

Guidelines on Registration of Sender IDs and Sending of Short Messages and Multimedia Messages

Part A - Introduction

1. Interpretation

1.1 In this set of guidelines (the “Guidelines”),

“Authorised Representative” means a representative authorised by a Registered Sender to send SMS^{RS} on behalf of the Registered Sender;

“Destination Number”, in relation to an SMS, means the directory number, in accordance with the Numbering Plan for Telecommunications Services in Hong Kong issued by OFCA, of the recipient to whom the SMS is intended to be sent;

“HKAB” means the Hong Kong Association of Banks;

“Local Mobile Number” means a number for mobile services according to the Numbering Plan for Telecommunications Services in Hong Kong issued by OFCA;

“OFCA” means the Office of the Communications Authority;

“Registered Sender” means a Sender which has registered Sender ID(s) with prefix “#” with the Registry;

“Registry” means the registry which is established and maintained by OFCA and/or its appointed agent(s) to hold records of the Registered Senders and their corresponding Sender IDs for sending SMS^{RS} for the purpose of the Guidelines;

“RSSP” means a Registered SMS Service Provider, which is an SMS service provider registered with OFCA;

“Sender” means a party in Hong Kong or any other locations who sends an SMS to one or more Destination Numbers;

“Sender ID” means the information attached to an SMS for delivery to display on the recipient’s mobile device to identify the Sender of the SMS;

“SMS” means a message, for the purpose of the Guidelines, –

- (a) which is delivered using
 - (i) the short message service; or
 - (ii) the multimedia messaging service as defined in the specifications of the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP); and
- (b) the Destination Number of which is a Local Mobile Number assigned to subscribers of public telecommunications services in Hong Kong; and

“SMS^{RS}” means an SMS using a Sender ID with prefix “#” that has been registered by a Registered Sender in the Registry. For the avoidance of doubt, those SMS with phone numbers as Sender IDs of which receiving parties are expected to reply to the Senders direct are not supported.

2. Background

2.1 To prevent fraudsters from masquerading as reputable organisations and sending SMS to customers and to protect Hong Kong mobile users from fraud SMS messages, OFCA, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Hong Kong Police Force, HKAB and the telecommunications industry have established the SMS Sender Registration Scheme (the “Scheme”) for transmission and delivery of trusted SMS from Registered Senders, i.e. SMS^{RS}, to local subscribers of mobile services in Hong Kong.

2.2 Under the Scheme, a Registry is established and maintained by OFCA and/or its appointed agent(s) to hold records of Registered Senders and their corresponding Sender IDs with prefix “#” for sending SMS^{RS}. A Sender who have genuine and practical needs to send SMS to communicate with its customers or members of the public may apply to OFCA or OFCA’s appointed agent(s), as the case may be, to register as a Registered Sender with Sender ID(s) with prefix “#”. A Registered Sender shall only engage RSSP(s) for sending SMS^{RS} to local subscribers of mobile services in Hong Kong.

- 2.3 The Guidelines aim at providing practical guidance for –
- (a) Registration of Registered Sender and Sender ID(s) with prefix “#”; and
 - (b) Sending of SMS^{RS} by Registered Sender through RSSP(s).

3. Applicability of the Guidelines

3.1 The Guidelines apply to Senders who have genuine and practical needs to send SMS to communicate with customers or members of the public. To ensure the integrity of the Scheme, OFCA has the sole and absolute discretion in assessing the application and deciding whether the applicant will be accepted for registration as a Registered Sender or not.

Part B - Registration of Registered Sender and Sender ID(s)

4. The Registry

4.1 The Registry shall contain registration records with the following information –

- (a) name of the Registered Sender;
- (b) registered Sender ID(s);
- (c) the sector which the Registered Sender belongs to;
- (d) date(s) of registration of the Sender ID(s);
- (e) date(s) of cancellation of the Sender ID(s) (if applicable);
- (f) status of the registered Sender ID(s) (e.g. valid, cancelled etc.); and
- (g) designated contact of the Registered Sender, namely full name, title/position, telephone number and email address.

4.2 To facilitate the necessary operation of the Scheme, OFCA will only publish part of the above information from the Registry on its website¹.

