



Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-51

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Relief for area code complex 204/431 in Manitoba

The Commission determines that relief for area code complex 204/431 in Manitoba is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of new area code 584, effective **29 October 2022**. In addition, the Commission **approves** the 204/431 relief planning committee's report, including the proposed planning document and relief implementation plan.

Introduction

1. On 18 September 2020, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA)¹ advised the Commission that the area code complex 204/431² was projected to exhaust by June 2024 and requested that an ad hoc relief planning committee be formed via the issuance of a notice of consultation.
2. On 11 January 2021, the Commission issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2021-6, in which it established a CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC)³ ad hoc relief planning committee for planning relief for the 204/431 area code complex (the 204/431 relief planning committee). The 204/431 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 204/431 had advanced to October 2023, and that the area code complex had entered into a jeopardy condition⁵ per section 9.1 of the [Canadian NPA \[Numbering Plan Area\] Relief Planning Guideline](#).
4. On 17 November 2021, the CNA released the October 2021 Jeopardy NRUF results, which indicated that the projected exhaust date for area code complex 204/431 had moved out to December 2023. With central office code assignments remaining at the July 2021 R-NRUF levels, this revised projected exhaust date allowed the jeopardy condition to be removed.
5. Contributions to the 204/431 relief planning committee were considered at a meeting on 16 September 2021, at which the 204/431 relief planning committee finalized a planning document and relief implementation plan, which are included in Task Identification Form (TIF) Report #1 (the report), dated 30 September 2021.

Report

6. 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 Manitoba served by area code complex 204/431 are available on the CNA's [website](#).
7. In the planning document, the 204/431 relief planning committee recommended that
 - the relief method be a distributed overlay area code on area code complex 204/431;
 - the new area code be 584, per Telecom Decision 2017-38; and
 - the relief implementation date be 29 October 2022.
8. 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

⁴ An R-NRUF is conducted every six months by the CNA for area codes that are within the relief planning window of 36 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 A jeopardy condition is declared when (i) the available pool of assignable central office codes is forecasted to run out of assignable central office codes before an additional relief area code can be implemented or (ii) certain criteria has not been met per section 9.1 of the [Canadian NPA \[Numbering Plan Area\] Relief Planning Guideline](#).

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

9. As set out in the Canadian NPA 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.⁶ The distributed overlay 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 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 204/431.
11. Given that there is already one distributed overlay area code in place over the original 204 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 204/431 is to be overlaid with a new area code.

Relief area code

13. In Telecom Decision 2017-38, the Commission set aside area code 584 as the future relief area code for area code complex 204/431. The Commission therefore determines that area code 584 is to be used for the relief of area code complex 204/431.

Implementation date

14. The 204/431 relief planning committee recommended that the new relief area code be activated by 29 October 2022, which is 14 months before the projected exhaust date of December 2023. When the 204/431 relief planning committee finalized the report and its recommendations, the projected exhaust date was October 2023, which meant that the relief date would have been 12 months before the projected exhaust date.
15. 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

⁶ Previous methods included area code splits, area code boundary realignments, and concentrated overlay area codes.

Commission,⁷ but it is within the previous version of the Guideline's lead time of 12 to 18 months.

16. The projected exhaust date is within the next two years, and this area code complex remains on the verge of being in a jeopardy condition. Therefore, a longer interval between relief implementation and the projected exhaust date provides more of a buffer to allow for changing projected exhaust dates without resulting in changes to relief implementation plans or the potential to run out of assignable central office codes before relief is implemented. This timing also provides telephone service providers and customers the time necessary 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 204/431 area code complex that is already in place.
18. Accordingly, the Commission determines that area code relief will take effect on 29 October 2022.

Planning document and relief implementation plan

19. The planning document contains the 204/431 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,⁸ 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 584 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 204/431 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.

⁷ See Telecom Decision 2021-217.

⁸ 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.

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 204/431 is to be overlaid with a new area code, effective **29 October 2022**; and
- area code 584 is to be used for area code relief.

Policy Directions

23. In accordance with subparagraph 1(b)(i) of the 2006 Policy Direction,⁹ the Commission considers that approval of the report will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.¹⁰

24. In accordance with the 2019 Policy Direction,¹¹ 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 204 and 431 in Manitoba*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2021-6, 11 January 2021

⁹ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ *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

- *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*