

Answering an Unwanted Sales Text

A reply you can send — and how to decide whether to send it at all

PRESENTER: JOHN ULETT | AISAVVYSENIORS

THE BACKGROUND

A sales pitch that arrives on your cell phone out of the blue is not just a nuisance. In the United States it is regulated, and often prohibited outright. Three rules do the work.

The TCPA

47 U.S.C. §227. Marketing texts to a wireless number generally require your *prior express written consent* — agreed in writing, by you.

The FCC's rules

47 C.F.R. §64.1200. Anyone marketing by phone or text must keep an internal do-not-call list, honour removal requests, and produce their written policy on demand.

The Do Not Call Registry

donotcall.gov. Free, and it never expires. It will not stop a scammer, but it strengthens your hand against a real company.

THE REPLY

COPY THIS AND SEND IT BACK

STOP. Do not contact this number again.

This is an unsolicited commercial solicitation sent to a wireless number without prior express written consent, in violation of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (47 U.S.C. §227) and FCC regulations at 47 C.F.R. §64.1200. This number is also registered on the National Do Not Call Registry.

Under FCC rules you are also required to maintain an internal do-not-call list and honor opt-out requests. Consider this a formal request to remove this number and to provide your written DNC policy upon demand.

Further messages will be reported to the FCC ([fcc.gov/complaints](https://www.fcc.gov/complaints)), the FTC ([donotcall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov)), and the state attorney general.

Check one thing first: keep the Do Not Call Registry sentence only if your number really is registered. Checking or registering takes a minute at [donotcall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov), and a reply that overstates your own facts is a weaker reply.

One honest caveat. Whether a particular text actually breaks the law depends on details you cannot see from your phone — whether an autodialer was used, whether you gave consent somewhere along the way, whether your number is on the registry. The reply above asserts a position; it does not state a settled fact about that specific message. It is written to be accurate about the law in general and firm about your request. This is general information, not legal advice.

HOW TO USE IT

1. Screenshot it before you reply

Capture the message with the sender's number and the timestamp visible. That screenshot is your evidence, and it disappears the moment you delete the thread.

3. "STOP" does most of the work

Legitimate senders must honour it, and every automated system recognises it. The paragraphs after it show you know the rules and build your record if messages continue.

5. Block the number

On iPhone: tap the number at the top of the thread, then Info, then Block this Caller. On Android Messages: press and hold the conversation, then Block. Keep the thread until you are sure the messages have stopped.

2. Decide whether to reply at all

Replying tells the sender a real person is here, which can mean more messages rather than fewer. Filing the complaint and blocking, without replying, is a perfectly good choice.

4. Report it

File at fcc.gov/complaints and donotcall.gov. If it looks like outright fraud rather than sloppy marketing, use reportfraud.ftc.gov. You can also forward the message to **7726** — it spells SPAM, it reaches your carrier, and it is free.