¹ The Registry is available at https://www.ofca.gov.hk/en/consumer_focus/guide/hot_topics/ssrs/index.html.

5. General Rules for Registration of Sender IDs

5.1 Registration of Sender IDs is on a first-come-first-served basis. Subject to paragraph 5.4 below, there is no limit on the total number of Sender IDs for each Registered Sender.

5.2 No sharing of Sender IDs is allowed between Registered Senders unless otherwise approved by OFCA.

5.3 Sender IDs cannot be transferred between Registered Senders unless otherwise approved by OFCA.

5.4 A Sender should register Sender ID(s) that is/are directly associated with its company/organisation name and/or brand name(s) and commonly known by the public. At request of OFCA, the concerned Sender should timely provide OFCA with additional documents to justify its participation in the Scheme and the use of the proposed Sender ID(s).

6. Format of Registered Sender IDs

6.1 A Sender ID shall start with **prefix “#”**, followed by **three (3) to ten (10) characters**. For the avoidance of doubt, “#” is not allowed in any position other than in the prefix of a Sender ID.

6.2 The characters after the prefix “#” in a Sender ID may include English alphabets, numbers, special characters or any of their combinations. For the avoidance of doubt, a Sender ID composed of special characters or numbers only after the prefix “#” is not allowed.

6.3 The English alphabets referred to in paragraph 6.2 above are case sensitive.

6.4 The special characters referred to in paragraph 6.2 above shall only include those special characters listed in **Annex 1**.

6.5 A Sender ID shall not –

- (a) contain leading or trailing space;
- (b) be generic in nature (e.g. #OTP, #SMS, etc.);
- (c) have any implications that the Sender ID is connected with the Central People's Government or the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, any department or agency of either governments, statutory bodies, or regulatory authorities/agencies, except with full justification to the satisfaction of OFCA and/or its appointed agent(s);
- (d) violate, or bear any direct or indirect implications or meanings to potentially violate, any laws of Hong Kong;
- (e) infringe any intellectual property rights; or
- (f) be regarded as obscene, indecent, scandalous, seditious or contrary to law or morality in any language, or offending religious beliefs.

6.6 OFCA has the sole and absolute discretion in deciding which Sender ID(s) can be used for registration. OFCA may reject any Sender ID(s) under any application, suspend the use of any Sender ID(s), remove any Sender ID(s) from the Registry, or take such other associated actions as OFCA deems necessary or desirable and notify the relevant parties accordingly.

7. OFCA's and its Appointed Agent(s) in Handling Application

7.1 Subject to paragraph 6.6 above, OFCA will handle application for registration of Sender IDs either directly or via its appointed agent(s) where appropriate.

7.2 OFCA has appointed HKAB as its agent to handle application for registration of Sender ID(s) from the banking sector. OFCA may appoint other agents to handle applications for registration of Sender IDs as necessary.

7.3 The appointed agent(s) referred to in paragraph 7.2 above is/are responsible for the following duties –

- (a) handling the application for Registered Sender and Sender ID(s), including collecting all the required information from the applicant;
- (b) handling the enquiries regarding Sender ID(s) registration;
- (c) assessing and validating the eligibility of entity for Sender ID(s) registration;

- (d) assessing the appropriateness of the Sender ID(s) under application;
- (e) replying to the applicants whether or not the application is successful after consulting with OFCA; and
- (f) coordinating with OFCA to facilitate the registration of Sender IDs in the Registry.

8. Application for Registration as Registered Sender with Sender ID(s) and Cancellation of Registered Sender ID(s)

8.1 A Sender who have genuine and practical needs to send SMS to communicate with its customers or members of the public may apply for registration as Registered Sender with Sender ID(s) via OFCA or its appointed agent(s) as specified in paragraph 7.2 above. To facilitate the processing of the application, applicants from different sectors shall provide information requested in the corresponding application forms at **Annex 2** to OFCA or its appointed agent(s), as the case may be, including but not limited to the following information –

- (a) full name of the applicant;
- (b) full name, contact number and email address of the applicant's designated contact point;
- (c) proof of business in the sector concerned;
- (d) Sender ID(s) that the applicant intends to use;
- (e) the applicant's identification document (e.g. Business Registration Certificates, Certificate of Incorporation, etc.) for verification purposes;
- (f) an authorised person of the applicant with company/organisation chop on the application form; and
- (g) list of participating RSSPs that the applicant works with or intends to work with to send SMS^{RS}.

