

## FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

## 16 CFR Part 310

## Telemarketing Sales Rule

AGENCY: Federal Trade Commission.

ACTION: Final Amended Rule.

**SUMMARY:** In this document, the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC" or "Commission") issues its Statement of Basis and Purpose ("SBP") and final amended Telemarketing Sales Rule ("amended Rule"). The amended Rule sets forth the FTC's amendments to the Telemarketing Sales Rule ("original Rule" or "TSR"). The amended Rule is issued pursuant to the Commission's Rule Review, the Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act ("Telemarketing Act" or "Act") and the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act ("USA PATRIOT Act").

**EFFECTIVE DATES:** The amended Rule will become effective March 31, 2003. Full compliance with § 310.4(a)(7), the caller identification transmission provision, is required by January 29, 2004. The Commission will announce at a future time the date by which full compliance with § 310.4(b)(1)(iii)(B), the "do-not-call" registry provision, will be required. The Commission anticipates that full compliance with the "do-not-call" provision will be required approximately seven months from the date a contract is awarded to create the national registry.

**ADDRESSES:** Requests for copies of the amended Rule and this SBP should be sent to: Public Reference Branch, Room 130, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20580. The complete record of this proceeding is also available at that address. Relevant portions of the proceeding, including the amended Rule and SBP, are available at <http://www.ftc.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Catherine Harrington-McBride, (202) 326-2452, Karen Leonard, (202) 326-3597, Michael Goodman, (202) 326-3071, or Carole Danielson, (202) 326-3115, Division of Marketing Practices, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20580.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The amended Rule: (1) retains most of the original Rule's requirements concerning deceptive and abusive telemarketing acts or practices without major substantive changes; (2) establishes a national "do-not-call" registry maintained by the Commission; (3)

defines "upselling" to clarify the amended Rule's application to these transactions, requires specific disclosures for upsell transactions, and expressly excludes upselling transactions from certain exemptions in the amended Rule; (4) requires that sellers and telemarketers accepting payment by methods other than credit and debit cards subject to certain protections obtain express verifiable authorization from their customers; (5) retains the exemptions for pay-per-call, franchise, and face-to-face transactions, but makes these transactions subject to the national "do-not-call" registry and certain other provisions in the abusive practices section of the Rule; (6) specifies requirements for the use of predictive dialers; (7) requires disclosures and prohibits misrepresentations in connection with the sale of credit card loss protection plans; (8) requires an additional disclosure in connection with prize promotions; (9) requires disclosures and prohibits misrepresentations in connection with offers that include a negative option feature; (10) eliminates the general media and direct mail exemptions for the telemarketing of credit card loss protection plans and business opportunities other than business arrangements covered by the Franchise Rule<sup>1</sup>; (11) requires telemarketers to transmit caller identification information; (12) eliminates the use of post-transaction written confirmation as a means of obtaining a customer's express verifiable authorization when the goods or services are offered on a "free-to-pay conversion" basis; (13) prohibits the disclosure or receipt of the customer's or donor's unencrypted billing information for consideration, except in limited circumstances; and (14) requires that the seller or telemarketer obtain the customer's express informed consent to all transactions, with specific requirements for transactions involving "free-to-pay conversions" and preacquired account information.

## Statement of Basis and Purpose

## I. Background

*A. Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act.*

The early 1990s saw heightened Congressional attention to burgeoning problems with telemarketing fraud.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Disclosure Requirements and Prohibitions Concerning Franchising and Business Opportunity Ventures ("Franchise Rule"), 16 CFR Part 436.

<sup>2</sup> Statutes enacted by Congress to address telemarketing fraud during the early 1990s include the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991

The culmination of Congressional efforts to protect consumers against telemarketing fraud occurred in 1994 with the passage of the Telemarketing Act, which was signed into law on August 16, 1994.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of the Act was to combat telemarketing fraud by providing law enforcement agencies with new tools and to give consumers new protections.

The Telemarketing Act directed the Commission to issue a rule prohibiting deceptive and abusive telemarketing acts or practices, and specified, among other things, certain acts or practices the FTC's rule must address. The Act also required the Commission to include provisions relating to three specific "abusive telemarketing acts or practices:" (1) a requirement that telemarketers may not undertake a pattern of unsolicited telephone calls which the consumer would consider coercive or abusive of his or her right to privacy; (2) restrictions on the time of day telemarketers may make unsolicited calls to consumers; and (3) a requirement that telemarketers promptly and clearly disclose in all sales calls to consumers that the purpose of the call is to sell goods or services, and make other disclosures deemed appropriate by the Commission, including the nature and price of the goods or services sold.<sup>4</sup> Section 6102(a) of the Act not only required the Commission to define and prohibit deceptive telemarketing acts or practices, but also authorized the FTC to define and prohibit acts or practices that "assist or facilitate" deceptive telemarketing.<sup>5</sup> The Act further directed the Commission to consider including recordkeeping requirements in the rule.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the Act authorized state Attorneys General, other appropriate state officials, and private persons to bring civil actions in federal district court to enforce compliance with the FTC's rule.<sup>7</sup>

("TCPA"), 47 U.S.C. 227 *et seq.*, which restricts the use of automatic dialers, bans the sending of unsolicited commercial facsimile transmissions, and directs the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") to explore ways to protect residential telephone subscribers' privacy rights; and the Senior Citizens Against Marketing Scams Act of 1994, 18 U.S.C. 2325 *et seq.*, which provides for enhanced prison sentences for certain telemarketing-related crimes.

<sup>3</sup> 15 U.S.C. 6101-6108.

<sup>4</sup> 15 U.S.C. 6102(a)(3)(A)-(C).

<sup>5</sup> Examples of practices that would "assist or facilitate" deceptive telemarketing under the Rule include credit card laundering and providing contact lists or promotional materials to fraudulent sellers or telemarketers. See 60 FR 43842, 43853 (Aug. 23, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> 15 U.S.C. 6102(a)(3).

<sup>7</sup> 15 U.S.C. 6103, 6104.