



AI-Voice Robocalls and the New FCC Rules — What Changed

Why fake AI voices now flood our phones — the new rules, and how to quiet it down.

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1634 · SAFETY** —————

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Robocalls are automated calls, and now many use AI voices that sound like a real person instead of an obvious recording. In early 2024 the FCC ruled that AI-generated voices in robocalls count as 'artificial' under the law, so making them without your consent is illegal. That's good news, but criminals ignore the law, so the calls continue. Your real protection is practical: turn on call-blocking tools, let unknown callers go to voicemail, register on the Do Not Call list, and never act on an unsolicited call asking for money or information.

- 1 Understand: AI-voice robocalls without consent are now illegal — but scammers don't care.
- 2 Turn on your carrier's free spam-call blocking.
- 3 Consider 'silence unknown callers' so only saved contacts ring through.
- 4 Register your number on the national Do Not Call list.
- 5 Never give money or information on an unsolicited call — hang up and verify.

GOOD TO KNOW

A lifelike voice does not make a call legitimate. Whether it's a person, a recording, or an AI voice, the rule is the same: don't act on an unsolicited call — hang up and verify independently.

1. Why I Wrote This One

The robocall problem just got a new voice.

In over thirty years of helping folks across Portage County with their phones, few things come up more often than the plague of unwanted calls. For a long time, robocalls at least sounded like robocalls — a stilted recording or an obvious script you could spot in a second. That is changing fast. Now a robocall can speak in a warm, natural, lifelike voice generated by artificial intelligence, carrying on almost like a real person. I am writing this guide so you understand what is happening and, more importantly, how to take back control of your phone.

There is both good news and a dose of realism here. The good news is that the authorities have recognized the danger and acted: the Federal Communications Commission ruled in early 2024 that AI-generated voices in robocalls are illegal without the recipient's consent, which gives regulators and state attorneys general more tools to go after the worst offenders. The realism is that criminals, by definition, break the law, so a ruling does not

make the calls stop. Your practical defenses still matter most.

So this guide does two things. It explains, in plain terms, what the new rules mean and why AI voices make robocalls more dangerous, so you are informed. And it gives you the concrete, practical steps — the blocking tools, the phone settings, the simple habits — that actually reduce the flood and keep you safe when a call slips through. By the end, you will feel less at the mercy of your ringing phone and more in charge of it, which is exactly how it should be.

WATCH OUT

If spam calls are wearing you down, the practical steps later in this guide can quiet your phone dramatically. Don't resign yourself to the flood — a lot can be done.

2. What a Robocall Actually Is

The plain-English basics.

A robocall is simply an automated phone call that plays a pre-set message or runs through an automated system rather than being dialed and spoken by a person in real time. Computers place these calls by the millions, cheaply and instantly, which is why they are so relentless. Some robocalls are legitimate and even welcome — an appointment reminder from your doctor, a school closing alert, a fraud alert you signed up for. Many others are unwanted sales pitches, and a dangerous share are outright scams.

The law draws important lines here. Legitimate informational robocalls you have agreed to, and certain exempt categories, are allowed. But automated or pre-recorded sales calls to your phone generally require your prior consent, and scam robocalls are flatly illegal. The trouble is that scammers operate outside the law entirely, often from overseas or through networks that hide their tracks, so the rules that restrain honest businesses do little to stop the criminals. That gap is why the calls persist despite the regulations.

Understanding this helps you sort the calls you get. A robocall is not automatically a scam — your pharmacy's automated reminder is fine. But an unsolicited robocall trying to sell you something, offering a prize, warning of a problem with an account, or pressing you to press a button or share information, deserves suspicion. The automation itself is neutral; what matters is whether the call is something you agreed to and what it is trying to get you to do.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not every robocall is a scam — appointment reminders and alerts you signed up for are fine. The suspicious ones are unsolicited and want you to buy, press a button, or share information.

3. What the AI Voice Changes

Why a lifelike voice is more dangerous.

