

How to avoid nuisance calls - and what to do if you receive them

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Unwanted sales and marketing calls

If you don't want to get any calls from sales and marketing firms you can add your details to a list, run by the Telephone Preference Service, which makes it illegal for a company to call you for marketing purposes in the future.

- * The Telephone Preference Service can be contacted at:
www.tpsonline.org.uk
Tel: 0845 0700707
- * It takes about 28 days after you've registered before the service takes effect. If you are still getting calls after 28 days, then you can complain to the Telephone Preference Service, using the contact details above.

Useful contact details

Complain to Ofcom: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/complain/landline/silent/>

Ofcom Advisory Team: 0300 123 3333

BT Nuisance Call Advice Line: 0800 661 441

Carphone Warehouse/Talk Talk: 0870 444 1820

Kingston Communications: 01482 602 555

Post Office: 0845 600 3210

Sky: 08442 414 141

Tiscali: 0871 222 3311

Tesco: 0845 300 7080


Virgin Media's Sensitive Information Bureau: 0800 953 3333

Telephone Preference Service: 0845 0700707

Police: [check the number for your local area](#)

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Nuisance calls can include unwanted sales and marketing calls, abusive or threatening calls or silent calls. Here are some tips on how to avoid them and what to do if you receive them.

Abusive and threatening calls

Malicious or nuisance calls, whether from people you know or from strangers, are a criminal offence. If you receive such a call you should:

- * Tell your phone company as soon as you receive a malicious or nuisance call. It doesn't matter whether you know the caller's identity or not.
- * Phone the operator (100 from a BT line) and ask for the number of your phone company's nuisance or malicious calls team. Then tell the team that you have received a malicious or nuisance call. Tell the team what the caller said.
- * In some cases, particularly if the caller is threatening, your phone company will advise you to call the police.
- * If the caller is making direct threats to you or your family and you believe those threats to be real and immediate, you must call 999 straightaway.
- * If you believe that the threats made are not immediate, then you should call your local police station.
- * You may be offered 'anonymous call' rejection from your provider which should prevent these kinds of calls in the future (ask your provider if there's a charge for this service). However, this may block some calls you might want to continue receiving, such as calls from overseas.

Silent Calls

Silent calls are caused by automated calling systems known as diallers. These are often used in call centres to generate and attempt to connect calls. If there are not enough call centre agents available to handle all of the calls made, you may receive a silent call.

Ofcom guidelines state that call centres using diallers should play an information message if a call is abandoned, to prevent the call being silent. However, if you are receiving silent calls you should:

- * Try and identify the caller. All companies using automated diallers should present a Calling Line Identification number on your telephone's display, and allow you to obtain the caller's telephone number by dialling 1471.
- * Complain to Ofcom via the [online complaints form](#). Report the name and number of the company that has made the silent call, plus any other details you may have. Ofcom continually monitors complaints about silent calls, and may investigate any company which it believes may not be complying with its guidelines.
- * If you are unable to identify the caller you should contact your phone company. Most phone companies have a nuisance calls team, who can give you advice on what to do next. They may also be able to trace the caller's number.