

Contravention of Guidelines on Implementation of Real-name Registration for SIM Cards and Licence condition by five licensees

The following is issued on behalf of the Communications Authority:

The Communications Authority (CA) announced today (March 8) its decision to issue directions pursuant to section 36B(1)(a) of the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) to the five licensees listed below in respect of their contravention of the Guidelines on Implementation of Real-name Registration for SIM Cards issued by the CA and the relevant condition of their licences:

1. Hong Kong uCloudlink Network Technology Limited (Note 1);
2. Neware Info Technology Limited (Note 2);
3. Truphone (Hong Kong) Limited (Note 3);
4. Uhuibao International Business Co., Limited (Note 4); and
5. Ultra Data Technology Limited (Note 5).

The Telecommunications (Registration of SIM Cards) Regulation (Cap. 106AI) took effect on September 1, 2021, to implement the real-name registration programme for subscriber identity module (SIM) cards. The Regulation requires that all newly effective SIM service plans and new pre-paid SIM (PPS) cards shall require real-name registration before activation from March 1, 2022, and existing PPS cards shall require real-name registration on or before February 23, 2023.

The CA issued the Guidelines on August 20, 2021, to provide practical and administrative guidance to telecommunications service providers for implementation of the real-name registration programme in compliance with the Regulation. Among others, the Guidelines stipulate that telecommunications service providers shall put in place an electronic registration platform with a database for the SIM cards before March 1, 2022.

During its close follow-up with the relevant licensees, the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) noted that the above-mentioned five licensees failed to put in place in a timely manner an electronic registration platform in accordance with the Guidelines. Having considered OFCA's assessment and the representations made by each of the five licensees concerned, the CA concluded that they have breached the Guidelines and the relevant condition of their licences. The CA's directions were hence issued to these licensees today to require them to complete implementation of the electronic registration platform within three weeks and cease the sale, supply or activation of any new SIM cards with effect from March 1, 2022.

For details, please refer to the CA's directions

(www.coms-auth.hk/en/policies_regulations/ca_decisions/index_yr_all-ca_75-sb_all-p_1.html) published on the CA's website.

Note 1: Registered licensee of Class Licence for Offer of Telecommunications Services (CLOTS), registration no. CLOTS0000066.

Note 2: Registered licensee of CLOTS, registration no. CLOTS0000071.

Note 3: Holder of Services-based Operator Licence No. 1568.

Note 4: Registered licensee of CLOTS, registration no. CLOTS0000056.

Note 5: Registered licensee of CLOTS, registration no. CLOTS0000070.