



## Telecom Decision CRTC 2009-622

Ottawa, 6 October 2009

### Code relief for area code 705 in northern Ontario

File number: 8698-C12-200905630

*In this decision, the Commission makes its determinations on a code relief solution for area code 705. The Commission directs that*

- *relief for area code 705 be provided through a distributed overlay using new area code 249 on the area served by area code 705 starting on 19 March 2011; and*
- *mandatory 10-digit dialing be introduced in area code 705.*

### Background

1. On 5 March 2009, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) informed the Commission that the results of a general numbering resource utilization forecast indicated that area code 705 in northern Ontario would exhaust by October 2012.
2. The Commission subsequently issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2009-179, in which the Commission established the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee ad hoc numbering plan area (NPA) 705 relief planning committee (RPC) to examine options for providing relief for area code 705 in northern Ontario.
3. The Commission notes that the Relief Planning Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast results, dated April 2009, show that the projected exhaust date for area code 705 has advanced to February 2012. As a consequence of the revised forecast and in accordance with the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines, the CNA declared a jeopardy condition<sup>1</sup> for area code 705 on 13 May 2009.

### The RPC's submission

4. The RPC filed with the Commission a planning document, dated 31 July 2009, and a relief implementation plan (RIP), dated 14 September 2009. In the planning document, the RPC evaluated nine relief options for area code 705, including variations on geographic splits and boundary extension overlays. In the RIP, the RPC included the detailed implementation measures and plans to provide relief in accordance with the recommendations set out in the planning document.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines, a jeopardy condition is declared when the forecast and/or actual demand for central office (CO) codes exceeds the available supply of CO codes before relief is implemented or the implementation time frame is shorter than 36 months and no relief plan is yet in place.

5. In the planning document, the RPC recommended that
- a) code relief be provided by a distributed overlay of a new area code on the area served by area code 705, to come into effect on 19 March 2011;
  - b) area code 249 be reserved as the most suitable area code for code relief in the area served by area code 705;
  - c) a 7- to 10-digit local dialing transition period be implemented beginning on 15 January 2011 and ending on 5 March 2011, with network announcements on calls dialed using 7 digits phased in between 15 January 2011 and 22 January 2011;
  - d) mandatory 10-digit local dialing be implemented beginning on 5 March 2011, with network announcements on calls dialed using 7 digits phased in between 5 and 12 March 2011;
  - e) central office (CO) codes 468, 537, 548, 584, 683, 825, 851, 871, and 873, which correspond to future Canadian geographic area codes currently designated as unavailable for assignment in area code 705, be made available for assignment at the time of Commission approval of the relief method, in both area code 705 and in the new area code when CO codes become available for assignment in that area code;
  - f) in an extreme jeopardy condition, CO codes 226, 289, 343, 519, 613, 807, 819, and 905, which correspond to current neighbouring area codes, be made assignable in certain portions of area code 705; and
  - g) telecommunications service providers (TSPs) that are unable to support a permissive dialing recorded announcement with automatic call completion due to network limitations be permitted to use alternative measures to educate subscribers about the pending change to mandatory 10-digit local dialing.

## **Issues**

6. The Commission considers that the RPC's planning document and RIP raise the following issues:
- I. What relief method should be used and when should it be implemented?
  - II. What alternative measures to permissive dialing should be used to raise consumer awareness of the pending change to local dialing requirements?
  - III. Which area code should be reserved?
  - IV. How should potential future area codes be treated in area code 705?
  - V. Should the Commission approve the RPC's jeopardy contingency plan?
  - VI. Should the Commission approve the RIP?

## **I. What relief method should be used and when should it be implemented?**

7. The Commission considers that the overlay of a new area code on the area served by area code 705 would provide the best method to address CO code exhaust in the 705 area code as it would (i) allow existing customers to keep their current telephone numbers, (ii) cost TSPs less to implement than other options evaluated by the RPC, and (iii) provide long-term relief, as the RPC estimated that the new area code exhaust date is after 2034.
8. Accordingly, the Commission directs that a new area code be distributed on the area served by area code 705, effective 19 March 2011.
9. As the overlay of a new area code on the geographic area served by area code 705 will cause the same CO codes to become assignable in both of these area codes, the Commission determines that all local calls that originate in the area served by area code 705 must be dialed using 10-digit dialing in order to ensure that calls are routed to the correct area code.
10. The Commission notes that when mandatory 10-digit local dialing is introduced, consumers will require a permissive dialing period during which calls dialed as either 7- or 10-digits will be completed. During the permissive dialing period, when a consumer uses 7-digit dialing to place a local call, the call is to be directed to a standard short recorded announcement about the change to 10-digit dialing before the call is automatically completed. This time period has traditionally been at least three to four months. However, the Commission considers that with area code 705 exhaust imminent, it is appropriate to use as short a permissive dialing period as possible.
11. With respect to the dates for the permissive dialing period for area code 705, the Commission therefore determines that
  - a) the introduction of permissive 10-digit local dialing is to begin on 15 January 2011, and carriers are permitted to phase in this change from that date until 22 January 2011; and
  - b) the requirement for mandatory 10-digit local dialing is to begin on 5 March 2011, and carriers are permitted to phase in this change from that date until 12 March 2011.

