

Sustainability

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Getting Rid of Junk Mail



November 29, 2018 | Jonna Korpi

The UMD mailroom has come to your rescue!

The amount of junk mail produced in this country is staggering -- over 4 million tons per year (EPA, 2009). This unsolicited mail wastes resources and people's time in having to deal with it.

Enter the UMD Mail Room's Ben Fornear. Ben started working for UMD in May 2017 and inherited a system that already repurposed/reused cardboard boxes and packing materials. He's added to the mail room's initiatives by

A Uline catalog weighs 2.2 pounds. UMD has received 30-40 Uline catalogs

developing a system to reduce the amount of junk mail sent to campus.

in a single day before
-- what a waste!

Another issue to be remedied is proper addresses on mail.

That would mean having both the street address AND the office address, e.g. 1208 Kirby Drive, Kirby Plaza 245, so mail room staff know where it's going. Ben thinks UMD is close to 20% accurate in addresses, which equals precious staff time using the directory to find a piece of mail's actual home each day.

Ben states that these initiatives have dual benefits: the first being sustainability and reducing waste (why throw it in the garbage when you can reuse it?) and the second being operational savings in staff time and money. I would add even a third benefit: the increase in goodwill among mail recipients when their mail gets delivered even faster! Kudos to Ben and the mail room for their efforts. The steps to reducing junk mail are below:

Getting Rid of Junk Mail (at your UMD office)

It couldn't be simpler:

- Put a big "X" across the face of the piece of mail (make sure we can still read the address) and drop it into any "Out" mailbox. The Mail Room team takes it from there and tries to contact the sender to remove you from their mailing list.

A soft launch of the program a few months ago has already removed UMD from over 1,000 mailing lists! It's really as simple as it sounds -- you might even see a bright yellow sticker on some of your catalogs reminding you to consider if you want to stay on that mailing list. You can also use this on mail that comes to your office for people who no longer work here.

Note: you may receive mail from a sender for up to 3 months after getting off of their list. And, these mailers are constantly selling your information to each other so you may end up on their list again.

Questions are always welcome -- call the mailroom at 218-726-8287 or email Ben at for0022@d.umn.edu.

Getting Rid of Junk Mail (at home)

- [Opt Out Prescreen](https://www.optoutprescreen.com/?rf=t) (<https://www.optoutprescreen.com/?rf=t>) (credit card and insurance offers)
- [Direct Marketing Association's consumer website](https://dmachoice.thedma.org/register.php) (<https://dmachoice.thedma.org/register.php>) (\$2 for a 10 year removal)
- [National Do Not Call list](https://www.donotcall.gov/) (<https://www.donotcall.gov/>) (telemarketers)

Tags

Sustainability

Contact us

sustain@d.umn.edu

(218) 726-8198

TTY/TDD:

(800) 627-3529

1208 Kirby Drive
Kirby Plaza 245
Duluth, MN 55812



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RELATED LINKS

[UMD Mailroom \(http://d.umn.edu/facilities-management/services/mailroom\)](http://d.umn.edu/facilities-management/services/mailroom)

[Holiday Update from the Mailroom \(https://drive.google.com/open?id=161f5CxhomY1TR-lwLhdo5isZIU_zEaia\)](https://drive.google.com/open?id=161f5CxhomY1TR-lwLhdo5isZIU_zEaia)

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