

# Introduction to Short Message Service (SMS) Sender Registration Scheme (“Scheme”)

Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee

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# Background on Implementation of the Scheme

- OFCA has always been committed to, from the perspective of telecommunications services, cooperating with the Police's enforcement actions to combat the transmission of fraudulent calls and SMS through telecommunications networks
- In recent years, the problem of fraudulent SMS has been worsening. The Police has received a number of reports about fraudulent SMS sent to mobile users by fraudsters masquerading as banks and telecommunications service providers
- Following the launch of the Scheme, members of the public can easily identify the authenticity of the SMS senders so as to reduce the risk of deception by fraudulent SMS



# Establishment of the Scheme

- Newly introduced prefix “ # ”
  - ➔ Identify “Registered SMS Sender IDs”
  - ➔ Identify whether an SMS is sent by a Registered Sender easily



- The Scheme is not applicable to SMS which receiving parties are expected to reply to the senders via their phone numbers

# Registration of “SMS Sender IDs”

- Participating company/organisation needs to register with OFCA
  - as a “Registered Sender”
  - for SMS Sender ID(s) with prefix “#”

- “#” is positioned at
  - ✓ Beginning of SMS Sender ID
  - ✗ Beginning of SMS content



- Only Registered Senders can send SMS using their Registered SMS Sender IDs with prefix “#” to local subscribers of mobile services in Hong Kong

Remark: The length of “Registered SMS Sender ID” should be 3 to 10 alphabets, numbers or special characters (excluding “#”)

# Receipt of SMS from “Registered Senders”

- Members of the public receiving SMS in HK
  - ➔ Can easily identify whether the SMS is from a “Registered Sender” by looking at the prefix “#” in the “SMS Sender ID”

- Service is provided by mobile service providers free of charge
  - ❌ Prior application
  - ❌ Installation of mobile app
  - ❌ Change of handset settings



# Implementation of the Scheme and Participating Companies/Organisations

- The Scheme was first launched by the telecommunications sector on **28 December 2023**. Major telecommunications service providers have started sending SMS using “Registered SMS Sender IDs” with prefix “#”

## *Examples of Participants in the Scheme*



- **Police** joined the Scheme from **2 January 2024**
- **Major Banks** joined the Scheme from **28 January 2024** as well



# Checking of “Registered Senders” and their corresponding “Registered SMS Sender IDs”

- Check the SMS Sender Registry at OFCA’s website [www.ofca.gov.hk/ssrs](http://www.ofca.gov.hk/ssrs)
  - Registered Senders
  - their Registered SMS Sender IDs with prefix “#”

Look for a Hashtag  
“#” for Registered  
Senders!

- OFCA will update the Registry to include new participants in the Scheme in the future



# Conclusion

- The Scheme aims at helping members of the public identify SMS sent by “Registered Senders”
- Under any circumstances, upon receipt of SMS from unknown senders
  - ✓ Stay highly vigilant
  - ✗ Never disclose personal information, bank account numbers or credit card details, or transfer money to unidentified senders upon their request
- OFCA will review the implementation of the Scheme and assist government departments / bureaux and other interested organisations in participation in the Scheme





# Thank You