## **II. What alternative measures to permissive dialing should be used to raise consumer awareness of the pending change to local dialing requirements?**

12. The Commission notes that during the permissive dialing period leading to mandatory 10-digit local dialing, TSPs are to inform subscribers about the pending change to mandatory 10-digit local dialing by routing calls to a brief recorded message before the calls are completed.
13. The Commission also notes that the RPC recommended that TSPs that are unable to support a recorded announcement with automatic call completion due to network limitations should request permission to use alternative measures to inform subscribers.

14. The Commission notes that this situation has arisen in other parts of the country during the implementation of 10-digit local dialing associated with area code relief measures. The Commission considers it appropriate to permit those small TSPs in area code 705 with such network limitations to use methods similar to those approved by the Commission in Telecom Decision 2006-26.
15. Accordingly, the Commission directs those small TSPs in area code 705 that cannot complete calls after a recorded announcement due to technical network limitations to take the appropriate methods to inform their customers during the permissive dialing period. The following alternative measures may be used:
  - a) send monthly bill inserts in January and February 2011 advising customers of the pending change to 10-digit local dialing in area code 705;
  - b) place two notices in local newspapers, one in February 2011 and the other in March 2011, prior to the implementation date of mandatory 10-digit local dialing;
  - c) send a personal letter to each affected customer, to be received at least 10 days prior to the implementation date of mandatory 10-digit local dialing; and
  - d) place information on the TSPs' websites in a prominent, highly visible location for the minimum period of November 2010 to the end of March 2011 inclusive.

### **III. Which area code should be reserved?**

16. The Commission considers that it is a good assignment practice to use an area code that has not been used as a CO code within the area to be served or in areas adjacent to it, as this reduces the potential for customer dialing confusion. As area code 249 meets this criterion, the Commission directs the CNA to reserve this area code for use as the new overlay area code on area code 705.

### **IV. How should potential future area codes be treated in area code 705?**

17. The Commission notes the RPC's recommendation that CO codes 468, 537, 548, 584, 683, 825, 851, 871, and 873, which correspond to future Canadian geographic area codes, be made available for assignment in area code 705 starting from the date of this decision, and in the new relief area code when CO code assignments become available. The Commission considers that these CO codes should only be used as a last resort and that they will be the last CO codes assigned in area code 705. The Commission therefore determines that the CNA is to protect these CO codes and make them available for assignment only if area code 705 exhausts before the relief date. The Commission further determines that these CO codes should remain unassignable in the new area code.
18. The Commission considers however that in an extreme jeopardy condition, CO codes 226, 289, 343, 519, 613, 807, 819, and 905, which correspond to current neighbouring area codes, may be made assignable as CO codes in certain portions of area code 705 after consultation with the Commission.

## **V. Should the Commission approve the RPC's jeopardy contingency plan?**

19. The Commission notes that the RPC included a jeopardy contingency plan as set out in the planning document. The Commission has reviewed this plan and considers it to be appropriate for its purpose.
20. The Commission therefore **approves** the jeopardy contingency plan.

## **VI. Should the Commission approve the RIP?**

21. The Commission notes that the RIP includes a detailed schedule, a network implementation plan, and a consumer awareness plan. The Commission further notes that the recommendations and milestones included in the RIP are in accordance with the planning document and the Commission's determinations in this decision.
22. The Commission therefore **approves** the RIP.

Secretary General

### **Related documents**

- *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for area code relief planning for area code 705 in northern Ontario*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2009-179, 6 April 2009
- *Relief implementation plans for area codes 450, 514, 519, 613 and 819*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2006-26, 11 May 2006

*This document is available in alternative format upon request, and may also be examined in PDF format or in HTML at the following Internet site: <http://www.crtc.gc.ca>*