the new National Do Not Call List as it should help weed out the worst offenders and improve the industry's image.

Consumers have for years been able to complain to the Canadian Marketing Association if one of its members violated the industry's own Do Not Contact list.

But many of the worst offenders don't belong to the association, Hill said.

Now that a federal agency is taking over the job of maintaining a list for telemarketing calls, every call centre in business will come under scrutiny, not just association members, Hill explained.

"Some of the bad actors out there are the ones who call outside reasonable hours or don't respect requests to be on a Do Not Call list. These organizations will be captured under the new rules," Hill said.

The industry is counting on the CRTC to pursue offenders even when the telemarketer doesn't provide a return phone number where they can be reached, he added.

"I trust that they will be able to crack down on some of that," Hill said.

Meanwhile, the association, which has been running its own "do not contact" registry for several

years, is bracing for a rash of calls from consumers who mistakenly believe they are still the main contact point for telemarketing calls.

The group's list covers not only phone calls, but faxes and mail. As of tomorrow, the phone part of the list will be handled by the CRTC, while the association will continue to keep a list of people who don't want to be contacted by fax or mail.



# “Simple Steps to Register”

ON

## Free service runs 24/7

**PAOLA LORIGGIO**  
STAFF REPORTER

Canada's long-awaited do-not-call list is finally here. Starting today, Canadians can sign up to stop unwanted calls and faxes — not to mention the dreaded recorded messages — from a variety of telemarketers.

We answer some questions about the list and what to expect.

### **How do I sign up?**

You can register your landline, cell phone and fax online ([www.lnnte-dncl.gc.ca](http://www.lnnte-dncl.gc.ca)) or by calling one of these toll-free numbers: 1-866-580-365 or 1-888-362-5889. If you're one of the few unlucky folks who get telemarketing calls at the office, you can register your work phone, too.

Call from the phone you're registering. Those going online just need to know the number they want listed.

It's free, and the service runs 24/7. If you need to talk to an operator — say, to file a complaint — call between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

### **Does that mean I can have a call-free dinner tonight?**

Not quite. Assuming you sign up right now, it'll be Halloween before you notice a real change. Telemarketers have 31 days to update their phone lists.

### **Will charities stop calling?**

No. Charities — along with newspapers, political parties, pollsters and companies with whom you've done business in the past 18 months — are exempt from the do-not-call list.

But you should be able to ask them not to call anymore, and they're required by law to oblige (again, within 31 days).

Plus, American companies can still call because they're not covered under our laws, and Canadians can't use U.S. do-not-call lists.

### **Will it last forever?**

No, just three years. So put a note in your calendar (regular or Blackberry) to re-register in 2011.

### **The grace period is over, and I'm still getting calls from telemarketers.**

#### **What now?**

Complain to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, which runs the list. You can do it online or on the phone, using the website or numbers listed above.

Make sure you know the date of the call and the name or number of the company. Each violation can fetch fines of up to \$1,500 for a person and \$15,000 for a corporation.

### **It's not enough.**

#### **What more can I do?**

It depends on how much time, effort and money you're willing to spend. Here are some options, from the easiest to the most far-fetched:

- Sign up for iOptOut.ca, a free service by tech guru Michael Geist, Canada Research chair in Internet and E-commerce Law at the University of Ottawa. It sends an email to nearly 150 exempt organizations, telling them not to call you anymore.
- Enhance your phone service. Some phone providers, such as Bell Canada, let you block all incoming calls from unknown numbers for about \$7 a month. Not willing to go that far? Get call display, so you know who's calling before you pick up. Just know that it can cost more than call blocking.
- Take a chance on late-night infomercials. Products such as the TeleZapper connect to your landline and promise to weed out mass-dialled telemarketing calls. They get mixed reviews on consumer sites, but you may think it's worth the \$40.