

OFCA conducts market surveillance on real-name registration for SIM cards before Lunar New Year (with photos)

The Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) conducted today (February 6) market surveillance, publicity and education activities around Apliu Street in Sham Shui Po before the Lunar New Year, and distributed pamphlets to members of the public and traders to remind them not to sell, purchase or use pre-paid SIM (PPS) cards from unknown sources or allegedly having completed real-name registration.

"To raise public understanding of the Real-name Registration Programme for SIM Cards (Real-name Registration Programme) and ensure traders' compliance with the registration requirements, the OFCA conducts ongoing market surveillance, publicity and education activities to remind members of the public and visitors to complete the real-name registration with their own original identity document, and not to purchase or resell registered PPS cards, with a view to protecting their own interests and avoiding any loss and criminal liability. Meanwhile, the OFCA urges traders not to assist any persons in using the identity document of any third party in completing real-name registration, and not to sell PPS cards allegedly having completed registration," a spokesman for the OFCA said.

The spokesman added, "The OFCA has been maintaining close contact with telecommunications service providers, and reminding them to strengthen the inspection of the user information of the registered PPS cards. In case of any suspicious cases, they should promptly be referred to law enforcement agencies for follow-up. Up to the end of December 2023, in accordance with the legal requirements and relevant guidelines, telecommunications service providers had rejected around 1.02 million registration requests because customers failed to provide information that meets the registration requirements, and had deregistered around 1.16 million non-compliant PPS cards."

"Telecommunications service providers also conduct sample checks on the registration information from time to time. Upon the receipt of an SMS message from his/her telecommunications service provider using the designated sender address '#SIMREG', the user subject to the sample check must provide his/her own identity document again as soon as possible by following the instructions provided in the SMS message for verification of the registered information. If the user subject to the sample check is unable to provide relevant information to complete the verification before the stipulated deadline, the relevant PPS card will be deregistered and cannot be used afterwards. Telecommunications service providers will continue to enhance their real-name registration platforms. Starting from December last year, their platforms will gradually support 'iAM Smart' and members of the public can complete real-name registration more conveniently through 'iAM Smart'.

The list of telecommunications service providers that support 'iAM Smart' and their respective user guides can be found on the OFCA's [website](#)," the spokesman continued.

The spokesman emphasised that providing false information and/or false documents under the Real-name Registration Programme may constitute a criminal offence. Depending on the nature of the act and proof of evidence, the applicable offences include obtaining services by deception under section 18A of the Theft Ordinance (Cap. 210) and/or using false instruments under section 73 of the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200). In addition, any person who knowingly transfers PPS cards for illicit purposes may be liable for aiding and abetting the commission of the relevant offence under section 89 of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Cap. 221).

Under the Real-name Registration Programme, all SIM cards issued and used locally (including service plan SIM cards and PPS cards) must have their real-name registration completed before service activation. The OFCA will continue to carry out a series of monitoring and enforcement actions to ensure that telecommunications service providers and other relevant parties comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines.

For details of the Real-name Registration Programme, please visit the OFCA's website (www.ofca.gov.hk/simreg/en).

