



How to Block Text Messages from Loan Sharks



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Ever received a text message from someone you don't know, offering you a fast loan without a minimum salary? Chances are, a loan shark has targeted you. And you are not alone.

A **loan shark** is someone within a personal or professional network offering to grant fast loans for large sums of money. Usually, the funds come from unidentified sources, and they work from private businesses or unregistered entities. They may threaten you or use violence for **debt collection**.

Many people have fallen prey to loan sharks. Low-income families and individuals are the main targets of loan sharks.

In one such case where one Singaporean woman fell prey to 50 loan sharks, it all started with one text message promising fast cash. As per **CNA**, the woman was mired in debt when she received an SMS for a money lending service that offered a company name and telephone number.

The unsuspecting woman gave out her personal particulars and received the money fast. When she couldn't pay off one of her loans due to high-interest rates and ever-changing terms, she borrowed money from another loan shark to settle it. Soon it became a vicious cycle.

The woman then started receiving threatening messages when the debt mounted, and the harassment even got physical.

An **investigation** made by The Straits Times revealed that these unlicensed moneylenders now have been acquiring databases of mobile phone numbers and hounding potential customers using new technologies.

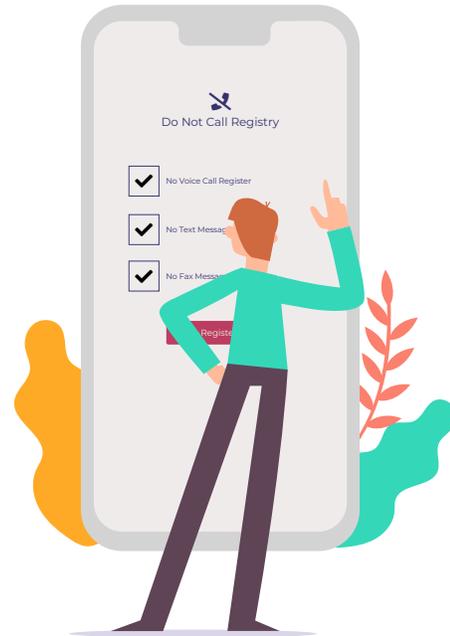
You must borrow **money only from licensed moneylenders**. Not doing so can put you in hot waters. And in Singapore, it is even illegal to borrow money from unlicensed moneylenders. Read more about why you should avoid unlicensed moneylenders in this **article**.

Even though you don't end up borrowing money, receiving unsolicited messages from unknown persons can be annoying and even frightening. If you have been a victim of loan sharks, here's how to deal with it.

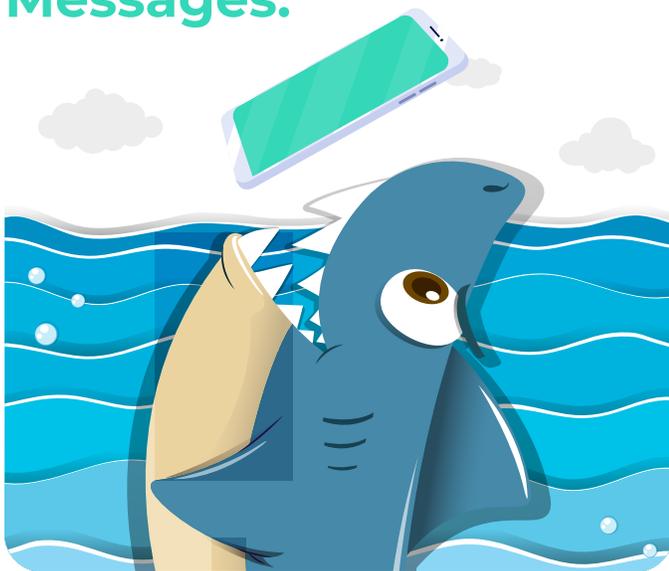
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Register to the Do Not Call Registry

By registering to the Do Not Call (DNC) Registry, you can opt-out of marketing messages addressed to your telephone number. In different regions, there are DNC regimes that prohibit organizations from sending marketing messages to your telephone numbers, including mobile, fixed-line, housing, and business numbers, registered with the registry. In cities like Singapore, you can register to three **DNC Registers**- No Voice Call Register, No Text Message Register, and No Fax Message Register.



Don't Respond to Shark Messages.



You are not obliged to reply to an unsolicited loan shark SMS, especially one that offers fast loans, financial assistance or relating to online gambling. If you do, it will be like adding fuel to the fire. Most probably, the messages are sent out from illegal moneylenders. Sure signs scream that a message is from a loan shark.

Here are some of the specific signs when a lender is likely to be a loan shark:

- ✓ If the lender is charging ridiculously high-interest rates
- ✓ When the lender asks you to turn over your ATM card as collateral
- ✓ In case when the lender doesn't provide any formal loan contract

Report to the Police about Loan Shark Messages

If ignoring doesn't help and you continuously keep receiving unsolicited messages offering you a loan, you can complain to the police. In Singapore, you can **notify the police** via i-Witness at

<https://www.police.gov.sg/iwitness>. You can also **call the National Crime Prevention Council's 'X Ah Long' Hotline** at 1800-924-5664 (1800-X-AH-LONG).



Block Contacts or Set up a Whitelist for Your Smartphone

Your smartphone provides features such as block contacts or whitelist numbers. You can set it up on your phone to avert unsolicited calls.



For iOS Users

Either block contacts and phone numbers on your devices or set up a whitelist for approved numbers on your iPhone. Don't know how to set up a whitelist? Put approved contacts into the favorite list and switch on the Do Not Disturb mode. Be aware that you might miss calls from certain organizations, such as banks or recruiters if they are not on your whitelist.

Also, email Apple for the same by sending an email to imessage.spam@apple.com.



Your email should contain the following information:

- ✓ A screenshot of the message
- ✓ The email address or phone number that sent the iMessage.
- ✓ The date and time that you got the iMessage.

Here is another [guide](#) on how to block and filter phone numbers on your iPhone.

For Android Users



Go to the android messaging app to find a built-in spam filter. Tap it to activate it and hold in the Text message of the sender you want to block. You will see options to Archive, Delete, Notify, and Block the person. You can also follow this [link](#) to learn how to block phone numbers on your Android phone. Moreover, you will find several third-party apps that allow you to filter out such spams. Most importantly, bear in mind not to reply or interact with these texts and report them promptly. You can also block such numbers using your WhatsApp messengers.



Conclusion

The best way out to save yourself from loan sharks is to be aware. You should be able to read the signs in the messages you receive that warns you that you are the target of a loan shark. Mention it to your family members and friends too lest they fall for the trap unknowingly.

Also, be alert and do not communicate with those unsolicited dealers. If they keep bugging you, follow the tips as shared above. If you urgently require money, ensure to borrow it from licensed moneylenders.

All in all, stay away from loan sharks as far as possible!



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<https://blog.cashguru.sg/how-to-block-text-messages-from-loan-sharks>

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