For years, one of our best defenses against scam robocalls was simply how they sounded. A robotic, stilted, or obviously pre-recorded voice gave the game away, and many people learned to hang up the instant they heard that telltale artificial tone. Artificial intelligence has taken that defense away. AI can now generate voices that are warm, natural, and conversational, indistinguishable from a real person to most ears, and even able to respond to what you say.

This matters in a few ways. A lifelike AI voice can hold you on the line longer, build rapport, and seem trustworthy in a way a clunky recording never could, making the pitch or the scam far more persuasive. The same technology can also clone specific voices, so a robocall could, in principle, use a voice crafted to sound like someone or some organization you trust. And because the AI can interact, it can handle your questions and objections smoothly, keeping the manipulation going.

The key takeaway is that you can no longer judge a call's legitimacy by how human and natural the voice sounds. 'It sounded like a real, nice person' is no longer reassurance. This is exactly why your defenses must shift from the voice to the behavior of the call — is it unsolicited, is it asking for money or information, is it pressuring you — and to practical tools that cut the calls off before you ever have to judge them. The ear is no longer a reliable gatekeeper.

WATCH OUT

A natural, friendly voice is no longer a sign a call is real. AI generates lifelike voices easily, so judge the call by what it wants, not by how human it sounds.

4. What the FCC Actually Ruled

The 2024 decision, in plain words.

Here is what the regulators did, in plain terms. In early 2024, the Federal Communications Commission issued a ruling that AI-generated voices count as 'artificial' voices under the existing law that governs robocalls, the Telephone Consumer Protection Act. In practical effect, that means calls using AI-generated voices are subject to the same rules as other pre-recorded or artificial-voice robocalls — which generally require your prior consent — so using them to call you without that consent is illegal.

The ruling grew out of real harm. It came shortly after a widely reported incident in which AI was used to generate a fake voice of a well-known political figure in robocalls to voters, which alarmed officials about how this technology could be misused to deceive the public. A broad coalition of state attorneys general supported the move, because it gives them, along with the FCC, clearer authority and more tools to pursue those behind illegal AI-voice robocall campaigns.

It is worth being precise about what the ruling does and does not mean, since headlines oversimplified it. It did not ban the technology itself or make every AI voice illegal; legitimate, consented uses remain possible. What it did was confirm that bad actors using AI voices to robocall people without consent are breaking the law and can be pursued for it. That is a meaningful strengthening of the rules, even though, as with any law, it does not by itself make the criminals stop.

GOOD TO KNOW

The FCC didn't ban AI voices outright — it confirmed that using them to robocall you without consent is illegal, giving regulators and state AGs more tools to go after offenders.

5. Why the Calls Keep Coming

The gap between law and reality.

If AI-voice robocalls are illegal without consent, a fair question is why your phone still rings with them. The answer is the same reason laws against fraud do not end fraud: the people making scam robocalls are criminals who ignore the law by definition. Many operate from overseas, beyond easy reach of American regulators, or route their calls through shadowy networks and constantly-changing numbers that are hard to trace and shut down. A ruling gives authorities better tools, but enforcement against a flood of anonymous, international calls is genuinely hard.

The economics work against us too. Placing automated calls costs almost nothing, so a scammer can call millions of numbers and profit even if only a tiny fraction of people respond. Faking the number on your screen is cheap and easy, letting them dodge blocks and hide their identity. And AI has lowered the skill needed to run a convincing operation. These forces mean that while the authorities make real progress against specific bad actors, the overall tide of unwanted calls does not simply vanish because of a rule.

This is not cause for despair, but for realism about where your protection comes from. The legal and technical efforts — the FCC's rules, the phone industry's work to authenticate calls, enforcement actions — do help, gradually. But your most reliable, immediate defense is the set of practical tools and habits you control directly: blocking, filtering, letting unknowns go to voicemail, and never acting on an unsolicited call. Those work today, regardless of how enforcement against the criminals is going.

GOOD TO KNOW

Laws help gradually, but criminals ignore them and often operate overseas. Your immediate, reliable protection is the practical tools and habits you control yourself.

