

TELECOMS

Operators face huge fines over sim cards

POST REPORTERS

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) will fine mobile phone operators one million baht a day if they cannot follow its rule on sim card registration within the next 30 days.

The move aims to eliminate the chance for call centre gangs to purchase sim cards for the purpose of scamming customers, said Sutisak Tantayotin, deputy secretary-general of the NBTC.

The instruction came after the NBTC found on June 16 that a mobile phone operator failed to comply with its rule that one person can register a maximum of five numbers in a dealer's shop.

It was reported that many customers exceeded this from the shop of that mobile phone operator, which the NBTC declined to name.

Under its regulations, a person who wants to register more numbers is required to present themselves with their ID card at a service centre of the operator. The rule was set to prevent call centre scam gang members from using other people's ID cards to purchase sim cards and register the numbers.

The NBTC raised the matter at the meeting to set the measure to better regulate the mobile phone service providers.

They must comply within 30 days or

pay a daily fine.

Initially, the meeting concluded the minimum fine will be set at around a million baht a day, he said.

A meeting yesterday of a multilateral team to resolve call centre scam issues included staff from 11 agencies including the NBTC, a personal data protection committee, the Bank of Thailand, the Technology Crime Suppression Division (TCSD), mobile phone operators and the telecoms association of Thailand under royal patronage.

Prawit Leesatapornwongsa, an adviser to the NBTC commissioner who chairs the working committee, proposed that operators should provide a service which allows their users to ask them to deactivate international calls.

In addition, the telecoms association suggested developing a mobile application to help screen and check suspicious numbers that may be used by scammers.

The association also proposed the NBTC serve as a registrar for senders of SMS texts, similar to Singapore, to prevent the use of fake names.

It also urged mobile phone operators to take more responsibility for preventing call centre scams by having an option for users to block international calls.

The NBTC will follow up on the issue, Mr Prawit said.