

Junk Mail

Why we care

The average American spends eight months of his or her life opening and sorting junk mail, most of which goes directly into the recycling or trash. Why? Catalogs are a major offender. A catalog request can result in contact information being put into a database ensuring you receive every catalog the company publishes. Companies may also rent or sell their mailing lists. You may diligently recycle all this junk mail, but reducing it would save a lot more trees.

Simple, positive change

- Contact the Direct Marketing Association at www.dmachoice.org/dma/member/regist.action to keep your name off member lists.
- If junk mail is accompanied by a postage-paid envelope, fold up everything, place it in the return envelope, and mail it back.
- Call the sender and ask to be removed from its list. When ordering from a catalog, note how many you are willing to receive per year.
- Keep a stack of postcards handy with the message: "Please take me off your mailing list." Tape the label with your address onto the postcard and send it off.
- To stop unwanted credit cards, contact major credit bureaus at 1-888-567-8688 or www.optoutprescreen.com.
- Cancel all publications you don't have time to read.
- Guard your name and address. Information on warranties or entry forms may go directly to a marketing firm. When filling out applications, subscriptions, or memberships, state that you do not want your name released to other businesses. Stay away from store "buyer's club" cards.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.