

July 2003
Number 45

Junk Mail Reduction

Pollution prevention (P2) means reducing the total amount of pollution generated at the source, and as a second preference, environmentally sound recycling. There are many ways that you can prevent pollution at home and reducing the amount of junk mail you receive is just one. For more information on how you can reduce pollution at home, check out the Office of Pollution Prevention's Consumer P2 Web page at www.epa.state.oh.us/opp/cnsmp2.html.

The book *50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save The Earth* listed stopping unwanted junk mail as its number 2 recommendation. Some interesting junk mail statistics from the book include:

- Each year, 100 million trees are used to produce junk mail;
- 250,000 homes could be heated with one day's supply of junk mail; and
- Americans receive almost 4 million tons of junk mail every year.

How Do They Get My Name And Address?

Direct mail organizations have a variety of ways of acquiring your name and personal information. They usually purchase lists of names from credit bureaus, credit card companies, banks, magazine subscription lists, warranty information cards and many other commercial services. For more information about change of address information provided by the U.S. Postal Service, please see www.salon.com/tech/feature/2000/04/20/postal_spam/index.html.

You can make a difference. By cutting back on the amount of junk mail you receive you reduce the need for new landfills, help save the environment and reduce your garbage collection bills and taxes.
Mother Earth News

How Can I Stop Junk Mail?

One of the most effective things you can do is to write letters to mail preference services and credit bureaus requesting that your name and address be removed from their lists. The names and addresses of the largest name-selling companies are listed on the backside of this fact sheet. Contact all your credit card companies and ask them not to release your name, address, or phone number to anyone for marketing, mailing, or promotional purposes.

Other companies to contact include: your credit union and mortgage company, all magazines you subscribe to, groups of which you are a member, airline frequent flyer programs, hotel programs, cable companies, and more. Anyone who sends you a bill may sell your name. Many of the charities we support can earn as much money selling names and addresses as through donations. Every time you order something over the phone, Internet, or through the mail, your name may be sold. To keep this from happening, call or write these organizations and request a privacy designation on your name, address and phone number. Tell them that under no circumstances is your personal information to be sold.

Frequent buyer's clubs at grocery stores, bookstores, wholesale clubs, etc. are also sources for your name and buying habits. Avoid these when possible.

Do not send in product warranty cards unless absolutely necessary. They usually are not required. Many of these "warranty cards" are filled with questions about your personal interests and preferences and are usually sent to a different address than the company you purchased the product from. Check product registrations to see if you can opt not to receive any further mailings.

I Need Help!

If you don't have time to write and call all the name-selling companies, you can often find someone to do it for you. If you're familiar with the Internet, visit one of the following organizations:

Junkbusters - This site has information on how to stop junk mail and telemarketing calls and the service is free. www.junkbusters.com/

Declare Your Independence from Junk Mail - Center for the New American Dream, site has forms, phone numbers and internet links for removing your information from junk mail lists. www.newdream.org/junkmail/step1.html

Both Internet sites provides a junk mail removal form that lets you specify which types of product mailings you do or do not want to receive. They have an online program that will print out letters addressed to eight of the top name-selling companies with your name and address included.

Junk Mail Reduction

Another company called Private Citizen, Inc., 1-800-CUT-JUNK, has a successful strategy of dramatically reducing your telemarketing calls and junk mail. There is a fee for their service. You can also search the Internet or contact your local library to find more information.

Return Junk Mail

Junk mail may be first class or third class ("Bulk Rate"). Envelopes stamped "address correction requested" or "return postage guaranteed" can be returned unopened to the sender by writing "refused, return to sender" on the envelope. Only write this on bulk mail with that special notation. For return solicitations that include a postage paid reply envelope; include a note requesting that you be removed from the mailing list. Include the mailing label they sent to you. The easiest way to handle first class junk mail is to write "refused" on the envelope and mail it back to the sender. This may prompt the sender to remove your name and address from their mailing list. There is no cost for the addressee to refuse first class mail. Return mail service is included with the first class postage rate.

Where Do I Write?

Here are some of the top name-selling companies. Write a letter asking to be placed in their name removal file and taken off of any telemarketing lists (don't forget to include your phone number). If you are writing from an address that receives junk mail to previous residents and/or other family members make sure to say "please cover all other addressees at this address" in your letter.

Advo Incorporated
www.advo.com/
Delivery Services
1001 W. Walnut Street
Compton, CA 90220-5191
(310) 637-0438

Direct Marketing Association
<https://www.the-dma.org/consumers/consumerassistance.html>
Attn: Customer Service Opt Out
1120 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036-6700

Experian Consumer Services
www.experian.com/privacy/opting_out.html
List Maintenance
901 West Bond
Lincoln, NE 68521

infoUSA, Inc.
www.databaseamerica.com/
5711 S. 86th Circle
Omaha, NE 68127-0347

Acxiom Corporation
www.acxiom.com/
Opt-Outs
P.O. Box 2000
Conway, AR 72033-2000

Trans Union LLC
www.transunion.com/
Name Removal Option
P.O. Box 97328
Jackson, MS 39288-7328

LEXIS-NEXIS
www.lexis-nexis.com/
9393 Springboro Pike
P.O. Box 933
Dayton, OH 45401

National Demographics & Lifestyles
(generates lists from product warranty cards)
Customer Service Department
1621 18th Street, #300
Denver, CO 80202
(800) 525-3533

Credit Card Offers

Write to the address below and ask that your name be removed from prescreen and marketing lists. This has a dramatic affect on the number of credit cards offers mailed to your home (Include your full name and current address):

Experian Consumer Services
www.experian.com/privacy/opting_out.html
List Maintenance
901 West Bond
Lincoln, NE 68521

You can also contact local credit reporting agencies and ask to be taken off of their market lists. Remember, to maximize the reduction of junk mail you not only have to write to the above companies, but you should also contact every company that sends you a bill, magazine or catalog and request privacy on your address and phone number. If enough people take these steps, the amount of junk mail generated can be greatly reduced. Finally, don't forget to recycle whenever possible!

More Junk Mail Links

JUNKBUSTERS
www.junkbusters.com/ht/en/junkmail.html

Tired of Junk Mail?
<http://bullwinkle.as.utexas.edu/junkmail/>

The Office of Pollution Prevention was created to encourage multi-media pollution prevention activities in Ohio to reduce risk to public health, safety, welfare and the environment. Pollution prevention stresses source reduction and, as a second choice, environmentally-sound recycling while avoiding cross media transfers. The office develops information related to pollution prevention, increases awareness of pollution prevention opportunities, and can offer technical assistance to business, government and the public.

For more information, visit the Office of Pollution Prevention's Web site at www.epa.state.oh.us/opp

 Printed on recycled and recyclable paper with soy-based inks