



# Consumer Connections

Brought to you by the Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division

Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, FCC

August 2020

## Calling a Mobile Number in Mexico?

Effective August 3, 2020, callers in the U.S. and abroad dialing a mobile number in Mexico should no longer add the number "1" after Mexico's country code of 52. The process for dialing a landline in Mexico has not changed.

- Dialing from a mobile phone:  
+52 xx xxxx-xxxx.
- Dialing from a landline:  
011 52 xx xxxx-xxxx.

For more information, including how to dial when in Mexico, [download this flyer](#).

Learn more about international calling: [fcc.gov/consumers/guides/international-long-distance-calling-made-simple-tip-sheet](https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/international-long-distance-calling-made-simple-tip-sheet)

## Call Blocking Updates

FCC Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau Chief, Patrick Webre, recently released a blog titled [Building on the Promise of Call Blocking](#). The blog highlights an FCC report [on call blocking tools](#) that found call-blocking technology is now widely available at low or no cost to customers. These tools build on actions taken by the Commission as part of its multiprong approach to addressing this pressing consumer issue.

In July, [the FCC adopted rules](#) that further encourage blocking of illegal and unwanted calls by establishing safe harbors from liability under the Communications Act and the Commission's rules for the unintended or inadvertent blocking of wanted calls. The rules are designed to eliminate concerns that kept some companies from implementing robust robocall blocking efforts.

Consumers interested in learning more about call blocking and labeling tools can visit the FCC's new call blocking guide [fcc.gov/consumers/guides/call-blocking-tools-and-resources](https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/call-blocking-tools-and-resources). The Consumer Help Center also has guides on [robocalls](#) and caller ID [spoofing](#). You can also file a complaint about unwanted calls or other telecommunications issues at the FCC's [Consumer Complaint Center](#).

## COVID-19 Contact Tracing Scams

Contact tracing is a public health technique used to identify individuals who have had close contact with someone known to have the virus. As state and local health departments develop contact tracing programs, scammers have taken note and are impersonating contact tracers in texts and calls, claiming the contacted party has been exposed to COVID-19 and needs to act quickly.

Scam text messages often include links to websites that request Social Security numbers or insurance information. Clicking these links can also download malware onto a mobile device, allowing scammers to access your personal data. **Never click on a link in a text message from an unknown sender.**

After the initial text, most legitimate contact tracing work is done over the phone. Be aware, legitimate contact tracers will not ask for:

- Insurance information
- Bank account information
- Credit card numbers
- Social Security numbers
- Payment

**If a caller asks for any of the above, hang up.**

Learn more about contact tracing and other COVID-19 scams at [fcc.gov/covid-scams](https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams).

## Stay Connected During a Weather Emergency

### FCC tips to prepare:

- Check landline back-up batteries.
- Fully charge mobile phones, devices, batteries and portable rechargers.
- Backup computer data and print out important personal emergency information.
- Note local emergency and non-emergency numbers.
- Ask local public safety officials if the 911 call center in your area supports text-to-911.
- Consider buying a battery-operated, solar powered or hand-cranked radio or portable TV.

### Tips for communicating during an emergency:

- Limit non-emergency phone calls
- Try texting in non-emergency situations
- Adjust your wireless phone settings to conserve battery
- Call 911 only for emergencies
- If evacuate, forward you home phone to your wireless

For more tips, visit:  
[fcc.gov/emergency](https://www.fcc.gov/emergency)



## September is National Preparedness Month: Make a Plan

Colleen Tressler, Senior Project Manager, Federal Trade Commission

Extreme weather and natural disasters can occur with little warning. Are you ready to leave your home at a moment's notice? You can reduce your anxiety about weather-related events by making sure you are prepared when they happen.

- **Organize your finances.** When it comes to preparing for situations like weather emergencies, [financial readiness](#) is as important as a flashlight with fully charged batteries. Having your financial documents up to date, in one place, and portable can make a big difference at a tense time.
- **Replace missing documents.** If you're missing important documents, now's the time to [replace them](#).
- **Check your insurance.** Find out if any of your home, health, or other insurance policies will pay for temporary shelter, replacement clothing, furniture, or other items if you are affected by extreme weather or a disaster.
- **Prepare your home.** From floods to fires, earthquakes, high winds, and tornadoes, check out [The Federal Emergency Management Agency's \(FEMA\) How-To Series: Protect Your Home or Business](#). If you live where storms and flooding are likely, visit [floodsmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) to learn about FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.
- **Plan for your pets.** If you're like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your household. A little [planning](#) today can help ensure safety for your pets during an emergency.
- **Sign up for alerts and warnings** in your area. Public safety officials use timely and reliable systems to alert you and your family in the event of severe weather and disasters.
- **Find out if your local public shelter is open**, in case you need to [evacuate your home](#) and go there. Your shelter location may be different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you need to evacuate, prepare a "go kit" with [personal items](#) you need during an emergency, including hand sanitizer and face coverings.

