Frequently Asked Questions

User Registration and User Account Association

A   *General*

Q1.   What is e-Registry? How to access the e-Registry?

Answer: e-Registry is a 24-hour portal developed by the Companies Registry to facilitate delivery of applications for incorporation of local companies or registration of non-Hong Kong companies, specified forms and related documents required under the Companies Ordinance and the Companies (Winding Up and Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Chapters 622 and 32 of the Laws of Hong Kong) in electronic form to the Registrar of Companies for registration. You can access the e-Registry at www.eregistry.gov.hk round the clock.

Q2.   What are the equipment requirements for using services of the e-Registry?

Answer: You will need a personal computer with internet access, preferably broadband connection, and equipped with a web browser. Please refer to the information sheet entitled "Equipment Specifications for Using Services of the e-Registry" which can be downloaded from the 'Equipment Specifications' section at the e-Registry.

Q3.   Must I be a registered user before using the e-Registry's services?

Answer: Yes. You must register as a user of the e-Registry before using the e-Registry's services.

Q4.   Who can register as a user of the e-Registry?

Answer: (i)   Any person can register as an **Individual User**. A director / company secretary / authorized representative / manager / authorized person of a company who is a natural person and is authorised to sign documents electronically on behalf of the company must register as an Individual User;

(ii)   A local company or a registered non-Hong Kong company registered with the Companies Registry under the Companies Ordinance can register as a Company User (hereinafter referred to as "**CR Company User**"); or

(iii)   Any unincorporated business registered with the Inland Revenue Department ("IRD") under the Business Registration Ordinance (Chapter 310 of the Laws of Hong Kong) such as firms or partnerships can also register as a Company User (hereinafter referred to as "**BR Company User**").

Q5.   How can I apply for user registration? What is the user registration fee?

Answer: Online user registration is available at the e-Registry free of charge. Please refer to Part B – Individual User Account and Part C – Company User Account below and the demonstration on "User Registration (Individual)" and "User Registration (Company)" at the e-Registry for more information.

Q6. **What are the differences between an Individual User account and a Company User account?**

Answer: An Individual User account is an account owned by an individual user in his/her personal capacity whereas a Company User account is an account registered for a company or an unincorporated business (i.e. CR Company User or BR Company User). An Individual User account holder can sign documents electronically with his/her User ID and password or digital certificate whereas a Company User account holder cannot. A Company User must associate its account with an Individual User account to enable the individual user to sign documents on its behalf.

Q7. **Are there any principal account and subsequent accounts for a user account?**

Answer: No. There are only Individual User accounts and Company User accounts. However, a user account can be associated to another user account. For example, an Individual User account can be associated to a Company User account of which the individual user is a director. Please refer to Part E – User Account Association for more information.

Q8. **Can I register for more than one user account with the e-Registry?**

Answer: No. A natural person, a company or an unincorporated business can register only one user account with the e-Registry. If you wish to register a new user account, you must close the existing user account first and you cannot use the same User ID again.

Q9. **What are User ID and password? Can I change them?**

Answer: User ID and password are defined and used by a user as an identifier at the e-Registry. User ID can be made up of 8-12 characters of any alphabets in capital letters or numbers. A password can be made up of 8-16 characters of a combination of alphabets (case sensitive) and numbers. User ID and password are used to login the e-Registry and sign documents. Since the User ID will be a unique identifier recognised by the e-Registry system, it should not be the same as those of other users nor can it be changed after registration. Users are advised to change their passwords regularly for security purpose.

Q10. **Apart from User ID and password, can I login the e-Registry by using my digital certificate which has already been registered in my user account?**

Answer: Yes. An Individual User who has registered his/her personal digital certificate in the user account can login the e-Registry with the digital certificate stored in his/her Hong Kong Identity Card or security token or PKCS#12 file.

Q11. **Can I share my User ID with another user?**

Answer: No. User ID is a unique identifier of a user in the e-Registry system. You should not share your User ID and password with another user.

Q12. **Can I use the same User ID and password as those used at the Cyber Search Centre?**

Answer: Since the electronic search system at the Cyber Search Centre (www.icris.cr.gov.hk) and the e-Registry system are two separate systems, there is no restriction on using the same User ID and password as those used at the Cyber Search Centre provided that they meet the requirements of the e-Registry system.

Q13. **How will the Hint Question and Hint Answer be used? Can I change them?**

Answer: The Hint Question and Hint Answer are used by the system to verify your identity and reset your password in case you forgot your password. You may change them when you change your password by [User Account Maintenance > Change Password] function.

