

OFCA conducts market surveillance on real-name registration of SIM cards (with photos)

The second phase of the Real-name Registration Programme for Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) Cards (the Real-name Registration Programme) commenced on March 1, 2022. The Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) conducted market surveillance this afternoon (April 11) in Sham Shui Po District including at stalls along Apliu Street to ensure effective implementation of the Real-name Registration Programme and took this opportunity to remind traders and the public to have real-name registration for their pre-paid SIM (PPS) cards as early as possible.

"Telecommunications service providers and their agents/distributors should observe the requirements of the Telecommunications (Registration of SIM Cards) Regulation (the Regulation) and the corresponding guidelines in their issuance and sale of SIM cards with respect to the real-name registration requirements starting from March 1, 2022. During the market surveillance conducted by OFCA, it was observed that SIM cards for sale by traders were generally compliant with the real-name registration requirements and guidelines. Among others, an express notice containing the wording 'real-name registration is required before use' was printed on new PPS card packages. Traders would also remind customers that new PPS cards must be registered before service activation though there was no need for real-name registration at the time of purchase," a spokesman for OFCA said.

"To raise public awareness of the Real-name Registration Programme, we also made use of the market surveillance to remind sellers and buyers of PPS cards of the statutory requirement and implementation of the Real-name Registration Programme through distributing introductory pamphlets in Apliu Street and neighbouring areas of Sham Shui Po," the spokesman added.

"We have urged all telecommunications service providers to recall from the market as far as possible all unsold existing PPS cards issued before March 1, 2022 which do not require the completion of real-name registration before service activation. We will continue to monitor closely the progress of real-name registration of SIM cards. Besides ensuring compliance with the Regulation, we also encourage all telecommunications service providers to actively consider measures to expedite real-name registration by their users before the deadline for registration," the spokesman said.

The Regulation, which took effect on September 1, 2021, is applicable to all SIM cards issued by local telecommunications service providers for person-to-person communications (including SIM cards for voice, data and/or SMS services) in Hong Kong. Pursuant to the Regulation, existing PPS cards issued before March 1, 2022 are required to have real-name registration on or before February 23, 2023 or else they can no longer be used after the

deadline. All newly effective SIM service plans (SSPs) and PPS cards issued from March 1, 2022 onwards are required to have real-name registration before service activation. Existing SSP users are not required to re-register unless they change to another telecommunications service provider or subscribe to a new phone number. To provide guidance on the implementation of the Real-name Registration Programme to telecommunications service providers, the Guidelines on Implementation of Real-name Registration for SIM Cards issued by the Communications Authority also took effect on September 1, 2021.

Under the Real-name Registration Programme, each individual user and each corporate user may register no more than 10 PPS cards and 25 PPS cards respectively with each telecommunications service provider. There is no upper limit on the number of registrable SSP cards. For details of the Real-name Registration Programme as well as the weblinks and contact information for real-name registration of PPS cards issued by telecommunications service providers, please visit OFCA's website (www.ofca.gov.hk/simreg) or call OFCA's hotline (2961 6699).

