

## One-Click List-Unsubscribe Header - RFC 8058<sup>1</sup>

Back in 2015, the CSA wrote about the benefits of List-Unsubscribe headers in emails<sup>2</sup>. Since then, more providers offer unsubscribe functionality within their web interface and email software like iOS Mail also offers that functionality outside the content of the email in the context of the program.

### Why a new RFC then?

List-Unsubscribe can either be a `mailto` or a `http(s)`-link or both<sup>3</sup>. Anti-spam software often checks every `http(s)`-link for malicious content. In that case, the receiver of the email may accidentally get unsubscribed. The easiest way to prevent this would be to require user interaction on the landing page linked in the List-Unsubscribe header. On the other hand, this breaks the functionality within the web interfaces or email software.

### What's the purpose of RFC 8058?

With this new RFC, senders can signal that a List-Unsubscribe header has one-click functionality and prevent accidental unsubscribe by anti-spam software. The receivers web interface or email program can process an unsubscribe from the user, knowing there's no need of interaction to successfully fulfill the request.

### How does it work?

In addition to the List-Unsubscribe header, another line - the "List-Unsubscribe-Post" - is added. Here is an example:

```
List-Unsubscribe: <mailto:listrequest@example.com?subject=unsubscribe>,  
<https://example.com/unsubscribe.html?opaque=123456789>  
List-Unsubscribe-Post: List-Unsubscribe=One-Click
```

Simply opening the link from the List-Unsubscribe header in a browser, or by anti-spam software, will show a landing page which does not cause an immediate unsubscribe, but may offer a button to confirm the unsubscribe.

But performing a POST request on that URI, sending the key/value pair from the List-Unsubscribe-Post header will cause the unsubscribe without the need of interaction.

1 <https://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc8058.txt>

2 [https://certified-senders.eu/wp-content/uploads/CSA\\_list\\_unsubscribe.pdf](https://certified-senders.eu/wp-content/uploads/CSA_list_unsubscribe.pdf)

3 see RFC 2369 (<https://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2369.txt>)

This Example results e.g. in an POST request like this:

```
POST /unsubscribe.html?opaque=123456789 HTTP/1.1
Host: example.com
Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded
Content-Length: 26
```

```
List-Unsubscribe=One-Click
```

### Who needs to implement it?

Senders need to include the new List-Unsubscribe-Post header line, and take care that the landing pages linked in the List-Unsubscribe header are able to process the POST requests accordingly.

Receivers or email software vendors who want to use List-Unsubscribe headers need to check for List-Unsubscribe-Post headers and perform the POST requests accordingly.

### What are the main benefits of the RFC?

First, it solves the issue of accidental unsubscribes by anti-spam software. Using this RFC means that when anti-spam software checks these links, there is no longer the unwanted side-effect.

Second, it helps receivers to know how to handle the List-Unsubscribe header. If there is a List-Unsubscribe-Post header present, the whole unsubscribe can be processed without any user interaction in the background. Without this header, the receiver can't be sure if the unsubscribe was successful or not.

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