Q14. **What can I do if I have forgotten my User ID or password?**

Answer: You can make use of the "Forget User ID" or "Forget Password" function provided on the login page of the e-Registry. You have to provide information of your identification document to enable the system to retrieve your User ID. In case you forgot your password, you have to provide the Hint Answer to your selected Hint Question to enable the system to verify your identity. The system will reset your password after successful verification. The User ID or system-generated password will be sent to your registered email address automatically by the system.

Q15. **Can I use my friend's email address as my registered email address at the e-Registry?**

Answer: There is no restriction on the use of email address. However, as the registered email address will be used for communication between the e-Registry system and users, including the email notification for account activation and other emails containing sensitive information such as User ID, system-generated password, monthly statements, etc., you are advised to use your own email address.

Q16. **How can I know whether my user registration is successful?**

Answer: For successful registration, an email inviting a user to activate the user account will be sent to the user's registered email address. The user account should be activated within the period specified in the email notification. You may contact the Helpdesk at (852) 8201 8273 or cr.helpdesk@icris.cr.gov.hk if you have any enquiries on user registration.

Q17. **Can I change my user particulars after registration?**

Answer: Users are only allowed to change their registered particulars in relation to contact information (e.g. address, email address, contact person, telephone no., fax no., choice of language for correspondence). If users want to change their registered name or identification document and number, they have to upload a copy of the new identification document at the e-Registry. The Companies Registry will amend the particulars after verification. For a CR Company User, the registered name and address will be updated automatically when the company has reported respective changes to the Companies Registry in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Ordinance. Users can login the e-Registry [User Account Maintenance > Change Particulars] to change their particulars or upload identification documents.

B   *Individual User Account*

Q1.   What identification document is required for registering an Individual User account? How to submit the identification document?

Answer: An Individual User can select one of the following ways to submit the required identification document:-
(i)   attach a digital certificate;
(ii)   attach a certified true copy of the identification document (i.e. Hong Kong Identity ("HKID") Card or overseas passport. If the individual does not have a HKID Card nor a passport of any country, People's Republic of China Identity Card or a Macau Identity Card is also accepted); or
(iii)   present the original identification document mentioned in (ii) above in person at the Public Search Centre of the Companies Registry on the 13th floor, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

Q2.   Which digital certificates are accepted?

Answer: The following digital certificates are accepted:-
(i)   Hongkong Post e-Cert (Personal) certificate; or
(ii)   Personal ID-Cert issued by Digi-Sign Certification Services Limited.

Q3.   Who can certify the copy of identification document?

Answer: The copy of identification document is deemed to be certified as a true copy if it is duly certified by:-
(i)   a notary public practising in Hong Kong;
(ii)   a solicitor practising in Hong Kong;
(iii)   a certified public accountant (practising) within the meaning of section 2 of the Professional Accountants Ordinance (Chapter 50 of the Laws of Hong Kong);
(iv)   an officer of the court in Hong Kong who is authorised by law to certify documents for any judicial or other legal purpose;
(v)   a professional company secretary practising in Hong Kong; or
(vi)   a consular officer of user's home country, in the case of a non-Hong Kong resident.

Q4.   I am a person who can certify the copy of identification document. Can I certify the copy of my identification document if I wish to register as an Individual User of the e-Registry?

Answer: No. The certification of identification documents cannot be self-serving. Please arrange the copy of your identification document to be certified by another person specified in the answer to **Q3** above.

Q5.   If I submit the identification document to the Companies Registry in person for verification, what should I bring along?

Answer: You have to present a printed copy of the "Acknowledgement of request for user registration" which bears the barcode of the application number together with your **original** identification document at the Companies Registry's Public Search Centre for verification. You can print a copy of the "Acknowledgement of request for user registration" in the last step of "User Registration".

Q6. **How long does it normally take to register an Individual User account at the e-Registry?**

Answer: The time required will be subject to the identification document submitted by you:-

(i) Digital Certificate – the system will accept your registration immediately if the information provided is correct.

(ii) Certified copy of identification document – the document will be scrutinised by CR's officer during normal office hours. It normally takes <u>half a working day</u> to complete the process.

(iii) Original identification document presented to the Companies Registry in person – your registration will be accepted immediately after the original document is checked by CR's officer.

An email for activating the user account will be sent out by the system normally within one hour after the registration is accepted. A registered user has to activate the account before using the e-Registry's services.

C   *Company User Account*

Q1.   What supporting document is required for registering a Company User account?

Answer: (i)   For CR Company User, input the company number and the company code.
(ii)   For BR Company User, attach a copy of the user's valid Business Registration Certificate.

Q2.   What is Company Code?

Answer: Company Code is a system-generated code which is used as an additional identifier for a company in addition to its company number. Apart from user registration, Company Code is used for accessing the [User Maintenance > Account Association] function after registration. Companies should keep their Company Codes in safe custody.

Q3.   How to apply for a Company Code?

Answer: (i)   A company which is registered electronically at the e-Registry will automatically be assigned with a Company Code which is provided in the email notification of electronic certificates sent upon the company's incorporation / registration.

(ii)   Other registered companies may apply for a Company Code through their directors, company secretaries or authorized persons who have already registered as Individual Users of the e-Registry by accessing [Company Code > Request Company Code] function. Each company can submit only <u>one</u> application. An authorisation letter is required if the application is made by an authorized person of the company. A sample Form COYCODE "Notification of Authorisation to Request for Company Code" is available at the "Download" section of the e-Registry.

If the application is approved, the Company Code will be sent to the applicant's message box at the e-Registry and registered email address.

Applications for company codes will be processed by CR's officers during normal office hours. It normally takes <u>half a working day</u> to complete the process.

Q4.   Can the Company Code be changed?

Answer: A CR Company User can login the e-Registry [Company Code > Change Company Code] to request for a change of Company Code. The new Company Code will be sent to the User's registered email address. Requests for changes of company codes will be processed by CR's officers during normal office hours. It normally takes <u>half a working day</u> to complete the process.

Q5   How long does it normally take to register a Company User account at the e-Registry?

Answer: (i)   CR Company User – the system will accept the registration immediately if the information provided is correct.
(ii)   BR Company User – the copy of Business Registration Certificate will be scrutinised by CR's officer during normal office hours. It normally takes <u>half a working day</u> to complete the process.

An email for activating the user account will be sent out by the system normally within one hour after the registration is accepted. A registered user has to activate the account before using the e-Registry's services.

D   *Fees and Payment*

Q1.   **Are registered users of e-Registry required to pay any annual fees?**

Answer: User registration at the e-Registry is free of charge.

Q2.   **How can I make a payment online?**

Answer: You can make payment online by:-
           (i)   deduction from deposit account at the e-Registry;
           (ii)   VISA / Master card; or
           (iii)   PPS Shop&Buy Service.

           If you wish to pay by VISA/Master Card, you have to obtain the "Verified by VISA/Master" password, if required, from the card issuing bank.

Q3.   **Do I get any official receipt when I make a payment online?**

Answer: If an online payment is made successfully, a digital receipt containing the Receipt Number and Case Number will be generated. As the Receipt Number and Case Number have to be quoted for future enquiries, you are advised to save/print the digital receipt for record before exiting the relevant screen. For top-up of deposit accounts, a receipt containing the Receipt Number and Payment Order Number will be generated.

           For online replenishment of deposit account by bank autopay, no receipt will be issued as the replenishment will be reflected in the deposit account.

Q4.   **Can I obtain a statement showing the paid services used per log-in session or over a period of time?**

Answer: Registered users may use [Deposit Services > e-Statement] function to check their daily transaction statements, payment summaries and monthly statements (deposit account holders only) free of charge. The respective charges, fees and levies, where appropriate, the opening and closing balances of the deposit accounts are shown in the respective statements. Besides, a transaction listing statement showing the transaction details for a specified month up to the last three months can be ordered at a cost.

Q5.   **Can I make a prepayment into my deposit account on a voluntary basis? Is there any limit on the amount of prepayment?**

Answer: You are entirely free to set the level of prepayment in your deposit account.

Q6.   **How can I increase or reduce the amount of prepayment in my deposit account?**

Answer: You can submit an online request for increasing or reducing the amount of prepayment at the e-Registry. After login the e-Registry, you may use the [Deposit Services > Adjust Deposit Amount] function to submit the online request.

           For increase of prepayment, you can pay by:-
           (i)   VISA / Master cards;
           (ii)   Direct internet bank transfer (from the bank accounts of HSBC, Hang Seng Bank and member banks of JETCO);
           (iii)   PPS Shop&Buy Service;
           (iv)   autopay instruction; or
           (v)   depositing an e-Cheque issued by any bank which offers e-Cheque issuance service through the e-Cheque Bill Payment Service provided by Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited.

           Alternatively, you may download a payment advice from the e-Registry and present it together with your payment in person at the Shroff Office of the Companies Registry's Public Search Centre on the 13th floor of the Queensway Government Offices. Payment by cheque (payable to "Companies Registry") can also be sent by post to

Financial Services Division of the Companies Registry on the 29th floor of the Queensway Government Offices.

For reducing the amount of prepayment, once you have submitted an online request, your available account balance will be adjusted accordingly. The reduced amount will be refunded to you through the channel where you paid the prepayment. Normally it will take about three weeks to effect the refund.

