



Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-308

PDF version

Ottawa, 8 November 2022

Public record: 8621-C12-01/08

CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE134A regarding setting aside five area codes for future relief of exhausting area code complexes

Summary

The Commission **approves** consensus report CNRE134A and **directs** the Canadian Numbering Administrator to set aside five area codes for the identified area code complexes.

Background

1. In the early 2000s, the Commission determined that the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) should request that the North American Numbering Plan Administrator reserve a pool of 30 area codes for future use in Canada. Since then, as area code relief has been required, the new relief area codes have been drawn from this pool.
2. In 2010, the Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN) proposed that certain area codes in the Canadian pool be reserved for future relief of designated area codes. The CSCN cited a number of benefits for reserving the identified area codes. These benefits included allowing telecommunications service providers (TSPs) and customers to add these future relief area codes into their various systems when these systems are being modified to make changes or updates. Further, the identification of these area codes provided the CNA with a better understanding of which central office codes should not be assigned in particular area codes to avoid future dialing conflicts.¹ The Commission considered that the CSCN proposal was reasonable and set aside seven area codes for future relief of seven area codes in *CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee consensus item – Reservation of area codes for future area code relief*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2010-784, 22 October 2010 (Telecom Decision 2010-784).
3. Rather than directing that those area codes should be reserved, the Commission set them aside. The Commission considered that it would be many years before the identified area codes would be required for relief, and much could change in that

¹ A potential dialing conflict would be assigning a central office code in an area code that is the same number as the area code itself (e.g., 613-613-XXXX).

time, which may alter the requirements for suitable relief for the existing area codes. Further, more pressing needs could arise for the area codes that the CSCN had proposed to reserve.

4. In 2016, the CSCN initiated Task Identification Form 98, entitled *Future Canadian Geographic NPA Codes to be used for relief of existing Canadian NPAs forecast to exhaust in the next ten years*, to identify area codes from the Canadian pool that could be set aside for area codes projected to exhaust within the next ten years and to seek the Commission's approval to set aside these area codes. The CSCN noted that this approach was similar to that included in section 4.8 of the [Canadian NPA \[Numbering Plan Area\] Relief Planning Guideline](#), which addresses the reservation of area codes for future subsequent relief of area codes undergoing relief activities.

The report

5. On 14 June 2022, the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) forwarded to the Commission, for its approval, consensus report CNRE134A from the CSCN. This report recommended that the Commission set aside five area codes from the Canadian area code pool for future relief of designated area code complexes.
6. The CSCN noted that the ability to identify and set aside area codes for future relief had proven beneficial, with TSPs having been able to incorporate future area codes into their systems as these systems are being modified to make various changes or updates, including but not limited to the addition of other relief area codes.
7. In consensus report CNRE134A, the CSCN indicated that almost all of the previously set aside area codes had been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. Additionally, the most recent Canadian Numbering Resource Utilization Forecasts have indicated that the projected exhaust dates for the majority of Canadian area code complexes² have advanced and are now within a 10-year window for relief activities to begin. These activities are typically initiated by the CNA with the issuance of the Proposal for Relief of an Overlay NPA Complex.
8. The CSCN determined that those area code complexes that will require a Proposal for Relief of an Overlay NPA Complex where a relief planning committee has not yet been established should have an area code set aside for the expected future relief.
9. The identified area codes that should be set aside were selected using the NPA Code Selection Tool with the additional factor of selecting area codes that would limit the need for new capital investments in legacy switching equipment.

² An area code complex is where more than one overlay area code serves the same geographical area.

Commission's analysis

10. Based on the telecommunications industry's experience from the previous area codes that were set aside, per Telecom Decision 2010-784, the Commission notes that TSPs and others have found it beneficial to know in advance what area codes will be used for future area code relief for specific area code complexes. As noted in consensus report CNRE134A, TSPs have been able to take advantage of this information to save costs in their network and operational systems. Further, the area codes that were set aside for particular area code complexes can simplify and shorten the relief planning time frames because the relief area code has already been determined. With the volatility that has been seen in recent years in projected exhaust dates, the ability for relief planning committees to respond more quickly to implementing area code relief is an important factor, especially in a situation where a jeopardy condition may have been declared.

Conclusion

11. The Commission **approves** consensus report CNRE134A and **directs** the CNA to set aside the five area codes for the identified area code complexes as shown in the Appendix to this decision.

Policy Directions

12. In accordance with subparagraph 1(b)(i) of the 2006 Policy Direction,³ the Commission considers that approval of consensus report CNRE134A will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(a), 7(b) and 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.⁴
13. In accordance with the 2019 Policy Direction,⁵ 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

³ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

⁴ The cited policy objectives are: 7(a) to facilitate the orderly development throughout Canada of a telecommunications system that serves to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the social and economic fabric of Canada and its regions; 7(b) to render reliable and affordable telecommunications services of high quality accessible to Canadians in both urban and rural areas in all regions of Canada; and 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.

⁵ *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

Appendix to Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-308

Area codes to be set aside for the identified area code complexes

Current area code complex	Proposed relief area code	Projected exhaust date	Required date for Proposal for Relief of an Overlay NPA Complex
236/250/604/672/778	257	March 2027	March 2024
368/403/587/780/825	568	February 2028	March 2025
782/902	851	April 2029	March 2026
289/365/742/905	537	May 2029	March 2026
249/683/705	460	May 2032	March 2029