

Stopping Your Junk Mail

An action by *Green Sangha**

Is Junk Mail a Problem?

- Each US Postal Service letter carrier delivers 17.6 tons of bulk mail annually - the typical weight of four elephants. We use about 62 million trees and 25 billion gallons of water to produce one year's worth of this country's junk mail. Forty-four percent of bulk mail is thrown away unopened. In 1999 only 22% of bulk mail was recycled.
- The United States consumed 99 million tons of paper in 1997, or about 740 pounds per American. The U.S., with only 5% of the world's population, consumes 30% of the world's paper.

Why Stop Junk Mail?

- *It's a waste of resources:* The world's forests are being depleted under the unsustainable demand for wood and paper. Producing a ton of virgin paper requires 17-24 more trees, 7000 more gallons of water, and substantially greater energy input than a ton of 100% recycled paper. Also, chlorine is often used in the bleaching process, releasing the carcinogenic chemical dioxin and other toxins. Other resources are wasted in direct mailings, for example, AOL/Time Warner uses steel, plastic, and aluminum in their "metal mail." Aluminum production consumes more energy than is needed to produce paper or glass and it relies on bauxite mining which destroys more of the earth's surface area than any other type of mining.
- *It's a waste of space:* Paper products comprise nearly one-third of all waste going into American landfills. Catalogues and other direct mailings account for 5.2 million tons of waste each year.
- *It's a waste of money:* U.S. companies spent 39.3 billion dollars in 1998 on direct mail (compared to 27.3 billion in 1993). It costs \$320 million tax dollars to dispose of junk mail.
- *It's a waste of time:* The amount of time the average American spends opening bulk mail over the course of his or her life is eight months!

Will Stopping my Junk Mail Make a Difference?

- If only 1,000 of us succeeded in halving our personal bulk mail, we will **save 170 trees**, nearly 46,000 pounds of carbon dioxide, and 70,000 gallons of water each year.
- By saying "No" to junk mail and shifting the way we respond to various types of marketing, we can drive the way goods are marketed. When we respond to a direct mail solicitation, we send the message that 'junk mail works.' All it takes is a 1% response rate for a direct mailing to be considered successful. If you don't contribute to that 1%, the marketers will be less likely to launch a million more pieces of paper.

**Green Sangha* is a spiritual community committed to environmental action. Our members make individual lifestyle choices and engage in local/national actions that promote systemic, positive change. Our work is inspired by a desire to responsibly care for and heal our personal selves as well as our larger self - the environment. Coming from love, our highest intention is to *be* the change we'd like to see in the world, and to empower others to do the same. If you'd like more information about *Green Sangha*, please call Jonathan Gustin, 415-459-8610. www.greensangha.org

How do I stop the Junk Mail?

1. Use the attached letter and preaddressed, stamped envelope to sign up for the Mail Preference Service, which lets the Direct Marketing Association (P.O.Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512) know you do not want to be contacted by solicitors. This reduces the amount of national junk mail to residential addresses. Simply write in the date, your name, address, and signature. Or do it online for a \$5 fee: <http://www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglistdave>
2. Fill out your name and address on the attached letter to ChoicePoint Option (P.O. Box 105108, Atlanta, GA 30348-5108) and mail in the stamped, preaddressed envelope. This will prevent you from receiving new mail from a major source of direct mailings.
3. Reduce credit card offers by calling: 1-888-5-OPTOUT (-888-567-8688). This will remove your name from the mailing list circulated by the main consumer credit reporting agencies, TransUnion, Experian, and Equifax. Leave your full name, address, telephone number, and social security number on the recorder after the message, then press 3 to have your name removed permanently, or press 1 to have your name removed for just two years.
4. To remove your name from Telemarketing lists: write to Telephone Preference Service, P.O.Box 9014, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9014
5. Call your bank and ask them to only send your bank statements and to stop sending other marketing materials.
6. Don't let marketers pass your name around. Any time you order a product by mail, enter a contest, subscribe to a magazine, send in a warranty card, or otherwise give your name and address to a company, write "Please do not rent, lend, trade, or sell my name and address" or "No mailing lists" next to your name.
7. Stop unwanted catalogues by calling the 800 customer service number of the organization or business. Request that your name be removed from their mailing list. Or send a written request with the mailing label taped to the letter to help the company identify how you are listed in its files.
8. Tell Congress to do its part by urging your Reps and Senators to make a national registry for citizens to opt out of unsolicited ad mail. The FTC recently held a public comment period on a proposal to start a national registry for Americans to opt out of telemarketer lists. This registry should be expanded to include junk mailers. Urge Congress to expand Form 1500 (a tool which citizens can use through the post office to stop sexually offensive mail).

Reproduced from The Center for a New American Dream website: <http://www.newdream.org/junkmail/optout.html>

Resources: Stop Junk Mail Association: www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/recycle/junkmail.html

or www.stopjunk.com, US Postal Service, E magazine, Advertising Mail Marketing Association, Direct Marketing Association, Consumer Research Institute, Conservatree, US EPA

Date: _____

Mail Preference Service
Direct Marketing Association
P.O. Box 643
Carmel, NY 10512

Please Register my name with the Mail Preference Service.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Thank you for your help.

Signature

Date: _____

Choice Point Option
P.O. Box 105108
Atlanta, GA 30348-5108

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to have my information removed from your direct mailings.

Name: _____

Variation of Name: _____

Address: _____
