



Telecom Decision CRTC 2026-167

PDF version

Gatineau, 10 July 2026

Public record: 8621-C12-01/08

CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus reports CNRE145A, CNRE157A, and CNRE158A – Non-geographic code assignment guidelines and implementation of thousand-block pooling

Summary

Telecommunications numbering resources are a finite resource and critical to our modern communications system. The growing use of non-voice services, like machine-to-machine communications (M2M) and Internet of Things (IoT) applications are increasing the demand for telephone numbers not linked to a specific geographic region.

The Commission relies on the Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN) to provide expert advice on numbering matters within the Commission's jurisdiction. To better support the implementation of Thousand-Block Pooling, the CSCN submitted three consensus reports to the Commission, in which it recommended the following:

- report CNRE145A: changes to certain numbering management practices to align them with a thousand-block pooling environment;
- report CNRE157A: changes to the Canadian Numbering Plan Area 600 NXX Code Assignment Guideline and the Canadian Non-Geographic Code Assignment Guideline to align them with previous Commission decisions on increasing the availability of non-geographic numbers and strengthening the oversight of number assignment practices; and
- report CNRE158A: the creation of the new Canadian Thousand-Block Central Office Code Assignment Guideline prior to implementing thousand-block pooling.

In this decision, the Commission approves two of the CSCN's recommendations from report CNRE145A and all recommendations in reports CNRE157A and CNRE158A. These recommendations will help ensure that numbering resources are managed responsibly and effectively, and that numbering guidelines accurately reflect the current state of Canada's numbering resources.

Background

1. The Commission administers telephone numbers and other numbering resources pursuant to section 46.1 of the *Telecommunications Act*. It works with various partners, including the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) and the North American Numbering Plan Administrator, to organize and manage phone numbers for Canada and other countries within the North American Numbering Plan (NANP).¹
2. The Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN) of the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) manages several Canadian numbering guidelines, which provide instructions to the CNA and Canadian carriers on how to manage and use Canadian numbering resources. Canada's CO codes, 6YY codes, and area code 600 are managed in accordance with the following Canadian numbering guidelines, respectively: the [Central Office Code \(NXX\) Assignment Guideline](#) (the CO Code Assignment Guideline), the [Canadian Non-Geographic Code Assignment Guideline](#) (the 6YY Assignment Guideline), and the [Canadian NPA 600 NXX Code Assignment Guideline](#) (the 600 Assignment Guideline). The CSCN recommends updates to the numbering guidelines for the Commission's approval.
3. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-26, the Commission directed local exchange carriers and wireless carriers to implement thousand-block pooling (TBP)² as an important tool to conserve telephone numbers. The Commission established 6 October 2025 as the TBP implementation deadline and requested that the CSCN provide, by 6 May 2024, recommendations for strengthening numbering administration guidelines, with a focus on preserving numbering resources both during and after the implementation of TBP. The Commission also requested that the CSCN file a report by 6 August 2024 examining the inclusion of unused numbers from previously assigned CO codes to the number pooling inventory.
4. The Commission modified the TBP implementation deadline in Telecom Decision 2025-321, when it directed the CSCN to create a schedule for phasing in TBP exchange by exchange. The first exchange would transition to TBP by 28 July 2026 and the final exchange by 28 July 2027.

¹ The NANP is a telephone numbering system that assigns unique 10-digit numbers, including a three-digit area code and a seven-digit local number, to facilitate call routing across participating countries like the United States, Canada, and several Caribbean nations. Telephone numbers within the NANP use a 1+10 format. The 1 is the country code for all NANP countries. The next 10 digits include a three-digit area code (also called a numbering plan area or NPA code), a three-digit central office (CO) code, and a four-digit individual line number (the unique number for the individual phone line).

² TBP involves assigning numbers to telecommunications service providers (TSPs) in blocks of 1,000, rather than 10,000. Currently, TSPs are automatically assigned blocks of 10,000 numbers when extending service to a new area, regardless of the size of the area. This can often lead to many assigned numbers remaining unused.

5. In Telecom Decisions 2025-224 and 2025-252, the Commission approved measures to increase the availability of non-geographic numbering resources³ and to strengthen certain number assignment guidelines by introducing more frequent numbering forecasts and number usage reporting, respectively. In light of these determinations, the Commission requested that the CSCN propose, by 2 March 2026, amendments to the relevant guidelines to reflect the new measures.
6. The CSCN filed three consensus reports proposing updates to the processes for assigning CO codes.

