



Media Release- 12 December 2006

ComReg and Data Protection Commissioner launch campaign to stop cold calls

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg), and the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (DPC), today launched a press campaign to inform consumers about how they can stop unwanted marketing calls.

Unsolicited cold calls for marketing purposes can be intrusive. All telephone users can now ensure that they don't receive such cold calls in the future.

If consumers wish to avail of this option, they should contact their phone line rental provider and request that they are added to the 'opt out' list. Ex-directory numbers are automatically included on the list. There are currently over 850,000 phone numbers on the 'opt-out' list.

When consumers receive unwanted marketing calls, they can tell the caller not to contact them again. If consumers receive further contact from that caller, after making this request, they can make a formal complaint to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. The DPC can investigate the matter and prosecute the company in question, if necessary.

ComReg Chairperson, Commissioner Mike Byrne, said: "ComReg wishes to increase awareness among consumers about how to opt out of receiving cold calls. The opt-out scheme was first launched in July 2005 and it has been expanded to include ex-directory numbers. The initiative is part of ComReg's mandate to protect and inform consumers of telecommunications services. I would like to thank the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner for its support in the development of this campaign which also includes a series of radio advertisements that will be broadcast in the New Year. I also wish to thank the telecoms industry for its co-operation in this initiative'.

The Data Protection Commissioner, Billy Hawkes, said: “Cold calling has been a major source of complaint to our Office in the past year. I am delighted that we can now offer phone subscribers this very effective way of protecting their privacy”.

For further information on consumer rights relating to ‘cold calls’, please visit www.askcomreg.ie and www.dataprotection.ie.

ENDS

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