6. Turn On Call Blocking

Your carrier's built-in help.

The first practical step, and one of the most effective, is to turn on the spam-call blocking and labeling that your phone carrier offers. In recent years, the major carriers have rolled out tools — often free — that automatically detect likely scam and spam calls and either block them outright or label them on your screen with a warning like 'Scam Likely' or 'Spam.' These catch a large share of unwanted calls before they ever bother you, and they improve over time.

How you turn it on varies by carrier, but it is usually available through a free app the carrier provides or a setting in your account. Each major carrier has its own branded version of this service. If you are not sure whether yours is on, that is a perfect thing to check — you may find a powerful filter has been available to you for free all along. The labeled calls let you decline with confidence, and the blocked ones you simply never have to deal with.

Beyond the carrier tools, your phone itself has built-in options and there are reputable third-party call-blocking apps as well. The carrier's own service is the best place to start, since it works at the network level before the call even reaches your phone. If you would like help finding and switching on your carrier's spam-blocking, or picking a trustworthy app to add on top, that is exactly the kind of quick, satisfying task I am glad to help with — it can make an immediate, noticeable difference to how often your phone rings.

WATCH OUT

Check whether your carrier's free spam-call filter is switched on — many people have it available and never knew. It blocks or labels a large share of unwanted calls automatically.

7. Silence the Unknown Callers

The setting that brings real peace.

One of the most powerful settings on a modern phone, and a favorite of many people I help, is the option to silence calls from unknown numbers. When you turn this on, calls from numbers that are not in your contacts do not ring your phone at all; they go quietly to voicemail, where you can review them at your leisure. Calls from people you know still ring through normally. It can transform a phone that rings with spam all day into one that only rings for people you actually want to hear from.

Both iPhones and Android phones offer a version of this feature in their phone or call settings, sometimes called 'silence unknown callers' or 'screen unknown numbers.' The trade-off is simple and manageable: a legitimate caller who is not yet in your contacts — a new doctor's office, a delivery driver, a return call from a business — will go to voicemail the first time, so you check your voicemail and call back the real ones. For many people, especially those worn down by constant spam, that is a wonderful trade.

If you worry about missing an important call from an unknown number, you can soften it by making sure the people and places you expect to hear from are saved in your contacts, so they ring through. You can also simply get in the habit of glancing at your voicemail. For a great many of the folks I help, turning on this one setting is the single biggest relief for the spam-call problem, and it pairs perfectly with the carrier's blocking to quiet the phone dramatically.

TIP

'Silence unknown callers' sends non-contacts straight to voicemail while your saved contacts ring normally. For many people it's the single biggest relief from the spam-call flood.

8. The Do Not Call List

What it does, and what it doesn't.

You have probably heard of the national Do Not Call Registry, and it is worth registering your number — but it helps to understand what it actually does, so you are neither skipping a free protection nor expecting too much from it. Registering tells legitimate telemarketers that they must not call you, and reputable companies honor it. It is free, it is permanent once done, and there is no harm in signing up both your landline and your cell.

The honest limit is that the Do Not Call list stops law-abiding telemarketers, not criminals. Scammers running illegal robocalls ignore the registry entirely, just as they ignore the other rules. So registering will reduce the legitimate sales calls you get, which is genuinely useful, but it will not stop the scam robocalls, which are the more dangerous ones. Do not mistake being on the list for being protected from fraud; it is one helpful layer, aimed at honest callers.

There is even a small twist worth knowing: because scammers do not care about the list, some use the pretense of it against you, calling to 'confirm your Do Not Call registration' or

offering to add you for a fee. The real registry is free and never calls you to sign you up. So register yourself, directly through the official registry, and treat any call offering to handle your Do Not Call status as a scam. Registering is a fine free step; just hold realistic expectations about what it can and cannot do.

WATCH OUT

The real Do Not Call registry is free and never calls you. Any call offering to register you, confirm your status, or do it for a fee is itself a scam.

9. The One Rule for When a Call Slips Through

Behavior, not voice, is what matters.

