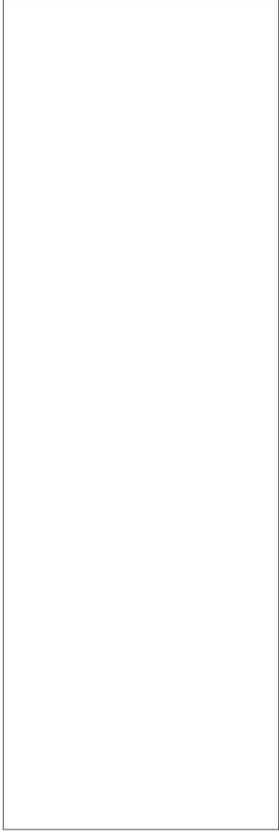


City of Victorville Sanitation Department
PO Box 5001
Victorville, CA 92393



Printed on Recycled Paper



Junk Mail Survival Kit



A Guide to the Reduction of Unsolicited Mail.

Winter 2004

Dear Resident,

According to a study done in 1999 by the Native Forest Network Campaign, the average American receives 1.5 pieces of personal mail each week, and 10.8 pieces of junk mail. A huge part of this junk mail is thrown away unopened and unread, filling our landfills with needless waste. It clogs our mailboxes and takes up our time by forcing us to sort through it. Many people feel their right to privacy is violated by mailing list distributors buying, selling, and trading personal information like their name, address, phone number, and even credit ratings.

What most people don't realize is that it is fairly simple to get yourself removed from these mailing lists. This junk-mail reduction guide describes some of the easiest and most effective ways to drastically reduce the amount of junk mail you receive. It is important to realize that although junk mailers are required to remove your name from their lists if you request it, it is practically impossible to eliminate unsolicited mail entirely. But by following the recommendations in this booklet, you can cut the amount of junk mail you receive way down, and reclaim your mailbox!

Good luck with your effort to reduce junk mail, and thank you for your help reducing waste and saving resources.

City of Victorville
Sanitation Department
760-955-5087

P. S. Please rest assured, the City of Victorville Sanitation Department has NOT added you to any mailing lists!

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO REDUCE WASTE

There are lots of other ways to reduce waste and recycle in Victorville. Here are just a few of them:

Reuse a Shoe

In the Nike Reuse-A-Shoe Program, old athletic shoes are collected, ground up, and used to make athletic surfaces like basketball courts, tennis courts, running tracks, playground surfaces, and even artificial turf that behaves more like real grass than any other. Many of these surfaces are donated to needy children all over the world who otherwise would have no safe place to play. Shoes can be in any condition, but must have no metal or cleats. Any brand is acceptable, but they *must* be athletic shoes, no dress shoes, work boots, sandals or flip-flops. Call the number below for drop off locations or more information.

Reuse Guide

Have you got old clothes that you want to get rid of but are still too nice to throw away? How about appliances that still work? The City of Victorville Sanitation Department has made up a list of thrift stores, charities, and antique stores in the Victor Valley where you can donate used household goods or search for treasures. Call and ask for one today!

Household Hazardous Waste

Many things are toxic and therefore not safe to throw into the garbage, where they will end up in a landfill and may possibly leach into groundwater. You can take these items to the Victorville Household Hazardous Waste center every Wednesday and Sunday, from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Enter the fairgrounds from Seventh Street at Desert Knoll Drive and follow the signs. Some of the common things they accept are motor oil, wood preservatives, household cleaners, weed killers, pesticides and fertilizers, auto and furniture polish, paints and thinners, pool and hobby supplies, and chemical drain cleaners. Call 760-955-5229 for more information.

Composting

Did you know it's easy to turn your garden trimmings into rich, healthy, all-natural fertilizer? Victorville Sanitation Department offers free seminars on backyard composting, free information packets, and more! Call the number below for more information.

City of Victorville Department of Sanitation : 760-955-5087

(Sample letter to businesses/organizations you send money to.)

