

Cell Phone Privacy Tips

Cell phones are a way of life for many consumers. People the world over use them on a regular basis, often forgetting the possible threats to their privacy and the potential for identity theft associated with mobile devices. The NYS Consumer Protection Board advises you to:

Protect Your Information

Use a digital cell phone. Conversations on older analog cell phones can be monitored fairly easily with scanning devices or other cell phones. Digital cell phones make this more difficult.

Turn off your Bluetooth function when your phone is not in use. Phones with Bluetooth capabilities are vulnerable to invasions of privacy. A person nearby with a laptop could potentially steal data from your phone, listen in on your conversation or use your phone to call other numbers.

Choose a secluded area for private conversations so they will not be overheard.

Register your personal wireless phone number(s) with the National Do Not Call Registry (1-888-382-1222 or www.donotcall.gov) to prevent receipt of unwanted calls or text messages.

Avoid replying to text messages from people or numbers you don't know.

Lock the phone keypad to help prevent unauthorized access when not using the cell phone.

Encrypt passwords and other sensitive data on your Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and cell phones. Service providers and/or manufacturers can assist you with encryption directions.

Delete personal information before disposing of or recycling your phone. Permanent data deletion may require several steps. You can direct your phone to delete certain data, but it will only delete the references to where the data is located. The actual information remains on the phone unless you take other actions. Therefore, you should:

- Refer to the owner's manual, service provider or the manufacturer of the phone for information on how to permanently delete data.
- Erase personal information including: contacts, call lists (received and made), voicemails, text messages (sent and received), web search history and photos.
- Remove the memory or subscriber identity module (SIM) card.

I WASN'T CONCERNED ABOUT CELL PHONE PRIVACY... BUT I AM NOW!



Dispose of Your Phone Responsibly and Safely

Recycle to safeguard the environment. Cell phone manufacturers, service providers, government agencies such as the NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV), the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US Postal Service (USPS), and not-for-profit groups have programs to recycle or refurbish mobile devices and their accessories.

Donate to a worthy cause. Some not-for-profit organizations collect mobile phones for charitable purposes. Information about where and how to donate your phone and accessories can be found online or by contacting the not-for-profit of your choice or your service provider.

Re-sell to get money for your phone. You may be able to resell the device to an individual or an organization. Contact information for this may be found online.

CAUTION: Be sure to delete all personal information and data from your mobile device before selling your phone (see *Protect Your Information* above).

Dispose of your phone properly. Check online at www.dec.ny.us or other websites to learn proper disposal methods and about New York's Wireless Recycling Act (2007), which requires providers to accept phones for reuse.



A public service of the
NYS Consumer Protection Board
Advocating for and Empowering NY Consumers

www.nysconsumer.gov

1-800-697-1220