No matter how good your blocking and settings are, some unwanted calls will still slip through, so you need one reliable rule for when they do. Here it is: you never give money, personal information, or access to anyone on an unsolicited call — one you did not place or expressly arrange. If a call you did not initiate asks you to pay, to share account or personal details, to press a button, or to act urgently, you hang up and, if it claimed to be someone real, you verify independently through a number you look up yourself.

This rule works precisely because it does not depend on judging the voice, which AI has made unreliable. It does not matter whether the caller sounds like a warm human, a smooth AI, or an obvious robot; what matters is that the call came to you unsolicited and is trying to extract money or information. By tying your response to the behavior of the call rather than its sound, you are protected even against a flawless AI voice, because you are simply declining to act on any unsolicited call, full stop.

In practice, this means a healthy default of skepticism toward calls you did not expect. You can be polite, or you can simply hang up — you owe an unsolicited caller nothing. If the call claimed to be your bank, a government agency, a company you use, or a charity, and you think there might be something to it, you reach that organization yourself through its official number, never through the call. That one rule, applied to every unsolicited call, is your sturdy backstop behind all the blocking tools.

GOOD TO KNOW

Judge a call by its behavior, not its voice: unsolicited plus a request for money, information, or urgency means hang up and verify. That beats even a perfect AI voice.

10. Press 1, Robots, and Live Transfers

How scam robocalls try to hook you.

It helps to recognize the common shapes scam robocalls take, so you can spot them quickly. Many play a recorded or AI message and then invite you to 'press 1 to speak with an agent' or 'press 2 to be removed from our list.' Both are traps. Pressing any button confirms to the scammer that your number is live and that a real person answered, which marks you for more calls, and 'press 1' usually connects you to a live scammer ready to work on you.

The safest response to a recorded or AI robocall you did not want is to hang up without pressing anything or speaking. Do not press buttons to opt out, do not say 'remove me,' and ideally do not even say 'yes' or engage, since any interaction signals a working, answered number. The old advice to 'ask to be removed' applies to legitimate telemarketers, not to scam robocalls, where any response just invites more. Silence and a hang-up are your friends.

Watch too for the common scam-robocall scripts: a warning about your 'expiring' car warranty or insurance, a problem with an account or a delivery, a prize or free vacation, a lowered-interest-rate offer, or an urgent issue with a government benefit. Whatever the script, and however lifelike the voice, the response is the same — do not press, do not engage, hang up. And if it claimed to be a real company you use, reach them yourself through their official number to check, rather than through the call.

WATCH OUT

Don't press any button on a scam robocall, even to 'opt out.' Pressing confirms your number is live and often connects you straight to a scammer. Just hang up.

11. Why They Fake the Number

A quick word on spoofed caller ID.

Robocalls almost always travel with a faked number on your screen, a practice called spoofing, and it is worth understanding briefly because it undercuts a natural instinct. The number you see is set by the caller and is easily faked, so robocalls often display a local-looking number, or the name of a real company or agency, to get you to answer and to trust the call. You cannot rely on the screen to tell you who is really calling.

This is why a familiar or local number ringing you is no guarantee the caller is who it appears to be, and it is also why blocking individual spam numbers has limited value — the scammers simply switch to a new faked number for the next batch. The phone industry and regulators have been rolling out a system to authenticate calls and cut down on spoofing, and it helps with some calls, but it is incomplete and does not verify that the caller is honest. So the screen remains, at best, a hint.

For the purposes of this guide, the practical point is simple: do not let a trusted-looking number on your screen talk you into trusting an unsolicited call. Your rule holds regardless of what the display shows — unsolicited calls asking for money or information get a hang-up and an independent check. I have a separate guide devoted entirely to caller-ID spoofing if you would like to understand that trick in more depth; here, just know that the number, like the voice, can be faked.

GOOD TO KNOW

The number on your screen is easily faked, even to show a local number or a real company. Blocking individual numbers helps little, since scammers just switch. Judge the call, not the display.

12. Protecting Against the 'Yes' Trap

Why they want you to say a word.

