



## Telecom Decision CRTC 2023-135

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References: [2020-35](#) and [2021-244](#)

Ottawa, 10 May 2023

*Public record:* [8621-C12-01/08](#)

### Relief for area code complexes 416/437/647 in Toronto, Ontario and 236/250/604/672/778 in British Columbia

#### Summary

The Commission determines that relief for area code complex 416/437/647 in Toronto, Ontario is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of new area code 942, effective **26 April 2025**. The Commission also determines that relief for area code complex 236/250/604/672/778 in British Columbia is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of new area code 257, effective **24 May 2025**.

In addition, the Commission **approves** the 416/437/647 and 236/250/604/672/778 relief planning committee's reports, including the planning documents and relief implementation plans.

#### Introduction

1. In March 2019, the Canadian Numbering Association (CNA)<sup>1</sup> advised the Commission that the area code complex<sup>2</sup> 416/437/647 was projected to exhaust by January 2024. These area codes cover Toronto, Ontario (hereafter referred to as the Toronto area code complex).
2. The Commission issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2020-35 on 30 January 2020 in which it noted a new projected exhaust date of June 2025 and established a CRTC

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC)<sup>3</sup> ad hoc relief planning committee chaired by the CNA for planning relief for the Toronto area code complex. The relief planning committee was to examine area code relief options and make recommendations for providing relief for the pending numbering exhaust.

3. In September 2022, the CNA issued a Proposal for Relief of an Overlay NPA [Numbering Plan Area] Complex (PROC) and in October 2022, the relief planning committee for the Toronto area code complex met to review the PROC and contributions on the planning document and relief implementation plan. This led to the filing of report [416-437-647RE01A](#) (the Toronto report) with CISC in November 2022.
4. In March 2021, the CNA announced that the area code complex 236/250/604/672/778 had entered the relief planning window of 72 months according to the aggregated results from the January 2021 general numbering resource utilization forecast (G-NRUF) and advised the Commission that this area code complex was projected to exhaust by February 2027. These area codes cover the province of British Columbia (hereafter referred to as the British Columbia area code complex).
5. The Commission issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2021-244 on 30 July 2021 in which it established a CISC ad hoc relief planning committee chaired by the CNA for planning relief for the British Columbia area code complex. The relief planning committee was to examine area code relief options and to make recommendations for providing relief for the pending numbering exhaust.
6. In September 2022, the CNA issued a PROC and in October 2022, the relief planning committee for the British Columbia area code complex met to review the PROC and contributions on the planning document and relief implementation plan. This led to the filing of report [236-250-604-672-778RE01A](#) (the British Columbia report) with CISC in November 2022.

## Reports

7. On 19 January 2023, CISC approved the Toronto report and the British Columbia report, and forwarded them to the Commission for approval.
8. In the Toronto report, the relief planning committee noted that per the September 2022 Relief Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast (R-NRUF),<sup>4</sup> the projected

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

exhaust date for the Toronto area code complex had been revised to April 2026. Therefore, the relief planning committee recommended that

- the relief method be a distributed overlay area code on the Toronto area code complex 416/437/647;
  - the new area code be 942, per Telecom Decision 2017-38; and
  - the relief implementation date be 26 April 2025.
9. In the British Columbia report, the relief planning committee noted that per the September 2022 R-NRUF, the projected exhaust date for the British Columbia area code complex had been revised to May 2026. Therefore, the relief planning committee recommended that
- the relief method be a distributed overlay area code on the British Columbia area code complex 236/250/604/672/778;
  - the new area code be 257, per Telecom Decision 2022-308; and
  - the relief implementation date be 24 May 2025.
10. Along with both reports, the relief planning committee submitted planning documents which include analyses of the various options considered for providing area code relief and make recommendations on how area code relief should be provided. The relief planning committee also submitted relief implementation plans which include the detailed steps to be taken by all affected parties to implement a new area code.

## **Should the Commission approve the reports?**

### **Relief method**

11. As set out in the [Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline](#) (which was approved by the Commission in Telecom Decision 2021-217), 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.
12. A mandatory requirement for overlay area codes is a 10-digit local dialing in order to differentiate between the same central office codes in different area codes serving the

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<sup>5</sup> Previous methods included area code splits, area code boundary realignments, and concentrated overlay area codes.

same geographical area. However, in the cases of the Toronto and British Columbia area code complexes, 10-digit local dialing is already in place.

13. Given that there are already two distributed overlay area codes in place over the original area code 416 in Toronto, and four distributed overlay area codes in place over the original area code 604 in British Columbia, the Commission considers that the only logical method for providing further area code relief in these locations is the addition of another distributed overlay area code.

#### **Relief area codes**

14. In Telecom Decision 2017-38, the Commission set aside area code 942 as the future relief area code for the Toronto area code complex, and in Telecom Decision 2022-308 the Commission set aside area code 257 as the future relief area code for the British Columbia area code complex.
15. The Commission therefore determines that area code 942 is to be used for the relief of the Toronto area code complex, and area code 257 is to be used for the relief of the British Columbia area code complex.

#### **Implementation date**

16. The relief planning committee for the Toronto area code complex recommended that the new relief area code 942 in Toronto should be activated by 26 April 2025, which is one year before the projected exhaust date of April 2026.
17. The relief planning committee for the British Columbia area code complex recommended that the new relief area code 257 in British Columbia should be activated by 24 May 2025, which is one year before the projected exhaust date of May 2026.
18. The recommended relief dates are sooner than the current six-month lead time as suggested in the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline. This lead time allows for volatility in the projected exhaust dates, and if these were to advance by a few months there would be no need to change the area implementation plans.
19. 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.
20. Accordingly, the Commission determines that
  - area code 942 used as area code relief for the Toronto area code complex will take effect on **26 April 2025**; and
  - area code 257 used as area code relief for the British Columbia area code complex will take effect on **24 May 2025**.

## Conclusion

21. The Commission **approves** reports 416-437-647RE01A for Toronto and 236-250-604-672-778RE01A for British Columbia, including the planning documents and relief implementation plans, and determines that

- area code 942 used as area code relief for the Toronto area code complex 416/437/647 will take effect on **26 April 2025**; and
- area code 257 used as area code relief for the British Columbia area code complex 236/250/604/672/778 will take effect on **24 May 2025**.

Secretary General

## Related documents

- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE134A regarding setting aside five area codes for future relief of exhausting area code complexes*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-308, 8 November 2022
- *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for relief planning for area codes 236, 250, 604, 672 and 778 in British Columbia*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2021-244, 30 July 2021
- *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 416, 437, and 647 in Toronto, Ontario*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2020-35, 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