

CONCERNED ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT?

Shredding any potentially sensitive unwanted mail immediately solves these problems. First, shred your confidential documents and mail. Next, place the shredded paper in a paper bag or in between layers of other unshredded mixed paper or cardboard and place in your mixed paper recycling cart, or place the paper bag next to or on top of your blue bin. Now your shredded paper and other paper products will be recycled into brand new sheets of paper or other types of paper items and packaging.



For more information on reducing unwanted mail or other tips on reducing waste, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recycling.

Make a difference today by reducing the amount of unwanted mail sent to your mailbox!



**Montgomery County, Maryland
Division of Solid Waste Services**

Waste Reduction and Recycling Section

101 Monroe Street, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recycling
Phone: 3-1-1 • TTY: 301-251-4850

This information is available in an alternate format by calling 240-777-6480.

 Printed on recycled and recyclable paper.

GUIDE TO REDUCING UNWANTED MAIL



DID YOU KNOW...

Your name and address are added to mailing lists every time you buy something online or over the phone, enter a contest, make a donation, subscribe to a magazine, send in a warranty card, or provide your information on a website. Mailing lists might even be sold or traded to other companies.

This information flow leads to our mailboxes being filled with unwanted mail and large amounts of wasted paper.

However, there are ways to reduce, if not completely stop, unwanted mail from ever reaching your mailbox! In this brochure you will find suggestions on how to sort, respond, prevent, reduce, and recycle all types of unwanted mail.

HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Montgomery County's most recent waste composition study found that more than 17 percent of all waste disposed of in Montgomery County includes recyclable mixed paper. Some of this paper includes unwanted mail that is being thrown away in the trash. Be sure to recycle any recyclable mixed paper, including unwanted mail, magazines, catalogs, envelopes, and postcards by placing them in your mixed paper recycling cart, or place them in a paper bag or bundle with twine and place next to or on top of your blue bin.

NOW YOU CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Reducing unwanted mail from reaching your mailbox is easy. Just follow these simple steps and you'll gradually start seeing less unwanted mail everyday!



STEP
1

SORT AND RESPOND

Don't just toss or recycle your unwanted mail right away. Instead, check it first and separate it into two categories: wanted and unwanted. Then follow the steps below:

UNWANTED MAIL

Almost every advertisement comes with a free, postage-paid reply card or blank order form that already has your name on it. With a big, bold pen, write this message where it can't be missed:

Take my name off your mailing list.

WANTED MAIL

On the reply card or order form, write:

*Keep my name on your mailing list,
but don't sell it.*

If you get duplicate mailings from one organization, provide all the printed mailing labels from the mailers and send the duplicate labels in their postage paid envelope. Write on the reply card or order form:

Stop duplicates and merge these labels.

You may have to put a postage stamp on a few letters, but it's worth it to keep the excess mail out of your mailbox. In some cases, you can call the sender's toll-free number to make this request. Remember, it takes 6 to 8 weeks for the mail to stop, so keep a list of the senders you've contacted. Monitor your progress by checking new mail against this list.

STEP
2

PREVENT MORE UNWANTED MAIL

Whenever you give out your name and address to a publication, store, or organization, you are providing information that can be used to solicit you to purchase additional products or services. You could be added to new mailing lists unless you tell them otherwise. Sometimes, there is a "no name rental" box to check on their order form, but usually, you must specifically state that you don't want to be added to any new mailing lists. You will need to do this each time you give your information to a new organization.

STEP
3

REDUCE AND RECYCLE

The final and best step to reducing your unwanted mail is to opt-out of mail marketing lists. Companies are required to take a person off of a mail marketing list if requested, and can never place you back on the mail marketing list in the future. There are a few companies you can contact right now and check with to see if you're on their mail marketing list. If you are, you can tell them to take you off the list permanently. To do a really thorough job, send a postcard to other major mailing companies and request that your name(s) be removed from their mailing lists. If you still receive unwanted mail, simply place it in your recycling bin along with your other types of mixed paper.

Visit www.dmchoice.org for additional information on direct mail marketing opt-outs from many national companies.