

# OPT-OUT

Many organizations are offering consumers choices about how their personal information is used. For example, many feature an "opt-out" choice that limits the information shared with others or used for promotional purposes. When you "opt-out," you may cut down on the number of unsolicited telemarketing calls, promotional mail and spam emails that you receive. Look for ways to "opt-out" of mailing lists to reduce "junk" mail and unauthorized solicitations. Many mail order forms, magazines and marketers now provide a box to check if you do not want your name(s), address and shopping habits to be shared with other companies.

Federal privacy laws give you the right to stop (opt-out of) some sharing of your personal financial information. These laws balance your right to privacy with the financial companies' need to provide information for normal business purposes.

**Protect Your Financial Privacy.** To protect your financial privacy, tell your financial companies that they may not sell or share your customer data with other companies. Federal law requires banks, credit card companies, insurance companies, and brokerage firms to send you a privacy notice each year. If you opt-out, you limit the extent to which the company can provide your personal information to non-affiliates. If you do not opt-out within a "reasonable period of time," generally about thirty (30) days after the company mails the notice, then the company is free to share certain personal financial information. If you didn't opt-out the first time you received a privacy notice from a financial company, it's not too late. You can always change your mind and opt-out of certain information sharing. Contact your financial company and ask for instructions on how to opt-out. Remember, however, that any personal financial information that was shared before you opted-out cannot be retrieved. Pay attention to the mail you receive from your bank, insurance company, credit card company, and brokerage firm. Look for words such as "Privacy Notice", "Privacy Policy" or "Opt-Out Notice." You might receive such notices via e-mail or the company's website if that is the way you normally do business with them.

## **DIRECT MARKETERS**

If you shop direct - by mail, online, telephone or home shopping TV shows - chances are the companies you are ordering could be members of the Direct Marketing Association (DMA).

DMA offers the right to Opt-Out of direct marketing mailings and emails by visiting [www.dmachoice.org](http://www.dmachoice.org). DMAchoice™ is an online tool developed by the DMA to help you manage your mail/emails. When you register with these services, your name will be put on a "delete" file that

SOUTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

**CONSUMER  
PROTECTION**

1302 E Hwy 14 Ste 3 • Pierre SD 57501   [consumerhelp@state.sd.us](mailto:consumerhelp@state.sd.us)

**1-800-300-1986**

This handout is for informational purposes and should not be construed as legal advice or as a policy of the South Dakota Attorney General. If you need advice on a particular issue, you should consult a private attorney or other experts.

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is updated throughout the year and made available to the direct-mail marketers. DMAchoice™ divides direct mails into four categories (credit cards, catalogs, magazine orders, other mail offers), to cut back on mailings you are not interested in. Two to three months after signing up for these services, you should notice a decrease in the number of solicitations you receive. However, your registration will not stop mailings from organizations NOT registered with the DMA.

To sign up for these services, go to [www.dmachoice.org](http://www.dmachoice.org) (you will be prompted to create an user account before using the services) and choose the types of mailings or emails you would like to opt-out of receiving. Registered for these mail preference services through the site is the fastest and easiest way to create an account.

**Email Preference Service** registration is active for five (5) years, after which time you must register again.

**Mail Preference Service** registration is active for five (5) years, after which time you must register again.

If you would rather send your information by mail, you can download a form on the website, print it, and send it along with a check for \$1 (one dollar) payable to the DMA. You can find the registration form at [https://www.dmachoice.org/static/pdf/registration\\_form.pdf](https://www.dmachoice.org/static/pdf/registration_form.pdf) Do not send cash. Your name will remain on DMAchoice for three (3) years. Mail request to:

DMAchoice  
Direct Marketing Association  
PO Box 643  
Carmel, NY 10512

## **THE DMA ALSO PROVIDES:**

**Deceased Do Not Contact Registration** for family members seeking to remove the names of deceased individuals from commercial marketing lists.

**Do Not Contact List for Caretakers** is available for individuals who are in the care of another family member, friend or caretaker. When registering for either of these services, the individuals name, address and email address is placed on DMA's mail and email preference service lists. (Do Not Contact List for Caretakers is effective for six (6) years, after which time you must register the individual again.)

## **OPT-OUT OF PRE-SCREENED OFFERS OF CREDIT**

The three (3) major credit reporting agencies offer a toll-free number that enables you to “opt-out” of having pre-screened credit offers sent to you. By calling 1-888-5-OPTOUT (567-8688) or visiting [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com), your name will be removed from the mailing list for five (5) years. Your request is shared with all three credit reporting agencies. However, it is important to follow up with **all three (3) credit reporting agencies** to make sure this has been done.

In addition, you can instruct the agencies to not share your personal information for promotional pur-

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poses, which is an important step towards eliminating unsolicited mail. To prevent your personal information from being shared, send a letter, call, or e-mail to each of the credit reporting agencies.

### **A "prescreened" offer of credit? What's that?**

Many companies that solicit new credit card accounts and insurance policies use prescreening to identify potential customers for the products they offer. Prescreened offers, sometimes called "preapproved" offers, are based on information in your credit report that indicates you meet criteria set by the offer.

### **How does prescreening work?**

A creditor or insurer establishes criteria, like a minimum credit score or minimum annual salary, and asks a consumer reporting company for a list of people in the company's database who meet the criteria.

### **Can prescreening hurt my credit report or credit score?**

No. There will be "inquiries" on your credit report showing which companies obtained your information for prescreening, but those inquiries will not have a negative effect on your credit report or credit score.