

**Consumer Complaints:**

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**For Immediate Release**

**ALERT: SCAM ROBOTEXTS ARE RISING THREAT**

***Text Message Scammers Seek Money, Information, and Engagement***

The FCC's Robocall Response Team is alerting consumers to the rising threat of robotexts. Substantial increases in consumer complaints to the FCC, reports by non-government robocall and robotext blocking services, and anecdotal and news reporting make it clear that text messages are increasingly being used by scammers to target American consumers.

**What Are Robotext Scams:**

Scam text message senders want you to engage with them. Like robocallers, a robotexter may use fear and anxiety to get you to interact. Texts may include false-but-believable claims about unpaid bills, package delivery snafus, bank account problems, or law enforcement actions against you. They may provide confusing information – as if they were texting someone else – , incomplete information, or utilize other techniques to spur your curiosity and engagement.

Some scammers may be after your money, but others may simply be trying to collect personal information or confirm that a number is active for use in future scams. Do not respond or click on any links in the message. If you think a text might be legitimate, you should independently look up contact information and reach out directly to the company, government agency, or law enforcement.

**How Big a Problem Is This:**

The FCC tracks consumer complaints – rather than call or text volume – and complaints about unwanted text messages have risen steadily in recent years from approximately 5,700 in 2019, 14,000 in 2020, 15,300 in 2021, to 8,500 through June 30, 2022. In addition, some independent reports estimate billions of robotexts each month – for example, RoboKiller [estimates](#) consumers received over 12 billion robotexts in June.

**What to Look Out For:**

Scam text message – also known as “smishing” – sometimes utilize:

- Unknown numbers
- Misleading information

- Misspellings to avoid blocking/filtering tools
- 10-digit or longer phone numbers
- Mysterious links
- Sales pitches
- Incomplete information

#### **How to Protect Yourself:**

- Do not respond to suspicious texts, even if the message requests that you "text STOP" to end messages.
- Do not click on any links.
- Do not provide any information via text or website.
- [File a complaint.](#)
- Forward unwanted texts to SPAM (7726).
- Delete all suspicious texts.
- Update your smart device OS and security apps.
- Consider installing anti-malware software.
- Review companies' policies regarding opting out of text alerts and selling/sharing your information.
- Review text blocking tools in your mobile phone settings, available third-party apps, and your mobile phone carrier's offerings.

#### **What the FCC Is Doing:**

- Updating Robotext Rules: FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel [proposed](#) a new proceeding that would look to require mobile phone companies to block likely illegal robotexts and would consider how caller ID authentication-like technology might be applied to text messaging. The proposal is supported by the Chairwoman but remains pending before the full Commission.
- FCC Rules: The FCC prohibits autodialed text messages from being sent to your mobile phone unless you previously gave consent to receive the message or the message is sent for emergency purposes. The FCC has repeatedly made clear that phone companies can block suspicious text messaging as a default policy based on reasonable analytics.
- Enforcement: The FCC reviews consumer complaints and other available information for possible violations of anti-robocalling and spoofing laws. For purposes of these laws, the FCC considers text messaging to be a type of call. The FCC's Enforcement Bureau [issued](#) an enforcement advisory on this topic.
- Partnerships: The FCC is [partnering](#) with state Attorneys General around the country to pool robocall investigation resources and combat robocalls and robotexts. The state leaders, like the FCC, have seen an increasing volume of scam robotexts.

#### **Consumer Help Guides:**

- [Avoid the Temptation of Smishing Scams](#)
- [How to Identify and Avoid Package Delivery Scams](#)
- [Robotexts on the Rise](#)
- [Smishing: Package Tracking Text Scams](#) (U.S. Postal Inspection Service)
- [Army, Selective Service Warn of Bogus Texts](#)
- [Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Warn of Impersonation Scam Involving Credentials and Badges](#) (Social Security Administration)

- [On the Internet: Be Cautious When Connected](#) (FBI)
- [Cybercriminals Trick Victims into Transferring Funds to "Reverse" Instant Payments](#) (FBI)

*FCC Robocall Response Team - Under Chairwoman Rosenworcel, the Robocall Response Team was created to serve as an FCC staff working group that pulls together expertise from across the agency to leverage the talents of enforcers, attorneys, policy makers, engineers, economists, and outreach experts to combat the unyielding menace of illegal spoofed, scam, robocalls.*

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*