

Duty payment procedure on mobile phones notified

ISLAMABAD: The government on Tuesday issued new procedures for swift registration and prompt payment of leviable duty and taxes for mobile devices which international passengers bring in their baggage.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority in coordination with cellular operators have devised a web-based user interface application called Device Identification, Registration and Blocking System (DIRBS).

The new procedures – implemented via a Customs General Order No. 01 of 2019 – have been issued for registration of devices brought in by international travellers, mobile devices available with an individual who is not a traveller and such devices imported by an individual via postal/courier services.

International travellers will apply online using the PTA application service for registration and payment of duty/taxes against mobile devices imported in accompanied baggage. This utility can also be accessed through franchise of mobile operators.

An applicant will be required to submit details including passport number, CNIC number, international mobile equipment identity (IMEI) number, etc. This information will be processed through WeBOC. The mobile device will accordingly be cleared by the system in accordance with admissible allowances under the Baggage Rules.

Under the new procedures, the first mobile phone in year will be allowed registration/white-listing in DIRBS free of duty/taxes. In the case of second or more mobile phones, the system will electronically generate a payment slip ID for payment of duty and taxes. The payment can be made via online banking, ATMs, mobile banking and bank branches of all leading banks.

Once the system confirms the payment of duty/taxes, the mobile device will be white-listed on DIRBS. International travellers can register their mobile device within 60 days of their arrival in Pakistan. After the due date, registration of such mobile devices will be subject to additional penalty and no concessions will be available under Baggage Rules.

Local residents will also register their mobile phones via the PTA web-based facility. The applicants will provide details including CNIC number and IMEI number of the mobile device seeking registration in DIRBS.

In the wake of submission of information, the system will electronically generate payment slip ID for payment of duty/taxes and prescribed fine. The applicant will have to pay the payment through available banks. The device will be white-listed in DIRBS after payment of duty/taxes and fine.

All mobile devices imported by an individual through postal service or courier will be released on production of Certificate of Compliance (CoC) issued by the PTA. The applicant can apply for the CoC to the customs authorities. On receipt of declaration, the Customs authorities will verify the particulars and process the declaration under PTA module for issuance of online CoC.

A system generated CoC will be accordingly issued by the PTA. Upon issuance of CoC, the applicant will deposit the customs' assessed leviable duty/taxes and the device will be released. In case of non-issuance of CoC, the customs authorities can take further action as per law.

The FBR has also devised new procedures for registration of mobile devices imported illegally through informal channels by local traders.

The holder/proprietor of unregistered mobile devices will voluntarily approach the nearest Collectorate of Customs and file declaration along with soft copy of IMEI details of such device. On receipt of declaration, the designated customs official will verify the particulars and endorse the stamp on the declaration form and detain the mobile device.

The holder will file an application supported with duty stamped declaration form before PTA for issuance of CoC. The PTA will process the application in accordance with its SoP and accordingly issue CoC.

Upon issuance of CoC, the applicant will approach the Customs authorities for release of the mobile device. The Customs authorities will assess the leviable duty/taxes and fine after adjudicating proceedings. The holder will deposit the whole amount in the designated branch of National Bank.

The mobile devices will be released to the holder accordingly. In case of non-issuance of CoC, the Customs authorities will take further action.

According to PTA's policy, an individual/passenger can obtain registration for five mobile devices within a year in DIRBS. PTA will not issue CoC/registration to additional mobile devices exceeding this quantity in a year.

Mobile device found stolen or having duplicate or invalid IMEI number will be permanently blocked and black-listed in DIRBS for use of mobile services in Pakistan. As per the PTA policy, a foreign roamer is allowed to continue using foreign SIMs without any time limit and without getting CoC from PTA. If a roamer starts using local SIM in his/her mobile device, he/she will not be considered a roamer and will be required to fulfill the conditions of a compliant device.

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter