

# Silence Unknown Text Messages

## On iPhones, iPads & Macs

April 2022

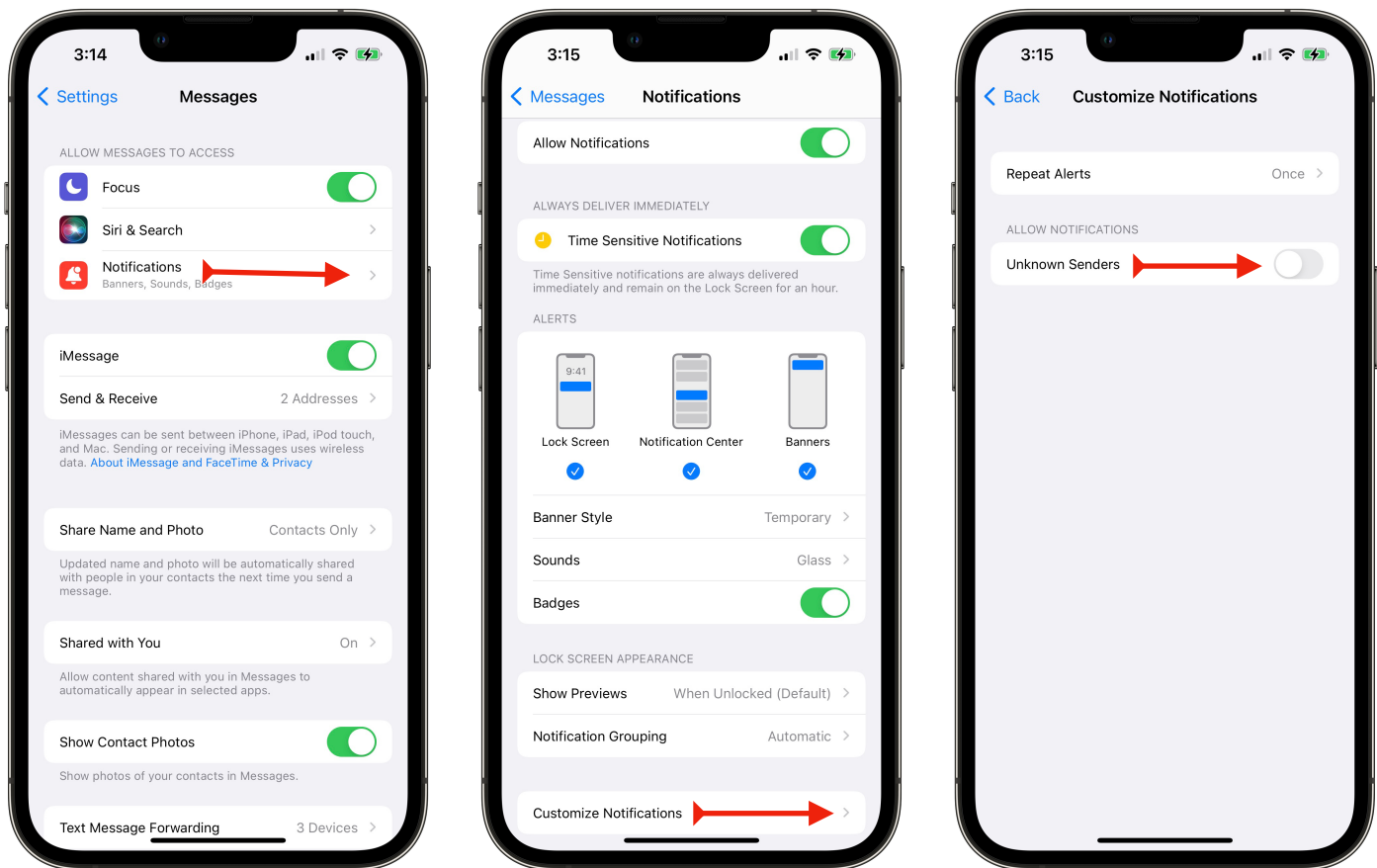
Stephen Huston for Alameda MUG & iPhone Without Tears

For years we've been getting junk text messages on Apple's iMessage system because there were no end-user tools to stop them. Turning notifications Off for all messages was not a realistic option for most of us. Now, in the latest operating systems, we finally have the tools to effectively stop text message notifications coming from unknown senders. We'll go through choosing the Settings on each device to silence notifications from unknown text senders, first the iPhone, then iPad, and Finally the Mac.

