

How to opt out from receiving unwanted mail

Many households will receive a lot of junk mail during the course of 12 months. Much of this mail is irrelevant and unwanted so is thrown straight into the bin.

There are a number of simple ways to reduce the amount of this kind of unwanted mail sent directly to your home.

Write to sender

You can write or email the sender directly indicating that you no longer wish to receive mailings from them. Any company or organisation that receives written indication that the person wishes to be removed from the mailing list is legally obliged to stop sending you marketing materials.

Opt out of unaddressed mail

Unaddressed mail can include marketing materials such as flyers, circulars, supermarket leaflets and free newspapers, known commonly as junk mail. Some of this information is important and useful. Sources may include local councils, central government, utility companies, charities, political parties, education bodies, local shops and local service providers. To filter out unwanted mail you can opt out.

There are two steps that should be taken to reduce this type of mail:

1. Opt out of the Royal Mail's Door-to-Door service www.royalmail.com

The opt-out will last for a period of two years from the date that Royal Mail receives your opt-out form. If you wish to continue your opt-out after the two-year period you can do so by completing a new opt-out form which can be obtained by contacting them via email at optout@royalmail.com or via telephone on **0345 266 0858**.

Visit www.royalmail.com for further information on this by searching 'How do I opt out of receiving any leaflets or unaddressed mail'.

Registering to opt out can take up to 6 weeks to stop mail from being delivered to your home.

2. Register with the 'Your Choice' preference scheme run by the Direct Marketing Association <http://www.dma.org.uk/>

This allows you to ask distribution companies that are members of the Association to stop delivering mail to your home.

Register with the Mailing Preference Service (MPS) <http://www.mpsonline.org.uk/mpsr>

Unfortunately many households receive mail that is personally addressed to a previous occupant.

To reduce this amount of mail with someone else's name and address on it, you can either, write to the sender and indicate that the person no longer lives at your address, or you can register the previous occupier with the **Mailing Preference Service (MPS)** (<http://www.mpsonline.org.uk/mpsr>)

You can register yourself and other members of your household and registering is free of charge.

This can take up to four months for the Mailing Preference Service to have full effect, but registering can reduce the amount of personally addressed direct mailings by up to 95%. Unfortunately it will not stop mail posted from overseas whether addressed to the occupier or unaddressed mail.

Tick the box

To avoid generating unwanted mail, when filling in any form (eg. Credit cards, or competitions), make sure that you tick the box that's says you don't want your name to be added to their mailing list.

Opt out of the edited version of the Electoral Register

The Electoral Register lists the name and address of everyone who has registered to vote.

There are two versions of this register:

1. Full register used for elections
2. Edited register which can be purchased by anyone, company or organisation and can be used for different purposes, including marketing.

You can choose to exclude your details from the edited version when registering to vote. There is a box on the voter registration form which must be ticked for your details to be excluded from this register.

Visit the Electoral Commission website <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/> for more information.

Use online services

Many companies, including utilities companies and banks, offer online services. Opt to have account and paying bills online so you stop receiving paper bills and statements. Many companies offer a discount if you sign up to paper-free billing and Direct Debit on line. Contact your service providers for more information.