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The Forum Editor  
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stforum@sph.com.sg

**Fair Trading Act prohibits use of small print to hide facts from consumers**

I refer to the letter by Mr Raymond Lim Siong Heng ("Fine print in contract extends its duration. This is unfair to unsuspecting clients", ST Online Forum, Nov 25). We thank Mr Lim for sharing his story as it reminds readers to read through their contracts carefully.

The practice encountered by Mr Lim is essentially an opt-out tactic where the consumer has to opt-out for the contract to be terminated. Not all consumers may be able to track the expiry dates of their contracts and may unknowingly allow the contract to continue, especially if the terms of contract renewal are in fine print. Thus we feel strongly that the renewal of contract requires explicit consent by consumers.

Under the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act, it is an unfair practice for retailers to use small print to hide facts from consumers. Retailers have a duty to be transparent in their dealings with clients and to highlight important clauses in the contract, including those pertaining to contract renewal.

If Mr Lim had purchased the supplies for his personal use, he can approach CASE for assistance. If the dispute happened within a one-year timeframe and the contract value does not exceed \$10,000, he can also consider going to the Small Claims Tribunals. However, if he had purchased the supplies for his office, we advise him to seek recourse through other means.

We advise all consumers to be vigilant in scrutinising the terms and conditions in contracts. Consumers who have encountered unfair practices can call the CASE hotline 6463 1811 for advice.

Seah Seng Choon  
Executive Director  
CASE