



## FAQs about Junk Faxes

Unsolicited advertisements sent to your fax machine are sometimes called "junk faxes." In most cases, FCC rules under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and Junk Fax Prevention Act prohibit sending junk faxes.

### When are companies allowed to send advertisements to my fax machine?

Businesses may send a fax advertisement to you if you gave them permission.

In all other instances, there must be **both** an established business relationship between you and the fax sender (based on an inquiry, application, purchase or transaction) **and** the sender must have obtained your fax number in one of the following ways:

- Directly from you within the context of the established business relationship – for example, as part of an application, contact information form or membership renewal form.
- From a directory, advertisement or web site to which you voluntarily agreed to make the number available for public distribution, and the sender has taken reasonable steps to verify that you consented to have the number listed.
- From your own directory, advertisement or Web site, unless you have noted on such materials that you do not accept unsolicited fax advertisements.

Fax advertisements sent as part of an established business relationship must include a notice informing you of your right to avoid future faxes and instructions for making an opt-out request.

A fax sender may not send fax ads based on obtaining your fax number in the ways described above without also having an established business relationship with you.

### Opting out: How do I stop companies from sending me faxes?

If the fax you received includes a notice about opting out of future faxes, follow those instructions. The opt-out information must include a cost-free way to submit the opt-out request to the sender, such as a toll-free number, local phone number, web site address, or email address. These opt-out contact options must be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When you send an opt-out request, be sure to identify the telephone number of your fax machine. Senders must honor opt-out requests within the shortest reasonable time, not to exceed 30 days. Putting an opt-out notice on a fax ad does not, by itself, make the fax lawful if the sender doesn't also satisfy the requirements described above.

### Filing a complaint

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322); ASL: 1-844-432-2275



- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

Federal Communications Commission  
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

### **Additional resources**

You can file complaints with your state authorities, including your local or state consumer protection office or your state Attorney General's office. Contact information for these organizations should be in the blue pages or government section of your local telephone directory.

You can also bring a private suit against the violator in an appropriate court in your state. Through a private suit, you can either recover the actual monetary loss that resulted from the Telephone Consumer Protection Act violation, or receive up to \$500 in damages for each violation, whichever is greater. The court may triple the damages for each violation if it finds that the defendant willingly or knowingly committed the violation. Filing a complaint with the FCC does not prevent you from also bringing a suit in state court.

### **Alternate formats**

To request this article in an alternate format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov).

Last reviewed: 05/08/19

