



# Communication Choices

Dealing with unwanted calls on your BT line



-  Call control
-  Peace of mind

[bt.com/unwantedcalls](https://bt.com/unwantedcalls)

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## **Not a BT customer?**

We hope the information in this booklet is useful. But if you need to talk to someone about specific unwanted calls, sorry, we can't help because we don't have access to your customer details. Please contact your own phone service provider for help.

# Dealing with unwanted phone calls

Your phone's a great way for you to stay in touch and for people to stay in touch with you. But you might sometimes get unwanted calls.

This booklet shows you how to deal with unwanted calls and how BT can help. We also show you how you can screen or block your calls.

There are four main types of unwanted calls:

- marketing calls – someone trying to sell you something
- calls made by mistake – such as wrong numbers
- silent calls – when there's nobody on the line
- malicious calls – calls that aim to distress you.

After an unwanted call, you might want to dial 1471 to find out who's called you. But remember that a withheld number isn't necessarily from a suspect caller. For example a doctor's surgery might withhold its number to protect patient privacy.



Find more about unwanted calls at [bt.com/unwantedcalls](https://bt.com/unwantedcalls).  
You can also download a PDF version of this booklet from there.

# Marketing and sales calls

You could get marketing calls from organisations you've dealt with in the past – unless you've told them you don't want to be contacted for marketing purposes. Or you could get 'cold calls' – unsolicited sales calls from companies you've not dealt with.

## How to reduce or stop marketing calls

Ask the company to stop calling you, by contacting them directly on the contact details they should give you for this purpose.

Some marketing calls start with a recorded message. If you listen to the whole message, it might give you the option to press a numeric key, the \* or # button on your phone, which lets you ask to be removed from the organisation's calling list.

You can cut down the number of marketing calls by registering with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) – a free opt-out service that makes your phone number unavailable to organisations that might call you with offers and information. Once you register with the TPS, your phone should not be used by organisations to call you with marketing offers unless you agree to receive these calls from them.



You can register with the Telephone Preference Service by signing up for BT Privacy, which comes with the option of Caller Display, so you can see the number that's calling before you answer. For Caller Display charges, see [bt.com/callingfeatures](https://www.bt.com/callingfeatures).

Or you can register with the TPS by going to [tpsonline.org.uk](https://tpsonline.org.uk) or calling their automated registration number: **0845 070 0707**.

# Silent calls

Most silent calls aren't meant to be malicious or mischievous. Most are made by automated dialling equipment in call centres, trying to maximise the amount of time call centre agents spend speaking to consumers. When you answer a call like this, the system tries to connect you to a sales agent. If no agent is available within a few seconds, the call ends automatically and it seems like you've got a silent call. When you get this kind of silent call, the calling company should leave a recorded message telling you its name and how to get in touch.

## How to reduce or stop silent calls

Many silent calls are annoying but harmless. To be on the safe side, don't answer the phone with your number, just say 'hello' and wait for a response. You can cut down the number of automatically-dialled calls by registering with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) – [see page 4](#) for more information.



### Freephone and online help

You can call our Nuisance Calls Advice Line on **0800 661 441**. We're open 8am–10pm Monday to Friday and from 9am–6pm on Saturdays.

And you'll find online advice at [bt.com/unwantedcalls](https://www.bt.com/unwantedcalls).

# Calls made by mistake

Many unwanted phone calls are just mistakes, often wrong numbers, usually one-offs and harmless. Some wrong number repeat calls are made by people with memory problems, where they think they're dialling a regular contact's number, such as a family member, but their memory's letting them down.

But if you're getting a lot of wrong numbers and think they might be deliberate, [see page 7](#) for our advice about malicious calls.

## How to reduce or stop calls made by mistake

Wrong numbers are usually innocent mistakes but, to be on the safe side:

- don't answer the phone with your number, just say 'hello' and, if the caller asks for your number, ask what number they dialled
- don't give out personal details such as your name or address
- consider asking the caller where they found your number.

If you're getting a lot of wrong number calls, your number could have been misprinted somewhere or be similar to a business number. If you can find out where the caller got your number, you might be able to track down the reason for the calls.

## Calls from fax machines

If your number's been dialled by a fax machine or electronic dialler, you'll hear electronic beeps and noises down the line. And because some fax machines are programmed to redial non-connected calls, you could get a lot of unwanted calls over a short period of time – but you won't be a deliberate target.

If you keep getting fax machine calls, dial 1471 to find out who has called you and [see page 9](#) for ways we can help you block or screen these calls.

