



Telecom Decision CRTC 2010-526

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Route reference: Telecom Notice of Consultation 2009-309

Ottawa, 28 July 2010

Code relief for area code 204 in Manitoba

File number: 8698-C12-200908098

In this decision, the Commission determines that relief for area code 204 is to be provided by overlaying the area served by area code 204 with new area code 431, starting on 3 November 2012.

Introduction

1. On 30 April 2009, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) informed the Commission that the results of a general numbering resource utilization forecast indicated that area code 204 in Manitoba would exhaust by January 2011.
2. The Commission subsequently issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2009-309, in which it established a relief planning committee (RPC) to examine options for providing relief for area code 204 in Manitoba and to put in place code conservation measures to extend the exhaust date.
3. The most recent numbering resource utilization forecast, dated 1 February 2010, indicates that area code 204 will now exhaust by May 2013. A jeopardy condition¹ was declared in May 2010.

The RPC's submission

4. The RPC filed a planning document with the Commission, dated 26 May 2010. In this document, the RPC evaluated nine relief options for area code 204, including variations on geographic splits and area code overlays. The planning document includes a jeopardy contingency plan.
5. Based on its analysis of the various relief options, the RPC recommended that
 - a) code relief be provided by a distributed overlay of a new area code on the area served by area code 204 (the 204 area), with an effective date of 3 November 2012;
 - b) area code 431 be reserved as the most suitable area code for code relief in

¹ According to the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines, a jeopardy condition is declared when the forecast and/or actual demand for central office (CO) codes exceeds the available supply of CO codes before relief is implemented, or the implementation time frame is shorter than 36 months and no relief plan is yet in place.

the 204 area;

- c) a 7- to 10-digit permissive dialing period be implemented beginning on 29 July 2012, with industry-standard recorded announcements and automatic call completion for calls dialed using 7 digits phased-in between 29 July and 5 August 2012;
 - d) mandatory 10-digit local dialing be implemented beginning on 20 October 2012, with recorded announcements for calls dialed using 7 digits stating that the caller must hang up and dial the area code with the 7-digit number phased-in between 20 and 27 October 2012;
 - e) standard recorded announcements for calls dialed using 7 digits stating that the call has been dialed incorrectly be phased-in between 1 February and 3 March 2013;
 - f) 7-digit local dialing be allowed to continue for calls originating from the Creighton exchange area in Saskatchewan (area code 306) to the Flin Flon exchange area in Manitoba (area code 204);
 - g) central office (CO) code 584 be made available for assignment to extend the life of area code 204 if necessary; and
 - h) telecommunications service providers (TSPs) be allowed to submit written requests for relief to the Commission if they face network limitations in providing industry-standard recorded announcements with automatic call completion for calls made using 7 digits during the permissive dialing period.
6. The RPC estimated that the next area code exhaust date in this area would be in 2041.
7. The Commission considers that the RPC's planning document raises the following issues:
- I. What relief method should be used and when should it be implemented?
 - II. Should 7-digit dialing be retained for calls from Creighton, Saskatchewan, to Flin Flon, Manitoba?
 - III. How should CO code 584 be treated in area code 204?
 - IV. Should the Commission approve the jeopardy contingency plan?
 - V. Is it necessary to obtain Commission approval for alternative measures to permissive dialing?

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

8. The Commission notes that one of the benefits of area code relief by overlay is that it enables subscribers to retain their current 10-digit telephone number when relief is provided. The Commission considers that, as compared to other relief options, such as geographic splits, as evaluated by the RPC, an overlay is less disruptive to subscribers. The Commission also notes that this method would cost less to implement than other options evaluated by the RPC and would provide long-term relief.
9. Accordingly, the Commission determines that the 204 area is to be overlaid with area code 431, effective 3 November 2012.
10. The Commission notes that area code overlays require 10-digit local dialing to ensure proper call routing between the area codes. The Commission further notes that consumers will require a permissive dialing period during which calls will be completed regardless of whether they are dialed using 7 or 10 digits. During this period, when a consumer dials 7 digits to place a local call, the call is to be directed to a standard short recorded announcement about the change to 10-digit local dialing before the call is automatically completed. This period is typically three to four months long. However, the Commission considers that with area code 204 exhaust imminent, it is appropriate to use as short a permissive dialing period as possible.
11. With respect to the transition to 10-digit dialing for area code 204, the Commission therefore determines that
 - a) the permissive dialing period is to take place between 29 July and 20 October 2012, with industry-standard recorded announcements and automatic call completion for calls made using 7 digits phased-in between 29 July and 5 August 2012;
 - b) mandatory 10-digit local dialing, with recorded announcements stating that callers who used 7 digits must hang up and use 10 digits phased-in between 20 and 27 October 2012, and ending on 1 February 2013; and
 - c) standard recorded announcements stating that calls made using 7 digits cannot be completed as dialed are to be phased in between 1 February and 3 March 2013.

II. Should 7-digit dialing be retained for calls from Creighton, Saskatchewan, to Flin Flon, Manitoba?

12. The Commission notes that the RPC requested that the present 7-digit local dialing from Creighton, Saskatchewan, in the 306 area, to Flin Flon, Manitoba, in the 204 area, be allowed to continue after area code 204 relief.
13. The Commission notes that Creighton straddles the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border. The Commission also notes that retaining 7-digit local dialing from Creighton to Flin Flon would result in two CO codes becoming unassignable in the 204-431 area.

14. The Commission considers that retaining 7-digit local dialing in the Creighton area would provide the following benefits: 1) Creighton consumers would not have a mix of 7- and 10-digit local dialing; and 2) Creighton consumers and TSPs would not need to change their equipment or networks to accommodate 10-digit local dialing to Flin Flon in Manitoba.
15. The Commission determines that retaining 7-digit local dialing from the Creighton area to Flin Flon would result in the least confusion and disruption to Creighton residents. Accordingly, the Commission **approves** this request.

III. How should CO code 584 be treated in area code 204?

16. The Commission notes the RPC's recommendation that CO code 584, which corresponds to a future Canadian geographic area code, be made available for assignment to extend the life of area code 204 if needed.
17. Given the current jeopardy condition, the Commission agrees with this recommendation and determines that CO code 584 is to be made available for assignment in the 204 area as a last resort.

IV. Should the Commission approve the jeopardy contingency plan?

18. The Commission notes that the RPC included a jeopardy contingency plan in the planning document. The Commission has reviewed this plan and considers it to be appropriate.
19. The Commission therefore **approves** the jeopardy contingency plan.

V. Is it necessary to obtain Commission approval for alternative measures to permissive dialing?

20. As noted above, the Commission considers that during the permissive dialing period leading to mandatory 10-digit local dialing, TSPs are to inform subscribers of the pending change by routing calls to a brief recorded announcement before the calls are completed.
21. The Commission notes the RPC's recommendation that TSPs that are unable to support this announcement and automatic call completion due to network limitations should request permission to use alternative measures to inform subscribers of the pending change.
22. The Commission notes that in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2009-156, it stated that TSPs may determine the appropriate methods to inform their customers about dialing plan changes. Therefore, the Commission finds that further approval is not required for such changes.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for area code relief planning for area code 204 in Manitoba*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2009-309, 28 May 2009
- *Revised regulatory requirements to provide information to customers*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2009-156, 24 March 2009