Auto Attendant

AUTO ATTENDANT / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Canada's Do Not Call List: Business Rules Before You Call

> Get a business phone number with a simple auto attendant menu from Auto Attendant. A caller picks who they need and the call rings that person's own mobile, so nobody on your team has to publish a personal number.

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The short answer

If your business, or anyone you pay, phones people in Canada to sell something, you are a telemarketer under the CRTC's Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules (UTRs). As of October 2026, that means:

- **Register** with the National Do Not Call List (National DNCL) operator before the first call. Registration is free and required even if all your calls are exempt (CRTC, Business alerts).
- **Subscribe** (paid) if any calls are not exempt, covering every area code you call, and use a list copy no older than 31 days (CRTC, Key UTRs).
- **Keep an internal do-not-call list**: add anyone who asks within 14 days and keep them for 3 years and 14 days (CRTC, Key UTRs).
- **Call only** 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on weekdays and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekends, and identify yourself and the purpose of the call (CRTC, About registering).

Penalties run up to $1,500 per violation for individuals and $15,000 for corporations, with "per call" as the CRTC's example (CRTC, Know your obligations).

This article is educational, not legal advice. The rules are under review in 2026 (see the last section).

Who the National DNCL protects, and who it does not

The National DNCL protects numbers registered by people: home phones, cellphones, VoIP numbers and fax numbers can all be signed up (CRTC, About registering).

Calls to businesses are treated differently. Business-to-business calls are exempt from Part II of the UTRs (the National DNCL Rules). A business can still put its own number on the list, but calls to business numbers are only regulated by Part III (Telemarketing Rules) and Part IV (Automatic Dialing-Announcing Device, or ADAD, Rules) (CRTC, Business alerts). The CRTC added this exemption for calls to "business consumers" in Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-48 (3 July 2007).

What the B2B exemption does **not** do:

- It does not remove the duty to register. A telemarketer that calls businesses must still register with the National DNCL (CRTC, Business alerts).
- It does not remove your internal do-not-call list. You must not call or fax any number on your own list (CRTC, Business alerts).
- It does not cover consumers. A "business" lead that is really someone's personal cellphone is a consumer call.

According to the CRTC's 2023-24 annual report, the latest we could load, 14,937,114 Canadian numbers had been added to the list since 2008 and 56,968 removed (CRTC 2023-24 annual report).

The three parts of the rules you will deal with

The CRTC describes three key parts of the UTRs (CRTC, Know your obligations):

Part	What it controls	Applies to B2B calls?	Applies to exempt calls?
National DNCL Rules (Part II)	Which consumer numbers you may call; registration, subscription, the 31-day list	No (registration still required)	No (registration still required)
Telemarketing Rules (Part III)	Calling hours, identification, caller ID, internal do-not-call list, records	Yes	Yes
ADAD Rules (Part IV)	Robocalls and pre-recorded messages	Yes	Yes

"Telemarketing" means using telecommunications facilities to make unsolicited calls for the purpose of solicitation (CRTC, Know your obligations). Surveys and debt collection calls are not telemarketing because they sell nothing and ask for no donation (CRTC, About registering).

Do you need to register, subscribe, or both?

The operator publishes a chart of who must register and who must subscribe (National DNCL, FAQ for organizations). In summary:

Your situation	Register?	Subscribe?
You make non-exempt sales calls yourself	Yes	Yes
You make only exempt calls yourself	Yes	No
You hire a call centre or lead generator for non-exempt calls	Yes	Yes
You hire someone for exempt calls only	Yes	No
You are the call centre, calling only for clients	Only if a client authorizes you to access its subscription	No, you use the client's subscription

Two points small businesses often miss:

1. **Hiring someone does not move the obligation.** If you use a call centre or lead generator, you are their client and need your own registration and subscription. A vendor who says you can rely on their list is not in compliance, and you could be liable (CRTC, Business alerts). In real estate and insurance, the brokerage registers and subscribes for its agents (same page).
2. **You cannot share a subscription.** Affiliates and association members each need their own. You may share the list with a third party that helps you comply, such as a list-scrubbing service (National DNCL, FAQ).