# Malicious calls

Malicious calls are intended to annoy, inconvenience or worry you. They're likely to be the most upsetting type of unwanted calls, so it makes sense to know the best ways to deal with them.

## How to answer your phone

When you answer your phone, we suggest saying 'hello', rather than giving your name or number. If a call is malicious, answering this way means that the caller won't be able to make a note of your details, so there's less of a chance they'll call again.

If you get a malicious call, the first thing to do is to stay calm. Many malicious callers try to get an emotional response and if you walk away from the phone for a few moments, then hang up, it's often more of a deterrent than reacting to the caller.

## Using an answerphone

Keep your greeting message short. Consider whether you include your name and number and never leave a message telling callers that you're away from home. Just say that you can't get to the phone or you can't take their call at the moment.

You could also use your answerphone to screen calls, letting it answer calls even if you're available. You can then find out who's calling before deciding whether to pick up the call. And it's also worth knowing that malicious callers are more likely to be put off by a male voice message than a female one.

## Your phone directory entry

We suggest that if you're listed in the phone directory your entry shouldn't show your gender or marital status, especially if you're female. And you can ask to be excluded from the next reprint of the phone directory if you want. This way, your details won't be included in the Phone Book and won't be available from BT 118 500 Directory Enquiries or our online directory service. Call us on **0800 800 150** if you'd like us to change your phone directory entry.

## Reporting malicious calls

If you keep getting malicious calls, please contact our specialist advisors. Call the Nuisance Calls Advice Line on **0800 661 441**. We're open 8am–10pm Monday to Friday and 9am–6pm Saturday.

When you contact us, we'll discuss the calls you've been getting and suggest what to do next, perhaps changing your number or tracing your calls. Most malicious calls can be traced, whether they come from private, public or mobile phones, anywhere in the country.

## What else you should do

- after a malicious call, dial **1471** to see if you can get the caller's number
- use BT Answer 1571 as a tool for screening your calls. For charges, see [bt.com/callingfeatures](https://www.bt.com/callingfeatures)
- let other family members or people you live with read this booklet
- make a note of the date and time of the call and, if you can, what the caller said and any background noises you heard. Any information you gather might help identify and prosecute the caller
- report any abusive, threatening, obscene or distressing calls to the police.

In some cases, you'll need to be ready to give evidence if the malicious caller is traced, charged and taken to court.



You'll find online advice at [bt.com/unwantedcalls](https://www.bt.com/unwantedcalls).



# Ways BT can help

## BT's Calling Features can help you block or screen your calls



Please note that for some services, Calling Feature charges might apply. To find out more, go to [bt.com/callingfeatures](https://bt.com/callingfeatures).

### BT Privacy

Gives you more control over incoming calls by registering you for the Telephone Preference Service and comes with the option of Caller Display.

### BT Answer 1571

A voicemail service for callers to leave a message if you don't answer the phone. While BT Answer 1571 can't filter calls, it can answer them for you, so acts as a kind of screening tool.

### BT 1471

Dial 1471 to get the number of the last person who called you.

### Caller Display

Lets you see the number that's calling you before you answer. So you can decide whether to pick up the phone or leave it to your answering service.

### Choose to Refuse

Helps block some nuisance and unwanted calls, including withheld numbers. Choose to Refuse lets you block up to ten numbers, including the last number you answered. You can check your list of blocked numbers at any time and change or unblock them if you want to.

## Anonymous Call Reject

Blocks calls from withheld or anonymous UK numbers. If a caller in the UK withholds their number, they won't be able to get through to you. Calls from 'unavailable' numbers, such as calls from abroad, can't be blocked.

## Call Sign

Get an additional number with a different ring tone. You can then give this number only to close friends and family so you can distinguish between incoming calls.

## Call Control

Lets you filter the calls you want to take and block the ones you don't so it helps you get the most from your phone and avoid nuisance calls.



[Find out more about phones with Call Control.](#)

Please note: to block nuisance calls from phones like the BT6500, you'll need the Caller Display service enabled from your network provider. Calling Feature charges might apply. To find out more, go to [bt.com/callingfeatures](http://bt.com/callingfeatures).

# Useful contacts at a glance

## **Unwanted calls and to register for BT Privacy**

Visit [bt.com/unwantedcalls](https://bt.com/unwantedcalls) or call 0800 661 441

## **BT calling features**

Visit [bt.com/callingfeatures](https://bt.com/callingfeatures) or call 0800 789 456

## **Telephone Preference Service (TPS)**

Visit [tpsonline.org.uk](https://tpsonline.org.uk) or call 0845 070 0707

## **General information**

Visit [bt.com](https://bt.com) or call 0800 800 150



## Offices worldwide

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