



Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-373

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Relief for area code complex 450/579 in the area surrounding Montréal, Quebec

The Commission determines that relief for area code complex 450/579 in the area surrounding Montréal, Quebec is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of new area code 354, effective **22 October 2022**. In addition, the Commission **approves** the 450/579 relief planning committee's report, including the revised relief implementation plan.

Introduction

1. In Telecom Decision 2019-13, the Commission determined that area code relief for area code complex 450/579¹ was to be provided by a distributed overlay area code (354), effective 24 October 2020.
2. In Telecom Decision 2019-347, the Commission indefinitely deferred the implementation of area code relief because the projected exhaust date had moved to June 2024, according to the January 2019 relief numbering resource utilization forecast (R-NRUF) results.² In that decision, area code relief was suspended until the projected exhaust date had advanced by 12 or more months, or to June 2023.
3. On 23 February 2021, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA)³ published the January 2021 R-NRUF results, which indicated that the projected exhaust date for area code complex 450/579 had advanced to September 2023. The 450/579 relief planning committee noted that the projected exhaust date had not advanced by more

¹ 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.

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

³ 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.

than 12 months or to June 2023; however, relief planning had to be reinstated to avoid a jeopardy condition.⁴

Report

4. On 12 May 2021, the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC)⁵ approved and forwarded to the Commission for its approval the 450/579 relief planning committee's Task Identification Form (TIF) Report #3 (the report), which included a revised relief implementation plan. This report is available on the CNA's [website](#).
5. In the report, the 450/579 relief planning committee recommended that
 - the relief method be a distributed overlay area code on area code complex 450/579;
 - the new area code be 354, per Telecom Decision 2019-13; and
 - the relief implementation date be 22 October 2022.
6. The revised relief implementation plan and the revised relief implementation schedule included in the plan are based on the January 2021 R-NRUF results with a projected exhaust date of September 2023.

Should the Commission approve the report?

7. The relief method and new area code to be used were approved in Telecom Decision 2019-13 with area code 354 as a distributed overlay area code. In that decision, the Commission also determined that the relief in-service date should be 24 October 2020. However, due to a significant delay in the projected exhaust date in the January 2019 R-NRUF, the Commission issued Telecom Decision 2019-347 to suspend indefinitely the implementation of the new area code. This decision did not alter the other aspects of the relief measures that would eventually be taken, namely the use of area code 354 as a distributed overlay on area code complex 450/579. Thus, the only matter to be considered by the report is the new relief implementation date.

Implementation date

8. The 450/579 relief planning committee recommended that the relief implementation date should be 22 October 2022. This date is 11 months before the current projected

⁴ In accordance with the Canadian Numbering Plan Area Relief Planning Guideline, a jeopardy condition would be declared when there is the possibility that the pool of assignable central office (CO) codes could be depleted before a new area code could be implemented. The assignment of CO codes to carriers is limited by, among other things, certain restrictions.

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.

exhaust date of September 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 450/579.

9. The relief implementation lead time of 11 months before the projected exhaust date is reflective of recent changes to the Canadian NPA [Numbering Plan Area] Relief Planning Guideline approved by the Commission in Telecom Decision 2021-217. One of those changes is to reduce the relief implementation lead time of 12 to 18 months⁶ prior to the projected exhaust date to at least 6 months.
10. While the recommended relief implementation time frame is more than the minimum six months before the projected exhaust date, it provides a buffer of five months in the event that the projected exhaust date advances even further and prevents a jeopardy condition from being declared. The Commission considers that avoiding a jeopardy condition is important because it (i) does not impose constraints on central office (CO) code assignments and (ii) prevents more work for the industry by requiring biannual CO code requirement forecasts, rather than quarterly ones.
11. Accordingly, the Commission determines that area code relief will take effect on 22 October 2022.

Relief implementation plan

12. The relief implementation plan is intended to establish the framework and time frame for implementing the new distributed 354 overlay area code. It includes a summary of the key points from the planning document, such as the relief method and the relief area code. The relief implementation plan also includes a detailed step-by-step relief implementation schedule so that the new area code can be implemented by the recommended date of 22 October 2022.
13. In the relief implementation plan, the 450/579 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

14. In light of all the above, the Commission **approves** the 450/579 relief planning committee's report, including the revised relief implementation plan – which includes the relief implementation schedule, consumer awareness program, and network implementation plan – and determines that

⁶ This was the time frame in place when the 450/579 relief planning committee was preparing its report.

- the area served by area code complex 450/579 is to be overlaid with a new area code, effective **22 October 2022**; and
- area code 354 is to be used for area code relief.

Policy Directions

15. In accordance with subparagraph 1(b)(i) of the 2006 Policy Direction,⁷ the Commission considers that approval of the report will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.⁸
16. In accordance with the 2019 Policy Direction,⁹ 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 telecommunications service providers so that they can continue to compete and provide existing and new innovative communications 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
- *CISC ad hoc relief planning committee – Consensus report 450_579RE02A regarding Numbering Plan Area 450/579*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2019-347, 8 October 2019
- *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

⁷ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

⁸ 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.

⁹ *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