Q7.   **Can I replenish my deposit account by bank autopay?**

Answer: Yes, you can arrange for your deposit account to be topped up periodically and automatically by direct debiting the top up amount to your bank account. You can download the direct debit authorization form through [Deposit Services > Direct Debit Authorization] function and return the completed form by hand or by post to the Companies Registry (Attn: Financial Services Division). The top up will be carried out on a monthly basis at the beginning of each month. The amount to be debited to your bank account will be the difference between the balance of your deposit account with the e-Registry and the deposit limit set by you for your deposit account as at the end of the previous month or the limit of each payment/month set out in your direct debit authorization form, whichever is the lower.

Q8.   **For autopay (direct debit) instruction to top up my deposit account under the e-Registry, how can I ensure that the amount to be debited to my bank account will not be too excessive?**

Answer: When you create your deposit account through [Deposit Services > Create Account & Change Deposit Limit], you can set a deposit limit which will be the maximum amount to be debited to your bank account in each top up event. You can change the deposit limit from time to time to fit your requirements. On the other hand, you are advised to set a ceiling of each payment in your autopay instruction (direct debit authorisation).

Q9.   **How can I check the balance of my deposit account at the e-Registry?**

Answer: Whenever you login the e-Registry, the available balance of your deposit account (if any) will be displayed on each screen for your information. In addition, you can check the deposit account balance by using [Deposit Services > Enquire Account Balance] function.

Q10.   **As a deposit account holder, can I allow other persons to pay the e-Registry's services from my deposit account?**

Answer: You may allow other persons to share your deposit account at the e-Registry. However, to protect your interest, the parties sharing your deposit account must also be a registered user of the e-Registry and have been properly associated with your account by [User Maintenance > Account Association] function. By this function, you can also set the limit of your individual associated users and terminate the association anytime. However, such function is only available for Company User.

Q11.   **If there are insufficient funds in my deposit account for making a payment at the e-Registry, what can I do?**

Answer: You can top up the prepayment by online means using credit cards (VISA/Master card) or through PPS Shop&Buy Service.

Q12.   **How can I draw money from my deposit account?**

Answer: Any refund (including withdrawal of deposit account) will be paid through the channel where you paid the prepayment. For example, if the prepayment is paid by credit card, the refund will be credited to your credit card account. Normally a refund will take about three weeks for the necessary verification and bank clearance processes.

E   *User Account Association*

Q1.   Why is there a need for user account association?

Answer: User account association is required because:-
(i)   A Company User cannot sign documents and it has to associate an Individual User to sign documents on its behalf. Apart from its officers (e.g. directors, company secretaries, authorized representatives), a company can also authorise other natural persons to sign documents on its behalf.
(ii)   An Individual User or a Company User of the e-Registry can act as an officer of different companies. User account association enables the e-Registry system to identify the relationship between a user and a company.

Q2.   How to associate an officer (e.g. director) to a company?

Answer: The officer must have already registered as a user of the e-Registry. Association of an officer (e.g. a director) to a company can be done in the following steps:-
(i)   A Company User has to login the e-Registry [User Maintenance > Account Association] function.
(ii)   Select "Create" and input the User ID of the director.
(iii)   Map the director to the list of officers of the company.
(iv)   If the director's name is not on the list of officers of the company, the request for association will be rejected.
(v)   Indicate whether the director is allowed to share the deposit account (if any) of the company.
(vi)   Input the effective date of association.

Please refer to the demonstration on "Account Association" at the e-Registry.

Q3.   Can a BR Company User account associate other users to its account?

Answer: A BR Company User has to appoint an authorized person upon user registration. Only one authorized person is allowed to be associated to the BR Company User at any time. The BR Company User can use the [User Maintenance > Change Particulars] function to change the authorized person.

Q4.   Can a Company User account A be associated to another Company User account B?

Answer: Yes, but Company User account A cannot sign documents for and on behalf of Company User account B. Company User account A must have an Individual User associated to its account such that the Individual User can sign documents on its behalf.

Q5.   Can an associated user be removed from a Company User account?

Answer: Yes. The Company User account can remove the association by using the "Remove" feature provided in the [User Maintenance > Account Association] function.

Moreover, the e-Registry system will automatically remove the association of a user account ("the associated user") from the Company User account under the following circumstances:-
(i)   The associated user has resigned as an officer of the company under the Companies Ordinance;
(ii)   The associated user has dissolved or ceased to have a place of business in Hong Kong or ceased to exist as a separate entity under the Companies Ordinance;
(iii)   The associated user account has been closed;
(iv)   The Company User has dissolved or ceased to have a place of business in Hong Kong or ceased to exist as a separate entity under the Companies Ordinance; or
(v)   The Company User account has been closed.

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