### iPhone Settings

First open Settings and scroll down to the Messages App in the list (between Phone and FaceTime on the first screen. Tap on **Messages**, then scroll to the end of the next screen. Find *Message Filtering* > **Filter Unknown Senders**. Turn that ON (green is On). *If you skip this step, the option to silence unknown senders may not appear on your iPhone.*





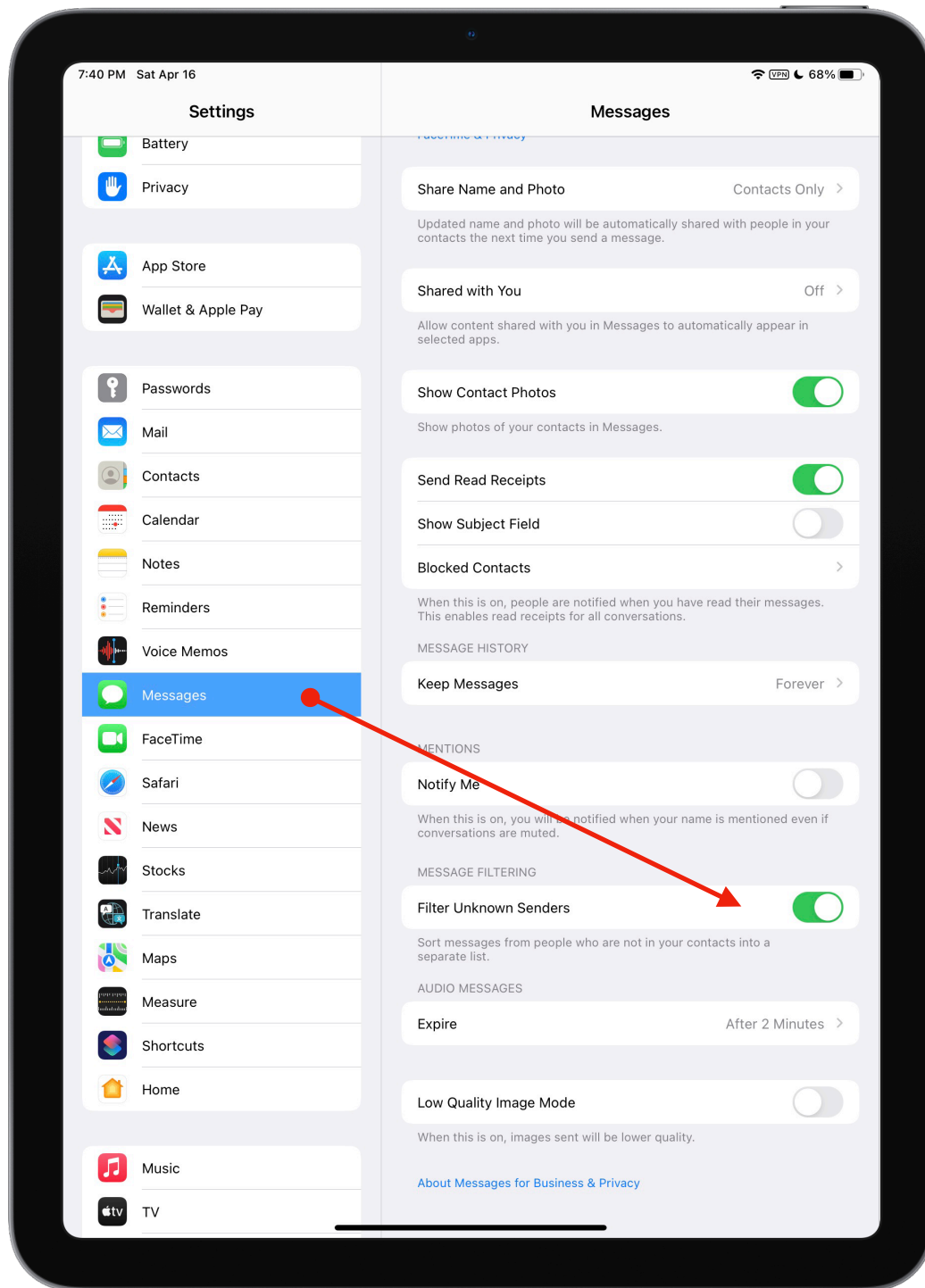
Now scroll back up to the top of that same screen and locate the line in the top section for **Notifications**; it shows the Notifications red icon. (above left)

Tap on **Notifications**. At the bottom of the next screen (shown above center) is **Customize Notifications** — scroll if you must to reach it — then tap that line to see the final setting (right). Turn Off **Unknown Senders** (grey is Off). That section is titled Allow Notifications, so turning it Off stops notifications from unknown senders.