The FTC's site, [Dealing with Weather Emergencies](#), has practical tips to help you prepare for, deal with, and recover from a weather emergency. Like all FTC materials, the site is mobile-friendly, so you'll have ready access to information when and where you need it.

## Multilingual Alerting

With summer upon us, natural disasters—from hurricanes and wildfires to windstorms and floods—may also arrive. Local officials know that timely and effective public communication is essential to keeping their communities safe, including outreach to those whose primary language is not English. America's public alerting tools can help. The Wireless Emergency Alerts system (WEA) allows authorized government officials to deliver alerts to cell phones in an affected area, and WEA supports Spanish language alerts. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) delivers critical warnings and essential information over radio and television. Authorized EAS alert originators can issue multilingual audio messages over EAS. The FCC has [tips](#) on how you can issue emergency alerts in your community and information to assist you with multilingual alerting at [Multilingual Alerting Tips](#). The FCC also hosted a May 2019 workshop on multilingual alerting, that can be [viewed online](#).

## Upcoming Events

### Join us for our Monthly Consumer Information Call!

August 11, 2020  
September 8, 2020  
2:00 p.m. EDT

To RSVP and for more  
info email  
[outreach@fcc.gov](mailto:outreach@fcc.gov)

## Open Commission Meetings

[August 6, 2020](#)

10:30 am - 12:30 pm EST

[September 30, 2020](#)

10:30 am - 12:30 pm EST

[All FCC Events](#)

## Resources:

[Consumer Guides](#)  
[FCC Scam Glossary](#)  
[Consumer Help Center](#)  
[Consumer Complaint  
Center](#)

## Consumer Education Materials to Share

Download PDF's of the  
FCC's [tip cards and  
posters](#) to share. Tip  
cards are available in  
Spanish, Korean,  
Tagalog, Traditional  
Chinese & Vietnamese  
upon request.

## Connect with the FCC:

[Facebook](#)  
[Twitter](#)  
[YouTube](#)

## Contact CAOD:

Inquiries and information  
request can be sent to  
[outreach@fcc.gov](mailto:outreach@fcc.gov)  
[fcc.gov/outreach](http://fcc.gov/outreach)

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Signed by President George H. W. Bush on July 26, 1990, Title IV of the ADA directed the Federal Communications Commission to ensure that [Telecommunications Relay Services](#) (TRS) are available to individuals with hearing and speech disabilities in the United States.

This new civil right shattered many previously insurmountable obstacles to employment, health care, emergency communications, and much more. As a result, individuals with disabilities are now able to place calls to others directly, independently, and effectively. It was a critical step in fulfilling the promise to make “rapid, efficient nationwide communication service” available to all individuals. As communication technologies have evolved, TRS has expanded to enhance access to “functionally equivalent” telecommunications services under the ADA.

Learn more about the major milestones in the history of TRS in this recently [published blog](#). For more information about the FCC's work in disability access policy, visit the home page for the FCC's [Disability Rights Office](#).

Chairman Pai also released a [statement](#) and [video](#) in recognition of this landmark legislation's anniversary.

## FCC Seeks New Members for Its Consumer Advisory Committee

The Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) makes recommendations to the Commission regarding consumer issues within the jurisdiction of the FCC and facilitates the participation of all consumers in proceedings before the Commission. The CAC is one of many federal advisory committees that provide advice to the agency on its work.

The FCC is [seeking nominations](#) for two-year terms from nonprofit organizations, corporations, trade associations, government agencies, or other entities from both the public and private sectors, as well as consumers interested in serving on their own behalf.

The renewed CAC Charter is expected to begin after the current charter expires in October 2020 and run for two years.

Member selections will be made based on factors, such as expertise and diversity of viewpoints necessary to effectively address the topics considered by the Committee.

While there is no required number of meetings, the Committee traditionally holds three meetings per calendar year in Washington, D.C. and/or by teleconference. Members of the Committee will be expected to participate in at least one CAC Working Group. Working Group deliberations are conducted primarily through email and teleconferences. Meetings will be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

All nominations must be received by the Commission no later than August 7, 2020, and should be submitted via an online nomination form at <https://www.fcc.gov/consumer-advisory-committee> unless use of that form would present a hardship, in which case the required information may be submitted by email to the Committee's Designated Federal Officer, Scott Marshall, [scott.marshall@fcc.gov](mailto:scott.marshall@fcc.gov). Nominations will be acknowledged shortly after receipt.

For additional information about the CAC, the status of CAC membership, prohibitions of lobbyists, and other details, please see [this Public Notice](#), email Scott Marshall ([scott.marshall@fcc.gov](mailto:scott.marshall@fcc.gov)), or email [outreach@fcc.gov](mailto:outreach@fcc.gov).