



## Telecom Decision CRTC 2013-574

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Route reference: Telecom Notice of Consultation 2012-656

Ottawa, October 30, 2013

### Area code relief for area codes 403, 587, and 780 in Alberta

File number: 8698-C12-201214915

*In this decision, the Commission determines that area code relief for area codes 403, 587, and 780 in Alberta is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of new area code 825, effective 9 April 2016, and that, for planning purposes, area code 368 is to be set aside for future relief. The Commission also approves, with one change, a jeopardy contingency plan and the relief implementation plan that were submitted by the relief planning committee.*

#### Introduction

1. On 17 October 2012, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) informed the Commission that the results of the latest numbering resource utilization forecast (NRUF) indicated that area codes 403, 587, and 780 (the current area codes) in Alberta would exhaust by June 2018. The January 2013 General NRUF indicated that the exhaust date had moved forward to June 2017.
2. The Commission subsequently issued *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for relief planning for area codes 403, 587, and 780 in Alberta*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2012-656, 29 November 2012, in which it established a relief planning committee (RPC) to examine options and make recommendations for providing additional numbering resources in the area served by the current area codes.
3. The July 2013 Relief NRUF, issued by the CNA in early October 2013, indicated that exhaust of the current area codes had advanced to July 2016.

#### The RPC's submission

4. The RPC filed with the Commission a planning document, dated 6 June 2013, which included its recommendations regarding the relief measures to be taken for the current area codes. The planning document also included a jeopardy contingency plan that would come into effect in the event that a jeopardy condition<sup>1</sup> were declared for the current area codes. The RPC also filed a relief implementation plan, dated 6 June 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> A jeopardy condition exists when the future demand for central office (CO) codes may exceed the available supply of CO codes. Paragraph 8.1 of the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines lists the various conditions used to determine when a jeopardy condition should be declared.

5. In the planning document, the RPC evaluated seven relief options and, based on its analysis, recommended that
  - area code relief be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of a new area code on the current area codes, with an effective date of 9 April 2016; and
  - area code 825 be used as the new area code, and area code 368 be reserved for subsequent relief.
6. The relief implementation plan included a schedule for relief implementation, as well as the network and consumer communications activities that would need to be completed as part of the relief implementation process.
7. The Commission considers that the RPC's recommendations raise the following issues:
  - I. What relief method should be used and when should it be implemented?
  - II. Which area code should be used for relief?
  - III. Should the Commission approve the jeopardy contingency plan included in the planning document?
  - IV. Should the Commission approve the relief implementation plan?

**I. What relief method should be used and when should it be implemented?**

8. The Commission notes that overlay area codes have previously been introduced in the regions served by the current area codes, which required the implementation of 10-digit local dialing. The Commission therefore considers that the introduction of another overlay area code would present minimal issues to carriers and very minimal disruption to subscribers.
9. The Commission notes that the RPC recommended that the new overlay area code be implemented on 9 April 2016, because this date provides ample time for the industry and subscribers to prepare.
10. Additionally, the Commission notes that there is no need for a permissive dialing period<sup>2</sup> prior to the introduction of the new area code, as 10-digit dialing is already in place.
11. Accordingly, the Commission determines that the regions served by the current area codes in Alberta are to be overlaid with a new area code, effective 9 April 2016.

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<sup>2</sup> The permissive dialing period is the period preceding the start of 10-digit dialing due to the introduction of a new area code, during which it is still possible to dial 7 digits to place a local call.

## **II. Which area code should be used for relief?**

12. The Commission considers that it is a good assignment practice to use an area code that has not been used as a central office (CO) code within the area to be served, or in areas adjacent to it, because this reduces the potential for customer confusion during dialing. The RPC's analysis of available area codes in the Canadian area code pool determined that area codes 825 and 368 both meet this criterion and recommended that area code 825 be used for the current area code relief and area code 368 be reserved for future relief.
13. In terms of reserving a future area code, the Commission considers that there could be significant changes in the telecommunications industry before further future area code relief is required for area codes 403, 587, 780, and 825, and that it would be desirable to maintain a degree of flexibility in the future assignment of area codes to meet unforeseen circumstances. However, the Commission considers that setting aside area code 368 as the most suitable area code for future relief in Alberta would be beneficial for planning purposes.
14. Accordingly, the Commission determines that area code 825 is to be used for current area code relief and that, for planning purposes, area code 368 is to be set aside for potential future relief.

## **III. Should the Commission approve the jeopardy contingency plan included in the planning document?**

15. The RPC's planning document included a jeopardy contingency plan that would come into effect if a jeopardy condition were to be declared in the region served by the current area codes before area code relief is completed. This plan included a number of measures to conserve CO codes and increase the size of the pool of CO codes available for assignment. It also included measures to restrict the assignment of CO codes to carriers, depending on the severity of the jeopardy condition.
16. One of the provisions of the plan is to limit carriers to their forecasted CO code requirements as submitted to the CNA. However, the Commission considers that the forecast that should be used for this purpose is the last forecast submitted to the CNA immediately prior to a jeopardy condition being declared. The Commission considers that all other elements of the jeopardy contingency plan included in the planning document are acceptable.
17. Accordingly, the Commission **approves** the jeopardy contingency plan included in the planning document, with the one modification noted in paragraph 16 above.

## **IV. Should the Commission approve the relief implementation plan?**

18. The Relief Implementation Plan included a detailed implementation activity schedule, a consumer awareness plan, and a network implementation plan. The Commission notes that the recommendations and milestones included in the relief implementation

plan are in accordance with the planning document and the Commission's determinations in this decision.

19. Accordingly, the Commission **approves** the relief implementation plan.

Secretary General