

Zero Waste—You Make It Happen!

You Can Reduce Unwanted Mail

418,000 tons of bulk mail was thrown away unopened in the U.S. in 1990. Reducing junk mail saves landfill space, conserves natural resources, and may reduce your trash bill.

How Do I Get on Mailing Lists?

Every time you enter a contest, make a donation, buy something, order a product by mail, write a check, or send in a subscription or warranty card, chances are your name and address are being added to a mailing list of some kind. Then the mailing list may be rented, sold, or traded.

What Can I Do to Reduce Junk Mail?

Below are steps you can take to reduce junk mail. Be patient; it takes three to six months before you notice a reduction in your junk mail.

Call Mail Order Catalog Companies

Most companies selling by catalog provide a toll-free telephone number for placing an order. Call this number and ask to be taken off their mailing list.

Contact Specific Organizations or Businesses

If you receive unwanted flyers or mail, call the customer service department of the organization or business responsible and request that your name be removed from their mailing list. Alternatively, send in a written request that is signed and dated. Include a sample of the mailing label so the sender can identify how you are listed in their files.

Return Junk Mail Stamped “Address Correction Requested” or “Return Postage Guaranteed”

Return junk mail unopened to the sender by writing “Refused, return to sender” on the envelope. DO NOT write this on mail without that

special notation; the post office will not return it to the sender.

Get off National Mailing Lists

Write to the address below and ask to be placed on a “suppress” file. Include a list of your name and address in all the different ways it appears on your junk mail. The Mail Preference Service places your name in the suppress file for five years. The Direct Marketing Association sends this list to its business subscribers four times a year.

Mail Preference Service
Direct Marketing Association
P.O. Box 9008
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008

Notify Mailing List Brokers

Some companies specialize in collecting and selling mailing lists. Write or call these companies and ask to be placed in their “suppress” files:

Donnelley Marketing, Inc.
470 Chestnut Ridge Rd.
Woodcliff, NJ 07677
1-800-223-7777

Donnelley Marketing, Inc.
Data Base Operations
416 South Bell
Aimes, IA 50010
1-888-633-4402

Experian
List Maintenance
901 West Bond
Lincoln, NE 68521
1-800-228-4571

R.L. Polk & Company
Attn: Name Deletion File
List Compilation and Development
6400 Monroe Boulevard
Taylor, MI 48180-1814
1-800-873-7655

Reduce Coupons, Ads, and Product Samples

If you don't want these items, check for the name of the company distributing the item. Write or call and ask that your address be removed from the company's lists. One company mailing these items is:

Advo Incorporated
Delivery Services
1001 W. Walnut Street
Compton, CA 90220-5191
(310) 637-0438

Contact Credit Bureaus

Credit bureaus may sell names and addresses to banks and credit card companies. You can now contact Equifax, Trans Union, and Experian by calling a single toll-free number: 1-888-5-OPT-OUT or 1-888-567-8688. There is also a fourth credit reporting agency, Innovis, which receives this information.

Don't forget to recycle the junk mail you do receive.

For More Information:

CIWMB publications are available online at www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Publications/ or by calling (916) 341-6306 or 1-800-CA-WASTE. If you want to obtain the name of your local government recycling coordinator or you have questions, information, ideas, educational materials, etc., please e-mail the California Waste Prevention Info Exchange at wpinfoex@ciwmb.ca.gov or call (916) 341-6363.

Special thanks: material in this fact sheet was adopted from "How to reduce junk mail" by Kings County Solid Waste Division, 1994, and "Junk Mail Reduction Kit" by City of Palo Alto Recycling Program.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut energy costs, **Flex Your Power** and visit www.consumerenergycenter.org/flex/index.html.