

Mobile Spam Code of Practice



The Mobile Spam Code of Practice is a new initiative from the GSM Association (GSMA) and its member operators. It has been devised to protect the secure and trusted environment of mobile services to ensure customers receive minimal amounts of spam sent via SMS and MMS. The Code takes a firm stance on how to deal with mobile spam messages that are either fraudulent or unsolicited commercial messages.

To support this initiative the GSMA is encouraging member operators to sign-up to the Code and for governments and consumer associations to support industry in its endeavours.

Development of the code

The Code of Practice represents a proactive approach to dealing with mobile spam and comes as a result of identifying the need to:

- *Keep Mobile Spam to a Minimum.* The level of mobile spam to-date is very low compared to e-mail spam sent on the internet, predominantly due to the mobile commercial and service environment which is inherently resistant to mobile spam. A desire exists to ensure that this secure environment is maintained in the future and that the level and impact of spam is kept to a minimum.

- *Take Collective Action.* Whilst many operators have already adopted measures to minimise problems associated with mobile spam, there is disparity in national legal environments regarding spam and where mobile spam is sent across networks or internationally it is harder to combat. The Code provides a common basis for operators to work together to combat mobile spam and share best practice.
- *Work Together.* The Code aims to encourage governments to assist industry for instance, by reviewing any national legislation that may inhibit anti-spam activities, and together with consumer associations to empower consumers by providing advice and information on how to deal with mobile spam.

Next steps

The GSMA and signatories to this Code of Practice will continue to examine issues associated with other types of spam and unsolicited communications, work with wider industry groups and update the Code as appropriate.

Further information:

The full Code of Practice and a toolkit on mobile spam is available for GSMA members at <https://infocentre.gsm.org/mobilespam>
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Key highlights of the code

Under the Code, the mobile operators that are signatories commit to:

- Include anti-spam conditions in all new contracts with third party suppliers
- Provide a mechanism that ensures appropriate customer consent and effective customer control with respect to mobile operators' own marketing communications
- Work co-operatively with other mobile operators, including those who are not signatories to the Code
- Provide customers with information and resources to help them minimise the levels and impact of mobile spam
- Undertake other anti-spam activities, such as: ensuring that an anti-spam policy is in place that prohibits the use of the mobile network for initiating or sending mobile spam, and adopting GSMA recommended techniques for detecting and dealing with the international transmission of fraudulent mobile spam
- Encourage governments and regulators to support industry.

What falls under the code?

The Code is voluntary and applies specifically to three types of unsolicited SMS and MMS messages: commercial messages sent to customers without their consent, commercial messages sent to customers encouraging them directly or indirectly to call or send a message to a premium rate number and bulk unlawful or fraudulent messages sent to customers (e.g. faking, spoofing or scam messages).