



Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-71

Ottawa, 13 August 2007

Code relief for area code 418 – Quebec

Reference: 8698-C12-200707953

In this Decision, the Commission makes its determinations on a code relief solution for area code 418. In this regard, the Commission directs that

- *relief for area code 418 be provided through the implementation of a distributed overlay of a new area code on the area served by area code 418; and*
- *mandatory 10-digit local dialing be introduced in area code 418 prior to the introduction of the new area code.*

The Commission approves, with changes, the relief implementation plan proposed by the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee ad hoc relief planning committee for area code 418, which includes a detailed implementation schedule for relief activities, a network implementation plan, and a consumer awareness plan.

Background

1. In Telecom Public Notice 2007-8, the Commission noted that the Canadian Numbering Administrator's (CNA) latest General Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast, which was published on 23 March 2007, indicated that area code 418 would exhaust by October 2008, rather than by December 2013 as had been previously forecast. The Commission noted that the CNA's latest forecast indicated that area code 418 was in a serious jeopardy condition as, at that time, relief planning activities had not commenced.
2. In that Public Notice, the Commission established a CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee ad hoc relief planning committee (RPC) for the purpose of making recommendations regarding the various code relief options available for area code 418. The Commission also approved a jeopardy contingency plan and established an abbreviated relief planning process.

The RPC's submission

3. The RPC filed a planning document and a relief implementation plan, both dated 11 July 2007. In the planning document, the RPC evaluated 14 relief options for area code 418, including variations on area code overlays, splits, and boundary re-alignments. In the relief implementation plan, the RPC included the detailed implementation measures and plans to provide relief in accordance with the recommendations set out in the planning document.
4. 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 418 to come into effect on 19 September 2008;
- b) area code 581 be reserved as the most suitable area code for code relief in the area served by area code 418;
- c) the current 7-digit local dialing plan be changed to a 10-digit local dialing plan for all local calls originating in area code 418;
- d) the current 7-digit local dialing from Campbellton in area code 506 (New Brunswick) and from Labrador City – Wabush in area code 709 (Newfoundland – Labrador) into area code 418 be allowed to continue after the introduction of the new area code;
- e) mandatory 10-digit local dialing for all calls originating in area code 418 be introduced with a transition period, which would commence 23 June 2008 and end 8 September 2008;¹
- f) a standard network announcement be used during the above-noted transition period;
- g) telecommunications service providers that cannot complete calls after a recorded announcement be permitted to use alternate methods to educate customers about the pending change to 10-digit local dialing during the above-noted transition period;
- h) initially, three central office codes (CO codes) from area code 418 be set aside in a "Pool for Initial Code Assignments" for entities applying for an initial code in an exchange during the two-year period following the overlay of the new area code on the area served by area code 418. The RPC also recommended that 66 days prior to the implementation of the new area code, this quantity of CO codes be increased to ten (or as many as remain assignable within area code 418);
- i) CO codes 273, 367, 437, 460, 468, 474, 506,² 537, 579, 709, 753, and 942, which are assignable during a jeopardy condition, remain assignable when the jeopardy condition for area code 418 ends; and
- j) the Commission approve the changes made to the jeopardy contingency plan for area code 418 that was approved in Telecom Public Notice 2007-8.

¹ The RPC recommended this timing for the transition period on the basis that the Commission would issue its decision on the planning document and relief implementation plan by the end of August 2007.

² The RPC noted that this CO code can only be assigned in the area north of the St. Lawrence River.

5. The RPC also suggested that when relief measures would be required for area code 819, the Commission and the relief planning committee for area code 819 should consider a re-alignment of the boundary of the new area code to be overlaid on area code 418 so that the new area code would be overlaid on area code 819 as well.

The issues

6. The Commission considers that the RPC's planning document raises the following issues:
 - I. The relief method and the timing of its implementation
 - II. The reservation of area code 581
 - III. 7-digit local dialing for neighbouring area codes
 - IV. The treatment of CO codes in area code 418
 - V. The appropriate consumer education methods
 - VI. Revisions to the previously approved jeopardy contingency plan

In this Decision, the Commission first examines the above-noted issues and, following that, the RPC's relief implementation plan.

Commission's analysis and determinations

The planning document

I. The relief method and the timing of its implementation

7. The Commission considers that the overlay of a new area code on the area served by area code 418 would provide the best method to address CO code exhaust in the 418 area code as (i) it will not require customers to make telephone number changes, (ii) it will provide options for future relief, and (iii) it will provide long-term relief (i.e., the RPC estimated that the new area code will not exhaust until 2041). Accordingly, the Commission directs that a new area code be distributed on the area served by area code 418, effective 19 September 2008.
8. As the overlay of a new area code on the geographic area served by area code 418 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 418 must be dialled using 10-digit dialing in order to ensure that calls are routed to the correct area code.
9. The Commission notes that when mandatory 10-digit local dialing is introduced, consumers will require time to adjust (i.e., a permissive dialing period). During this permissive dialing period, when a consumer uses 7-digit dialing to place a local call, the call is to be directed to a short recorded announcement about the change to 10-digit dialing before the call is completed.
10. The Commission determines the following with respect to the dates for the permissive dialing period for area code 418:

- a) The introduction of permissive 10-digit local dialing is to commence on 21 June 2008, and carriers are permitted to phase-in this change from that date until 27 June 2008.
- b) The requirement for mandatory 10-digit local dialing is to commence on 6 September 2008, and carriers are permitted to phase-in this change from that date until 12 September 2008.

