

## **Press release**

### **LCQ6: Lost Octopus cards**

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

Following is a question by the Hon Cheung Hok-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, in the Legislative Council today (February 23):

Question:

According to the general procedure of the Police for handling found properties, any found property which does not involve personal data and remains unclaimed after three months may be claimed by the finder. It was recently reported that a member of the public who found a non-personalised Octopus card (i.e. Standard Octopus) gave the card to the Police for handling, and while that card was not claimed upon expiry of the period, it had to be returned to and permanently kept by the Octopus Company Limited (OCL) for the owner to claim. Yet, it was also reported that some members of the public who reported to OCL the loss of their non-personalised Octopus cards were told by the Company that reporting service was not available for loss of non-personalised Octopus cards. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the number of lost Octopus cards not containing personal data which were handled by the Police in each of the past three years, how such found properties which remained unclaimed upon expiry of the three months period were handled, and the justifications for handling them that way;

(b) whether it knows if reporting mechanism is available for loss of Standard Octopus cards (without Automatic Add Value Service function) at present; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(c) whether it knows how OCL handles those lost Standard Octopus cards handed in by/transferred from the Police, the public or other organisations;

(d) whether it knows the total number of lost Standard Octopus cards kept by OCL and yet to be claimed by the owners to date, and the total remaining value (including deposits) of the lost cards;

(e) whether it knows, among the lost Standard Octopus cards kept by OCL, the number of those which have been claimed by the public to date; and

(f) whether it knows if OCL has formulated any mechanism or proof for claiming lost Standard Octopus cards (without Automatic Add Value Service function); if it has, of the details; if not, how the public can claim lost cards?

Reply:

President,

The Administration's reply to the question is as follows:

(a) In dealing with found property case, the Police often receives an Octopus card found by the public along with other items, and such found properties will be processed as one single case. Therefore, the Police has not maintained separate statistics on the number of found Octopus cards received.

Upon receiving Octopus card found by the public, the Police will try to locate the card owner with the information available and return the card to the card owner. In case the card owner cannot be found, the Police will hand over the card to OCL. As a matter of fact, while personalised Octopus cards store personal particulars of the card owners, anonymous Octopus cards may contain the transaction records of the card owners. Since the Police is not authorised to retrieve or process data stored in Octopus cards when handling found property cases, the Police needs to hand over the cards to OCL for appropriate action, instead of giving the lost cards to the finders, in order to avoid leakage of data.

(b) As pointed out by OCL, currently customers are not required to provide or register any personal information for anonymous Octopus cards. However, if the card owner of the lost Octopus card can provide valid proof such as transaction receipts evidencing the use of the card to help verify the identity of the owner, the card owner can contact OCL. Arrangement will then be made by OCL for the card owner to get back the card when it is found and handed over to OCL.

(c) When processing the lost cards handed over by the Police, the public or other institutions, OCL is not able to take the initiative to contact the owners of such cards as it does not maintain any personal information of the card owners. In such cases, OCL will retain the deposit and remaining value of the lost cards. When the owner of the lost Octopus card contacts OCL and is able to provide valid proof such as transaction receipts evidencing the use of the card to help verify the identity of the owner, arrangement will then be made for the card owner to get back the card.

(d) Based on the information provided by OCL, from 2008 to 2010, there were about 35,000 anonymous Octopus cards found, handed over to and kept by the company. The total deposit and remaining value of these cards amounted to about HK\$3,300,000.

(e) According to the information provided by OCL, from 2008 to the present, OCL returned about 30 lost and found anonymous Octopus cards to the card owners.

(f) As mentioned above, OCL does not maintain any personal information of the owners of anonymous Octopus cards, and therefore is not able to take the initiative to contact the owners of such cards. Notwithstanding this, the owners of the lost Octopus cards may contact OCL to check whether their lost cards have been found and handed over to OCL. The card owner may provide valid proof such as transaction receipts showing the use of the card to help verify his/her identity and make arrangement for getting back the card.

Ends