8.2 The application forms for different sectors can be downloaded from the websites of OFCA or its appointed agent(s) at the respective links given in **Annex 2**.

8.3 Upon receipt of all the requested information under paragraphs 8.1 and 5.4 above, OFCA or its appointed agent(s), as the case may be, targets to notify the applicant within 15 working days of the result where practicable. If

the new registered Sender ID is approved, the Registered Sender is allowed to start sending SMS^{RS} with the new registered Sender ID by its appointed RSSP(s) upon receipt of the above notification. For the avoidance of doubt, no testing for sending SMS^{RS} with RSSP(s) shall be conducted until receipt of the above notification.

8.4 The registration of any registered Sender ID(s) shall be withdrawn right after the company or organisation concerned ceases the business in the sector concerned. A Registered Sender may also apply for cancellation of an existing registered Sender ID using the application form mentioned in paragraph 8.2 above. The cancellation of a registered Sender ID will take effect within 15 working days upon receipt of the application.

8.5 On the effective date of the Guidelines, the application for registration or cancellation of registered Sender IDs is free of charge. OFCA or its appointed agent(s) reserve the right to charge reasonable fees for handling such application or cancellation of registration in the future.

8.6 To ensure the integrity of the Scheme, OFCA has the sole and absolute discretion to revoke the status of a company or an organisation as a Registered Sender and to withdraw all corresponding Sender IDs under registration, in circumstances including but not limited to the following –

- (a) if a Registered Sender fails to comply with any requirements and/or obligations stipulated in the Guidelines and/or other regulatory instruments, where applicable;
- (b) if a Registered Sender behaves in a manner or has any involvements in any activities which jeopardises or compromises the integrity or credibility of the Scheme;
- (c) if a Registered Sender has been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, any crime relating to its business conduct or activities; and/or
- (d) if any information and document supplied by a Registered Sender in relation to its application under the Scheme is found to be false, fake or misleading, or any representation, declaration or statement which is made by such Registered Sender in its application is false, fake or misleading.

8.7 Subject to paragraph 8.6 above, upon notification by OFCA, the concerned company or organisation with its status of Registered Sender revoked shall immediately cease to send any SMS using a Sender ID with

prefix “#”. All RSSPs shall immediately take action to cease the transmission of any SMS having a Sender ID with prefix “#” previously used by the concerned company or organisation.

Part C - Sending of SMS^{RS} by Registered Senders

9. Obligations of Registered Senders

9.1 A Registered Sender shall –

- (a) only use Sender ID with prefix “#” that has been registered by the Registered Sender itself in the Registry for sending SMS^{RS} only to local subscribers of mobile services in Hong Kong, except those SMS with phone numbers as Sender IDs of which receiving parties are expected to reply to the Sender direct; and
- (b) only engage services from RSSP(s) for sending SMS^{RS} via dedicated and secured network connections with the RSSP(s).

9.2 A Registered Sender shall not send –

- (a) any SMS that are not SMS^{RS}, except those SMS with phone numbers as Sender ID(s) of which receiving parties are expected to reply to the Sender direct; or
- (b) any SMS^{RS} via an SMS service provider that has not been registered with OFCA as an RSSP.

9.3 A Registered Sender shall refer to the list of RSSPs published on OFCA’s website² when engaging services from RSSP(s) for sending SMS^{RS}.

9.4 A Registered Sender may appoint an Authorised Representative to send SMS^{RS} on its behalf and the Authorised Representative shall comply with all the requirements under paragraphs 9.1 to 9.3 above. For the sake of practicality, an RSSP shall only accept SMS^{RS} from the Authorised Representative appointed by a Registered Sender which has established commercial relationship with that RSSP. For the avoidance of doubt, the appointment of an Authorised Representative shall not absolve the responsibility of the Registered Sender from complying with the requirements

² The list of RSSPs is available at https://www.ofca.gov.hk/filemanager/ofca/en/content_1685/list.pdf.

under the Guidelines. A Registered Sender who wishes to authorise an Authorised Representative to send SMS^{RS} on its behalf shall issue a letter of authorisation to the RSSP(s) engaged for sending SMS^{RS} with a copy of the letter to OFCA prior to sending SMS^{RS} by the Authorised Representative. A sample letter of authorisation is given and available for download at the hyperlink in **Annex 3**.