The reports

7. The Commission received the following CSCN consensus reports:
 - [CNRE145A](#) – *Inclusion of unused numbers from previously assigned CO codes to the number pooling inventory* (6 August 2024);
 - [CNRE157A](#) – *Updating the Canadian NPA 600 NXX Code Assignment and the Canadian Non-Geographic Code Assignment Guidelines* (1 December 2025); and
 - [CNRE158A](#) – *Proposed Initial Canadian TBCOCAG – Version 1.0* (24 December 2025).

CNRE145A

8. In this report, the CSCN presented a series of recommendations in response to the Commission's requests set out in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-26. In particular, the report recommended a phased, exchange-by-exchange rollout of TBP that would include voluntary block donations from in-service CO codes, on the basis that this approach would improve TBP numbering efficiency while minimizing unnecessary risks. A breakdown of the specific recommendations contained in this report and their status can be found in the appendix to this decision.
9. On 10 October 2024, the Commission published Telecom Decision 2024-239, in which it denied an application to review and vary Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-26. Following this decision, the CSCN debated the continued relevance and validity of report CNRE145A and concluded that most of the recommendations in the report were no longer required. The recommendations to adapt numbering management would be captured by the new Thousand-Block Central Office Code Assignment Guideline (TBCOCAG) proposed in report CNRE158A,⁴ should it be

³ Under the NANP, Canada has been assigned a set number of area codes. Area codes are considered geographic when they are linked to a specific area. They are considered non-geographic when they can be used anywhere in Canada. Canada's non-geographic area codes are known as 6YY codes and are mainly used for Internet of Things and Machine-to-Machine communications. Canada also has a separate non-geographic area code, 600, which is mainly used for voice services such as satellite communications.

⁴ Per CNRE158A, TBCOCAG covers both the assignment of CO codes and thousand blocks and reflects the processes for assignment of thousand blocks.

approved, and those related to a phased TBP rollout were superseded by Telecom Decision 2025-321.

10. Only two of the CSCN's recommendations in report CNRE145A remained relevant. These two recommendations proposed amendments to Telecom Decision 2007-23.⁵ In these two recommendations, the CSCN proposed to adapt this obligation for a TBP environment. Specifically, it recommended that Type I and II competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs), including wireless service providers, be required to acquire at least one thousand-block and location routing number (LRN) for each local interconnection region where they provide local service, rather than acquire a full CO code.

Commission's analysis

11. The Commission is of the view that these two recommendations will align the numbering resource requirements for CLECs entering new markets within a TBP environment.
12. In Telecom Decision 2025-321, the Commission directed the CSCN to develop a year-long exchange-by-exchange schedule for the phased implementation of TBP. The Commission notes that, beginning in July 2026, the implementation of the recommendations outlined above will vary for each exchange, in accordance with the phased transition to TBP.
13. Additionally, the Commission notes that certain processes and guidelines will need to be modified to reflect the requirement for Type I and Type II CLECs, which include wireless service providers, to acquire at least one thousand-block and LRN for each local interconnection region where they provide local service.

CNRE157A

14. In this report, the CSCN recommended amendments to the non-geographic (6YY) Assignment Guideline⁶ and the 600 Assignment Guideline⁷ in light of the Commission's approval of a 1+14 digit format for 6YY numbers in Telecom Decision 2025-335.

⁵ In Telecom Decision 2007-23, the Commission determined that all competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs), including wireless CLECs, must acquire at least one CO code and location routing number (LRN) for each local interconnection region where they provide local service, rather than for each incumbent local exchange carrier.

⁶ The 6YY Assignment Guideline describes and specifies procedures for the assignment and administration of Canadian non-geographic NPA NXX codes.

⁷ The 600 Assignment Guideline describes and specifies procedures for the assignment and administration of NXX Codes within NPA 600 and any other Canadian non-geographic NPA codes subject to this guideline.

