



Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-371

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Relief for area code complex 249/705 in central Ontario

The Commission determines that relief for area code complex 249/705 in central Ontario is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of new area code 683, effective **18 June 2022**. In addition, the Commission approves the 249/705 relief planning committee's report, including the proposed planning document and relief implementation plan.

Introduction

1. On 29 September 2019, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA)¹ advised the Commission that based on the results of the latest relief numbering resource utilization forecast (R-NRUF),² area code complex 249/705³ was projected to exhaust by March 2026.⁴ This area code complex covers central Ontario.
2. The Commission subsequently issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2020-36, in which it established a CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC)⁵ ad hoc relief planning committee to examine options and make recommendations for providing additional numbering resources in the area served by area code complex 249/705 (the 249/705 relief planning committee). In that notice, the Commission noted that in Telecom Decision 2017-38, it had set aside area code 683 for future relief of area code complex 249/705.

¹ The CNA follows regulatory directives and industry-developed guidelines in making assignment decisions. As necessary, it participates in and contributes to the technical requirements associated with the planning, administration, allocation, assignment, and use of North American Numbering Plan numbering resources. The CNA is not a policy-making entity.

² An R-NRUF is conducted every six months by the CNA for every area code or area code complex that is undergoing relief planning activities.

³ Due to an ever-increasing demand for telephone numbers in some areas, more than one area code is required for the same geographical area. These multiple area codes serving the same geographical area are referred to as area code complexes.

⁴ The CNA began its yearly NRUF activities for Canadian area codes on 15 December 2017 in accordance with the Commission-approved Canadian Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast (C-NRUF) Guideline.

⁵ CISC is an organization established by the Commission to assist in developing information, procedures, and guidelines as may be required in various aspects of the Commission's regulatory activities within its jurisdiction.

3. The January 2021 R-NRUF results, released on 23 February 2021, indicated that the projected exhaust date for area code complex 249/705 had advanced to April 2023. Because an area code relief plan was not yet in place, in accordance with the [Canadian NPA \[Numbering Plan Area\] Relief Planning Guideline](#), the CNA declared on 26 February 2021 that area code complex 249/705 was in a jeopardy condition.⁶ Contributions on how area code relief should be implemented were submitted to the 249/705 relief planning committee on 3 March 2021.

Report

4. On 12 May 2021, CISC approved and forwarded to the Commission for its approval the 249/705 relief planning committee's consensus report (249-705RE01A). The report included a planning document and a relief implementation plan. These documents are available on the CNA's [website](#).
5. In the planning document, the 249/705 relief planning committee recommended that
 - the relief method be a distributed overlay area code on area code complex 249/705;
 - the new area code be 683, per Telecom Decision 2017-38; and
 - the relief implementation date be 18 June 2022.
6. In the relief implementation plan, the 249/705 relief planning committee proposed a public framework and time frame for implementing relief for the area served by area code complex 249/705.
7. In light of the declared jeopardy condition, the 249/705 relief planning committee mentioned in its consensus report that an accelerated implementation should be executed with a shortened time frame. The committee took this requirement into account in its consensus report, planning document, and relief implementation plan.
8. The 249/705 relief planning committee also addressed the activities, deliverables, and issues affecting more than one telecommunications service provider (TSP). It did not address activities internal to a TSP.

Should the Commission approve the report?

Relief method

9. As set out in section 5.1 of the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline, the only relief measure now considered in Canada is a distributed overlay area code. This method does not require customers to change their telephone numbers, as other

⁶ The criteria for declaring a jeopardy condition are set out in section 9.1 of the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline.

previous methods required.⁷ A distributed overlay area code does not increase the number of separate areas for which future relief planning must be considered and thereby does not increase the administrative burden on the telecommunications industry.

10. A requirement for overlay area codes is 10-digit local dialing in order to differentiate between the same central office codes in different area codes serving the same geographical area. However, in this case, 10-digit local dialing is already in place for the area served by area code complex 249/705.
11. Given that there is already one distributed overlay area code in place over the original 705 area code, the only logical method for providing further area code relief is the addition of another distributed overlay area code.
12. Accordingly, the Commission determines that the area served by area code complex 249/705 is to be overlaid with a new area code.

