

Abstract

General information about robocalling call blocking in a VoIP/SIP environment

ROBOcalling - Call Blocking Guidelines & recommendations

DOA Enterprise Telecom Services

**Scope**

Agencies have seen an increase in the number of nuisance calls and robocalls when they have migrated to Voice over Internet (VoIP) services. This document provides background and guidelines for how you may get around these types of calls impacting State agencies today.

**Definitions and Background**

* **Robocalling** is a phone call that uses a computerized system to deliver a pre-recorded message, as if from a robot, hence the name. They are often associated with telemarketing phone campaigns but can also be used by groups who are trying to scam or trick people. Some robocalls use personalized audio messages to simulate an actual personal phone call.
* **Spoofing** is a tactic that spam callers use to hide their caller ID and display any number they want.
* **Neighbor** **Spoofing** refers to telemarketers and scammers changing their phone number to resemble your phone number.
* **War Dialing** is the practice of having a computer dial large numbers of telephone numbers in search of devices that can be exploited, such as fax machines, computers, or modems. Often, robocallers target a range of phone numbers and dial them with no concern of who owns those numbers. Once done with a war dialing campaign, robocallers will move onto the new number range.
* Both, robocalling and neighbor spoofing, are issues impacting users across business/consumer VoIP and wireless services. Recently, the industry has started to see robocallers and scammers spoofing local phone numbers by using the same area code and prefix to increase their chances of having their calls answered. Unfortunately, when you multiply that by the number of different robocallers targeting the same number ranges or become a war dialing target, you can begin to see why the issue is so prolific. Industry experts and telecom service providers are leading efforts to develop solutions that can intelligently analyze calls and block calls based on a network IP address, call duration, phone number and other techniques. This technology is relatively new to the industry, and we don’t anticipate service providers having mature products for another 3 to 5 years.

**Guidelines and Recommendations**

Several states have engaged together to see what can be done about this issue. This includes:

* developing a detailed understanding of what is technologically feasible to minimize unwanted and illegal telemarking
* pressing major telecom companies to expedite the best possible solutions for businesses and consumers
* reviewing if further recommendations should be made to the Federal Communications Commission.

DOA reached out to AT&T (the current service provider) to see what can be done to prevent this issue. AT&T’s Public Policy Office provided the State with two documents (links below) on AT&T’s latest steps in preventing robocalling. DOA reviewed the options outlined and concluded that these documents don’t provide new solutions and offers no timeline for adoption by the Telecom service providers.

AT&T’s Public Policy Office Documents:

* + [Robocall Handout](https://agency.wisconsin.gov/sites/pmo/ucprogram/DOAUCProject/Shared%20Documents/Program/Robocalls/Robocall%20Handout_012519.pdf)
  + [Robocall - 1.14.2019 Rosenworcel Response](https://agency.wisconsin.gov/sites/pmo/ucprogram/DOAUCProject/Shared%20Documents/Program/Robocalls/Robocall%20-%201.14.2019%20Rosenworcel%20Response.pdf)

Until more permanent solutions are found, we recommend the following:

* For Harassing/Abusive Calls from an individual, you should engage Capitol Police to investigate and work with your Telecommunications manager to block the number as necessary.
* For Robocalling or SPAM, the best suggestion currently is to hang up. Chances are good that you will not see another intrusive call because robocalling and neighbor spoofing groups tend to change phone numbers they use to evade defense mechanisms. However, if robocalling or spam does continue from the same number, you can work with your Telecommunications manager to block the number. We have seen legitimate numbers blocked previously, and so we strongly caution you and your Telecommunications manager to use due diligence before blocking ***any*** number. Due diligence might include calling the number to confirm they don’t belong to a real person or legitimate business. If a number is blocked, we also suggest regular reviews of those blocks to validate that they continue to not belong to a person or legitimate business.

**Document History/Owner**

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