

Subject to the law, whether they like it or not

Registration of online service providers will soon be automatic

PETALING JAYA: Large online social media and messaging service providers will be “deemed registered” under the Applications Service Provider Class (ASP(C)) licence of the Communications and Multimedia Act, says the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC).

According to the agency, this includes Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, WhatsApp and YouTube.

The automatic registration is imposed through a deeming provision following amendments to the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 by introducing section 46A (Deeming Provision).

“This deeming provision enables any person to be deemed as registered under a (ASP(C)) licence through a Ministerial Declaration without the need to submit a formal registration to register or get a licence,” MCMC said in a statement yesterday.

“All Internet messaging and social media service providers with eight million or more users in Malaysia are subject to this

licensing framework.”

MCMC said this step ensures that large-scale service providers will operate within the country’s legal and regulatory framework in an orderly, consistent and effective manner.

The commission has further clarified that this deemed registration has no validity period; the registration of an ASP(C) licence remains in effect until it is cancelled by service providers.

Among the duties licensed service providers have to perform under the Online Safety Act 2025 (Onsa) is to protect the online safety of child users, including by preventing children from accessing suspected harmful content (see graphic for details).

Adults are also prevented from viewing the personal information of a child, and there will be control of personalised recommendation systems suitable for child users.

Service providers who do not comply with the law can face a financial penalty not exceeding RM10mil, paid to MCMC.

“MCMC will continue to work

Online Safety Act (Onsa)

Expected to be enforced on Jan 1, 2026

Among harmful content defined under Onsa

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) defined under Section 4 of the Sexual Offences against Children Act 2017

Financial fraud and promotions on the use or sale of dangerous drugs

Content that may incite violence or terrorism and induce child self-harm

Content that is profane in nature, improper and against generally accepted behaviour or culture

Content that may promote feelings of ill will among the public or may disturb public tranquility

Duties of licensed service providers include:

1. Issuing guidelines and safety measures to users in a clear and easily understood manner

2. Preparing an online safety plan which does not contain any personal information of any user and that can be submitted to commission

3. Implementing a mechanism that makes harmful content inaccessible to users

4. Implementing measures to protect the online safety of child users

5. Implementing sufficient tools for users to manage their online safety and report harmful content

6. Implementing responsive user assistance to deal with users’ concerns about online safety

The Star graphics

Source: Onsa 2025

closely with service providers and other law enforcement agencies to strengthen online safety, particularly for children and families, and for the benefit of all users in Malaysia,” said the commission.

Previously, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said

explained that the establishment of the Online Safety Committee is crucial given Malaysia’s vast social media landscape with 33.1 million active social media users, representing 96% of the total population.

“Of this number, an estimated

10.6 million users are under 18 years old, making Malaysia one of the countries with the highest digital literacy and exposure rates in the region,” she said during a ministerial briefing on the committee in the Special Chambers of the Dewan Rakyat on Nov 13.

“This indicates that the government cannot act alone, hence a safe online environment can only be achieved through practical synergy between the government and platform providers.”

The Online Safety Bill was passed in the Dewan Rakyat on Dec 11, 2024, and was gazetted on May 22 this year.