

Police "Beat App" to trial launch in phases for shortening "stop-and-search time"

Police will launch a pilot run of the fourth generation of Command and Control Communications System Mobile Application "Beat App" by phases starting from early May 2021.

In addition to communicating with the Regional Command and Control Centre via the wireless telecommunication devices to ascertain if the person is wanted or reported missing, police officers can use "Beat App" to read HKID cards and international passports by using the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology, or Exit-Entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macau by QR codes. For other identification documents, Police can use hand-writing and voice input to conduct the enquiry.

The "Beat App" can only be installed on the official mobile phones of the Force. There is a laser engraved Police logo on the phone and Police will continue to devise new differentiating features for the sake of recognition. The "Beat App" will only read the card face data (e.g. name, date of birth and date of issue etc). It is unable to read data contained in the chip of the identification documents, take or store any photo of it. Besides, the screen capture function is deactivated and no data can be duplicated when using the "Beat App". The database enquiry function of the application will only be activated when police officers are on duty. When accessing the database of the application, a digital watermark with date, time and the identification number of the police officer will be shown on each page.

"Beat App" can streamline the enquiry process, enhance operational efficiency and safety as well as shorten citizens' waiting time when being stopped and searched. It also alleviates the tremendous workload in the Regional Command and Control Centre so that more resources could be deployed for emergency services.

The "Beat App" provides an additional means for the frontline officers to conduct checks on person/vehicle/vessel, reducing officers' time in transcribing data and enhancing the accuracy of data checking. There is no change on the overall stop-and-search procedures. The data being checked by frontline officers during "stop-and-search" remains the same as before.

Regarding information security and protection of personal data, Police have clear and strict internal guidelines regulating the use, storage and retention of personal data collected by officers while performing duties and ensure they comply with the regulations stipulated under the "Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance" (Chapter 486)". Police would take all practical steps to safeguard personal data from unauthorized or accidental access, processing or use. All Force members are required to strictly adhere to the laws and regulations, notwithstanding on or off duty.

Phase one will involve part of Regional Emergency Units and District Traffic Teams to participate in the pilot run. If the pilot run is smooth, it will then formally rollout to all Regional Emergency Units and five selected District Traffic Teams in late May. Phase two will be launched in August 2021 and the use of "Beat App" will be extended to all Police Tactical Units, part of Patrol Sub-units and Marine Region.