You may have heard warnings about scammers recording you saying 'yes,' and it is worth addressing calmly and accurately, because the topic generates both real caution and some exaggeration. The genuine concern is that any engagement with a scam robocall — answering questions, saying 'yes,' pressing buttons — confirms your number is active and responsive, which marks you for more targeting and can feed you into a live scam interaction. That part is real and is good reason to simply hang up rather than converse.

The more dramatic version of the warning claims a recorded 'yes' alone lets scammers authorize charges in your name. In practice, a recording of you saying 'yes' is not a magic key that empties your accounts — real charges require far more, like your account numbers and other verification. So you do not need to panic if you once answered 'yes' to a robocall. The sensible takeaway is not fear of a single word, but the broader habit of not engaging with unsolicited calls at all.

So keep it in proportion: the right practice is to avoid conversing with suspicious robocalls, not because one word dooms you, but because any engagement invites more calls and keeps you exposed to manipulation. When an unsolicited call starts asking questions designed to get you talking — 'Can you hear me?' 'Is this [your name]?' — the cleanest move is to hang up. You lose nothing by ending an unwanted call, and you deny the scammer the engagement they are fishing for.

GOOD TO KNOW

A recorded 'yes' alone can't drain your accounts — that needs much more. But engaging at all marks your number as live, so the best habit is simply to hang up on unsolicited calls.

13. Helping an Overwhelmed Loved One

When the phone rings all day.

For some people, especially older adults with a long-held landline or a widely-shared number, the volume of spam calls becomes genuinely overwhelming — the phone ringing many times a day, interrupting meals and sleep, and creating constant low-level stress and a steady risk of a scam slipping through. If you have a loved one in this situation, helping them quiet their phone is a real kindness that improves daily life and safety at once.

The most effective help is setting up the practical tools for them: turning on the carrier's spam blocking, enabling 'silence unknown callers' so only saved contacts ring through, making sure the people and places they want to hear from are in their contacts, and registering on the Do Not Call list. For a heavily-targeted landline, some people switch to a phone or service with strong built-in call screening, or add a call-blocking device. Each step chips away at the flood, and together they can restore real peace.

Pair the tools with gentle reassurance about the one rule — never give money or information on an unsolicited call — and the open-door promise that they can always check a worrying call with you, with no judgment. The goal is a phone that is once again a helpful tool rather than a source of dread and danger. If setting up these features on a particular phone or carrier is fiddly, that is exactly the kind of visit I am glad to make; it is deeply satisfying to hand someone back a quiet phone.

TIP

For a loved one drowning in spam calls, 'silence unknown callers' plus the carrier's spam filter can restore real peace. Make sure their important contacts are saved so those still ring through.

14. Legitimate Robocalls You Might Want

Don't block the useful ones.

In the rush to block the bad calls, it is worth remembering that some automated calls are genuinely useful, so you do not want to cut yourself off from them entirely. Appointment reminders from your doctor or dentist, prescription-ready notices from your pharmacy, school or weather emergency alerts, flight or delivery updates, and fraud alerts you signed up for with your bank are all robocalls of a helpful kind. The tools in this guide are designed to filter the junk while letting these through.

This is one reason the 'silence unknown callers' approach works well: the organizations you deal with regularly can be saved in your contacts so their automated calls ring through, while random spam goes to voicemail. It is also why outright blocking every automated call is usually not the goal. You want a smart filter — carrier spam detection plus your own contact list — rather than a blanket wall that would also stop the pharmacy from telling you your medicine is ready.

A practical tip: as you set up your defenses, take a moment to add the numbers of the services you rely on to your contacts — your doctor, pharmacy, bank, utility, school. That way their legitimate automated calls and messages reach you normally even with strong filtering on, and you get the best of both worlds: the useful automated calls come through, and the flood of junk is held back. A little setup on the front end makes the filtering both powerful and painless.

TIP

Save your doctor, pharmacy, bank, and school in your contacts. Their useful automated calls then ring through even with strong filtering on, while spam stays filtered out.

15. Reporting Robocalls

Where to send them, and why.

