

Earth Action: Cancel Catalogs

By [Gemma Alexander](#)DEC 2, 2022 [catalogs](#), [earth action](#), [junk mail](#)

Earth911 is honoring the 52 years of Earth Day with 52 [Actions for the Earth](#). Each week through Earth Day 2023, we will share an action you can take to [invest in the Earth](#) and make your own life more sustainable. Over the past few weeks, you've probably noticed a spike in the amount of junk mail you receive. Around the holidays, we all start getting unsolicited catalogs in the mail. Often these are from companies we've never heard of and have no interest in. This week, you can take action for the Earth by canceling these catalogs.

Action: Cancel Catalogs

Junk Mail

Junk mail and robocalls are the twin terrors of late-stage capitalism, and around the holidays, catalogs seem to multiply like [tribbles](#). And like the fuzzy pests, catalogs are tremendously wasteful of resources. Paper and cardboard contribute almost 25% of [municipal solid waste](#). Although these fibers are very recyclable — they make up two-thirds of all recycling in the U.S. — almost 12% of the garbage heading to landfills is still [paper waste](#).

What Do You Think?

Are you considering moving because of climate change?

- No
- I'm researching my options to decide
- Yes

[NEXT *](#)

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Reader's Digest reports that sorting junk mail could take up to eight months of your life, but the [environmental statistics](#) they found about junk mail (also euphemistically called direct or bulk mail) are even more terrifying. An estimated 5.6 million tons of landfill-destined paper comprises catalogs and other direct mail. The average American household receives 848 pieces of junk mail. That's the equivalent of 1.5 trees per household. In a year, that adds up to more than 100 million trees nationwide. It's the equivalent of clearcutting an area three times the size of Rocky Mountain National Park. Deforestation and paper manufacturing create as much greenhouse gas emissions annually as 3.7 million cars.

Cancel Catalogs

Getting off of mailing lists is a hassle because there's no one action that will eliminate it all. Getting rid of [mailed bills](#), to [opt-out of offers](#) for credit cards and insurance, and to eliminate unwanted catalogs are all different tasks. This week, let's start with circulars and catalogs. This is also a multi-step process.

The nonprofit [CatalogChoice](#) helps you opt out of specific catalogs. You will also need to write a note to Mail Preference Service, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735 requesting removal of your address from their list.

You might enjoy browsing the catalogs of companies you actually shop with. But ordering from a catalog often results in your name being shared with a publishing group called Abacus, which will then send you more catalogs. You can email (optout@abacus-us.com) or write to Abacus (Abacus, Inc, PO Box 1478, Broomfield, CO 8003) or visit their [website](#) to have your name removed from their lists. If you've ever received two copies of the same catalog, you know that you have to do this for every version of your address (middle initials, anyone?). Once you've removed your name, it's better to shop in person or online to stop generating new listings for yourself.

advertising



Reading time: 2 mins

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By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

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