

## **COMREG CONSUMER GUIDE**

### **Do you want to prevent unwanted calls from Direct Marketing Companies?**

All telephone users can now register a preference on whether they wish to prevent cold calling to their telephone number.

“Cold Calling” is when a company calls you without your prior permission for the purpose of selling you goods or services; this is sometimes called “direct marketing”. The process of having your preference recorded is simple and free of charge – you only need to contact your telephone line provider to have your instructions recorded. **(IMPORTANT:** This is the company to whom you pay line rental). All providers will contact their customers in due course (most likely in conjunction with normal bill dispatch) with details on any special arrangements for registering a preference.

### **About ComReg**

ComReg is responsible for the regulation of the electronic communications (telecommunications, radio-communications and broadcasting transmission) and postal sectors.

### **How does the process work?**

All telephone numbers contained in public phone books or available through directory enquiries are held in a central record known as the “National Directory Database” (NDD). Once you have contacted your telephone provider with your preference to opt-out from receiving direct marketing calls, they will ensure that your preference is recorded in the NDD. This will be done promptly but in some circumstances (e.g. because of a large number of requests) the process may take up to 5 working days once you have contacted your telephone provider. Direct marketing companies can obtain an extract of the NDD to ensure that they do

not call telephone users who have expressed a preference not to be contacted. However, it can take up to 28 days after the information is recorded in the NDD for marketers to access the opt-out listing, depending on how frequently they update their own listings.

### **Fixed Line Users**

If you do not wish direct marketing companies to call you, you should contact the telephone company to whom you pay a line rental charge. If you have no objection to receiving calls from companies wanting to sell you goods or services you do not need to do anything.

### **Mobile Users**

Most mobile telephone numbers are not listed in the NDD and therefore it would not be possible for mobile users to register a preference. However, the mobile companies have arranged for all mobile telephone customers to be regarded as not wanting to receive cold calls. Your mobile telephone number is therefore automatically barred from unsolicited calls from direct marketing companies. If you do not wish to allow such companies to call you, you do not need to do anything. However if you want to allow direct marketers to contact you in this way, you can call your mobile service provider and ask that your number be made available to direct marketers.

### **Important information for “Ex-Directory” telephone numbers**

It is not possible for your ex-directory number to be included in the opt-out listing of the NDD as such numbers are not listed in the NDD itself. Having an ex-directory number does not mean that you will be exempt from receiving direct marketing calls. If you receive an unwanted marketing call you should instruct the caller to remove your telephone number from their contact database and not to call you again.

**What about unsolicited faxes?**

No residential customer may be sent a fax for direct marketing without prior consent.

**Business users**

If you are a business user the position on telephone calls is identical to that for residential or private users. If your business telephone number is in the NDD you may record a preference not to receive unsolicited marketing calls. However you should note that the NDD does not include the full range of Direct Dial Inward (DDI) numbers that a business may use and typically will only list the number of the main switchboard or the numbers that the business user chooses to have included in public directories.

In the case of faxes, unlike residential customers you need to register a preference not to receive unsolicited marketing faxes. However, the number used for fax communications needs to be listed in the NDD in the first instance to be included in the opt-out register. You should note that the NDD does not distinguish between telephone numbers used for voice calls and fax machines as these can be interchangeable. If a number used for receiving faxes is listed in the NDD, you should contact the telephone provider to whom you pay your line rental to have that number included in the opt-out register.

**What can you do if you receive marketing calls against your wishes?**

Not all marketing calls fall into the category of "unsolicited calls". A business may contact you for marketing purposes if you are or recently were a customer, even if your number is included in the opt-out listing, unless you instruct them that you do not wish to be contacted by telephone. You might also receive a marketing call if you provide telephone details to a company (e.g. by entering a competition, redeeming coupons, requesting a brochure, etc) unless

you specify at that time that you do not wish to be contacted.

If you receive an unwanted marketing call from a business that you have had no prior dealings with, or to whom you have not provided contact details, you should tell the caller you do not want to be contacted by that company again. If the call has taken place more than 28 days after your details have been recorded in the NDD, or after you have told the company in question not to contact you again, you may wish to complain to the Data Protection Commissioner, who can investigate and prosecute the company if necessary.

**How can I contact ComReg?**

The ComReg Consumer Line is open between 10:00-16:30;

*By Phone (LoCall):* 1890 229 668

*By Fax:* 01 804 9680

*By Email:* [consumerline@comreg.ie](mailto:consumerline@comreg.ie)

[www.comreg.ie](http://www.comreg.ie)

[www.askcomreg.ie](http://www.askcomreg.ie)

*By Post:* ComReg Consumer Line Team  
Irish Life Centre  
Abbey Court  
Lower Abbey Street  
Dublin 1

**How can I contact the Data Protection Commissioner?**

You can contact the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner in the following ways:

*By Phone :* 01 8748544 (9.45 am to 12.45, 14.15pm to 17.00pm)

*By Fax:* (01) 8745405

*By Email:* [info@dataprotection.ie](mailto:info@dataprotection.ie)

*By Post:* Office of the Data Protection Commissioner  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Block 6  
Irish Life Centre  
Lower Abbey Street  
Dublin 1