From:

Date:

To Whom It May Concern:

Disposing of unwanted mail is a serious problem in my community, and I am trying to do my part to reduce the amount created. Therefore, I am instructing you:

DO NOT RENT, SELL, TRADE, LOAN, OR OTHERWISE MAKE AVAILABLE MY NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, OR EMAIL ADDRESS TO ANY OTHER GROUPS OR ORGANIZATIONS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

If you cannot or will not comply with this request, then RETURN MY CHECK.

Please send me written verification that you will comply with this request.

Note: If I do not receive written verification, I will no longer contribute to your organization or purchase items from your company in the future.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
How do they even get my address?	4
How do I avoid getting on new lists?	4
How do I get off lists?	6
How long until I see a change?	8
How not to reduce junk mail	9
What do I <i>do</i> with the junk mail I get?	9
More Information	10
Direct Marketers Opt-Out Directory	11
Checklist of Common Sources of Junk Mail	12-13
Sample Letter to New Organization	14
Other Opportunities to Reduce Waste	15

Introduction

The amount of junk mail sent in the United States is amazing—4.5 million tons a year! The Native Forest Network Campaign estimates that it takes 100 million trees to produce this amount of mail—and nearly half of it is thrown away without even being opened. This is a tremendous waste of resources, takes up our rapidly dwindling landfill space, fills our mailboxes making it more difficult to find mail that is actually important, takes up our time, and adds untold stress to our lives.

How do they even get my address?

Even though so much of it goes unread, junk mail, or “Direct Marketing,” is still effective enough to make it big business. Many companies exist solely to buy and sell names, addresses, and personal information. Even more businesses and charitable organizations trade with each other to expand their client base. For instance, if you donated money to a certain charity, they might trade your name and address to a similar organization, reasoning that you might also be interested in donating to this other group. In exchange, they will get a new set of names and addresses of people who also might want to donate. Some clubs and magazines add to their revenue by selling their member and subscription lists. Direct marketers reason that if you are interested in a certain topic, you will be interested in related services. For instance, if a person subscribes to a hot rod car magazine, they might also be interested in a shop in their area that does custom car paint jobs.

How do I avoid getting on new mailing lists?

From this day forward, every time you order something from a new business or donate to an organization, **YOU MUST** tell that group what your wishes are concerning mailing lists.

Other _____
Cell Phone _____
Other _____
Other _____

Financial Institutions
Bank _____
Credit Union _____
IRA's _____
Mortgage Co. _____
Investment Co. _____
Other _____
Other _____

Other Businesses/Organizations
Car Repair _____
Fitness Clubs _____
Schools _____
Video Store _____
Auto Club _____
Mail Order Businesses (Catalogs, etc)

Who to Contact

Magazines

Date

Non-profit groups/clubs

Credit Cards (Including gas cards, department store cards, etc)

Utility/ Service Companies

Gas	_____	
Electric	_____	
Water	_____	
Phone	_____	
Cable	_____	

This means you need to either 1) send them a letter (see sample letter on page 14) or 2) call them. You also need to contact all the groups and businesses you have previously done business with. This includes mail order companies, on-line businesses, banks, credit card companies, non-profit groups, etc. Use the lists on page 12 to keep track of what groups you've contacted.

Tips: Many businesses/non-profits have toll-free customer service/order numbers. This is the fastest way to make your preferences known. If you want to receive their mailings, but do not want your name and address sold or traded to anyone else, ask to be put on the "in-house only list." Also, some magazine subscription cards have an opt-out box to check if you do not want your name sold. Look for this when filling out new magazine subscriptions. If you don't find the opt out box, then send a letter or use the 1-800 number to call the magazine.

When you move, consider not filling out the Postal Service's Change of Address Form. Instead, contact friends, family, and groups you do business with directly and inform them of your new address. US Postal Service Change of Address Forms are made available to direct marketers, so they can keep their addresses up-to-date and ensure their mail gets to the right people. This list is provided *only* for that reason; if a name and old address does not appear on their list, they are not supposed to put the name and *new* address on their list. But some unscrupulous direct marketers will take the new name and address anyway. The Postal Service has no effective way to prohibit this, so the best way to keep it from happening is to not fill out a Change of Address Form.