Reporting unwanted and scam robocalls helps regulators and carriers track the sources and go after the worst offenders, and it is quick. While you will not usually get a personal response, your reports feed the data that supports enforcement actions and better blocking over time. It is a small civic good that, combined with many others, does make a difference to the broader fight against the call flood.

- Report unwanted and spoofed calls to the Federal Communications Commission through its consumer complaint center online.
- Report illegal and scam calls to the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud), and unwanted-call issues tied to the Do Not Call list through the registry's site.
- Forward scam text messages to 7726 (SPAM) so your carrier can act on the source.
- Use the 'report' or 'block and report' feature in your carrier's spam app or your phone when available.
- For a scam that cost you money, also report to the FBI at ic3.gov and the Ohio Attorney General at 800-282-0515.

Keep your expectations realistic, as with all scam reporting: the point is the collective record and the enforcement it supports, not an individual investigation of your particular call. Still, reporting is worthwhile, especially for persistent campaigns, and it pairs naturally with your blocking tools. I have a separate, detailed guide on reporting scams of all kinds if you would like the full walkthrough of the FTC, FBI, and Ohio channels.

GOOD TO KNOW

Reporting robocalls rarely gets a personal reply, but it feeds the data behind enforcement and better blocking. It's a quick civic good that adds up across many people.

16. The Text-Message Cousin

Spam texts work the same way.

Everything troubling about robocalls has a text-message cousin, often called spam texts or 'smishing,' and the same forces drive it: automated sending, pennies per message, faked sender information, and now AI writing the content fluently. You get a text about a package held for a fee, an unpaid toll, a bank alert, a prize, or a 'wrong number' that turns chatty, each with a link to tap or a reply to send. Like robocalls, these are sent in enormous volumes to huge lists.

The defenses mirror the call ones closely. Do not tap links in unexpected texts, do not reply, and do not send money or information. Reaching a company through its own app or a number you look up yourself — never through the text — is the safe way to check anything that claims to be from a service you use. And resist replying 'STOP' to a scam text: with a legitimate sender that unsubscribes you, but with a scammer it merely confirms your number is live and worth more targeting. Just delete it.

For spam texts, there is a simple, useful reporting step: forward the message to 7726, which spells SPAM on the keypad, and your carrier uses it to help block the source. Your phone may also offer a 'report junk' option on suspicious messages. Between not engaging, reporting to 7726, and your phone's filtering, you can hold back much of the text flood the same way you hold back the calls — and the one rule, never act on an unsolicited message, covers both.

WATCH OUT

Don't reply 'STOP' to a scam text — it just confirms your number is live. Delete it, or forward it to 7726 to help your carrier block the source.

17. Help for a Landline Under Siege

Options when the home phone won't stop.

A traditional landline can be especially besieged by robocalls, and the carrier apps and smartphone settings in this guide do not all apply to an old-fashioned home phone. If you or a loved one relies on a landline that rings with spam constantly, there are still good options worth knowing, because no one should have to unplug their phone to get peace.

- Call-blocking devices that plug into the landline and screen or block known spam numbers, some requiring callers to identify themselves before the phone rings.
- A 'phone number screening' feature where unknown callers must announce themselves or press a key, which robocall systems usually can't do.
- Your phone company's own call-blocking or 'anonymous call rejection' services, which many offer.
- Switching an internet-based home phone to a service with strong built-in call screening.
- Registering the landline on the Do Not Call list, as you would a cell number.

Some of these devices and features are remarkably effective, because they demand an interaction — announcing a name, pressing a key — that automated robocall systems simply cannot complete, so the phone never even rings for them. For a loved one worn

down by a constantly ringing landline, setting up one of these can be life-changing in a small but real way. If you are not sure which option fits a particular phone or service, that is a good thing to ask me about; matching the right tool to a landline is exactly the kind of help I enjoy providing.

WATCH OUT

Call-screening devices that make unknown callers announce themselves work beautifully on landlines, because robocall systems can't complete the step — so the phone never rings for them.