Part D - Miscellaneous

10. Review and Update of the Guidelines

10.1 OFCA may review and update the Guidelines from time to time in view of the latest technology and market developments.

Office of the Communications Authority
Revised on 26 April 2024

Annex 1: List of Allowable Special Characters in a Sender ID

Special Characters	Description
!	exclamation mark
&	Ampersand
*	Asterisk
-	minus or dash
=	equal sign
+	Plus
?	question mark
/	forward slash
@ ³	"at" symbol
_	Underscore
.	Dot
	space (except leading or trailing space)

Remarks

Not all RSSPs may support certain special characters in the Sender IDs. Applicants should check with their RSSPs about the support for any special characters they plan to include in the Sender IDs before submitting applications for the registration of such Sender IDs.

³ The special character @ shall not be used together with any capital letter in a Sender ID.

Annex 2 – Application Forms for New Registration or Cancellation of Sender ID(s)

Sector	Processing Party of the Application	Application Form for Download
Telecommunications	OFCA	https://www.ofca.gov.hk/filemanager/ofca/common/ssrs/SenderID_Telco.docx
Banking	HKAB	https://www.hkab.org.hk/files/page/smart-consumer/1/Application_Form_final-1705465657.docx
Government Bureaux / Departments, Statutory Bodies and other related Organisations	OFCA	https://www.ofca.gov.hk/filemanager/ofca/common/ssrs/SenderID_Gov.docx
Others	OFCA	https://www.ofca.gov.hk/filemanager/ofca/common/ssrs/SenderID_Others.docx

Annex 3 – Sample Letter of Authorisation

(A copy of the authorisation letter is available at: <https://www.ofca.gov.hk/filemanager/ofca/common/ssrs/SampleLetterOfAuthorisation.docx>.)

<Full Company/Organisation Name of the Registered Sender with Letter Head >

To: <Name of RSSPs registered with OFCA>

CC: <Full Company/Organisation Name of the Authorised Representative>

Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”)
(sms-sender-rep@ofca.gov.hk)

Date: <DD MM YYYY>

Subject: Letter of Authorisation

Unless the context requires otherwise, the terms used in this letter shall have the same meaning as in the Guidelines on Registration of Sender IDs and Sending of Short Messages and Multimedia Messages (“Guidelines”) issued by OFCA.

<Full Company/Organisation Name of the Registered Sender> (The “**Company/Organisation**”) hereby certifies, represents and warrants that –

(i) the Company/Organisation has registered the following Sender ID(s) in the Registry which is established and maintained by OFCA and/or its appointed agent(s) to hold records of the Registered Senders and their corresponding Sender IDs for sending SMS^{RS} pursuant to the Guidelines issued by OFCA (**with a copy of letter for application result concerning SMS Sender ID Application issued by OFCA or its appointed agent attached**) –

- #XXXX
- #XXXX

(ii) <Full Company/Organisation Name of the Authorised Representative> (the “**Authorised Representative**”) is providing the Company/Organisation with the services of sending SMS^{RS} with the registered Sender ID(s) above for and on behalf of the Company/Organisation;

(iii) the following employee(s) of the Authorised Representative is/are authorised to give instructions to you for sending SMS^{RS} with the registered Sender ID(s) specified above for and on behalf of the Company/Organisation –

Full Name	Title/ Position	Contact Phone Number (including country code)	Contact email address

(iv) the authorisation in this letter shall remain valid until the Company/Organisation notifies you in writing of its revocation; and

(v) no other person or entity has the right to use or cause the distribution of the Sender ID(s) specified above.

The Company/Organisation acknowledges and agrees that you have the right to contact the Company/Organisation to verify the aforementioned matters.

Yours Sincerely,

For and on behalf of the Company/Organisation < Full
Company/Organisation Name of the Registered Sender >

<**Signature**>

<**Name**>

<**Title/Position of the Company/Organisation** >

<**Contact Phone Number**>

<**Contact Email Address**>