



Telecom Decision CRTC 2017-35

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Area code relief for area code 709 in Newfoundland and Labrador

In this decision, the Commission determines that area code relief for area code 709 in Newfoundland and Labrador is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of new area code 879, effective 24 November 2018. Customers in that province will be transitioned to 10-digit local dialing, beginning 17 August 2018, as part of the implementation of the distributed overlay. The Commission also approves the relief implementation plan that was submitted by the relief planning committee.

Introduction

1. On 22 April 2016, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) informed the Commission that, based on the results of the jeopardy numbering resource utilization forecast (J-NRUF),¹ area code 709 is projected to exhaust by March 2019. Area code 709, also called numbering plan area (NPA) 709, covers the whole province of Newfoundland and Labrador.
2. The Commission subsequently issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2016-205, in which it established a CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) ad hoc relief planning committee (RPC) for area code 709 to examine options and make recommendations for providing additional numbering resources in the area served by that area code. The Commission directed the CNA to chair the RPC.

The RPC's submission

3. The RPC filed with the Commission a planning document, dated 11 October 2016, which included its recommendations regarding the relief measures to be taken for area code 709. The RPC also filed a relief implementation plan, dated 11 October 2016. These documents are available on the [CNA's website](#).

¹ The CNA began its yearly numbering resource utilization forecast (NRUF) activities for Canadian area codes in January 2016 in accordance with the Commission-approved Canadian Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast (C-NRUF) Guideline. The January 2016 NRUF showed that area code 709 would exhaust in May 2019. Consequently, on 14 March 2016 the CNA declared a jeopardy condition for area code 709 in accordance with section 8.1 of the Canadian NPA [Numbering Plan Area] Relief Planning Guideline and requested input from central office code holders in NPA 709 for a J-NRUF. The results of the April 2016 J-NRUF showed that the projected exhaust date for NPA 709 had advanced to March 2019.

4. In the planning document, the RPC evaluated four relief options for area code 709 and, based on its analysis of those options, recommended that
 - area code relief be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of a new area code on the current area code 709, with an effective date of 24 November 2018;
 - area code 879 be used as the new area code;
 - the local dialing plan be changed to 10 digits for all local calls within area code 709;
 - a 7- to 10-digit local dialing transition period be implemented beginning on 17 August 2018, with network announcements on calls dialed using 7 digits phased in over one week between 17 and 24 August 2018;²
 - mandatory 10-digit local dialing be implemented beginning on 10 November 2018, with network announcements on calls dialed using 7 digits phased in over one week between 10 and 17 November 2018;³
 - standard network announcements be implemented over a one-month period beginning on 2 February 2019, with implementation to be completed by 2 March 2019 (the projected exhaust date);⁴ and
 - the proposed relief implementation plan be approved.
5. The Commission considers that the RPC's recommendations raise the following issues:
 - What relief method should be used and when should it be implemented?
 - Which area code should be used for relief?
 - Should the Commission approve the relief implementation plan?

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

6. In its planning document, the RPC evaluated four relief options: one distributed overlay and three concentrated overlays. The distributed overlay option would introduce a new NPA code as an overlay on all the exchange areas within NPA 709. The concentrated overlay options would each overlay a new NPA code over different geographic areas covering various specific exchange areas.

² At this stage, known as the permissive dialing stage, callers are told that the number dialed should be preceded by the area code, and then the call is completed.

³ At this stage, known as the mandatory dialing stage, callers are told that the call cannot be completed and they must redial using the area code.

⁴ At this stage, known as the standard dialing stage, callers are told that the call cannot be completed and they should check the number and dial again.

7. Implementing concentrated overlays would increase the number of separate relief planning areas in Newfoundland and Labrador from one to two, which would cause additional work in the future, as the geographic areas would exhaust on different dates and would require separate relief plans.
8. The distributed overlay option would not change the number of relief planning areas in the province, would cost less to implement than the other options evaluated by the RPC, and would provide long-term relief.
9. Accordingly, the Commission determines that the area served by area code 709 is to be overlaid with a new area code, effective 24 November 2018.
10. Area code overlays require the use of 10-digit local dialing to ensure proper call routing between the overlaid area codes. As mentioned above, the RPC proposed to transition customers to 10-digit dialing using established methods and a 3-month permissive dialing period.⁵
11. With respect to the transition to 10-digit dialing, the Commission determines that
 - the permissive dialing period is to take place between 17 August and 9 November 2018, with network announcements and automatic call completion for calls dialed using 7 digits being phased in during the period of 17 to 24 August 2018;
 - mandatory 10-digit local dialing is to be implemented beginning on 10 November 2018, with network announcements for calls dialed using 7 digits, stating that the caller must hang up and dial the area code with the 7-digit number, being phased in between 10 and 17 November 2018; and
 - standard network announcements stating that calls made using 7 digits cannot be completed as dialed are to be phased in between 2 February and 2 March 2019.

Which area code should be used for relief?

12. In Telecom Decision 2010-784, the Commission directed the CNA to set aside NPA code 879 for relief of NPA 709. NPA code 879 still meets the criteria for relief of NPA 709 based on the NPA Code Selection Tool provided on the CNA's website.⁶ The Commission therefore determines that area code 879 is to be used for current area code relief.

⁵ In order to facilitate the implementation of 10-digit dialing, a permissive dialing arrangement is used for a defined period of time, as specified in the relief implementation plan. During the permissive dialing period, callers may complete local calls using 7 or 10 digits.

⁶ The selection tool identifies potential codes that have not been used as a central office code within the area to be served, or in areas adjacent to it, because this reduces the potential for customer confusion during dialing.

Should the Commission approve the relief implementation plan?

13. The relief implementation plan includes a detailed implementation activity schedule, as well as the network and consumer communications activities that would need to be completed as part of the relief implementation process. The Commission considers that the relief implementation plan includes steps that are consistent with the steps identified in the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline and sets out implementation timelines that a telecommunications service provider can follow to meet the relief date.

14. In light of all the above, the Commission **approves** the relief implementation plan.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for relief planning for area code 709 in Newfoundland and Labrador*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2016-205, 31 May 2016
- *CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee consensus item – Reservation of area codes for future area code relief*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2010-784, 22 October 2010