18. Keeping It in Perspective

Annoyed, not afraid.

I want to close the main part of this guide by putting the whole thing in a calm light. Robocalls, even clever AI-voiced ones, are mostly a nuisance to be managed, not a terror to live in fear of. With your blocking tools on, your unknown callers silenced, and your one simple rule in mind, you are well protected, and the occasional call that slips through is just that — an occasional call you can hang up on and forget. You are far more in control than the relentless ringing can make it feel.

It also helps to remember that the big picture is slowly improving. Regulators are taking the AI-voice threat seriously, the phone industry is working to authenticate calls and cut spoofing, carriers' spam filters keep getting better, and enforcement actions do take down bad actors. Progress is uneven and the criminals adapt, but you are not shouting into a void — there is a genuine, ongoing effort on your side, and your reports and your tools are part of what makes it work.

So let the goal be a phone you control rather than one that controls you. Set up the practical steps at whatever pace suits you, keep the one rule in your back pocket, and treat the calls that get through as the minor annoyance they usually are. And remember you are never on your own with any of it: if the tools are confusing, if a call rattles you, or if you just want your phone to stop ringing so much, that is exactly what I am here to help with, with patience and no judgment.

GOOD TO KNOW

With your tools on and your one rule in mind, robocalls are a manageable nuisance, not a danger to fear. The occasional one that slips through is just a call to hang up and forget.

19. Questions People Ask Me

The ones that come up again and again.

If AI robocalls are illegal now, why do I still get them? Because criminals ignore the law, and many operate overseas or hide behind faked numbers that are hard to trace. The ruling gives authorities better tools, but it does not flip a switch that stops the calls. Your practical blocking and habits are what protect you day to day.

The voice sounded completely human — doesn't that mean it was a real, legitimate call? No. AI now generates lifelike, natural voices easily, so a human-sounding call is no longer a sign of legitimacy. Judge the call by whether it was unsolicited and what it wants, not by how real the voice sounds.

Is it safe to answer unknown calls at all? Answering is not dangerous in itself; the danger is in engaging — pressing buttons, sharing information, or acting on the call. Many people prefer to let unknown numbers go to voicemail to avoid the hassle entirely. If you do answer and it's unsolicited and asking for something, just hang up.

Will blocking numbers stop the calls? Only a little, because scammers constantly switch to new faked numbers. Blocking an individual repeat offender can help, but network-level spam filtering and 'silence unknown callers' are far more effective than chasing numbers one by one.

20. A Five-Minute Phone-Peace Setup

The steps that quiet it down.

Here is the whole practical plan in one place. You can do these at your own pace, and each one helps on its own, but together they can transform a phone that rings with spam all day into one that is calm and under your control. None of it is complicated, and it is exactly the kind of setup I am glad to help with if a menu gets fiddly.

- 1 Turn on your carrier's free spam-call blocking or app.
- 2 Enable 'silence unknown callers' so only saved contacts ring through.
- 3 Save the people and services you want to hear from in your contacts.
- 4 Register your number on the national Do Not Call list (free, directly through the official site).

- 5 Adopt the one rule: never give money or information on an unsolicited call — hang up and verify.
- 6 Don't press buttons or engage with scam robocalls; just hang up.
- 7 Report persistent offenders to the FCC and FTC.

TIP

If you do just two things, make them the carrier spam filter and 'silence unknown callers.' Together they quiet most phones dramatically while still letting real callers reach you.

21. Reporting It — and Why It Helps

A few minutes that protect the next person.

Reporting a scam can feel pointless once the money is gone, but it genuinely matters. Reports help investigators link cases together, give platforms and phone carriers the evidence to shut fakes down, and warn others before they are caught. You do not need to have lost money to report — flagging an attempt is valuable too. It takes only a few minutes, and it turns a bad experience into something that helps your neighbors.

