

Code of Practice on Verification of the Addresses of Potential Customers for Mobile Telecommunications Services

Preamble

Pursuant to Special Conditions (“SC”s) 1.2(a) and 1.2(c) of the Unified Carrier Licence (“UCL”), SCs 13.1(a) and 13.1(c) of the Services-Based Operator Licence (“SBO Licence”), and Conditions 15.1(a) and 15.1(c) of the Class Licence for Offer of Telecommunications Services (“Class Licence”) under section 8(1)(aa) of the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) (“TO”), the Communications Authority (“CA”) may issue a Code of Practice for the purpose of providing practical guidance to the licensees in respect of the provision of a satisfactory service and to ensure the protection and promotion of the interests of consumers of telecommunications goods and services.

2. This Code of Practice (“CoP”) issued by the CA shall be observed and complied with by all providers of mobile telecommunications services including holders of UCL for the provision of mobile telecommunications services, SBO Licence for the provision of mobile virtual network operator services and Class Licence offering in the course of business mobile telecommunications services (collectively referred to as “Mobile Service Providers” hereinafter). The purposes of this CoP are:

- a) to ensure the integrity and validity of the address information of customers maintained by Mobile Service Providers;
- b) to prevent the use of incorrect address information by Mobile Service Providers for purposes related to its provision of service including billing and debt collection; and
- c) to prevent the misuse of other parties’ address information for subscription to mobile telecommunications services.

3. For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this CoP absolves any Mobile Service Providers from operating in accordance with the terms of its licence and legislation, for example the TO and the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486), currently in force in Hong Kong.

Basic Guiding Principles

4. The basic guiding principles for the verification of the addresses of customers are:

- a) Mobile Service Providers shall request all applicants for their services, including individual and corporate customers, to provide proof of address whenever customer's address is collected or retained in the course of or in connection with the provision of their services. This requirement can only be waived in circumstances (i) when the Mobile Service Provider has full knowledge of the address of the applicant, for example, when an existing customer applies for value-added services under his account, or (ii) when the Mobile Service Provider does not collect or retain the address information for the purpose of provision of service to the customer (such as pre-paid services).
- b) Acceptable proof of address shall be in the form of any document, bill or correspondence issued by any reliable third-party source within the last three months from the application date. Correspondences from personal friends or relatives shall not be accepted.
- c) The addressee of the proof of address shall be the same person as the applicant for the mobile telecommunications services, otherwise the addressee shall accompany with the applicant to apply for the mobile telecommunications services and confirm that the applicant can be contacted at the address shown in the document.
- d) The document of the proof of address shall be the original of the document.
- e) In case the transaction for service subscription is conducted or completed via online means or customer service hotlines, the proof of address referred to in (b) above in printed copy, facsimile, or digital copy (such as sent via mobile phone or computer or other similar means) can be acceptable if Mobile Service Providers have implemented proper and effective measure(s) to reasonably verify the address concerned.
- f) In handling the information obtained for the verification of the address of customer, Mobile Service Providers shall ensure that

proper procedures have been taken at all times to comply with the requirements as stipulated in the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

Acceptable Proof of Address

5. The following are common examples of documents which are considered to be acceptable proofs of address from applicants for mobile telecommunications services. The list below is by no means exhaustive.

- a) Correspondence with Government Departments
Examples : Tax Return
Student Loan Statement
Voter Registration
Business Registration Certificate
- b) Correspondence with banks or financial institutions
Examples : Bank statement
Statement
Credit card account statement
- c) Correspondence with Public Utilities
Examples : Electricity bill
Water bill
Gas bill
Business Registration Certificate
- d) Correspondence with operators of Public Telecommunications Services
Examples : Mobile telecommunications service bill
Fixed telephone service bill
Internet access service bill
Pay TV service bill
- e) Correspondence with public organisations
Examples : Letter from a university
Letter from the Hospital Authority

Application and Update of the CoP

6. The CA may review and update this CoP from time to time in respect of developments in telecommunications policy, market and technology, as appropriate. If the CA considers that relevant amendments are necessary, it will take into account the views of the industry and other interested parties before effecting the amendments.

Communications Authority
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