Registration is online. New organizations are validated against Dun & Bradstreet records; if there is no match, you obtain a D-U-N-S Number and restart (National DNCL, FAQ). Build that step into your launch date.

What a subscription costs (as of October 2026)

The operator's FAQ (page last modified 12 September 2025, checked 28 October 2026) lists these fees. Each total is the operator fee plus the CRTC unsolicited telecommunications fee (National DNCL, FAQ for organizations):

Download subscription	Annual	6 months	3 months	1 month
All area codes, total	$62,166	$34,011	$17,835	$6,112
Single area code, total	$3,218	$1,656	$854	$290

A query subscription lets you check up to 100 numbers per session in any area code, at $0.50 per query (National DNCL, FAQ for organizations). The page does not say which fiscal year these fees cover, so confirm the live figures on the operator's site before you buy.

Exemptions that still carry obligations

The Telecommunications Act exempts these calls from the National DNCL Rules (Telecommunications Act, s. 41.7):

- calls by or for a registered charity;
- calls to someone you have an **existing business relationship** with, as long as they have not made a do-not-call request to you;
- calls by or for registered political parties, their candidates, nomination and leadership contestants, and riding associations;
- calls made only to collect information for a survey of the public;
- calls made only to sell a subscription to a newspaper of general circulation.

What counts as an existing business relationship

Under the Act, the relationship must come from a voluntary two-way communication and arise from one of three things (Telecommunications Act, s. 41.7(2)):

Trigger	How long it lasts
The person bought services, or bought, leased or rented products from you	18 months from the purchase
The person made an inquiry or application about your product or service	6 months from the inquiry
A written contract with the person	While it is in force, and 18 months after it expires

The relationship belongs to one legal entity; it extends to affiliates only with the consumer's express consent (Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-48, paras. 202-205). Once the window closes, a listed customer cannot be called without permission (CRTC, About registering).

What exempt callers must still do

- **Register** with the operator and **follow calling hours and ADAD rules**; charities are not exempt from ADAD consent (CRTC, Key UTRs).
- **Keep an internal do-not-call list**, adding requests within 14 days (CRTC, About registering).
- **State the purpose and who the call is for** at the start (Telecommunications Act, s. 41.7(3)).

Survey calls are exempt from those last two duties (s. 41.7(5)), but only calls made solely for a survey qualify.

Referrals are not an exemption. A customer cannot consent for a friend they refer, so check the referral's number against the National DNCL first (CRTC, Key UTRs).

Calling hours and identification rules

These Part III and Part IV rules apply to every telemarketing call, including exempt and B2B calls (CRTC, About registering; CRTC, Key Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules):

Rule	Requirement
Weekday hours	9:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Weekend hours	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Identification	Say who you are and why you are calling
Contact on request	Give a fax or phone number where the person can speak to someone about the call
Caller ID	Display the number you are calling from or a number that reaches you
Return calls	Respond to calls from consumers
Robocalls (ADAD)	Only with the consumer's prior express consent, including calls that put the consumer on hold until an agent is free

The hours are those of the person receiving the call, so use their time zone. Where a provincial law sets stricter hours for an activity, those hours apply to calls for that activity (Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules, Part III, ss. 23-24).

A compliant call opening (example script)

> "Hi, this is Sam from Northside Heating in Ottawa, calling to offer a fall furnace inspection. ... If you'd rather we not call again, I'll add you to our do-not-call list today. To reach someone about this call, our number is 613-555-0100."

(Northside Heating is fictional.) Log the date of every do-not-call request so you can show it was added within 14 days.

Penalties and the due-diligence defence

Amounts. Up to $1,500 per violation for individuals and $15,000 per violation for corporations (CRTC, Know your obligations).

Who pays. You can be vicariously liable for an employee, agent or lead generator, including for leads bought without knowing how they were generated, or a list copy bought from anyone but the operator (CRTC, Know your obligations; CRTC, Business alerts).

Due diligence. If a call went out by error, the CRTC's review staff look at whether your normal practices included (CRTC, Business alerts):

- written policies and procedures to comply with the UTRs;
- ongoing staff training;
- a National DNCL copy obtained no more than **31 days** before the call;
- an internal list updated no more than **14 days** before the call;
- records documenting how you prevent calls to listed numbers;
- monitoring and enforcement of your own policies;
- when a third party calls for you, a contract requiring it to comply with the UTRs.

Other defences are that, at the time of the call, the consumer had given valid prior express consent, an exemption applied, or the person called was a business (CRTC, Business alerts).

Compliance checklist

- [ ] Registered; subscription covers every area code called, for the whole campaign
- [ ] List scrubbed against a National DNCL copy no older than 31 days
- [ ] Internal list updated at least every 14 days; entries kept 3 years and 14 days
- [ ] Each relationship-based call checked against its 18-month or 6-month window
- [ ] Calling hours enforced; script gives identity, purpose and a contact number
- [ ] No automated calls without documented express consent
- [ ] Written contract with any call centre or lead generator
- [ ] Records kept: scripts, call logs, subscription copy, third-party contracts (CRTC, Know your obligations)

If your business only receives calls

These rules cover unsolicited outbound calls made to solicit business. Answering calls is not telemarketing, so a phone menu that routes people who dialled you, or a voicemail greeting, is outside the UTRs.

The rules come back as soon as your staff start calling out:

- **Returning a sales inquiry** is generally covered by the existing-business-relationship exemption for 6 months after the inquiry (Telecommunications Act, s. 41.7(2)). You still have to register, identify yourself and honour do-not-call requests.
- **Calling past customers** after the 18-month window is a non-exempt call if they are on the list.
- **Calling a list of local homeowners** to pitch a service is plain telemarketing. You need registration, a subscription and a scrubbed list.

For inbound calls, the bigger risk is spam; see our guide to screening spam calls to your business. Recording is a separate topic covered in our call recording checklist.

How consumers register and complain

- **Sign-up:** free, online or at 1-866-580-DNCL (1-866-580-3625); TTY 1-888-362-5889 (CRTC, About registering).
- **Timing:** numbers are added within 24 hours, and telemarketers then have 31 days to update their lists. That is why your copy can be up to 31 days old (CRTC, About registering).
- **Duration:** registration is permanent unless the person removes the number (CRTC, About registering).
- **Complaints:** online or by phone, for calls to registered numbers, calls outside permitted hours, or refusals to add someone to an internal list. A consumer needs the caller's name or number and the date (CRTC, About registering).

If you receive a Notice of Violation and neither pay nor file representations, you are deemed to have committed the violation (CRTC, Business alerts).

The 2026 review: what may change

On 11 June 2026 the CRTC published Compliance and Enforcement Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-132, "Review of the Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules". Interventions were due 27 July 2026 and replies 11 August 2026, under public record 1011-NOC2026-0132 (CRTC, Notices of consultation 2026).

Filed interventions show some of the questions under review. They include a formal definition of "business consumer" and whether the ADAD definition captures AI-generated or synthesized voices. Others ask whether telemarketers should have to say when the caller is not a live person, and whether the rules should apply to strictly personal use of these tools (M3AAWG intervention, July 2026). The Canadian Marketing Association asked the CRTC to extend the existing-business-relationship window from 18 to 24 months to match CASL (CMA submission, July 2026). Those are interveners' positions, not decisions.

No decision in this proceeding appears in the CRTC's published lists through mid-August 2026, the latest we could read. A consultation changes nothing until a decision issues, so the rules described above remain the ones to follow. If you run outbound campaigns, watch public record 1011-NOC2026-0132, especially for changes to exemptions and robocall definitions.

FAQ

Can I register my business number on the National DNCL? Yes, nothing stops a business from registering. But because B2B calls are exempt from the National DNCL Rules, registration gives a business number only the protection of the Telemarketing and ADAD Rules (CRTC, About registering). To stop a specific company from calling you, ask to be put on its internal list.

Are cellphone numbers covered? Yes. Consumers can register cellular, home, VoIP and fax numbers (CRTC, About registering).

Do follow-up calls count? A follow-up to someone who made an inquiry within the last 6 months, or bought from you within the last 18 months, falls under the existing-business-relationship exemption unless they asked not to be called (Telecommunications Act, s. 41.7). A follow-up to a referral does not, so check the list first (CRTC, Key Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules). Auto Attendant handles the inbound side, a phone menu that rings the right person for Canadian and US numbers, and does not place outbound calls; see our Canada page.

Sources

1. Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules: Know your obligations, CRTC. UTR parts, definitions, penalties, vicarious liability, records.
2. Business alerts: telemarketing, CRTC. B2B exemption, registration, defences, third parties.
3. About registering and who can still call you, CRTC. Consumer registration, timing, exemptions, calling hours, complaints.
4. Key Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules, CRTC. Subscription, 31-day and 14-day rules, referrals, ADAD consent.
5. Frequently Asked Questions (organizations), National DNCL operator. Register/subscribe chart, D&B validation, fees, sharing.
6. Telecommunications Act, s. 41.7, Justice Laws Website. Statutory exemptions and existing-business-relationship definition.
7. Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-48, CRTC, 3 July 2007. Business-consumer exemption; relationship limited to one entity.
8. 2023-24 Annual report on the National DNCL, CRTC. Registration totals.
9. Notices of consultation 2026, CRTC. Notice 2026-132 deadlines and public record.
10. M3AAWG intervention, CRTC 2026-132, M3AAWG, July 2026. Questions under review.
11. CMA submission, 2026 UTR review, Canadian Marketing Association, July 2026. 24-month relationship proposal.

12. Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules, CRTC. Part III ss. 23-24: calling hours are the consumer's; stricter provincial hours apply.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/telemarketing/biz.htm
2. https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/telemarketing/tobligations/rules-regles.htm
3. https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/telemarketing/exempt.htm
4. https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/telemarketing/tobligations.htm
5. https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2007/dt2007-48.htm
6. https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/dncl/rpt240930/p2.htm
7. https://lnnte-dncl.gc.ca/en/Organization/Frequently-Asked-Questions
8. https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/t-3.4/page-6.html
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11. https://www.m3aawg.org/sites/default/files/doc_files/m3aawg-crtc-2026-132-comments-july-24-2026.pdf
12. https://thecma.ca/docs/default-source/government-submissions/2026-Review-of-the-Unsolicited-Telecommunications-Rules.pdf

THE PUBLISHER

About Auto Attendant

Auto Attendant gives a small business one phone number and a recorded menu that sends each caller to the right person. The call rings the mobile that person already carries, using their normal dialler and their normal mobile plan. Pricing is a single flat monthly fee for the whole company rather than a charge for each user, and there is no app, desk phone or hardware to install.

One number, one menu, the phones you already own

A caller dials the business number, hears a short greeting and chooses an option. Each option can ring one mobile, ring several at once so whoever is free answers first, or try people one after another in a set order. There is no limit on how many people sit on the receiving end, because nobody is billed per seat. Setup is done by the owner in a few minutes: pick a number, write the greeting, and point each option at a mobile.

What it deliberately is not

An auto attendant routes a call; it does not answer one. Nobody at Auto Attendant speaks to callers, and no AI stands in for a receptionist. A business that wants its calls handled, messages taken and appointments booked wants an answering service, which is a different product at a different price. A business that needs call recording, queues, agent dashboards or CRM integration wants a contact centre platform. Auto Attendant is for the case where the call should simply reach the right pocket.

Keeping personal numbers off the internet

The business number is the only number a caller ever sees. Personal mobile numbers are never displayed and never given out, which is what lets an owner put a number on a website, an invoice, a van or a Google Business Profile without handing a personal line to everyone who finds it. An existing advertised number can be ported across and kept, and the old line keeps working while the port is in progress.

Work with Auto Attendant

Visit Auto Attendant to see how it works, how it compares to a personal mobile, Google Voice and a full phone platform, and the current pricing.

Telephone number portability, emergency calling and caller-ID rules differ by country and change over time. Articles published here describe general practice and cite primary regulator and carrier sources; they are not a guarantee of any timeline, and they are not legal or regulatory advice for a specific business.

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