That will stop notifications for incoming text sources that don't match either a phone number or an email recorded in your Contacts. Texts from all unknown sources will be silenced. They will still arrive, but you won't be notified when they do. You can read or delete them later as you notice them in your Messages app.



*The same sequence of Settings shown for the iPhone also works on iPad, but the screens are a bit different due to the iPad's dual panel view of settings. iPad screens and instructions start on the next page. Mac instructions follow the iPad.*

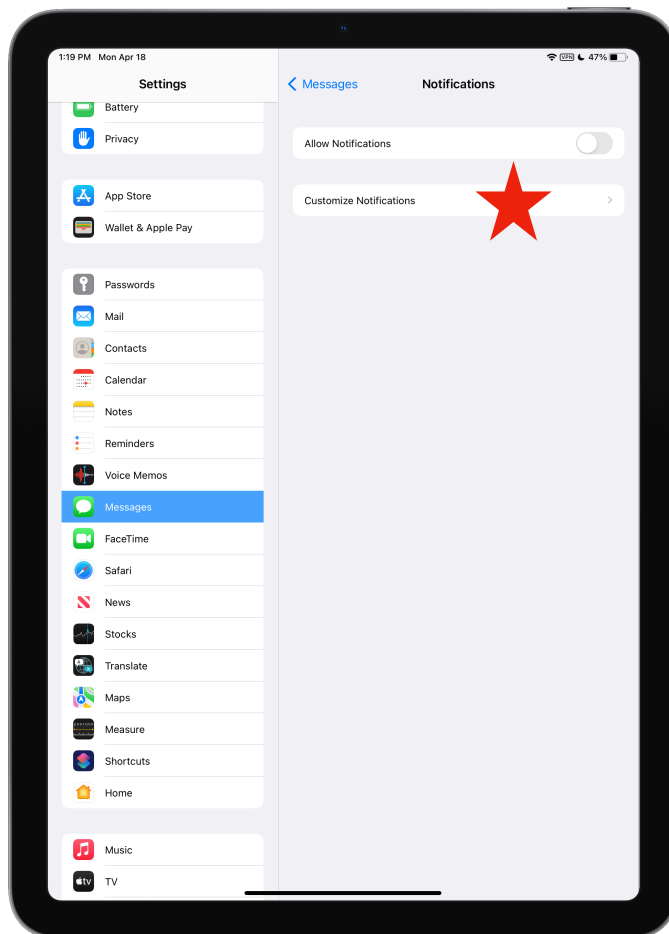
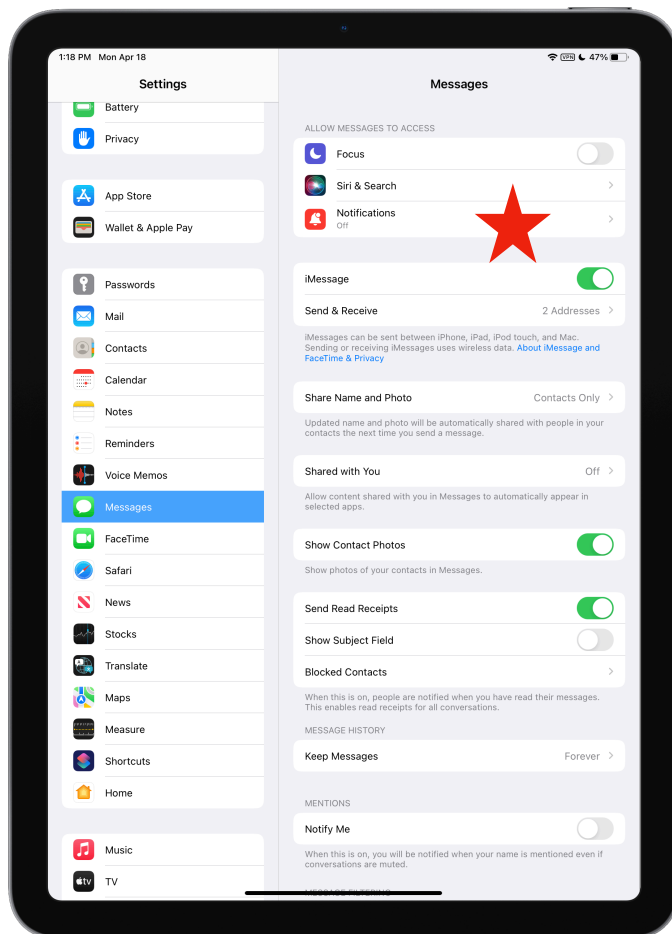


## iPad Settings

First, open Settings and scroll down to Messages in the Apps list. (It's in the section starting with Passwords, above FaceTime on the left panel of Settings.

