

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

# Stringent SIM rules unveiled

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The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has announced strict measures for people buying and registering SIM cards.

People who want to buy a SIM card from a mobile phone retail shop can buy no more than five SIM cards per operator, and all new SIM cards must be registered with face recognition and fingerprinting.

Those who buy and register more than five SIM cards from each mobile operator must directly buy and register at the mobile operator's service centre and the operator must inform the NBTC later.

The mobile operators have to force retail shops to comply with the rule.

According to NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith, the move aims to prevent any possible damage caused by improper sales and registration of new

SIM cards.

The measure also aims to tighten the existing system to ensure efficiency of SIM card purchases and registration in the country.

This is the first time that the NBTC has limited the amount of SIM cards purchased.

Mr Takorn said mobile users still have the freedom to buy new SIM cards because each buyer will be able to buy up to 25 new SIM cards from major mobile operators: Advanced Info Service, True Move, Total Access Communication, TOT and CAT Telecom.

Customers can also buy new SIM cards from mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) on the same basis. An MVNO is a mobile operator that rents network capacity to provide mobile services, such as White Space, which provides services under the Penguin brand.

In the past, some retail shops registered SIM cards on behalf of their customers. The NBTC found that one person at a shop registered up to 100,000 SIM cards.

With the existing biometrics verification system, each new SIM buyer has to provide their ID card to be scanned and be registered by facial recognition system or a fingerprint reader at the purchase location.

The facial recognition system, provided by the NBTC, will verify the buyer's face against the image from the ID card's chip data. The fingerprint system is more complex and has a higher unit cost for mobile operators.

Mr Takorn denied that the latest measures were introduced in response to the recent incident of a man falsifying the ID card of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha to register for prepaid SIM cards at Real Move, a subsidiary of True Move.