Do not enter sweepstakes or drawings where you are re-

quired to provide your address. Frequently, these contests are run only for the purpose of compiling large lists of names and addresses.

Do not fill out product registration or warranty cards. Contrary to popular belief, you do not need to register to be eligible for a warranty, all you need is your receipt. Warranty/ registration cards are used to compile lists of people who have purchased a certain product, and therefore might be interested in buying a similar or associated product. For example, someone who just bought a new stereo might also be interested in joining a music club to purchase discounted CDs. The only need for a warranty/product registration card is to notify consumers of a product recall.

How do I get off lists?

There is no way to eliminate junk mail completely. But with a few simple steps, you can make a huge reduction in the amount you receive:

The single most effective thing you can do is send a request to the Mail Preference Service of the Direct Marketing Association. The MPS is a list of names and address that junk mail should *not* be sent to. Most direct marketers are members of the DMA, so by registering with the MPS, you can reduce about 75% of your junk mail.

There are three ways to join the MPS. In all three, the MPS must verify that the person making the request is the person whose name is being removed from circulation, so it is necessary that you sign your request. It is also important for you to include as many spellings of your name as you can. The computers used by Direct Marketers will see a difference between “John Smith” and “Jonathan Smith,” and

Direct Marketer's Opt-Out Directory

Name	DMA?	Phone Removal	Web Removal	Mailing Address
Axiom	Yes		Contact DMA	
ADVO	No	1-888-241-6760	www.advo.com/consumersupport.html	
American Business Directory	No	See: InfoUSA	None	
Carol Wright	No		See: Cox Direct	
Cox Direct	No		http://www.coxtarget.com/removal_request.html	
Donnelly	Yes		Contact DMA	
Haines & Co/ Criss-Cross Directory	No	1-800-843-8452	None	
InfoUSA	No	1-888-633-4402	None	
Pennysaver	No	1-800-422-4116	None	Circulation C/O Pennysaver 2830 Orbiter Street Brea, CA 92821
Publisher's Clearing House	No	1-877-379-3377	None	
R.L. Polk	Yes		Contact DMA	
Val-Pak Coupons	No		See: Cox Direct	
AOL Computer Disks	No	1-800-827-6364		(Ask to sign up for a new account, then tell the person who answers you want off the mailing list.)

What do I do with the junk mail that I *do* get?

In most communities today, you can recycle your junk mail. Residents of the City of Victorville simply put all your junk mail into the blue barrel. Before recycling, please make sure that there are no stickers or labels (such as free return address labels) in the envelope. Also, plastic wrap, CDs, and CD cases are not recyclable. If you do not live in Victorville city limits, contact your local sanitation service to find out if junk mail can be recycled.

More Information

www.junkbusters.org
www.privacyrights.org
www.dmaconsumers.org/consumerassistance.html
www.optoutprescreen.com
dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/nwpc/bizjunkmail.htm—Site from Kings County, WA about Business Junk Mail

Telemarketers

www.donotcall.gov
www.ehow.com/how_13609_telemarketers-stop-calling.html
www.dmaconsumers.org/consumerassistance.html

E-Mail

www.dmaconsumers.org/consumerassistance.html
www.cauce.org —Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-mail
spam.abuse.net

continue to send mail.

The first method is to send a letter or postcard with your name, address, and signature to:

Mail Preference Service
Direct Marketing Association
PO Box 643
Carmel, NY 10512

Sending a letter or postcard is the slowest way to join the Mail Preference Service, because of the time it takes to manually input the data into a computer system. This is free.

The second way is the “Online Mail-in Option,” in which you fill out a form online, and are assigned a tracking number. Then you print out a letter to the MPS, sign it, and mail it in as if it were a postcard or letter. When they receive it, they will verify that the request is signed, and then punch in the tracking number. Because name(s) and address do not need to be put in manually, this second method is faster than the first. The web address for the on-line form is: <http://www.dmaconsumers.org/consumerassistance.html> and click on “Remove my Name from Mailing Lists.”

The third method is to use your credit card number to verify your identity. This method is the fastest, but costs five dollars. The web address for this method is the same as the one above.

