

The almost-secret hidden iPhone switch that blocks spam text messages and notifications

You are 60 seconds away from removing one of your phone's most annoying annoyances.

By [David Gewirtz](#) for [DIY-IT](#) | January 23, 2020 -- 13:42 GMT (05:42 PST) | Topic: [Security](#) - ZDNet

Are you getting a ton of spam text messages? How annoying is it to be interrupted with a notification on your iPhone, only for it to be yet another junk message? Here's a secret: you can make these go away using a feature already in iOS.

Here's how you do it. First, open Settings. Scroll down and down and down until you find Messages. Tap it.

Settings

-  Mail >
-  Contacts >
-  Calendar >
-  Notes >
-  Reminders >
-  Phone >
-  Messages >

Next, scroll down and down and down until you find "Filter Unknown Messages." This is the magic. Turn it on. You'll have to scroll almost three pages to find this thing, but it's worth it.

SMS/MMS

MMS Messaging



Group Messaging



Show Subject Field



Character Count



Blocked



MESSAGE HISTORY

Keep Messages

Forever >

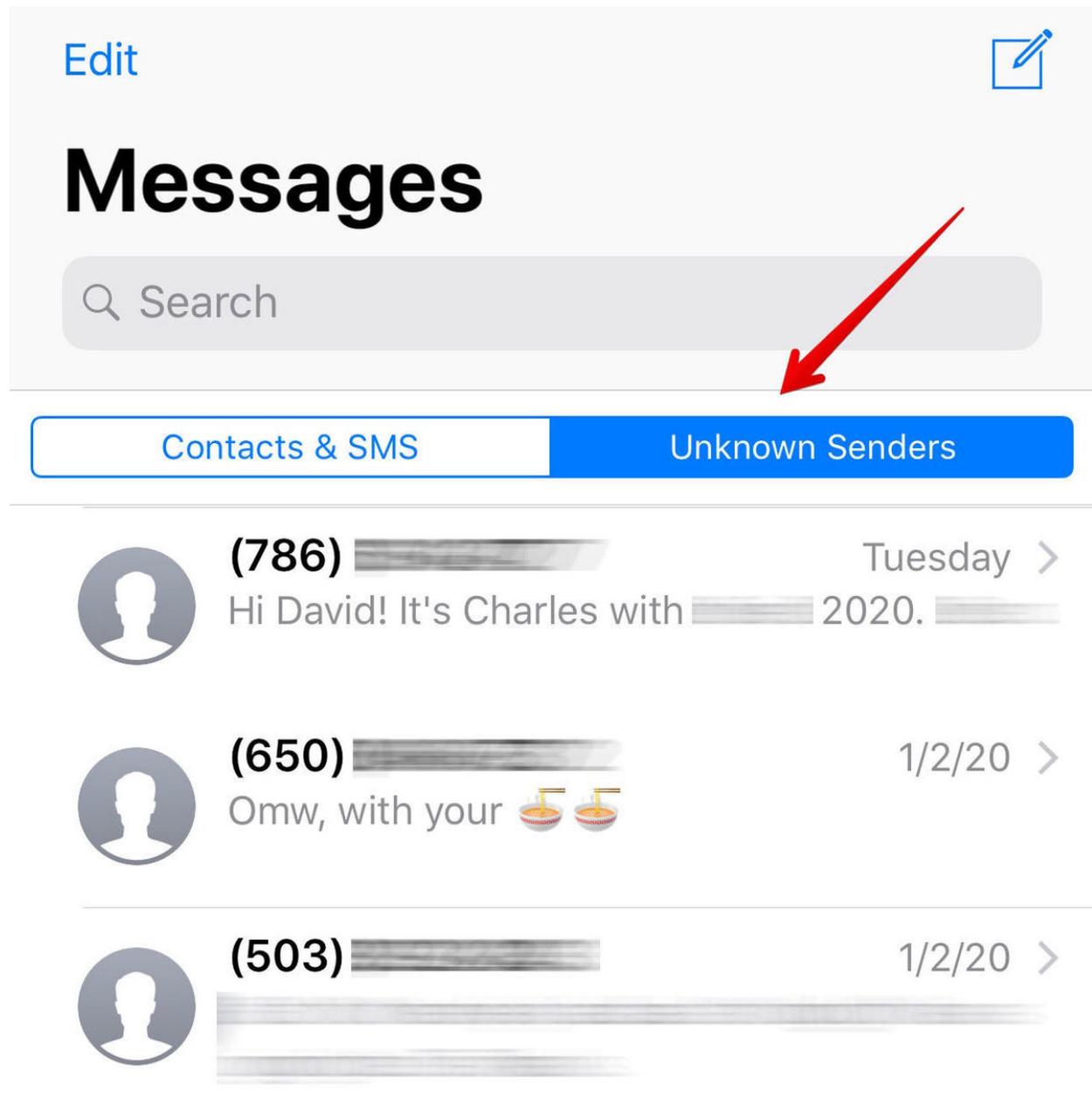
MESSAGE FILTERING

Filter Unknown Senders



Turn off notifications for iMessages from people who are not in your contacts and sort them into a separate list.

That's it. Now, if you go into your messages app, you'll see tabs at the top of the screen. On the left will be "Contacts & SMS" which will contain messages from known contacts in your address book. On the right will be the new "Unknown Senders" tab.



When you get a message from a sender not in your address book, you won't get a notification. Instead, it will be dropped into this tab.

Warning: Once "Filter Unknown Senders" is enabled, it becomes very important to add all legitimate senders to your address book. Any message from a number not in your contacts will wind up in the Unknown Senders tab. If you're expecting a text from someone you know, be sure to enter them into your address book. Otherwise, you'll have to scan this list to see if there's anything new you need to pay attention to.

Related warning: Gig workers from services like Door Dash, Uber Eats, and InstaCart often use rotating custom text message numbers to reach out to customers during the shopping or pickup process. If you're expecting a delivery from one of these services, be sure to check your Unknown Senders tab during the delivery window.

This need for added diligence in certain cases is probably why the feature is turned off by default. For new iOS users with an empty contacts app, all messages will necessarily be from contacts not in the address book. That said, this is such a huge benefit it's worth a little extra diligence to add contacts you want to be able to get text notifications from.