Tap on **Messages**, then scroll down in the right panel to find *Message Filtering* > **Filter Unknown Senders**. Turn that ON (green is On).

*If you skip this step, the option to silence unknown senders may not appear on your iPad.*

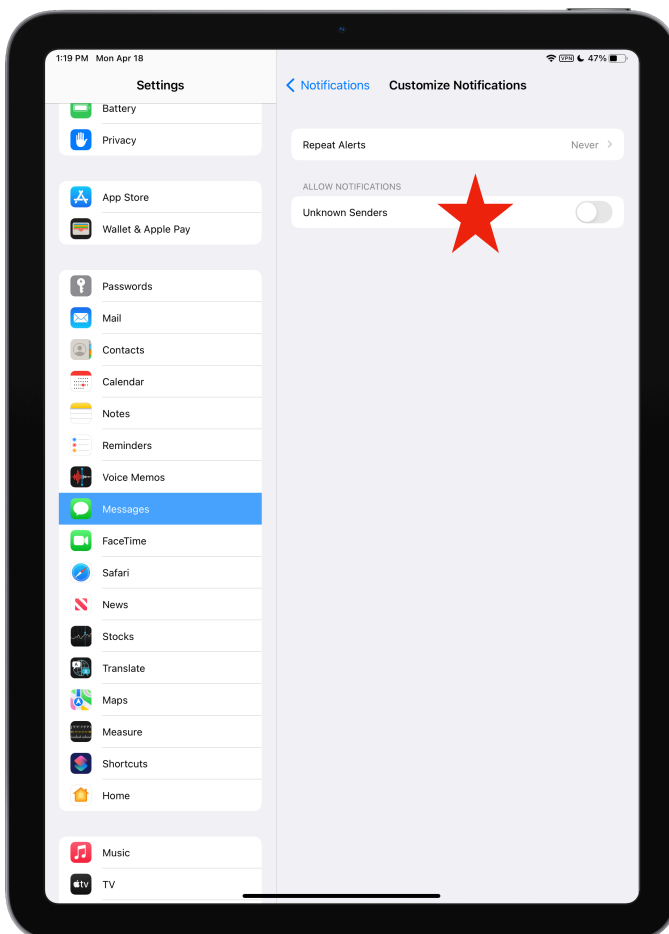


Next, scroll back up to the top of that same screen to locate the line in the top section for **Notifications**; it has a red icon. (see top left screenshot above)

Tap on **Notifications**, then find **Customize Notifications**, and tap that line (top right) to get to the final setting.

Turn Off **Unknown Senders** (grey is Off, shown lower right). That section is titled Allow Notification, so turning it Off stops notifications from unknown senders.