There are a few things to keep in mind with the Mail Preference Service:

- The list is distributed quarterly, so it may take as long

as six months to see a difference in the amount of mail you get.

- You name will stay in the MPS for five years; after that, you have to re-register.
- The MPS does not apply to organizations you have done business with. For instance, if you have ordered from a certain mail-order catalog, you will continue to receive it. Organizations that you have already done business with will have to be contacted directly. See the example letters on page 14.

Not *all* direct marketers belong to the DMA. Registering with the Mail Preference Service will not affect mail from those marketers. You will have to contact non-DMA members directly. Examples of letters asking that your name not be distributed can be found on page 14. You can also call an organization's 800/888 number and ask to be removed from their mailing list. Look for a "Customer Service" number on your mail from them.

The four major credit bureaus also sell information. They will not sell your specific details, but general information. For instance, they will sell lists of people who make over \$40,000 a year and pay all their bills on time. Credit card companies will then send "pre-approved" credit card offers to each person on the list. You can opt-out of all pre-approved credit card applications and pre-approved insurance applications at once by dialing the opt-out number 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688) This number is voice-activated—you must speak slowly and clearly for the computer to understand you. You can also visit www.optoutprescreen.com and fill out an online form. You can either opt-out for five years, or permanently.

You can also opt-out of mailings like Advo, Penny Saver,

and Val-Pak Coupons. See the Direct Marketer's Opt-Out Directory on page 11.

How long will it be until I see a change?

The response time varies, but you should see a major reduction in your junk mail in about 4-6 months. This is because the Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service list is released four times a year, then it takes time to adjust the mailing lists at individual businesses. For junk mailers you have contacted directly, it may take less time. Don't get discouraged! We have provided you with a list of common sources of junk mail. When you contact them, write down the date, and if you don't see a change in a few months, contact them again. Be persistent!

How *not* to reduce your junk mail.

There are many methods people have tried to reduce junk mail that have proven to be ineffective. Writing "Refused, Return to Sender" on the envelope only returns the mail if the postage is paid at the first-class rate. If a mailing is sent at the bulk rate—and most junk mail is—the postal service will simply discard it. This creates extra work for your mail carrier and the direct mailer has no idea that you are refusing the mail.

Similarly, stuffing the mailing itself into a postage paid envelope to be sent back to the mailer at their own expense isn't often very effective. When sending out any large mailing with postage-paid envelopes enclosed, a very large portion come back empty, or with contents other than what the mailer intended. Typically, this is simply discarded by the person opening the mail without any thought to the meaning of the gesture. Your name will not be taken off the list, and you will continue to receive junk mail.

PLEASE REGISTER ME WITH THE DIRECT MARKETING ASSOCIATION'S MAIL PREFERENCE SERVICE. I WANT TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF UNSOLICITED MAIL I RECEIVE, REDUCE WASTE, AND SAVE RESOURCES. I UNDERSTAND YOU WILL KEEP MY NAME ON FILE FOR 5 YEARS.

Name: _____

Alternate Spellings: _____

Address: _____ Apt: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Alternate Spelling(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP _____

Please remove me from your mailing list. You will find the address at left. Also, do not sell, trade, loan, or distribute my personal information in any way, shape, or form for any reason.

I want to reduce the amount of mail I receive in order to save resources and reduce waste. Unsolicited mail is a major part of our nation's solid waste disposal problems.

Name: _____

Alternate Spelling(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP _____

Please remove me from your mailing list. You will find the address at left. Also, do not sell, trade, loan, or distribute my personal information in any way, shape, or form for any reason. I want to reduce the amount of mail I receive in order to save resources and reduce waste. Unsolicited mail is a major part of our nation's solid waste disposal problems.

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Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP _____

Please remove me from your mailing list. You will find the address at left. Also, do not sell, trade, loan, or distribute my personal information in any way, shape, or form for any reason. I want to reduce the amount of mail I receive in order to save resources and reduce waste. Unsolicited mail is a major part of our nation's solid waste disposal problems.

Return Address

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Return Address

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

**Mail Preference Service
Direct Marketing Association
PO Box 643
Carmel, NY 10512**

Return Address

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Return Address

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE
