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AUTO ATTENDANT / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Who Regulates Your Business Phone in the US?

> 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

In the US, no single agency "owns" your business phone line. Roughly:

- The **FCC** regulates the phone companies and the network: numbers, porting, billing practices, robocall and caller ID rules, and most service complaints.
- The **FTC** goes after the people misusing the phone: telemarketers, scammers, deceptive sellers. It runs the National Do Not Call Registry.
- **States** add their own layer: public utility commissions over parts of phone service, and attorneys general over consumer fraud and some federal phone laws.
- **Courts** handle private lawsuits under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA).

Knowing which one to contact saves you a wasted complaint. This guide covers the US as of October 2026; it is educational, not legal advice.

The map: who covers what

Area	Main federal body	What it does for you
Your phone company's service, billing, porting, outages	FCC	Informal complaints, forwarded to the provider for a written response
Robocalls, spoofed caller ID, TCPA rules	FCC (rules and enforcement)	Takes reports to inform enforcement; does not resolve individual unwanted-call complaints
Telemarketing sales practices, Do Not Call Registry, phone scams	FTC	Enforces the Telemarketing Sales Rule; takes fraud reports
Local utility regulation	State public utility commissions	Varies by state and by type of service

Area	Main federal body	What it does for you
Consumer fraud; enforcement of spoofing and TCPA provisions	State attorneys general	Investigate and sue on behalf of state residents
Your own damages for illegal calls	Courts	TCPA private lawsuits

Sources for each row follow in the sections below.

The FCC: phone companies, numbers, robocalls, billing

The FCC's informal complaint process covers anyone with "a problem with phone equipment or services, internet service, or TV and radio services" (FCC, Filing an Informal Complaint). Practical points from that page:

- **How:** online at fcc.gov/complaints (the FCC says online is "the most effective way"), by phone at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322), or by mail.
- **Cost:** "There is no filing charge for an informal complaint," and you do not need a lawyer.
- **Provider first:** "Before filing a complaint with the FCC, you should try to resolve the issue with your provider."
- **What it covers:** "access and billing concerns and issues with advertised service speeds, number porting, equipment, unwanted calls and texts, and more."
- **What happens:** the FCC may serve the complaint on the provider. If it does, "The service provider must respond within 30 days of receiving the complaint," in writing, to you and to the FCC, and may contact you directly.
- **Wrong agency:** "If FCC does not have legal authority to resolve your complaint, we may direct you to another agency that can help."

The FCC also sets rules that give you leverage before you complain:

- **Billing.** Under the truth-in-billing rule, each carrier bill must "prominently display" a toll-free number to "inquire or dispute any charges," and carriers "shall not place or cause to be placed on any telephone bill charges that have not been authorized by the subscriber" (47 CFR 64.2401(d), (g)).
- **Porting.** Interconnected VoIP providers must "facilitate" a valid porting request to or from a carrier or another VoIP provider, and may not sign agreements that prohibit a customer from porting (47 CFR 52.34). A port that is being stalled is a legitimate FCC complaint. Our porting guide covers the steps that prevent most delays.

Unwanted calls are different

For unwanted calls and texts, the FCC is explicit: "We do not resolve individual unwanted call or text complaints," but complaints are used "to inform policy decisions and as the basis of potential enforcement actions" (FCC Consumer Complaint Center). The form has separate paths:

- Unwanted calls or texts: Phone Issue "unwanted calls/texts," sub-issue "all other unwanted calls/messages."

- **Your own number is being spoofed, blocked, or labeled as potential spam:** Phone Issue "unwanted calls/texts," sub-issue "my own number is being spoofed" (FCC Consumer Complaint Center).

If your number is being labeled spam, the complaint is one step; the practical fixes are in our guide to why a business number shows up as spam.

The FTC: telemarketing, Do Not Call, scams

The FTC enforces the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR), which covers "a plan, program, or campaign ... to induce the purchase of goods or services or a charitable contribution" involving more than one interstate call; the FTC notes that the FCC regulates both intrastate and interstate calling (FTC, Complying with the Telemarketing Sales Rule).

Three things a business owner should know:

1. **Calls to your business are mostly exempt from the TSR, but not from its anti-deception rules.** The rule exempts calls between a telemarketer and a business, except that the exemption does not cover the bans on misrepresenting material information and on false or misleading statements to induce payment, and does not cover retail sales of nondurable office or cleaning supplies (16 CFR 310.6(b)(7); 16 CFR 310.3(a)(2), (a)(4)). The eCFR shows that section was amended in April 2024. So a scam "directory listing" or "toner" call to your office is still something to report.
2. **The Do Not Call Registry.** The FTC's FAQ describes it as free registration for "your home or cell phone number"; it tells registered telemarketers which numbers not to call but "doesn't block calls," so it does not stop scammers (FTC, National Do Not Call Registry FAQs). Telemarketers who call registered consumers face civil penalties of up to $53,088 per violation (FTC).
3. **Where to report.** "If you didn't lose money and just want to report a call, use the streamlined reporting form at DoNotCall.gov. If you've lost money to a phone scam, or if you have information about the company or scammer who called you, report it at ReportFraud.ftc.gov" (FTC).

Like the FCC, the FTC does not answer each report: "The FTC gets millions of reports each year, so we can't respond to each one." Reports are analyzed by the FTC and other agencies, and reported numbers are released "each business day" to carriers and partners working on call blocking and labeling (FTC).

If the call that hurt you is your own outbound marketing, the TSR and Do Not Call rules apply to you as the caller, which is a separate topic.

State regulators and attorneys general

Public utility commissions. Every state has a commission that regulates utilities. The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) keeps a directory of commissions for all 50 states, DC, Guam and Puerto Rico (NARUC, Regulatory Commissions). How much a commission can do about your phone depends on the state and the type of service, and its authority over internet-based (VoIP) service is limited and contested. In 2004 the FCC preempted Minnesota's attempt to apply traditional phone-company entry and certification rules to Vonage's DigitalVoice service, because its interstate and intrastate parts could not be separated (FCC 04-267, Vonage order). The Eighth Circuit upheld that preemption for "nomadic" VoIP in

Minnesota PUC v. FCC, 483 F.3d 570 (2007) (opinion). In *Charter Advanced Services v. Lange*, 903 F.3d 715 (8th Cir. 2018), the same court treated Charter's fixed VoIP service as an "information service" and held Minnesota's regulation of it preempted; the Supreme Court declined review in 2019 (opinion, No. 17-2290). The FCC itself has never formally classified interconnected VoIP as a telecommunications or an information service, and states keep some roles: they collect 911 fees on VoIP lines and may assess state universal service charges on nomadic VoIP. Outside the Eighth Circuit, the fixed-VoIP question is not settled nationally. In practice: check your state commission's own complaint page to see whether it accepts complaints about your type of service before you file.

Attorneys general. Each state, DC and the territories have an attorney general (NAAG, Find my AG). Federal phone law gives them specific powers: a state attorney general can sue in federal court to enforce the caller ID spoofing ban on behalf of state residents (47 U.S.C. 227(e)(6)). Their consumer protection offices are also the usual place for local scams.

Courts: your own TCPA claim

The TCPA lets a person or entity bring a case in state court, where state rules allow, to stop a violation and to recover "actual monetary loss from such a violation, or to receive $500 in damages for each such violation, whichever is greater" (47 U.S.C. 227(b)(3)). A separate private right covers someone who received "more than one telephone call within any 12-month period by or on behalf of the same entity" in violation of the Do Not Call regulations (47 U.S.C. 227(c)(5)). Whether a particular call qualifies is a question for a lawyer.

Decision table: which problem goes where

Problem	First stop	Then	Source
Wrong or unexplained charges on your phone bill	Provider's dispute number on the bill	FCC informal complaint	47 CFR 64.2401; FCC
Number port stalled or refused	Both providers, in writing	FCC informal complaint (porting is a listed category)	FCC; 47 CFR 52.34
Service outage or poor service	Provider	FCC; state commission if it covers your service type	FCC; NARUC
Unwanted sales calls or robocalls, no money lost	DoNotCall.gov	FCC unwanted-calls complaint	FTC; FCC
Phone scam, money lost	ReportFraud.ftc.gov	Local police; state attorney general	FTC; NAAG
Your number is spoofed or labeled spam	FCC: "my own number is being spoofed"	Your carrier	FCC
Charged after returning a one-ring call	Your phone company	FCC complaint; FTC for international scams	FCC, One Ring
Deceptive sales call to your business	ReportFraud.ftc.gov	State attorney general	16 CFR 310.6(b)(7)

Before you complain: go to the provider first, with evidence

Both the FCC's general guidance and its one-ring guide say to start with the provider: "first try to resolve the matter with your telephone company. If you are unable to resolve it directly, you can file a complaint with the FCC at no cost" (FCC, One Ring).

A complaint that gets traction is specific. Collect:

- [ ] Account number and the phone number(s) affected
- [ ] Dates and times of each event (calls, outage start and end, port request date)
- [ ] Copies of bills with the disputed lines highlighted
- [ ] Ticket or case numbers and the names of agents you spoke with
- [ ] Screenshots: call logs, error messages, porting status, caller ID labels
- [ ] What you asked for, and what the provider said or did

Template for the complaint text:

> "We are a small business. Our [service type] account [number] with [provider] has [problem] since [date]. We contacted the provider on [dates], ticket [number]. They [response]. We are asking for [specific outcome: credit of $X / completion of the port of (number) requested on (date) / restoration of service]. Attached: bills, screenshots, ticket emails."

Keep a copy of what you file and the confirmation number. If the FCC serves it on the provider, watch for the written response within 30 days (FCC).

What a complaint can and cannot do

	Can	Cannot
FCC informal complaint (service, billing, porting)	Get a written response from the provider within 30 days of service; sometimes a direct fix	Guarantee a refund or outcome; no published resolution statistics were found
FCC unwanted-call complaint	Feed enforcement and policy	Resolve your individual case
FTC report	Feed investigations and call-blocking data	Get an individual reply
State commission	Act where it has authority over your service	Help if your service type is outside its authority
TCPA lawsuit	Recover statutory damages where the law applies	Work against callers who cannot be identified

Sources: FCC, FCC Consumer Complaint Center, FTC, 47 U.S.C. 227.

If you are in Canada

The structure is different: the CRTC regulates telecom, the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services (CCTS) handles individual service complaints, and privacy has its own commissioners. Our Canada page collects the Canadian rules that apply to a business phone line.

FAQ

Should I complain to the FCC or the FTC about robocalls? Either works for reporting, and neither resolves your individual case. The FTC's DoNotCall.gov is the quick report for unwanted sales calls with no money lost; ReportFraud.ftc.gov if money was lost (FTC). The FCC's complaint form has a dedicated path if *your* number is being spoofed (FCC).

Who regulates VoIP? The FCC applies many rules to interconnected VoIP, porting among them (47 CFR 52.34), and takes complaints about it. State authority is limited and contested: the FCC preempted state entry rules for VoIP in 2004, and the Eighth Circuit has held Minnesota's regulation of both nomadic and fixed VoIP preempted (Charter v. Lange). States still collect 911 fees, and rules on fees and consumer protection vary by state.

How long does an FCC complaint take? If the FCC serves it, the provider must respond within 30 days of receiving it (FCC). We found no official figure for how long full resolution takes.

Does it cost anything? No. FCC informal complaints are free (FCC), and FTC reporting is free.

Can I put my business line on the Do Not Call Registry? The FTC's FAQ describes registering "your home or cell phone number" (FTC), and most telemarketing calls to businesses are exempt from the TSR anyway (16 CFR 310.6(b)(7)). For spam reaching a business line, call blocking is the practical tool; see our guide to stopping spam calls to your business.

Source links

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

1. https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/filing-informal-complaint
2. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/section-64.2401
3. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-52/subpart-C/section-52.34
4. https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/115002234203-Unwanted-Calls-Phone
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6. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-16/chapter-I/subchapter-C/part-310/section-310.6
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9. https://www.naruc.org/about-naruc/our-mission/regulatory-commissions
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12. https://ecf.ca8.uscourts.gov/opndir/18/09/172290P.pdf
13. https://www.naag.org/find-my-ag
14. https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/47/227
15. https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/one-ring-phone-scam
16. https://www.ccts-cprst.ca

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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.

Website: https://autoattendant.io

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