



Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-50

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Relief for area code complex 226/519/548 in southwestern Ontario

The Commission determines that relief for area code complex 226/519/548 in southwestern Ontario is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of new area code 382, effective **17 June 2023**. In addition, the Commission **approves** the 226/519/548 relief planning committee's report, including the proposed planning document and relief implementation plan.

Introduction

1. On 23 February 2021, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA)¹ advised the Commission that the area code complex 226/519/548² was projected to exhaust by July 2024 and requested that an ad hoc relief planning committee be formed via the issuance of a notice of consultation.
2. On 30 July 2021, the Commission issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2021-245, in which it established a CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC)³ ad hoc relief planning committee for planning relief for the 226/519/548 area code complex (the 226/519/548 relief planning committee). The 226/519/548 relief planning committee was to examine area code relief options and to make recommendations for providing relief for the pending numbering exhaust.

¹ In making assignment decisions, the CNA follows regulatory directives and industry-developed guidelines. 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 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.

³ 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. On 19 August 2021, the CNA published the July 2021 Relief Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast (R-NRUF)⁴ results, in which it indicated that the projected exhaust date for area code complex 226/519/548 had moved out to August 2024.
4. Contributions to the 226/519/548 relief planning committee were considered at a meeting on 14 October 2021, at which the 226/519/548 relief planning committee finalized a planning document and relief implementation plan, which are included in Task Identification Form (TIF) Report #1 (the report), dated 28 October 2021.

Report

5. On 3 December 2021, CISC approved the report and forwarded it to the Commission for its approval. The report, planning document, and relief implementation plan for the implementation of area code relief for southwestern Ontario served by area code complex 226/519/548 are available on the CNA's [website](#).
6. In the planning document, the 226/519/548 relief planning committee recommended that
 - the relief method be a distributed overlay area code on area code complex 226/519/548;
 - the new area code be 382, per Telecom Decision 2017-38; and
 - the relief implementation date be 17 June 2023.
7. The relief implementation plan includes the recommendations in the planning document and establishes a public framework and time frame for the steps required to implement the area code relief. It also includes the activities, deliverables, and issues that affect more than one telecommunications service provider (TSP). It does not cover activities internal to individual TSPs.

Should the Commission approve the report?

Relief method

8. As set out in the [Canadian NPA \[Numbering Plan Area\] Relief Planning Guideline](#), the only relief measure now considered in Canada is the distributed overlay method. This method does not require customers to change their telephone numbers, as other previous methods required.⁵ The distributed overlay does not increase the number of

⁴ An R-NRUF is conducted every six months by the CNA for area codes that are within the relief planning window of 72 months. Based on forecasts provided by carriers, the CNA is able to project when an area code is expected to run out of assignable central office codes.

⁵ Previous methods included area code splits, area code boundary realignments, and concentrated overlay area codes.

separate areas for which future relief planning must be considered and thereby does not increase the administrative burden on the telecommunications industry.

9. A mandatory 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 226/519/548.
10. Given that there are already two distributed overlay area codes in place over the original 519 area code, the only logical method for providing further area code relief is the addition of another distributed overlay area code.
11. Accordingly, the Commission determines that the area served by area code complex 226/519/548 is to be overlaid with a new area code.

Relief area code

12. In Telecom Decision 2017-38, the Commission set aside area code 382 as the future relief area code for area code complex 226/519/548. The Commission therefore determines that area code 382 is to be used for the relief of area code complex 226/519/548.

Implementation date

13. The 226/519/548 relief planning committee recommended that the new relief area code be activated by 17 June 2023, which is 14 months before the projected exhaust date of August 2024.
14. The recommended relief date is sooner than the current six-month lead time as suggested in the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline and approved by the Commission,⁶ but it is within the previous version of the Guideline's lead time of 12 to 18 months.
15. This lead time allows for volatility in the projected exhaust date, and if it were to advance by a few months, there would be no need to change the area code implementation plans. A shorter implementation lead time would place relief implementation at the end of 2023. However, carriers avoid making any network changes during this period because there are significant customer activities in the fall, such as back-to-school activations, and end-of-the-year promotions, such as those for Christmas. Further, summer vacations can result in staff shortages. As a result, the 226/519/548 relief planning committee decided the optimal time to introduce the new area code would be in June 2023.

⁶ See Telecom Decision 2021-217.

16. This timing also provides telephone service providers and customers the necessary time to implement the new area code into their systems, databases and telecommunications equipment.
17. Given that 10-digit local dialing is already in place, implementation will only require the addition of the new area code to the 226/519/548 area code complex that is already in place.
18. Accordingly, the Commission determines that area code relief will take effect on 17 June 2023.

Planning document and relief implementation plan

19. The planning document contains the 226/519/548 relief planning committee's conclusions and recommendations. The main topics in the planning document are the relief planning process, analysis of relief options, a jeopardy contingency plan,⁷ the proposed relief area code, and a proposed implementation schedule.
20. The relief implementation plan is intended to establish the framework and time frame for implementing the new distributed 382 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 that covers all the activities by various stakeholders, such as the CNA, the Commission, TSPs, and others.
21. In the relief implementation plan, the 226/519/548 relief planning committee 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

22. The Commission **approves** the 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 226/519/548 is to be overlaid with a new area code, effective **17 June 2023**; and
 - area code 382 is to be used for area code relief.

⁷ A jeopardy contingency plan 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

23. In accordance with subparagraph 1(b)(i) of the 2006 Policy Direction,⁸ the Commission considers that approval of the report will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.⁹
24. In accordance with the 2019 Policy Direction,¹⁰ 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 226, 519, and 548 in southwestern Ontario*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2021-245, 30 July 2021
- *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

⁸ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

⁹ The cited policy objective 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.

¹⁰ *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