15. Regarding the 6YY Assignment Guideline, the CSCN recommended making previously unassignable CO codes (555,⁸ 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711, and 811), along with certain ranges from area code 600, available for assignment in all non-geographic area codes. The CSCN also recommended modifying the guideline to reflect the Commission's determination that future non-geographic area codes 677 and 688 be reserved for implementing the expanded 1+14 6YY format.
16. Regarding the 600 Assignment Guideline, the CSCN recommended defining specific ranges of CO codes covered by this guideline to reduce the number of CO codes available for assignment within area code 600. The CSCN also recommended transferring the remaining CO codes in that area code to the pool of available resources covered by the 6YY Assignment Guideline.
17. Additionally, the CSCN recommended that both guidelines specify that 6YY and 600 codes should not be entered into the Business Integrated Routing and Rating Database System (BIRRDS).⁹ It explained that doing so would prolong the implementation of the recommendations in this report and the transition to the 1+14 6YY format.

Commission's analysis

18. The Commission is of the view that the CSCN's proposed amendments to the 6YY Assignment Guideline and the 600 Assignment Guideline will reflect the Commission's determinations and requests outlined in Telecom Decision 2025-224.
19. Specifically, in that, the CNA was directed by 2 March 2026 to:
 - (a) designate 768 CO codes in area code 600 as non-geographic;
 - (b) eliminate the restriction on the assignment of 555 and N11¹⁰ codes 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711, and 811 in all non-geographic area codes; and
 - (c) reserve area codes 677 and 688 for future implementation of an expanded numbering format using additional digits.

⁸ While central office code 555 was originally set aside for public information services, some 555 numbers have been reserved by the film industry and the rest have been returned to the NANP Administrator.

⁹ BIRRDS is the centralized system used by telecommunications services providers to share the information needed to route and rate calls properly.

¹⁰ N11 codes are special three-digit telephone numbers ending with 11 that range from 211 to 911. They are used for special services such as directory assistance, municipal services, and emergency services, and cannot be used as CO codes.

20. The CSCN was also requested to amend the CO Code Assignment Guideline, the 6YY Assignment Guideline, and the 600 Assignment Guideline to reflect the Commission's directions in items (a) and (b).
21. With regard to the CSCN's proposal to exclude non-geographic codes from BIRRDS, the Commission notes that the BIRRDS database is used by telecommunications service providers to share information regarding the routing and rating of calls. The database mostly concerns the activation of geographic numbering resources that have been assigned to the public switched telephone network. Because of this, the Commission considers that entering non-geographic number information into the BIRRDS database is unnecessary and requests that this be reflected in the 6YY Assignment Guideline and the 600 Assignment Guideline.

CNRE158A

22. In this report, the CSCN submitted that the modifications requested in Telecom Decision 2025-252 to the Canadian Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast Guideline and the CO Code Assignment Guideline, including the latter's audit appendix and forms, will be presented in a subsequent report because the changes are still being developed.
23. The CSCN also submitted version 1.0 of the Canadian TBCOCAG, which is intended to replace the current CO Code Assignment Guideline and includes guidelines for assigning both CO codes and thousand blocks. The CSCN explained that the new version of the TBCOCAG reflects the process for assigning thousand blocks and that, in some instances, the process for assigning CO codes was modified to align with the thousand-block assignment process.
24. Accordingly, the CSCN recommended that the Commission approve the new Canadian TBCOCAG, either temporarily or permanently, before TBP is implemented in the first exchanges on 28 July 2026.

Commission's analysis

25. On 16 June 2026, the Commission issued a [letter](#)¹¹ notifying the CSCN that the TBCOCAG guideline proposed in CNRE158A has been approved.
26. The Commission is of the view that the new proposed Canadian TBCOCAG is appropriate for the transition to TBP because it will provide the CNA and the industry with a framework for effectively managing CO codes and thousand-block pools in a TBP environment.
27. In Telecom Decision 2025-252, the Commission also requested that the CSCN file, by 26 March 2026, a report with recommendations for new number usage reporting requirements for the audit appendix and forms of the CO Code Assignment Guideline. The Commission recently

¹¹ *Approval of the Canadian Thousands-Block (NXX-X) and Central Office Code (NXX) Assignment Guideline*, Telecom – Secretary General Letter addressed to Kelly T. Walsh (Canadian Numbering Administrator), 16 June 2026.

approved the suspension of this report by way of a [letter](#), following the issuance of Telecom Notice of Consultation 2026-61, in which comments were sought on potential new measures to improve the management of telephone numbers and increase accountability for their use. The Commission therefore considers that the request does not currently apply.

