



What is SPAM & Why Are Legitimate Calls Getting Blocked as SPAM?

What Is a SPAM Call? As many people know, unwanted calls are a nuisance and the desire for something to be done about them is nationwide. A **SPAM** call is an unsolicited phone call, meaning no prior consent was given by the recipient. In some cases, the spammer calls over and over again until the recipient responds. One variation of a SPAM call is called a “**robocall**”, meaning the use of an automated dialer application to call number after number until one connects, then playing a message. Another variation of a SPAM call, **caller ID spoofing**, is when the caller uses the caller ID name or telephone number of an existing business or person (spoofing or fooling) to entice the recipient to answer the phone call from what appears to be someone they know or trust.

What Is The Government Response? In response to consumer demand, the United States (US) federal government, via the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), enacted regulations to communications providers to curb SPAM calls to their customers. While some refinements to these laws are still to come, the base regulations have been implemented by telephone providers within the US, including ESI.

For consumers to take action, SPAM call databases are offered by service providers that allow consumers to flag calls they believe are SPAM from multiple sources: landline phones, cellular (mobile) phones, and computer application based (also known as web-based) phones. These databases are polled by telephone provider tools to determine if a particular name/number is likely to be SPAM.

Within the FCC regulations, telephone providers must verify calls entering and leaving their networks. Tools were developed by software companies to assist in this endeavor to mark, report and/or block suspected SPAM calls. While not perfect, these tools may, from time to time, mark or block legitimate calls as SPAM based on calling patterns or responses from national databases tracking flagged SPAM call numbers.

Why Are Numbers Marked As SPAM? Customers may see calls displayed as SCAM LIKELY, SPAM LIKELY, SPAM RISK, SPAM?, or other similar wording on the caller ID when a call is suspected as SPAM. The call may be blocked and not presented to the customer at all if the SPAM rating is high enough. A couple common reasons for the SPAM identifier to be set are:

1. A consumer flagged the number as SPAM.
2. The volume of outbound calls made per day, per number has reached a threshold.

These SPAM databases keep track of the number of times a number has been flagged as SPAM and create a SPAM rating score to determine how likely the number is to be SPAM. The higher the rating, the more likely the call is going to be either flagged or blocked.

Since the SPAM flag is set from consumers and their data is housed in various provider databases, there is not yet a centralized database to which they all feed their data, or from which telephone providers can query.

How Can Legitimate Calls Flagged As SPAM Be Resolved? In the event a legitimate telephone number has been flagged as SPAM and is either labeled as such in caller ID or is being blocked, there is a path to remediation. The remedy is for the business paying for the telephone number to register their phone number with the SPAM databases listed below, in this section.

If a caller's phone number is blocked or flagged as SPAM on the recipient's caller ID, that company making the call should register their number with the SPAM databases listed below, in this section, beginning with Free Caller Registry.

Three of the largest SPAM databases partnered together to allow businesses to clear their name so-to-speak with respect to SPAM. They offer a website where businesses can confirm their identity and their associated telephone numbers to clean the three databases of SPAM flags for those numbers for free. The website is Free Caller Registry and is found at <https://www.freecallerregistry.com/fcr/>.

The three databases updated by Free Caller Registry are utilized by AT&T, C Spire, Samsung Smart Call, Spectrum, T-Mobile and US Cellular.

- Verizon uses their own database at this time and must be contacted via their website at <https://www.voicespamfeedback.com/vsf/>

The following list of individual communications provider websites is offered in the event the above do not correct the SPAM flag of a number.

- AT&T: https://hiyahelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket_form_id=824667
- Sprint, U.S. Cellular, Verizon: <https://reportarobocall.com/trf/>
- Altice, Charter, Comcast, Cox: send an email to the following Nomorobo email address requesting numbers be unflagged as SPAM: reports@nomorobo.com

Popular SPAM blocking apps that might also have numbers flagged as SPAM.

- Icehook: <https://www.icehook.com/contact>
- Nomorobo: Send an email to reports@nomorobo.com
- Robokiller: support@robokiller.com
- Telo: <https://www.telo.com>
- TrueSpam: https://www.truecnam.com/contact_us
- YouMail: <https://youmail.com>

What Can Be Done to Prevent Future Calls Being Blocked? Once the corrective actions have been taken to validate and remove a number from the SPAM rating databases, signing up for a paid SPAM monitoring service is a good idea to stay on top of the SPAM reputation score.

Since ESI is not responsible for the SPAM reputation score, we are unable to directly facilitate the monitoring of said reputation score. This requires the number holder to manage any SPAM monitoring services for their inventory of numbers.

Two such services are:

- Call Transparency: <https://calltransparency.com/>
- Caller ID Reputation: <https://calleridreputation.com/>

Is SPAM Scoring Necessary? While having a number flagged as SPAM is a nuisance, it is necessary to have a system in place to help prevent consumers from receiving SPAM calls. As no system is entirely foolproof, in the event of false positives, steps can be taken to remediate and monitor to stave off future occurrences.

ESI is available to answer questions with regard to SPAM, SPAM reputation, or related government regulations our customers may have. Direct inquiries to ESI Technical Support at (800) 850-2151 or email tsc.cloud@esi-estech.com.