

## BLOCK TELEMARKETING PHONE CALLS

By Jane M. Winand, Chief, Legal Assistance Division

We all have dealt with telemarketer phone calls. The calls seem to come just when you're sitting down to dinner or a movie with your family. The caller promises to deliver incredible products or services at unbelievably low prices. Unfortunately, many know from personal experience that telemarketer claims are often false. Telemarketing scams are on the rise. Now you can minimize these unwanted calls to your home and cell phones.

Pursuant to a Federal Communications Commission mandate, telemarketers can no longer phone to solicit business from any consumer whose telephone number is listed in the National Do Not Call Registry ("NDNCR"). Consumers register with the NDNCR to notify the Federal Communications Commission that they do not want to receive intrusive calls from telemarketers. If a telemarketer calls a consumer whose number is registered in the NDNCR, the telemarketer will be subject to a fine of up to \$11,000 per call to each registered number. Registering with the NDNCR will stop telemarketing calls from most companies and organizations, except political organizations, charities, and telephone surveyors.

There is a loophole in this program. The Federal Communications Commission will still allow telemarketers to contact you if you have already had business transactions with that company. This contact may continue for up to 18 months from the date of any previous business transaction, and up to 3 months if you request information about services or merchandise that appeared in print or on the television or radio. However, if you ask the telemarketing company to stop contacting you, the company must honor your request.

Additional information on this program may be obtained on the Federal Trade Commission's website at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov). You may register your phone number in the NDNCR by doing either of the following:

- 1) Call 888-382-1222. (NOTE: you must be calling from the number that you wish to register on the NDNCR.)
- 2) Register online at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov). You must provide an email address for confirmation and link back to the Federal Telecommunications Commission within 72 hours for your registration to become valid.

Once you are registered in the NDNCR, if you still receive calls from telemarketers with whom you have had no previous transactions, you may file a complaint with the Federal Telecommunications Commission. Visit [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov) or call 1-888-382-1222 to make a complaint. You'll need to provide the date of the call and the phone number of name of the company that called you. Should you have any additional questions regarding telemarketing and the NDNCR, you may call the Fort Meade Legal Assistance Office and make an appointment to speak with an attorney. The number is (301) 677-9536.