

# THE CLEAN COLD EMAIL KIT

Cold email for a local business without breaking the law or wrecking the domain: the five steps, a short email template, the setup checklist, the opt-out log

Cold email is email to someone who never asked for it. Cold email to a business is covered by CAN-SPAM (the FTC: the law "makes no exception for business-to-business email"), and Google and Yahoo watch your spam rate (Google: keep it below 0.10%). This kit is the setup I would use for a small outbound service for a local business, with every rule quoted from the FTC's, Google's and Yahoo's own pages (checked October 9, 2026). Educational only. Not legal advice. US rules only (CAN-SPAM): other countries have different rules, so ask a lawyer before emailing outside the US. Not affiliated with the FTC, Google or Yahoo. No results are promised.

## THE 5 STEPS

- Step 1. Pick ONE kind of business to email, in ONE town. Example: property managers in one town. One niche lets you write one email that fits everyone on the list.
- Step 2. Copy each business's public email from its own website, by hand, then verify every address before you send. The FTC guide lists "harvesting email addresses or generating them through a dictionary attack" among the items with criminal penalties, so never generate or guess addresses.
- Step 3. Write ONE short, plain email (template on page 2): an honest subject, who you are, what you do, one question, your real postal address, a clear opt-out.
- Step 4. Set up SPF, DKIM and DMARC on the domain you send from (page 3). Then send small batches and increase slowly. Google: "Start with a low sending volume to engaged users, and slowly increase the volume over time."
- Step 5. Follow up once. Honor every opt-out within 10 business days, and do it the same day: it is easy, and Yahoo asks bulk senders to honor unsubscribes within 2 days. Log it (page 3).

## THE RULES IN THEIR OWN WORDS

### FTC, CAN-SPAM Act: A Compliance Guide for Business

"The law makes no exception for business-to-business email." "Each separate email in violation of the CAN-SPAM Act is subject to penalties of up to \$53,088" (the FTC adjusts this amount for inflation: read the live page). "You must honor a recipient's opt-out request within 10 business days."

### Google, Email sender guidelines (Gmail Help)

"Don't send messages to people who didn't sign up to get messages from you. These recipients might mark your messages as spam, and future messages to these recipients will be marked as spam." "Keep spam rates reported in Postmaster Tools below 0.10% and avoid ever reaching a spam rate of 0.30% or higher."

## THE EMAIL TEMPLATE (FILL THE BRACKETS, KEEP IT SHORT)

### Subject line: honest, matches the email

[BUSINESS NAME]: quick question about [THING] or [FIRST NAME], quick question about [THING].  
FTC: "The subject line must accurately reflect the content of the message." Google: do not start a subject with Re: or Fwd: unless the message is an actual reply or forward.

### Email 1 (about 45 words, plus your address and opt-out line)

Hi [FIRST NAME],  
I'm [YOUR NAME] with [YOUR COMPANY]. I help [TYPE OF BUSINESS] in [TOWN] with [ONE THING, IN PLAIN WORDS].  
[ONE SPECIFIC QUESTION ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS]?  
If it helps, I can send [ONE SMALL THING, e.g. a one-page example].  
[YOUR NAME]  
[YOUR COMPANY], [YOUR REAL STREET ADDRESS OR REGISTERED PO BOX, CITY, STATE ZIP]  
This is an advertisement. If you do not want emails from me, reply STOP and I will remove you.

### Follow-up (once, a few days later)

Hi [FIRST NAME], following up on my note from [DAY]: [ONE LINE ON THE QUESTION].  
[YOUR NAME]  
[YOUR COMPANY], [YOUR REAL STREET ADDRESS OR REGISTERED PO BOX, CITY, STATE ZIP]  
This is an advertisement. If you do not want emails from me, reply STOP and I will remove you.

## WHY THE FOOTER IS NOT OPTIONAL (FTC)

- "Identify the message as an ad. ... you must disclose clearly and conspicuously that your message is an advertisement." The footer line above does it.
- "Your message must include your valid physical postal address." A street address, a post office box registered with the USPS, or a registered private mailbox.
- "Give a return email address or another easy Internet-based way to allow people to communicate their choice to you." Reply STOP does that. "Make sure your spam filter doesn't block these opt-out requests."

## IF SOMEONE WRITES STOP (OR ANYTHING LIKE IT)

- Reply "Done. You are removed." and add the address to your do-not-email list the same day. The FTC deadline is 10 business days; same day is the safe habit.
- Never sell or share that address. FTC: "you can't sell or transfer their email addresses, even in the form of a mailing list."
- Timing is an example only, not a rule: Email 1 on day 1, one follow-up on day 4, then stop. A person who replied "not now" gets no more messages from you.

## THE SETUP CHECKLIST (THE DOMAIN YOU SEND FROM)

### SPF, DKIM, DMARC in Google's words

SPF: "SPF prevents spammers from sending unauthorized messages that appear to be from your domain. Set up SPF by publishing an SPF record at your domain." DKIM: "Receiving servers use DKIM to verify that the domain owner actually sent the message." DMARC: "DMARC tells receiving servers what to do with your messages that don't pass SPF or DKIM." Google also says: "we recommend that you always set up SPF, DKIM, and DMARC for your domains."

| Who          | Google (Gmail)                                                                                                       | Yahoo                                                                                                                           |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All senders  | SPF or DKIM. Spam rate below 0.3%.                                                                                   | SPF or DKIM at a minimum. Spam rate below 0.3%.                                                                                 |
| Bulk senders | More than 5,000 messages a day to Gmail accounts: SPF, DKIM and DMARC, one-click unsubscribe, spam rate below 0.30%. | SPF and DKIM, a DMARC policy (p=none is enough), one-click unsubscribe, honor unsubscribes within 2 days, spam rate below 0.3%. |

- Under Google's rule the bulk-sender extras start above 5,000 messages a day to Gmail. A small-batch campaign sends far fewer, but the habit is the same: authenticate first, then send. Google: "Sending to personal Gmail accounts requires a DKIM key of 1024 bits or longer" (2048-bit recommended).
- Yahoo: "Sending unsolicited commercial email can negatively affect your reputation." Plan for that: small batches, honest copy, instant opt-outs.

## THE SMALL-BATCH LOG (ONE ROW PER SEND DAY)

Example only: start with about 10 a day. Google gives no number, only: start low, send at a consistent rate, avoid sudden spikes.

| Day | Planned | Sent | Bounced | Replies | Opt-outs | Spam reports |
|-----|---------|------|---------|---------|----------|--------------|
| 1   |         |      |         |         |          |              |
| 2   |         |      |         |         |          |              |
| 3   |         |      |         |         |          |              |
| 4   |         |      |         |         |          |              |

- Google: "If messages start bouncing or start being deferred, reduce the sending volume until the SMTP error rate decreases. Then, increase slowly again." And: "immediately doubling previously sent volumes suddenly could result in rate limiting or reputation drops."

## THE OPT-OUT LOG (REMOVE WITHIN 10 BUSINESS DAYS)

| Business | Email | Date asked | Date removed |
|----------|-------|------------|--------------|
|          |       |            |              |
|          |       |            |              |
|          |       |            |              |

## BEFORE EVERY SEND: THE FTC'S RULES, AS A CHECKLIST

- [ ] From, To, Reply-To and routing information are accurate (no fake sender). FTC rule 1.
- [ ] The subject line matches what the email says. Rule 2.
- [ ] The email says it is an ad. Rule 3.
- [ ] A valid physical postal address is in the email. Rule 4.
- [ ] A clear opt-out is in the email, and your spam filter does not block the replies. Rule 5.
- [ ] Opt-outs are honored within 10 business days, and those addresses are never sold or transferred. Rule 7.
- [ ] If you send for a client: "you can't contract away your legal responsibility" and "Both the company whose product is promoted in the message and the company that actually sends the message may be held legally responsible." Put the rules in your agreement. Rule 8.

## THREE MISTAKES THAT WRECK A NEW SENDING DOMAIN

- Guessing or generating addresses. FTC: "harvesting email addresses or generating them through a dictionary attack" carries criminal penalties. Google and Yahoo also tell senders not to buy addresses or mailing lists. Google: "Don't purchase email addresses from other companies." Yahoo: "Don't purchase mailing lists ..." Whatever your source, know where each address came from, verify it, and honor every opt-out.
- A big first batch. Start low and grow slowly (page 3).
- Tricks: a fake "Re:" subject, a vague sender, a hidden opt-out. They break FTC rules 1, 2 and 5, and they raise spam reports.

## WHERE THIS COMES FROM

- FTC: CAN-SPAM Act: A Compliance Guide for Business
- Google (Gmail Help): Email sender guidelines
- Yahoo Sender Hub: Sender Requirements & Recommendations

Checked October 9, 2026. Penalty amounts, thresholds and rules change; read the live page before you rely on a number. Educational only. Not legal advice: ask a lawyer about your situation. Not affiliated with the FTC, Google or Yahoo. No results or income are promised.

### Want a head start on who to contact?

- I also sell ready-made lists of businesses to research. Message me LIST. Google and Yahoo say not to buy email addresses or mailing lists, so use any list, mine included, only to find the businesses, then follow steps 2 to 5.
- Free community, more plays like this: [skool.com/unlimitedleads](https://skool.com/unlimitedleads)
- Verify before you send: EmailClik.com verifies addresses (free version)