



CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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CASE Sees Over Fivefold Increase in Entertainment Complaints in 1H2024 Due to Sky Lantern Festival and Ticketing Issues

In the first half of 2024 (“1H2024”), the Consumers Association of Singapore (“CASE”) saw a 538% spike in entertainment complaints, largely due to the botched Singapore Sky Lantern Festival.

A total of 670 complaints were received in the entertainment industry in the first six months of 2024, compared with 105 in the same period last year.

In total, CASE received 7,721 complaints in 1H2024, a 6% increase from 7,316 in 2023. This rise was attributed to a significant surge in complaints within the entertainment industry, despite fewer complaints in the contractors and electrical and electronics industry.

There was a 53% rise in e-commerce complaints, largely due to online purchases of event and concert tickets. Of these, approximately 21% were linked to the entertainment industry and about 10% were related to online orders from tingkat delivery companies in the food & beverages industry.

In 1H2024, prepayment-related losses surged by 312% to approximately \$1,246,500, compared to \$302,205 in the first half of 2023. This significant increase in prepayment losses was primarily due to the entertainment, food & beverages and bridal industries.

Breakdown of Complaints

The motorcar industry saw an 8% increase in complaints, from 629 in 1H2023 to 682 complaints in 1H2024, with complaints mainly due to issues with car sharing, car rental and second-hand vehicles. The beauty industry saw a slight 1% increase in complaints, mostly related to pressure sales and unsatisfactory services.

Complaints related to the electrical and electronics industry fell by 9% from 653 complaints in 1H2023 to 593 in 1H2024. About 44% of complaints were related to goods that were defective or did not conform to contract.

CASE saw a 25% increase in complaints for which consumers sought help to negotiate with the businesses, with a total of 1,323 complaints compared to 1,063 during the same period in 2023. This increase reflects the growing role of CASE in supporting consumers and negotiating with retailers.

The breakdown of complaints received for the top 10 industries in 1H2023 and 1H2024 is listed in Table 1.

January to June 2023 (1H2023)			January to June 2024 (1H2024)		
No.	Industry	Total Complaints	No.	Industry	Total Complaints
1	Electrical and Electronics	653	1	Motorcars	682
2	Contractors	631	2	Entertainment	670
3	Motorcars	629	3	Beauty	600
4	Beauty	594	4	Electrical & Electronics	593
5	Furniture	407	5	Contractors	486
6	Food & Beverages	302	6	Furniture	449
7	Airlines	251	7	Food and Beverages	423
8	Telecommunications	235	8	Telecommunications	319
9	Travel	234	9	Miscellaneous	304
10	Pets	231	10	Travel	202

Table 1: Breakdown of complaints received for the top 10 industries in 1H2023 and 1H2024.

Entertainment

In 1H2024, the entertainment industry saw a fivefold increase, from 105 in 1H2023 to 670 complaints to this year. This surge comes on the back of an increase in events and concerts in Singapore.

Nearly three-quarters of entertainment industry complaints were against Asian Couture and Boutique, organisers of the Singapore Sky Lantern Festival. They had failed to secure permits for the sky lantern release, which was the event's main attraction, forcing consumers to use LED lanterns instead. CASE intervened and, after extensive discussions with the event organisers, secured a full refund for affected consumers who lodged a complaint with CASE, which totalled about \$20,450.

Other contributing factors for the sharp spike in complaints were due to the rising concerns of ticket resellers taking advantage of concertgoers by inflating ticket prices significantly. About 4% of these complaints were from consumers who had entered concert venues only to be informed their tickets were invalid.

CASE President, Mr Melvin Yong, said: "CASE is deeply concerned in the rise of entertainment complaints. As Singapore establishes itself as the region's premier event and concert hub, we anticipate a further increase in related complaints. We are actively studying how overseas jurisdictions are tackling disamenities related to events and concerts, such as the issue of ticket scalping. Unfair trade practices in the events and concerts sectors have the potential to impact many consumers as we saw this happen during the botched Sky Lantern event in February this year."

E-Commerce

E-commerce saw a 53% increase in complaints, rising from 1,703 in 1H2023 to 2,611 in 1H2024, mainly due to a surge in online purchases of event and concert tickets. Around 21% of online transaction complaints were linked to the entertainment industry, including events and concert tickets. There was also a rise in complaints against tingkat delivery companies for online orders, with about 10% of complaints related to the food & beverages industry.

Mr Yong said: "In response to the surge in e-commerce complaints in recent years, CASE launched the CaseTrust accreditation for e-businesses in 2023. This is Singapore's only consumer trust mark for online businesses. Seven businesses have since been accredited with the eCaseTrust mark, and we aim to onboard another eight companies by the end of this year. CaseTrust-accredited companies commit to upholding standards, boosting consumer confidence and ensuring fair trading practices. I encourage consumers to look for our trust mark when shopping online, for a greater peace of mind."

Prepayment Losses

In 1H2024, there was a 312% increase in prepayment-related losses, totalling approximately \$1,246,500, compared to \$302,205 in 1H2023. This spike was predominantly due to the entertainment, food & beverages, and bridal industries.

The entertainment industry saw the highest number of cases contributing to prepayment losses, with 448 cases amounting to an estimated \$73,200.

The bridal industry recorded the most in prepayment losses, at about \$267,500, primarily due to the closure of Love Nest and its affiliated bridal salons. Additionally, the food & beverages industry saw about \$47,500 in prepayment losses, attributed to the abrupt closure of Sakura Buffet Pte Ltd and its associated tingkat delivery companies.

Mr Yong said: "CASE is concerned by the sharp increase in prepayment losses in the first half of 2024. In recent years, we have seen sudden business closures in various industries, such as gyms and bridal studios, affecting many consumers. CASE will therefore expand the prepayment protection feature in our CaseTrust schemes to better protect consumers. The government should also legislate prepayment protection for high-risk businesses that collect large amounts upfront."

Conclusion

Mr Yong said: "As Singapore establishes itself as a major entertainment hub, CASE is increasingly concerned about the rise in associated disamenities, such as ticket scalping and scams. E-commerce complaints have doubled compared to the same period in 2021. With online shopping now the norm, we must enhance consumer protection so that consumers feel safe when transacting online. The sharp rise in prepayment losses has highlighted the need for stronger prepayment protection, and CASE will certainly push for stronger prepayment protection measures."

Melvin Yong
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About the Consumers Association of Singapore:

The Consumers Association of Singapore (“CASE”) is an independent, non-profit organisation that is committed to protecting consumers’ interest through information and education and promoting an environment of fair and ethical trade practices. One of its key achievements is in advocating for the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA) which came into effect on 1 March 2004.

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