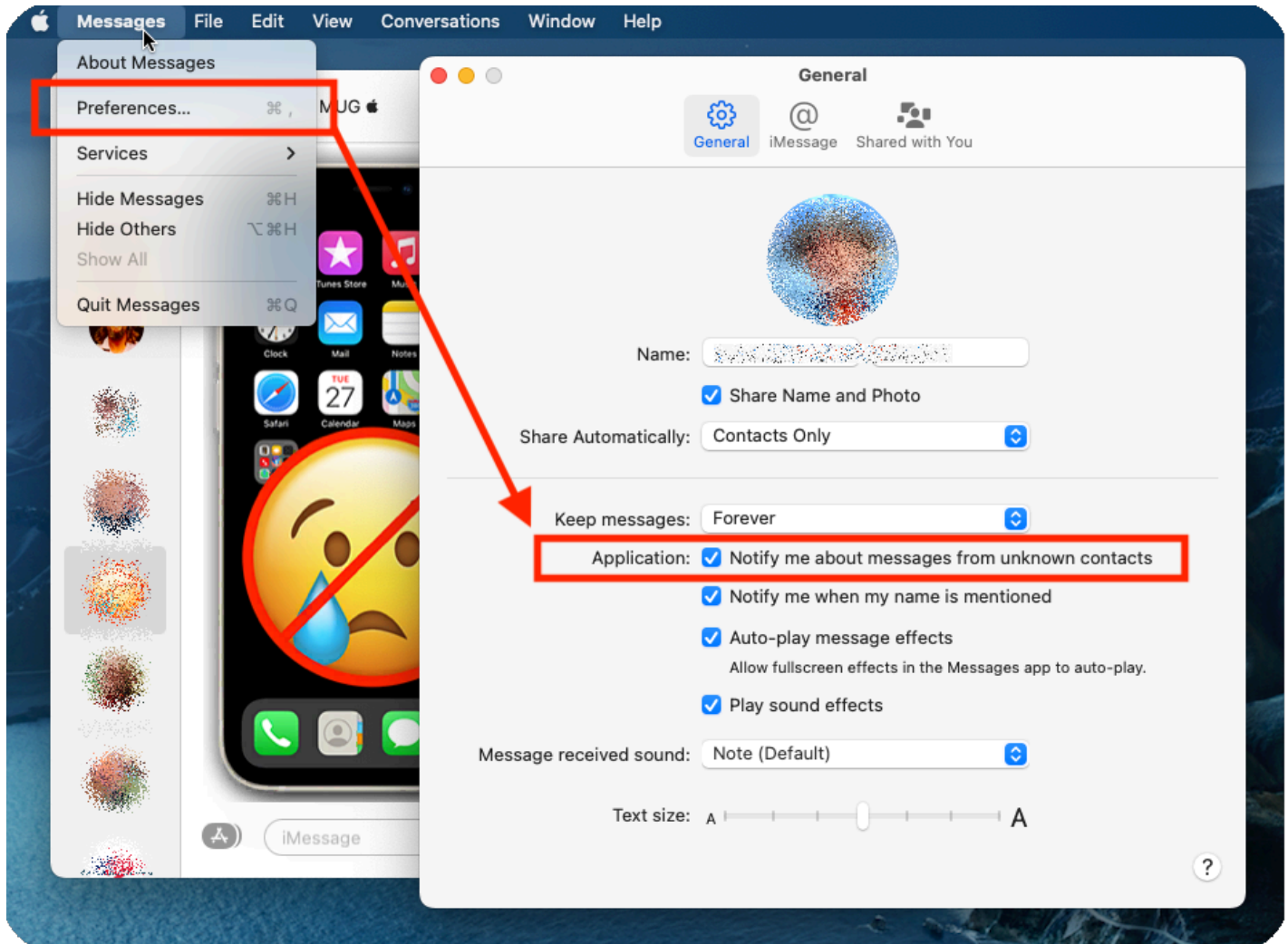
That will stop notifications for incoming text sources that don't match either a phone number or an email recorded in your Contacts. Texts from unknown sources will be silenced. They will still arrive, but you won't be notified when they do. You can read or delete them later as you notice them in your Messages.



## Mac Settings

The option to stop notifications for text messages from unknown senders on a Mac is NOT in the System Preferences settings, but is found inside the Messages App itself.

1. Open the Messages App on the Mac.
2. Use the Menubar's pulldown menu named **Messages** to select **Preferences...**



3. In the lower part of the panel titled General, **uncheck** the Application checkbox which reads:

*Notify me about messages from unknown contacts.*

Clearing that checkmark, which is checked by default, will stop notifications for incoming texts from sources which don't match an email or phone number in your Contacts.



Don't skip the Warnings on the last page!



## WARNING



There is a caution to consider when silencing unknown text sources — the Settings described in this document will also stop some notifications for text messages from people and businesses from whom **you do want to get text messages**, unless you keep your Contacts up-to-date with the numbers they use for sending Text Messages!

For instance:

- Your dentist's office may send you a text from a phone number you haven't recorded in your contacts, asking you to confirm an appointment, and you won't hear it arrive.
- A Two-Factor-Authentication code that you need for logging into an App or website may arrive from a number not in our contacts, and you won't hear that arrive either.

These messages will still arrive, but notifications won't tell you when they do, and you'll have to go find them on your own. Just be aware that some unknown texts contain information you may need.

So, it becomes even more important that we enter valid text phone numbers for our Contacts when we learn of them.

We now have better tools to silence more of the *Spams & Scams* which target all of our computing devices, but...

**STOPPING NOTIFICATIONS FROM UNKNOWN TEXT SOURCES PUTS THE BURDEN ON EACH OF US TO REMEMBER WHEN AND WHERE TO GO LOOK FOR MESSAGES WE NEED TO SEE.**

