

Measures to Combat Fraudulent Calls and Messages

Telecommunications Regulatory Affairs Advisory Committee
20 July 2023



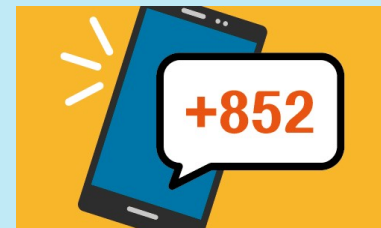
Combating Fraudulent Calls and Messages

- **Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) has been adopting a multi-pronged approach in collaboration with Police to combat fraudulent calls**
 - ▣ In September 2022, in view of the marked increase in the number of telephone deception cases, **OFCA set up a Working Group** with Police and telecommunications operators
 - ▣ **To devise and implement effective measures** to combat these fraudulent calls **from telecommunications perspectives**
 - ▣ To safeguard the integrity of telecommunications services and the security of communications networks



Sending Voice or Text Alerts for Incoming “+852” Calls

- To alert the public on suspicious calls originating from outside Hong Kong with caller number prefixed with “+852”
 - ▣ Starting from 1 May 2023, all mobile service providers have sent **voice alert or text alert** for incoming “+852” calls
 - ▣ **“Call is from outside Hong Kong. Beware of deception”**
 - ▣ Voice alert is spoken in Cantonese, Putonghua and English
 - ▣ Text alert is written in English and Chinese



Blocking Transmission or Delivery of Calls Bearing Suspicious or Spoofed CLI

“Code of Practice in relation to Calling Line Identification and Other Calling Line Identification Related Services” (CoP for CLI)

OFCA amended the CoP for CLI to require that fixed, mobile and external telecommunications service operators shall **identify and block calls bearing suspicious or spoofed CLI** and ensure that **only calls with valid CLI shall be transmitted across networks and delivered to end users.**



Suspension of Telecommunications Services of Local Phone Numbers involved in Scam Cases

- Even if the caller number display has no "+" sign and shows an 8-digit Hong Kong phone number, it may still be a scam call
 - ▣ With OFCA's coordination, Police and telecommunications operators concerned had established a liaison protocol
 - ▣ Telecommunications operators will **suspend telecommunications services of local mobile phone numbers, and block calls from fixed lines using CLI prefixed with +852, that are involved in scam cases** based on information provided by Police



Blocking Access to Suspicious Websites involved in Scam Cases

- From time to time, Police received reports of deception cases with information on fraudulent domain names/URLs
 - ▣ Under the protocol, telecommunications operators will **block users' access to those suspicious websites involved in scam cases** based on information provided by Police



Code of Practice on Management of Scam Calls by Mobile Service Providers

- Issued on 21 April 2023 after industry consultation
- Provide practical guidance to mobile service providers (MSPs) in -
 - managing suspected scam calls made from local mobile networks and systems; and
 - ensuring the efficient and reliable operation of mobile networks and systems
- Commencement date: 30 June 2023



Code of Practice on Management of Scam Calls by Mobile Service Providers (2)

Identify suspected scam call patterns

- MSPs shall monitor calls originating from their networks and systems based on suspected scam call patterns set out in the code of practice
- MSPs may propose other conditions for identification of suspected scam call pattern (subject to OFCA's agreement)



Code of Practice on Management of Scam Calls by Mobile Service Providers (3)

Suspend relevant service

- MSPs shall suspend the relevant telecommunications service/function of the local telephone numbers upon identification of suspected scam call patterns

Resumption of suspended service

- May be resumed in response to a request of the user concerned
- Identity of the user is provided or verified
- A statement from the user explaining the use of the suspended number and purpose of the calls

Code of Practice on Management of Scam Calls by Mobile Service Providers (4)

Record keeping and reporting

- Monthly statistics
- Detailed records to be provided to the Communications Authority upon request and, if necessary, law enforcement agencies for the prevention or investigation of crimes:
 - date, local telephone number and triggering condition of each suspension
 - date, local telephone number of each resumption
 - identity of the affected user who has requested for resumption, a statement from the user and result of request



Registration Scheme for SMS Senders

Technical Working Group to Combat Spoofing SMS (TWG)

- In November 2022, OFCA, together with Police, mobile service providers as well as the banking sector and its regulator, set up the TWG to formulate a **registration scheme for SMS sender addresses** to help the public ascertain the authenticity of the SMS sender's address

Code of Practice on Transmission and Delivery of Short and Multimedia Messages from Registered Sender (SMS CoP)

- With inputs from members of the TWG, OFCA prepared a draft SMS CoP and consulted the relevant stakeholders in June 2023
- OFCA plans to finalise and promulgate the SMS CoP by end July 2023



Registration Scheme for SMS Senders (2)

- OFCA is working with the Hong Kong Association of Banks to –
 - implement the **Registry of Registered Senders**
 - promulgate the **list of Registered Sender IDs** for the banking sector
- OFCA will also work with the MSPs to –
 - implement the **registration process for the Registered SMS Service Providers**
 - conduct **test on transmission and delivery of SMS^{RS}**
- The target is to launch a **pilot run** of the registration scheme for the banking sector by end of this year



Way Forward

- OFCA will continue to strengthen cooperation with Police and the telecommunications industry to step up **public education and publicity** through different channels with a view to widely disseminating anti-deception messages to all members of the public and reminding them to stay alert to all received calls and messages
- OFCA will continue to work with Police and the telecommunications industry on the adoption of **measures from telecommunications perspective** to combat fraudulent calls and messages



Thank you

