



Joint Media Release- 21 July 2005

Commission for Communications Regulation and Data Protection Commissioner launch “cold call” opt out register for consumers

In future consumers will be able to restrict cold calling if they wish. The establishment of new systems and processes will enable consumers to exercise their preference not to receive marketing calls. This preference is legally enforceable.

The National Directory Database, which contains all phone numbers listed in public directories or available through directory enquiries, can now be used to record the preference of subscribers not to receive unsolicited marketing calls or faxes.

All subscribers will be notified shortly by their phone line provider of the procedures to be followed should they wish to prevent cold calling to their telephone numbers. As consumer demand to opt out of receiving unsolicited marketing calls may be high, consumers should follow the advice of their phone line provider on ways to exercise this option.

Key Points

- This facility is open to both residential and business phone subscribers.
- It is a free service.
- It applies to voice calls and, for business subscribers, to faxes.
- Its aim is to stop unsolicited marketing messages.
- It only applies to calls made from within the State.
- Phone companies will pass on their customers' preference to the NDD in accordance with regulatory obligations.
- Within 28 days of opting out, no cold calling should occur.
- Marketing companies who break the rules face prosecution by the ODPC.

ComReg Commissioner Mike Byrne in welcoming the new “cold calling” opt out facility said; “consumers may now choose to avoid receiving unwanted sales calls through a simple and straight forward process. This measure will give consumers additional means to protect themselves from unsolicited calls from companies. I would like to record my appreciation for the efforts made by the telephone service providers, the staff of the NDD and the Data Protection Commissioner’s Office in making this consumer-friendly facility available.”

Newly appointed Data Protection Commissioner Billy Hawkes sees this as a positive development. “I welcome the launch of this initiative, which should help reduce the number of unwanted marketing phone calls and faxes being received. It should also be an aid to the marketing sector, helping ensure more effective and targeted marketing. I appreciate the efforts of ComReg, the staff of the NDD and the telephone service providers in developing this new facility and look forward to its successful operation.”

Please find further information at the following links;

Website of the Data Protection Commissioner - www.dataprotection.ie

ComReg Consumer Guide on Unsolicited Marketing Calls -

http://www.askcomreg.ie/_fileupload/News/CG09RR.pdf

Data Protection FAQ document –

<http://www.dataprotection.ie/viewdoc.asp?m=p&fn=/documents/guidance/faqndd.htm>

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