11. The Commission notes the RPC's recommendation that when code relief is required for area code 819, the relief planning committee for that area code should consider a re-alignment of the boundary of the new area code to be overlaid on the area served by area code 418 such that the new area code would also be overlaid on the area served by area code 819. The Commission agrees that this could be one of the options examined by the RPC for area code 819 when it is formed to develop a relief plan for area code 819.

II. The reservation of area code 581

12. 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 customer dialing confusion. The Commission, therefore, directs the CNA to reserve area code 581 for use as the new area code to be overlaid on the area served by area code 418.

III. 7-digit local dialing for neighbouring area codes

13. The Commission considers that retaining 7-digit local dialing for calls originating in the Campbellton exchange in area code 506 and in the Wabush exchange in area code 709 that terminate in area code 418 would result in the least confusion and disruption to customers located in these locations. Accordingly, the Commission determines that 7-digit local dialing from these communities for local calls into area code 418 may continue once mandatory 10-digit local calling is introduced in area code 418.

IV. The treatment of CO codes in area code 418

14. The Commission agrees with the RPC's recommendation regarding the treatment of CO codes in area code 418. Consistent with the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines, the Commission directs the CNA to set aside (i) three CO codes in area code 418 for the "Pool for Initial Code Assignments" as of the date of this Decision and (ii) a further seven CO codes (or as many as remain if less than seven CO codes) 66 days prior to the implementation of the overlay of the new area code on area code 418. Finally, the Commission notes that the CNA is to dissolve this pool two years after the relief date in accordance with the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines.
15. The Commission also agrees with the RPC that CO codes 273, 367, 437, 460, 468, 474, 506,³ 537, 579, 709, 753, and 942, which are assignable in a jeopardy condition, should remain assignable in the area served by area code 418 when the jeopardy condition ends. The Commission notes that under normal operating conditions, the use of the above-noted CO

³ CO code 506 can only be assigned in the area north of the St. Lawrence River.

codes may present network routing problems when 7-digit local dialing is used. However, since 10-digit local dialing will be mandatory in the area served by area code 418 once the code relief is implemented, the use of the above-noted CO codes would no longer result in potential routing problems. Accordingly, the Commission directs the CNA to continue to include these CO codes in the assignable number pool for the area served by area code 418 once the jeopardy condition has ended.

V. The appropriate consumer education methods

16. The Commission considers it appropriate that a standard network announcement be used during the transition period from 7- to 10-digit local dialing and therefore directs all telecommunications carriers in area code 418 to use a common standard network announcement during the permissive dialing period.
17. The Commission, however, considers that telecommunications service providers unable to complete a call once it has been forwarded to a recorded announcement should be permitted to use alternative customer education methods similar to those approved in Telecom Decision 2006-26 to educate customers about the change to 10-digit local dialing.
18. Accordingly, the Commission directs telecommunications service providers in area code 418 that cannot complete calls after a recorded announcement to take the following measures during the permissive dialing period for area code 418:
 - a) monthly bill inserts are to be sent in July 2008 and August 2008;
 - b) two notices are to be placed in local newspapers, one in August 2008 and the other in September 2008, before the commencement of mandatory 10-digit local dialing;
 - c) each affected customer is to be sent a personal letter to be received approximately 10 days prior to the commencement of mandatory 10-digit local dialing;
 - d) information is to be placed on the telecommunications service providers' websites in a prominent, highly visible location for the minimum period of July 2008 to the end of September 2008 inclusive; and
 - e) the text to be included in the bill inserts and personal letters is to be filed with the Commission for its information at least 30 days prior to the bill inserts or letters being sent to customers.

VI. Revisions to the previously approved jeopardy contingency plan

19. As noted above, the Commission approved a jeopardy contingency plan for area code 418 in Telecom Public Notice 2007-8. The Commission considers that the updates made by the RPC to this jeopardy contingency plan are reasonable and necessary in view of the severe jeopardy

condition in area code 418. Accordingly, the Commission approves the revised jeopardy contingency plan included in the RPC's planning document.

The RPC's relief implementation plan

20. The Commission notes that the RPC's relief implementation plan includes a detailed schedule, a network implementation plan and a consumer awareness plan. The Commission notes that the RPC's relief implementation plan and the attached network implementation plan would permit telecommunications service providers operating in area code 418 to use, at their discretion, one of two network announcement recordings (i.e., a short message or a long message) during the permissive dialing period. In this regard, the Commission notes that, earlier in this Decision, it determined that a common standard network announcement was to be used by all telecommunications service providers in area code 418.
21. By way of a Commission letter dated 15 June 2006, telecommunications service providers in area codes 450, 514, 519, 613, and 819 were given permission to use a short bilingual announcement during the permissive dialing periods in areas served by area codes undergoing relief in order to accommodate the technical limitations of alarm companies' equipment.
22. The Commission considers that the use of the announcement in the above-noted letter would meet the technical limitation requirements of the alarm companies and provide for a competitively neutral and consistent message to all telecommunications users. The Commission, therefore, determines that all telecommunications service providers are to use that announcement during the permissive dialing period for area code 418. With this change, the Commission approves the relief implementation plan for area code 418, with the relief implementation dates set out in this Decision. The Commission directs that these dates be incorporated into the relief implementation plan.

Related documents

- *Establishment of a new CISC ad hoc committee for area code relief planning in Quebec area code 418*, Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2007-8, 28 May 2007
- *Relief implementation plans for area codes 450, 519, 613 and 819*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2006-26, 11 May 2006

Secretary General

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