

Code of Practice on Promulgating Anti-scam Messages to the Public by Telecommunications Service Providers

1. Introduction

1.1 This code of practice (“CoP”) provides practical guidance to all telecommunications service providers for promulgating anti-scam messages to subscribers of public telecommunications services in Hong Kong through their publicity channels and means with a view to reminding them to stay vigilant against fraudulent calls and short message services (“SMS”). The Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”) encourages all telecommunications service providers to comply with this CoP for the protection and promotion of the interests of consumers of telecommunications goods and services.

2. Background

2.1 With a view to safeguarding the integrity of telecommunications networks and services, OFCA has, in collaboration with the Police and telecommunications service providers, developed and implemented a series of measures to combat fraudulent calls and SMS from telecommunications perspective, including –

- (a) blocking access to suspicious websites and suspending telecommunications services of local phone numbers involved in scam cases based on information provided by the Police;
- (b) blocking transmission or delivery of calls bearing suspicious or spoofed calling line identification;
- (c) sending voice or text alerts for incoming “+852” calls;
- (d) suspending telecommunications service/function of local telephone numbers/codes suspected of generating scam calls or SMS;
- (e) implementing the real-name registration programme for subscriber identification module (“SIM”) cards; and
- (f) setting up of the SMS sender registration scheme.

2.2 To promote self-vigilance among members of the public and enhance their awareness of the available measures against fraudulent calls and SMS, the Communications Authority (“CA”) promulgates from time to time anti-scam messages via its publicity channels and occasions, including press releases, TV and radio announcements, posters, leaflets and infographic, thematic websites, social media, exhibitions, seminars, community talks, etc.¹

3. Promulgation of Anti-scam Messages by Telecommunications Service Providers

3.1 Telecommunications service providers are advised to promulgate CA’s anti-scam messages with use of their publicity channels and means, with examples given in the following –

- (a) posting of anti-scam messages on corporate / thematic websites;
- (b) anti-scam tips posted on social media platforms;
- (c) pop-up of anti-scam messages in mobile Apps;
- (d) anti-scam messages printed on bills and/or bill inserts;
- (e) anti-scam advice included in email correspondence;
- (f) reminder voice script played for callers to the customer service hotline;
- (g) SMS and email reminders; and
- (h) display of posters, playing of video clips and/or distribution of leaflets of anti-scam measures and messages in retail outlets.

The above examples are not exhaustive. Telecommunications service providers may deliver CA’s anti-scam messages in other additional publicity channels and means to their subscribers as they see fit.

¹ Examples are available on the following webpages –
For scam calls:
https://www.ofca.gov.hk/en/consumer_focus/guide/hot_topics/fraudulent_calls/index.html;
For scam SMS:
https://www.ofca.gov.hk/en/consumer_focus/guide/hot_topics/ssrs/index.html; and
For real-name registration programme for SIM cards:
https://www.ofca.gov.hk/en/consumer_focus/guide/hot_topics/sim_registration/index.html.

3.2 In addition, telecommunications service providers are encouraged to produce their own anti-scam materials for the benefits of their customers so as to address any specific concern taking into account the latest trend of scam.

4. Review of this CoP

4.1 All telecommunications service providers are advised to promulgate anti-scam messages in their publicity channels and means with reference to this CoP, and report the work progress to OFCA at the request of the latter.

4.2 OFCA may review and update this CoP as necessary.

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