



Report a delivery issue

Mass. consumers file record 99,000 'Do Not Call' complaints

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Fed up with those annoying telemarketing calls? You're not alone.

Massachusetts consumers filed a record number of complaints about telemarketers allegedly violating the do-not-call rules last year, according to new data released this week by the Federal Trade Commission.

The statewide figures are part of a general national trend of rising reports from consumers who say that, even though they have added their number to the FTC's National Do Not Call Registry, they are receiving calls from companies trying to hawk their wares.

The agency received 99,215 do-not-call complaints from Massachusetts consumers during the 12-month period preceding Sept. 30, the 2015 federal fiscal year. That was a big increase from 69,756 complaints in the prior year.

In fiscal 2015, there were 1,471 complaints per 100,000 residents in the state. It was the fourth-highest rate of complaints in the country, the FTC says. Only New Jersey (1,588 per 100,000 residents), Delaware (1,542), and Maryland (1,534) had higher rates.

A closer look at the figures from Massachusetts reveals that all but one of the major area codes in the state saw complaints hit a record high in fiscal 2015.

The 617 area code was the lone exception. It reported 16,522 complaints during fiscal 2015, second only to 2012 when 19,176 complaints were filed.

Nationally, the 3.6 million complaints filed with the FTC during 2015 was the third-highest total recorded. In fiscal 2012, 3.8 million complaints were made and in fiscal 2013, 3.7 million were submitted. The numbers have soared over the past decade. In 2006, three years after the program began, 1.1 million complaints were filed.

The numbers include complaints about prerecorded telemarketing calls, commonly known as robocalls, which are prohibited by rules enacted in 2009 but are still on the rise.

Americans have been able to opt out of receiving most telemarketing calls by submitting their phone numbers to the Do Not Call Registry since 2003. There is no cost for consumers to register a number.

The count of phone numbers on the Do Not Call list has climbed annually. As of the end of September, the registry contained 222.8 million numbers.

The registry seems to be particularly popular in several New England states.

Adjusting for population, New Hampshire had the most phone numbers actively registered in the country, with 89,203 per 100,000 residents. Connecticut (85,841), and Massachusetts (83,671) came in second and third place. Maine ranked seventh nationally with 78,970 numbers registered per 100,000 residents.

Do Not Call rules do not apply to political calls; calls from nonprofits and charities; calls from legitimate survey organizations that are not offering anything to sell; and companies that the owner of the line has done, or sought to do, business with during the past 18 months.

The FTC says it takes "aggressive" legal action against telemarketers found violating do-not-call rules.

Do Not Call registrations, complaints by Massachusetts area code

The numbers are for the 2015 federal fiscal year, which ran from Oct. 1, 2014 through Sept. 30, 2015.

Area Code	Registrations	Complaints
508	1,576,906	27,525
617	1,169,145	16,522
978	1,022,693	17,965
781	901,779	17,227
413	633,367	14,049
774	224,955	1,940
857	68,256	878
339	44,702	528
351	2,143	26
Mass. resident with non-Mass. area code	NA	2,555
Total	5,643,946	99,215

SOURCE: Federal Trade Commission

Do Not Call complaints in the US

Since 2003, Americans have been able to register their phone number to try to prevent telemarketer calls. But sometimes the calls don't stop, triggering consumer complaints.

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