

Hold the Mail

Simple steps to reduce the amount and hassle of junk mail



Every year each person gets an estimated 24 pounds worth of marketing mail. An average household receives up to 63 pounds – it's time to get rid of that extra weight by reducing your junk mail!

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How to lose 24 pounds of unwanted mail

Control your exposure

The best way to keep your name off of mailing lists is to control your exposure. Most importantly, to keep your name off lists long term, think about how often you give out your contact information.

This includes:

- Product warranties.
- Professional associations.
- Publication subscriptions.
- Utilities (phone, gas, electric, water, cable).
- Financials (bank, credit insurance, car or home loans).
- Churches, non-profit and social groups.
- Contest sweepstakes and give-aways.
- Shopping (writing checks, ordering online).

Consistently add a privacy statement to anything you put your name on asking not to be added to their mailing list. You can also request that your name not be sold or shared with other organizations.

Contact companies directly

Not all companies use national systems to purge their mailing lists. Here are tips for when to contact them directly and contact information to make it easier to do so.

- **Be prepared.** Have the mailing label or catalog handy.
- **Be polite.** Most mailers will make an effort to comply with your request. If you don't get results, you can consider stronger language or contacting company management.
- **Be patient.** It may take some time to get your name and address out of their mailing cycle.
- **Be persistent.** Keep trying. Drive home the message that your privacy is an important part of customer service. You do have the right to be left alone.

Credit bureaus

The nation's major consumer credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, Innovis and TransUnion) offer to remove your name from pre-approved credit cards.

- Online: optoutprescreen.com

Mail list brokers and marketing associations

These firms or their members provide national lists for non-financial data.

- Direct Marketing Association (DMA)
 - Online: dmachoice.org. There is a \$5 processing fee for their do-not-mail service.
 - They also provide “deceased,” “email,” “as a caretaker,” and “do not contact” registration.

National mailers

These national advertisers compile and maintain large databases of customers nationwide, often for mailing coupons or local, weekly circulars.



- Red Plum (Mailbox Values), ShopWi\$e
 - Online: retailmenot.com/everyday/unsubscribe
- Val-Pak Direct Marketing Systems (Cox Target Media)
 - Online: valpak.com. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on “address removal.”
- Money Mailer, LLC
 - Online: moneymailer.com/contact
- Exclusive Twin Cities Offers (Share Local Media)
 - Online: sharelocalmedia.com. Click on “Opt-out of our mailings” at the bottom of page.

Catalog mailers

- Catalog Choice
This free service makes it easy for consumers to stop receiving unwanted paper catalogs.
 - Online: catalogchoice.org
- You can contact catalog companies individually by looking for their contact information on the catalog.
- If you still want to receive some catalogs from a retailer, simply ask to only receive those publications.

Sweepstakes mailers

Want to stop receiving all of those sweepstakes mailers? Contact the national companies below to remove your information from mailing lists.



Photo credit: Judith E. Bell on [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/judithbell/)

- Publishers Clearinghouse
 - Online: pch.custhelp.com/app/ask_mailing
- Readers Digest
 - Online: rd.com/customer-service/

Local utilities and service providers

- Check with your phone, gas, electric, water, cable, newspaper, banking and insurance providers about their privacy policies and to opt out of mailings.
- Ask that electronic copies of your utility, bank, and credit card statements be sent to you via email. Save them on your computer instead of printing.

College and University Mailers:

You can contact the schools directly, or go to the College Board Student Search Service to remove your name and address from their database at studentsearch.collegeboard.org/ and click on the “Opt-out” button under No Commitment.

U.S. Postal Service: Misaddressed mail

- Check with your local post office, usps.com, to stop these types of mail:
 - Former residents
 - Deceased
 - Sexually explicit

What to do with the mail you still receive

Sort mail directly into recycling bin

You can place a recycling bin near your desk or wherever you do the most paperwork to make recycling easy and convenient.

Mail you can recycle:

- Magazines and catalogs.
- All letters and paper inserts.
- Greeting cards (no foil, embossed areas, sparkles or batteries).
- Coupon advertisements.
- Envelopes, including window envelopes (no bubble mailers).
- Phone books.

Make sure to remove all non-paper items, such as CDs, plastic cards, product samples, magnets and stickers.



Hennepin County
Environment and Energy

hennepin.us/dropoffs
environment@hennepin.us
612-348-3777

34-603-01-24