Relief area code

13. In Telecom Decision 2017-38, the Commission set aside area code 683 as the future relief area code for area code complex 249/705. The Commission therefore determines that area code 683 is to be used for the relief of area code complex 249/705.

Implementation date

14. The 249/705 relief planning committee recommended that the new relief area code be activated by 18 June 2022, which is 10 months before the current projected exhaust date of April 2023. Given that 10-digit local dialing is already in place, implementation will only require the addition of the new area code to the systems and databases already in place for area code complex 249/705.
15. The relief implementation lead time of 10 months prior to the projected exhaust date is reflective of recent changes to the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline approved by the Commission in Telecom Decision 2021-217. One of those changes is to reduce the relief implementation lead time from 12-18 months⁸ prior to the projected exhaust date to 6 months.
16. While the recommended relief implementation time frame is more than the minimum six months before the projected exhaust date, it does provide a buffer of four months in the event that the projected exhaust date advances even further. In proposing this implementation time frame, the 249/705 relief planning committee also took into consideration the current jeopardy condition of the 249/705 area code complex. The

⁷ Previous methods included area code splits, area code boundary realignments, and concentrated overlay area codes.

⁸ This was the time frame in place when the 249/705 relief planning committee was preparing its consensus report.

overall shortened implementation time frame is therefore warranted under these circumstances.

17. Accordingly, the Commission determines that relief will take effect on 18 June 2022.

Planning document and relief implementation plan

18. The planning document contains the 249/705 relief planning committee's conclusions and recommendations, which include, among other things, a jeopardy contingency plan,⁹ the proposed relief area code, and a proposed implementation schedule.

19. The relief implementation plan is intended to establish the framework and time frame for implementing the new distributed 683 overlay area code. It includes a summary of the key points in the planning document, such as the relief method, the relief area code, and the implementation date for the new distributed overlay area code. The relief implementation plan also includes a detailed step-by-step relief implementation schedule.

20. In the relief implementation plan, the 249/705 relief planning committee also established the Consumer Awareness Task Force and the Network Implementation Task Force. The required activities of these two groups are contained in the consumer awareness program and the network implementation plan, which are attachments to the relief implementation plan.

Conclusion

21. In light of all the above, the Commission **approves** the 249/705 relief planning committee's report, including the proposed planning document and relief implementation plan – which includes the relief implementation schedule, consumer awareness program, and the network implementation plan – and determines that

- the area served by area code complex 249/705 is to be overlaid with a new area code, effective **18 June 2022**; and
- area code 683 is to be used for area code relief.

⁹ A jeopardy contingency plan is a contingency plan that would be implemented in the event that the forecasted or actual demand for central office codes exceeds the quantity of central office codes available for assignment before relief (i.e. a new area code) can be implemented.

Policy Directions

22. In accordance with subparagraph 1(b)(i) of the 2006 Policy Direction,¹⁰ the Commission considers that approval of the consensus report will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.¹¹
23. In accordance with the 2019 Policy Direction,¹² the Commission considers that this decision can promote competition, affordability, and consumer interests by ensuring an adequate supply of telephone numbers to carriers and other TSPs so that they can continue to compete and provide existing and new innovative telecommunications services to Canadian consumers.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE126A – Revised Appendix B, Canadian NPA Relief Planning Timeline, to the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-217, 8 July 2021
- *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for relief planning for area codes 249 and 705 in Ontario*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2020-36, 30 January 2020
- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE119A regarding setting aside numbering plan area (NPA) codes to be used for relief of existing Canadian NPAs forecast to exhaust in the next 10 years*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2017-38, 3 February 2017

¹⁰ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

¹¹ The cited policy objective of the Act is 7(f) to foster increased reliance on market forces for the provision of telecommunications services and to ensure that regulation, where required, is efficient and effective.

¹² *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives to Promote Competition, Affordability, Consumer Interests and Innovation*, SOR/2019-227, 17 June 2019