Conclusion

28. The Commission considers that the CSCN's recommendations in consensus reports CNRE145A, CNRE157A, and CNRE158A reflect the Commission's determinations and requests in Telecom Decisions 2025-224 and 2025-252. Therefore, the Commission:

- approves the proposed requirement for Type I and II CLECs and wireless service providers to have or acquire at least one thousand-block and an LRN for every local interconnection region where they provide local service, effective the date of TBP implementation in each exchange, as set out in CNRE145A. The Commission also requests that CISC amend the relevant process documentation and numbering guidelines accordingly and file them with the Commission within six months of this decision;
- approves the proposed changes to the 600 Assignment Guideline and the 6YY Assignment Guideline as set out in CNRE157A; and
- approves the new Canadian TBCOCAG as set out in CNRE158A.

Secretary General

Appendix to Telecom Decision CRTC 2026-167

Status of changes recommended by the Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN) in CNRE145A

Recommendation	Description	Status
Recommendation 1	The CSCN recommends that the Commission approve a maximum of 10% contamination as a block donation criterion for the return of blocks by carriers as directed in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-26.	Captured in Section 7 – <i>Reclamations</i> of the Thousand-Block Central Office Code Assignment Guideline (TBCOCAG) proposed in CNRE158A .
Recommendation 2	The CSCN recommends that the Commission: (i) direct local exchange carriers (LECs) and wireless carriers to implement a phased approach to thousand-block pooling (TBP) based on groups of exchange areas; and (ii) requests that the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) propose the exchange areas to be included in the initial rollout within six months of the directive regarding this report.	Superseded by Telecom Decision 2025-321, in which the Commission approved a phased, exchange-by-exchange implementation of TBP, with the first exchange to transition by 28 July 2026 and the final exchange by 29 July 2027.
Recommendation 3	The CSCN recommends that the Commission direct local exchange carriers and wireless carriers to adopt a voluntary block donation process as part of the initial implementation of TBP.	Captured in Section 7 – <i>Reclamations</i> of the TBCOCAG proposed in CNRE158A .
Recommendation 4	The CSCN recommends that the Commission request CISC to modify the Central Office Code (NXX) Assignment Guideline to indicate that blocks not put into service within six	Captured in Section 6 – <i>Responsibilities of Code/Block Applicants and Code/Block Holders</i> of the TBCOCAG proposed in CNRE158A .

Recommendation	Description	Status
	months of assignment be subject to reclamation, by six months prior to the TBP implementation date.	
Recommendation 5	The CSCN recommends that the Commission request CISC to modify number porting process documentation to reflect the revised snap-back process to accommodate TBP by six months prior to the TBP implementation date.	Captured in Section 7 – <i>Reclamations</i> of the TBCOCAG proposed in CNRE158A .
Recommendation 6	The CSCN recommends that the Commission request that CISC amend process documentation and the numbering guidelines to reflect that, effective the date of TBP implementation, Type I & II competitive local exchange carriers must acquire at least one thousand-block and establish a location routing number (LRN), either by obtaining a footprint central office (CO) code or by acquiring a facilitated LRN from a third party, in every local interconnection region in which they offer local service.	Addressed in this decision.
Recommendation 7	The CSCN recommends that the Commission request that CISC amend process documentation and the numbering guidelines to reflect that, effective the date of TBP implementation, wireless service providers must acquire at least one thousand-block and establish an LRN, either by obtaining a footprint CO code or by acquiring a facilitated LRN from a third party in every local calling area in which they offer wireless service.	Addressed in this decision.

Related documents

- *Call for comments – Strengthening numbering usage management practices*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-61, 2 April 2026
- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE152A – Implementing a 1+14 format for non-geographic (6YY) numbers*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-335, 8 December 2025
- *Modification of deadline for thousand-block pooling*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-321, 28 November 2025
- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE144B – Recommendations to strengthen the number assignment guidelines*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-252, 26 September 2025
- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE138B – Methods to address the high assignment rate of non-geographic (6YY) CO codes*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-224, 2 September 2025.
- *Application to review and vary Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-26 regarding thousand-block pooling*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2024-239, 10 October 2024
- *Implementing thousand-block pooling*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024-26, 5 February 2024
- *Rogers Wireless Partnership Part VII application regarding the requirement for a central office code in each served exchange*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-23, 12 April 2007