

# Taking Action Against Illegal Robocalls

## Protecting America's Senior Citizens

### ILLEGAL ROBOCALLS HARM AMERICAN CONSUMERS:

- Experts predict half of U.S. calls this year could be robocalls
- According to YouMail, there were approximately 2.5 billion illegal robocalls in March 2019 alone
- The FCC estimates calls cost consumers at least \$3 billion per year
- Criminal robocallers often switch tactics to avoid detection
- Government and industry are working together to end the illegal robocall plague

Illegal robocalls are a serious issue for American consumers, who endure about three billion robocalls each month—nearly half of which are illegal. This issue is particularly acute for senior citizens who are disproportionately targeted by criminal scammers.

USTelecom member companies, our industry partners, officials at the FCC, FTC, and state Attorneys General offices take this issue seriously and are devoting time and resources to fight back.

Here are some tips to help consumers dodge robocall scams and report bad actors to authorities.

### IDENTIFYING BAD ACTORS

There are a number of ways robocallers try to infiltrate your phone. Some of the more prevalent techniques include spoofs and scams.

#### Robocall Spoofing ▶

Spoofing is when callers disguise their identity by deliberately misrepresenting the name or number that appears on your caller ID display to increase the likelihood of responses. Callers often mask their identity behind phone numbers from the recipient's area code, a tactic known as neighbor spoofing.

How to protect yourself:

**Don't answer** calls from unknown numbers

**Hang up** if you accidentally answer the phone

**Don't push any buttons** if the caller instructs you to do so

#### Robocall Scams ▶

Once illegal robocallers connect with victims, they will often solicit personal information like bank accounts or social security numbers to steal money or gain access to accounts.

Common scams include:

**Charity Scams** asking for illegitimate donations to charity

**Health Insurance and Medical Scams** selling fraudulent health insurance or health care devices

**IRS Scam** asking for payment of money owed in taxes

**Job Opportunity Scams** offering job positions with upfront buy-in

**Jury Duty Scam** threatening arrest or fines for missing jury duty

**Social Security Scam** automated voice claiming suspicious activity on your social security number

America's broadband providers are committed to protecting consumers from illegal robocalls.

How to protect yourself:

**Remember** legitimate government agencies will always contact you in writing

**Research** legitimate banks and charities before opening accounts or making donations

**Don't answer** any questions or provide personal information

**Verify** when the caller claims to represent a company you know or a government agency

**Beware** even a number that looks legitimate could be spoofed

### TAKING ACTION

Government agencies and private companies are working to shut down illegal robocallers and bring them to justice through civil and criminal enforcement.

You can reduce the calls you receive by using the tips below, and you can help shut down illegal robocallers by reporting criminals to authorities.

**Use call blocking services** offered by your phone provider. Major carriers have services in place, with more on the way.

**Contact** the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 877-908-3360

**Register** your number with the National Do Not Call Registry: [donotcall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov)

**File a complaint** with the FCC or FTC:

- FTC: [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint); 1-877-FTC-HELP
- FCC: [consumercomplaints.fcc.gov](https://www.consumercomplaints.fcc.gov); 1-888-CALL-FCC