

# WHEN ARE ROBOCALLS LEGAL?

## 1. What is a robocall and how does it work?

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A “robocall” is when you pick up the phone and a machine is talking to you. These machines are called automatic dialing announcing devices (*ADADs or robocalls*). They store hundreds, even thousands, of telephone numbers, and then dial them automatically and play a recorded message.

## 2. When can robocalls (ADADs) be used? What companies or agencies can use them?

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Robocalls are only legal when introduced by a live person. Unless:

- 1) An existing relationship with you (for example, you are a member of their organization or a client) or;
- 2) A law enforcement agency or fire protection agency needs to contact you for an emergency about public safety.

*For more information, see PUC Code 2871-2876 at:*

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=puc&group=02001-03000&file=2871-2876>

## 3. What about the robocalls I get around election time about political candidates or other election issues?

Political candidates or other political advocates are not exempt from the law. Robocalls may be used by candidates for elections, but they must comply with the rules set forth in the California Public Utilities Code Sections 2871-2876.

## 4. What can I do if I receive a robocall that I suspect is illegal?

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- 1) You should call your local telephone company to file a complaint. You must be able to provide the name of the caller and it helpful to have the telephone number of the company (it may be provided in the message).
- 2) Your telephone company will then notify the robocall user about the reported violation. The robocall user may be given time to correct the violation.
- 3) If the violation is not corrected by the time given by the telephone company, the telephone company can disconnect the robocaller’s line.
- 4) If you are not satisfied with the telephone company’s response to your robocall complaint, you may contact the CPUC’s Consumer Affairs Branch by telephone at 1-800-649-7570 or in writing to:

California Public Utilities Commission  
Consumer Affairs Branch  
505 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3298