



# Burrillville Police Department

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## Annoying Phone Calls

Annoying, harassing, hang-up, or obscene telephone calls are becoming more and more commonplace today even with advanced technology in communications, such as Caller ID and dialing \*69. Today, we're able to trace a phone call back to the caller by pressing a couple of buttons on your telephone. This is an excellent tool for the homeowner and police to identify the caller.

These types of calls are evident in bad relationships, the breakup of a relationship, a disgruntled employee, unhappy customer, a neighbor and the like. The caller's purpose is to annoy or harass. There is a solution and these types of calls can be stopped.

### SOME INITIAL STEPS TO TAKE

Before contacting the phone company to put a trace on your line you may want to change your telephone number to an unlisted non-published number. If you have to give out your new unlisted number, give it to people you know. This can be an inconvenience but it's one of the first steps to see if the calls continue. If the calls continue and you've only given your new number to a few people or you've given it to personnel at your place of employment, you're on the right track at narrowing down who may be responsible. Some people cannot afford to change their phone number and their only action is to trace the calls

### TRACING PHONE CALLS

Most phone companies provide the following service that helps put an end to annoying and obscene phone calls by tracing the last incoming call. It provides essential information to authorities if an investigation is required (There is a fee for tracing phone calls).

#### When you want to trace a phone call:

1. Hang up then lift the receiver and listen for a dial tone.
2. Press \*57 or for rotary phone dial 1157. (Some phone companies may have a different procedure).
3. An announcement will tell you the call was traced and give you further instructions.
4. If this does not work, call you phone company and ask for instructions on tracing a call.

You will not receive the number from your phone company. The results of a successful trace will only be provided to the police or other legal authorities.

How do I find out who's making the phone calls?

If you're getting these phone calls we advise you to call the Unlawful Call Bureau, UCB, (formerly the Annoyance Call Bureau) at 1-800-518-5507 and open up a case. The Unlawful Call Bureau will provide you with further instructions. The phone company will not provide the police with any information until you have opened a case with them, unless it is an extreme emergency.

Next, contact the Burrillville Police Department at 401-568-6255 and speak to an police officer. Explain that you would like to file a complaint regarding annoying phone calls. After providing the officer with your information, ask for the POLICE CASE NUMBER. You may need this case number for the phone company.

If you have successfully traced three (3) or more phone calls you will be notified by the telephone company. Once you're notified call the Burrillville Police. You should be prepared to give the officer the case number provided to you by the Unlawful Call Bureau. An officer will then contact the UCB and they will provide the officer with the information on all calls traced. This information will include the telephone number, the address where the call was placed from, and the name of the person that the phone number is listed to. The UCB will send the investigating police officer a report and the list of numbers traced. The officer will then contact you (victim/reporting party) and tell you the date and time of the call, the address where the call originated from, and the name of the person the number is assigned to. If, after hearing the person's name and address, further investigation is needed, the officer will assist you.

Many times a parent will hear the name and address of the person making the calls and chose to handle the problem without police involvement. This may be a better solution depending on the situation. Once you close a case with the Unlawful Call Bureau and the calls persist, you must call them again to open up another case.

SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES

No conversation is necessary. It does not matter whether the person had a conversation with the victim, only that the person made the telephone calls or had them made. It must be demonstrated that the person's only purpose was to annoy, harass or molest, unless the person used obscene language. If a person makes repeated telephone calls in a short period of time or in the middle of the night, then hangs up when someone answers the phone, it is reasonable to infer that the calls were made for the purpose of harassment.