



*Because to Sue and Michele....  
Your Time Matters!*

## REMOVE YOURSELF FROM JUNK MAIL LISTS

by Deborah Mitchell — Senior Editor, [Environmental Protection](#)

### The Challenge

Junk mail is more than a nuisance: unsolicited mail has a tremendous negative impact on the environment. At least 100 million trees are destroyed each year to produce junk mail, and 28 billion gallons of water are used to produce the paper. All of these resources are wasted to produce items many people don't even look at: about half of all junk mail is thrown out unopened or unread, and the rate of response to junk mail is less than 2 percent. The result is that more than 4 million tons of paper is wasted every year, according to the [Native Forest Network](#) (now known as the WildWest Institute).

Junk mail also has a direct negative economic impact as well. An estimated \$320 million of local taxes are used to dispose of junk mail annually, and transportation of junk mail costs about \$550 million per year, not to mention the air pollution generated during transport.

You can fight back. Read on to learn about effective ways to reduce and even eliminate junk mail in 15 minutes or less!

### How to Make a Difference

- Register to have your name removed from mailing lists. There are two main resources you can access to accomplish this. One is a free service called the [National Do Not Mail List](#), offered by DirectMail.com, which makes the list available to mailing list owners and users for one reason only: so they can remove (or add) your name to their lists based on your stated preferences. When you complete the online National Do Not Mail List form, you can indicate if there are any types of mailings you would like to receive (a list is provided). You can choose as many or as few—or none—as you want. DirectMail.com will contact you every six months via e-mail so you can review and update your preferences. The second service is the [Mail Preference Service](#), which historically was free but which now charges \$1. You can register online or by regular mail. Your request is good for five years, and you cannot state preferences. (*Note:* Neither DirectMail.com nor the Mail Preference Service can guarantee that your name will be removed from ALL mailing lists on which you appear. Therefore you may want to try some of the suggestions stated below as well.)
- When you order something from a catalog, your name and address is likely given to Abacus, an alliance of mostly catalog and publishing companies. To have your information removed from Abacus, contact them with your name (including any middle initial), current address, and previous address if you moved recently. Abacus can be reached either via e-mail ([optout@abacus-us.com](mailto:optout@abacus-us.com)) or by mail: Abacus, Inc., PO Box 1478, Broomfield CO 80038.



- To stop sexually oriented advertising, contact your local post office and ask for Form 2150 to stop mail from a particular company, or Form 1500.
- Whenever you subscribe to a magazine, join a group, or make a donation and supply them with your name and address, ask that they not rent your name to other companies. Your request may be ignored, so it is best to contact them a few weeks later and make the request again.
- To be removed from the mailing list of major sweepstakes mailers, contact the following: Publishers Clearinghouse, by phone: (800-645-9242) or by mail: Consumer & Privacy Affairs, Publishers Clearinghouse, 382 Channel Drive, Port Washington NY 11050; or by e-mail: [privacychoices@pchmail.com](mailto:privacychoices@pchmail.com). And Readers Digest Sweepstakes, phone (800-310-6261) or by mail: Reader's Digest, PO Box 50005, Prescott AZ 86301-5005.
- Contact your banks and credit card companies and tell them not to release your name, address, social security number, e-mail address, or phone number to anyone for any type of marketing or promotional reasons.
- If you move, do not fill out the permanent change of address (COA) form supplied by the post office. Permanent COA information is provided to third parties. Instead, complete the temporary (10 month) form and notify companies and others on your own. Address changes can be done easily by completing the change of address form found on the back of bills.
- Don't mark your junk mail "return to sender" or return it in the postage-paid envelop and request to be removed from their mailing list. The fact that you responded, even in a negative way (and expect your request to be ignored), usually means your name and address will be used again by the company that purchased it. Instead, contact the company that mailed the items to you and ask to be removed from their list. If there is no phone number on the junk mail, you may find the company on the Internet. If no phone number is supplied, make your request via e-mail.
- To eliminate handbills from being left in your door, put up a "no handbills" or "no soliciting" sign on your door.
- To eliminate extra or redundant telephone books, contact the producer of the book (should be listed inside the front of the book) and ask to be removed from their list.
- For catalogs that "slip through" and continue to be delivered even after you have contacted MPS and Abacus, here's an easy plan:
  - Choose a convenient place to collect your catalogs, such as in a basket next to the phone .
  - Whenever you have a spare few moments, select one or more catalogs, call the toll-free customer service number listed (usually on or near the order form), and ask to be removed from their mailing list.
  - Place the catalog in your recycle bin!
  - An optional fourth step is to help an elderly friend or neighbor reduce his or her junk mail by offering to do the same service for them.

For more information on how to eliminate junk mail and similar unwanted printed materials, visit the [Privacy Rights Clearinghouse](#).

We hope this information from Environmental Protection has been helpful to you. By the way, if you know of someone who would appreciate our services, please call or e-mail us with their name and number and we will be happy to help them. Or, please feel free to give them our names and phone numbers or e-mail, and they can contact us. Serving Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Newbury Park, and parts of the San Fernando Valley.

Warmest Regards,

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