



Telecom Decision CRTC 2023-141

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CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE136A – Updating of the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline including Appendices B and C

Summary

The Commission **approves** a revised version of the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline, including Appendices B and C. The updates reflect a 36-month relief implementation window and remove considerations related to the transition from seven- to ten-digit dialing.

Background

1. When a new area code is introduced in Canada, the process is governed by the [Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline](#) (the Guideline). In accordance with the Guideline, relief planning for an area code or area code complex¹ is initiated when the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) advises the Commission that its projected exhaust date is within the relief planning window. The Commission issues a notice of consultation to establish a relief planning committee (RPC), which follows the relief planning process and timeline set out in Appendix B of the Guideline. The RPC analyzes the type of area code relief required, develops a relief implementation plan, and makes recommendations on these matters to the Commission for its approval.
2. The Guideline sets out a number of steps, milestones and processes for the analysis, planning and implementation of new area codes. It covers such topics as
 - the assumptions and constraints applicable to area code relief planning;
 - the principles that guide area code relief planning;
 - an overview of the relief methods to be considered by an RPC;
 - the transition from seven-digit local dialing to ten-digit local dialing;

¹ An area code complex is created when two or more area codes serve the same geographic area.

- roles and responsibilities for relief planning;
 - the relief planning process;
 - the conditions that can cause a jeopardy condition,² and a jeopardy condition plan that would be invoked in the event that a jeopardy condition is declared;
 - maintenance of the Guideline; and
 - appendices that include templates of the various documents used during relief planning and implementation.
3. In view of the telecommunications industry's extensive experience in implementing new area codes in Canada, the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN) recognized that it would be productive to update the Guideline in order to streamline some of the methodologies and template forms used during area code relief planning and implementation.

Telecom Decision 2021-217

4. In Telecom Decision 2021-217, the Commission approved a CSCN consensus report ([CNRE126A](#))³ related to Task Identification Form (TIF) [105](#), which, among other things, explored the shortening of the timeline for relief planning and implementation. The report included a revised Appendix B that reflected the CSCN's recommendation to reduce the timeline for the implementation of area code relief from 72 months to 36 months.
5. In that decision, the Commission also took note of an issue concerning the Guideline that was not mentioned in the report and would require action from the CSCN. The issue regarded section 9 – Jeopardy Condition.
6. Specifically, section 9.1 of the Guideline included a table that set out different scenarios under which a jeopardy condition would be declared, based on a relief implementation timeline of 72 months. Because of the reduction of that timeline to 36 months, the timing related to the jeopardy condition scenarios in section 9 also needed to be adjusted or reconsidered.
7. Consequently, the Commission requested the CSCN to adjust the jeopardy condition scenarios in section 9 of the Guideline in accordance with a 36-month timeline for relief implementation, and to file a revised version of the Guideline with the Commission for its approval.

² A jeopardy condition is a situation where the assignable pool of central office codes is forecasted to exhaust before a new area code can be implemented.

³ *Revised Appendix B, Canadian NPA Relief Planning Timeline, to the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline*, 24 February 2020.

Telecom Regulatory Policy 2022-234 and 10-digit dialing

8. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2022-234, in the context of the introduction of a 9-8-8 mental health crisis and suicide prevention hotline, the Commission directed telecommunications service providers to transition to 10-digit local dialing by 31 May 2023, with the exception of area code 867 outside the Yellowknife local interconnection region, and area code 506 in New Brunswick.
9. The mandated transition to 10-digit local dialing across Canada has implications for the Guideline, because it currently includes a plan for the transition from seven- to ten-digit dialing as part of relief implementation.

The report

10. On 29 March 2021, the CSCN forwarded to the Commission, for its approval, the following consensus TIF report (the report):
 - *Updating of the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline including Appendices B & C*, 18 November 2022 ([CNRE136A](#))
11. The report can be found in the “Reports” section of the CSCN page, which is available in the CISC section of the Commission’s website at www.crtc.gc.ca
12. In the report, the CSCN provided the requested adjustments to the jeopardy condition scenarios in section 9. The CSCN also addressed the issue of the transition from seven- to ten-digit local dialing and recommended corresponding changes to the Guideline.
13. The CSCN stated that the forthcoming transition to 10-digit local dialing makes it unnecessary to include a plan for that transition in the Guideline. As to the exceptions named in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2022-234, the CSCN noted that implementation of 10-digit dialing was already scheduled for area code 506,⁴ and that the excepted territory served by area code 867 will require special consideration and is expected to require a unique plan.
14. The CSCN stated that it had reviewed Appendix B to make changes based on Telecom Regulatory Policy 2022-234 that would reflect a more accurate list of relief planning activities.
15. The CSCN also noted that, because transitions from seven- to ten-digit dialing will no longer be required, the initial planning document outline in Appendix C should be updated to reflect that it is for reference purposes only. Consequently, the CSCN included a proposed revision to Appendix C.

⁴ Ten-digit local dialing for area code 506 was implemented in January 2023.

16. Furthermore, the CSCN leveraged the review process to make various additional modifications in order to streamline the Guideline. The modifications had no substantial impact on the Guideline and as such did not warrant specific consideration by the Commission.

Commission's analysis

17. The Commission is of the view that the CSCN's recommended amendments to the Guideline effectively reflect the Commission's determinations in Telecom Decision 2021-217 and Telecom Regulatory Policy 2022-234.

18. In accordance with Telecom Decision 2021-217

- the scenarios under which a jeopardy condition shall be declared, set out in the table in section 9, are now based on a 36-month relief window; and
- the relief planning schedule set out in Appendix B now stipulates that the CNA must notify various stakeholders of the projected exhaust of a numbering plan area within 36 months of the projected exhaust date.

19. In accordance with Telecom Regulatory Policy 2022-234

- Appendix B to the Guideline now reflects a more accurate list of relief planning activities, and no longer sets out tasks for the transition from seven- to ten-digit dialing; and
- Appendix C to the Guideline has been updated to reflect that it is for reference purposes only, which takes into account that there will be no more transitions from seven- to-ten-digit dialing after 31 May 2023.

Conclusion

20. In light of all of the above, the Commission **approves** the revised Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Introduction of 9-8-8 as the three-digit abbreviated dialing code for mental health crisis and suicide prevention services and Northwestel Inc.'s application for modified implementation of ten-digit local dialing*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2022-234, 31 August 2022; amended by Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2022-234-1, 9 December 2022
- *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

- *Further revision to the relief implementation schedule for area code 506 in New Brunswick, Telecom Decision CRTC 2020-363, 28 October 2020*
- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE124A regarding the streamlining of the relief planning process, Telecom Decision CRTC 2019-24, 29 January 2019*