- Report to the Federal Trade Commission at ReportFraud.ftc.gov, the national clearinghouse for scams. You can also call 1-877-382-4357.
- Report online or financial crime to the FBI at ic3.gov, their internet-crime complaint center — especially for larger losses or cryptocurrency.
- Contact the Ohio Attorney General's consumer protection team at 800-282-0515 or through ohioattorneygeneral.gov.
- If your identity may be exposed, visit IdentityTheft.gov for a step-by-step recovery plan.
- Report spam texts by forwarding them to 7726 (SPAM), and use the 'report' button inside apps and email.

I wrote a separate, step-by-step guide on reporting to the FTC, the FBI, and the Ohio Attorney General, with exactly what to write down and what to expect afterward. If the reporting steps feel like a lot, that is a perfect thing to call me about. I am glad to sit with you and help you file, so that your report actually reaches the people who can use it.

GOOD TO KNOW

You will usually not hear back from a report, and that is normal. Your report still joins a bigger picture that helps investigators and warns others, even when nothing lands in your own inbox.

22. When to Just Call Me

A calm second opinion costs you nothing.

If something about robocalls, including ones that use lifelike AI voices has you second-guessing yourself, or you just want a steady second opinion before you do anything, please call me. There is never a charge to ask a scam question, and never any judgment. I would far rather spend a few minutes on the phone talking it through with you than hear later that something cost you money or worry. That is genuinely what I am here for, and it is some of the most satisfying work I do.

If you would like a hand in person, I come to homes all across Portage County. I can help you check something safely, tighten up your accounts and passwords after a close call, set your devices and routine so these scams have a harder time reaching you, and walk your whole family through a simple plan. We go at your pace, with no pressure and no rushing, and you come away feeling steadier.

GOOD TO KNOW

The best time to call is before you act — before you click, pay, or share anything. A quick 'does this seem right to you, Bill?' is one of my favorite kinds of call to get.

23. Contact Card & a Warm Close

Keep this page where you can find it again.

Bill's Home Tech — your local tech, Bill Davis, owner and only tech. Phone or text: (330) 200-8042. Email: bill@billshometech.com. Web: billshometech.com. Service area: Atwater, Ravenna, Kent, Streetsboro, Aurora, Rootstown, Mantua, Garrettsville, Windham, Edinburg, Suffield — all of Portage County, Ohio.

- Free phone call: any scam question or close call, always free, with no judgment and no rushing.
- In-home scam-check visit: \$99 flat for the first visit, with a 30-day follow-up included.
- Remote help by screen-share, for when you would rather not wait for a visit.

The law is on your side, the tools are better than ever, and a few simple habits put you back in charge of your own phone. Set them up at your own pace, and call me if a menu gives you trouble. I am a phone call away, and glad to help quiet your phone down.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

The big picture

AI-voice robocalls without consent are now illegal — but criminals ignore that, so the calls keep coming. Your practical tools and habits are the real protection.

Quiet your phone

- Turn on your carrier's free spam blocking.
- Enable 'silence unknown callers.'
- Save the services you want to hear from.
- Register on the national Do Not Call list.
- Report persistent offenders to the FCC/FTC.

When one slips through

- 1 Judge the call by what it wants, not the voice.
- 2 Don't press buttons or say 'yes' — just hang up.
- 3 Never give money or info on an unsolicited call.
- 4 Claimed to be a real company? Call them yourself.
- 5 A faked number proves nothing — don't trust the screen.

WATCH OUT

A lifelike human voice no longer means a call is real, and the real Do Not Call list never calls you. Judge the call's behavior, and hang up on anything unsolicited.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Why AI Robocalls Are Worse

The old 'it sounds like a robot' tell is gone.



You can't judge by the voice - judge what the call wants.

Illustration - a schematic; details vary by device and setup.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Take Back Your Phone

Law helps slowly; these steps help today.

- 1 Turn on the carrier's spam filter
- 2 Silence unknown callers to voicemail
- 3 Save the services you want to hear from
- 4 Join the Do Not Call list (free)
- 5 Never give money/info on an unsolicited call
- 6 Don't press buttons - just hang up

A lifelike voice isn't proof - judge the call, not the sound.

Illustration - a schematic; details vary by device and setup.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.