



Telecom Decision CRTC 2019-347

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CISC ad hoc relief planning committee – Consensus report 450_579RE02A regarding Numbering Plan Area 450/579

*The Commission **approves** the 450/579 relief planning committee's report, defers indefinitely the implementation of the overlay of area code 354 to provide relief to area codes 450 and 579, and recommends that the 450/579 relief planning committee reconvene if the projected exhaust date advances by 12 months or more.*

Background

1. In June 1998, area code 450 was introduced when the area served by area code 514 in Quebec was split in two. Montréal retained area code 514, while the area surrounding Montréal received the new area code 450. Area code 579 was introduced in August 2010 as an overlay on area code 450.
2. On 1 March 2018, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) advised the Commission that, based on the results of the numbering resource utilization forecast (NRUF)¹ of January 2018, area codes 450 and 579 were projected to exhaust by June 2021.
3. The Canadian NPA [Numbering Plan Area] Relief Planning Guideline (the Guideline)² provides the framework for addressing area code exhaust in Canada. The Guideline (i) establishes a step-by-step process for the CNA and relief planning committees to follow and (ii) requires that relief planning activities begin if an area code is projected to exhaust within the next 72 months.
4. The telecommunications industry conducts area code relief planning in a public manner through an ad hoc relief planning committee under the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC). In Telecom Notice of Consultation 2018-233, the Commission established the ad hoc relief planning committee for area codes 450 and 579 (the 450/579 relief planning committee) under CISC, in order to begin relief planning activities.

¹ The NRUF forecasts the telecommunications industry's requirements for the assignment and use of central office codes, which are blocks of 10,000 telephone numbers.

² The Commission approved the [Guideline](#) in Telecom Decision 2014-603.

5. On 31 October 2018, the Commission received a consensus report (450_579RE01A) from the 450/579 relief planning committee, which recommended that relief be provided to area codes 450 and 579 through a distributed overlay of area code 354, and that such relief be implemented by 24 October 2020.
6. In Telecom Decision 2019-13, the Commission determined that the entire area served by area codes 450 and 579 was to be overlaid with a new area code and approved the proposed planning document and relief implementation plan submitted by the 450/579 relief planning committee.
7. The CNA released another set of NRUF results in March 2019, which indicated that the projected exhaust date for area codes 450 and 579 had moved out to June 2024 due to changes in the forecasts submitted by carriers to the CNA for their future requirements for numbering resources.

Report

8. Due to the projected delay in area code exhaustion, CISC filed a relief planning committee consensus report³ with the Commission on 11 June 2019. In the report, the 450/579 relief planning committee recommended that relief be delayed indefinitely, and that
 - the 450/579 relief planning committee reconvene if the July 2019 Relief-NRUF (R-NRUF) results indicate that the projected exhaust date has moved up by 12 months or more, but otherwise after the January 2020 R-NRUF results are released; and
 - the CNA continue to monitor central office code assignments and reconvene the 450/579 relief planning committee if warranted.

Commission's analysis and determinations

9. Article 4.8(g) of the Guideline indicates that relief for an exhausting area code should be in place 12 to 18 months prior to the projected exhaust date, but that this interval can be shortened if an overlay area code is already in place. The Commission considers that in this case, a shorter lead time is acceptable, since 10-digit local dialing, network changes, customer equipment changes, and customer education processes were completed by August 2010, when area code 579 was introduced as an overlay on area code 450. Essentially, the only remaining requirements for introducing area code 354 in the area served by area codes 450 and 579 are to (i) add the new numbering resource into various carrier and customer equipment and systems, and (ii) advise customers of the new area code. The Commission has already approved this planning work.⁴

³ Deferral of relief date for NPA 450/579 (File ID: 450_579RE02A), dated 9 May 2019

⁴ This planning work includes the Network Implementation Plan and the Consumer Awareness Plan, which set out all relevant activities and timelines that the Commission approved in Telecom Decision 2019-13.

10. The Commission considers that introducing a new relief area code far in advance of when it would be needed serves no purpose, since the numbering resource would sit unused for an extended period of time in carriers' and customers' equipment. Also, a consumer awareness program initiated too far ahead of the introduction of a new numbering resource would be confusing for customers and would have to be repeated when numbers from the new area code are allocated to carriers and assigned to customers.
11. Given that (i) the Commission has already approved the initial planning, (ii) the CNA is committed to closely monitoring central office code assignments in area codes 450 and 579 and thus is able to identify any pending changes in the projected exhaust date in a timely manner, and (iii) the 450/579 relief planning committee is able to respond quickly to any such changes, the Commission considers that it would be reasonable to defer indefinitely the introduction of area code 354.
12. In light of the above, the Commission **approves** the 450/579 relief planning committee's report and determines that the implementation of the overlay of area code 354 on the area served by area codes 450 and 579 is to be deferred indefinitely.
13. The Commission also agrees with the report's recommendation that the 450/579 relief planning committee should reconvene if the scheduled R-NRUFs indicate that the projected exhaust date has advanced by 12 months or more, to June 2023 or earlier.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Relief for area codes 450 and 579 in Quebec*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2019-13, 18 January 2019
- *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for relief planning for area codes 450 and 579 in Quebec*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2018-233, 11 July 2018
- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering - Consensus report CNRE106A*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2014-603, 20 November 2014