



Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-268

PDF version

References: 2023-92, 2023-92-1, and 2023-92-2

Gatineau, 10 October 2025

Public record: 1011-NOC2023-0092

Bell Canada – Request for an additional central office code in Gatineau, Quebec

Summary

Telephone numbers are critical to our modern communications system.

In October 2023, the Commission established an interim measure to limit the assignment of central office codes. In this decision, the Commission approves Bell Canada’s request for one additional central office code required to continue providing unique-purpose services to a customer in the exchange of Gatineau, Quebec.

Given the nature of the service, and the fact that the request will not significantly impact telephone number exhaust, the Commission approves Bell Canada’s request.

Background

1. In March 2023, the Commission issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2023-92 to address concerns related to telephone number exhaust. In the context of that notice, the Commission established, on 30 October 2023, an [interim measure](#) to limit the assignment of telephone number central office (CO) codes (i.e., the first three digits of a seven-digit telephone number).
2. Specifically, the Commission directed the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA)¹ to limit the assignment of geographic CO codes, which are associated with specific regions of Canada, based on the July 2023 Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast (NRUF). This restriction applies each year, for each carrier, and for each Numbering Plan Area (NPA) complex. Further, any carrier that has forecasted more than 20 CO codes for a given year and NPA complex will be assigned only 80% of its forecast.
3. Under the interim measure, carriers can still request telephone numbers to grow their business. However, if a carrier requests more CO codes than the forecasted levels it

¹ The CNA is responsible for assigning numbering resources to Canadian carriers. The CNA also manages guidelines that set out how telephone numbers in Canada should be planned, forecasted, and assigned.

submitted as part of the July 2023 NRUF, it must apply to both the CNA and the Commission to justify its need for additional resources.

4. The Commission indicated that it will consider the following factors, among others, when assessing a request for additional CO codes: the intended use for the additional CO codes, whether numbering resources other than North American Numbering Plan geographic resources can be used, whether the carrier has unused numbering resources from previous assignments, and the impact of the request on number exhaust Canada-wide or in a specific region.
5. In February 2024, the Commission issued Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-26 in which it directed the implementation of thousand-block pooling by 6 October 2025. The interim measure remains in effect until thousand-block pooling is implemented.

Application

6. On 2 May 2025, Bell Canada filed a request with the Commission to obtain one additional CO code in the exchange² of Gatineau, Quebec. Bell Canada filed its request with the Commission after the CNA denied its request for an additional CO code because it exceeded the projected levels Bell Canada submitted under the July 2023 NRUF.
7. Bell Canada notes that it requires one additional CO code to continue providing unique-purpose services to a customer that has exhausted its current inventory of telephone numbers and requires this code for the SIP Trunking Service³ it obtains from Bell Canada.

Commission's analysis

8. The Commission has considered Bell Canada's request against the assessment factors outlined in the interim measure and considers the following factors to be determinative in this case.
9. Bell Canada has requested one additional CO code in the exchange of Gatineau, Quebec, to enable the continued provision of a unique-purpose service to a customer that has exhausted its current inventory of telephone numbers. Per the [Canadian Central Office Code \(NXX\) Assignment Guideline](#), carriers may request additional CO codes for a unique purpose, such as distinct routing, rating, or billing services.
10. Having considered the request within the context of the interim measure, the Commission is satisfied that granting Bell Canada's request will allow it to continue

² In Canada, the service territories of incumbent telephone companies are divided into exchanges, notably for billing purposes.

³ See Bell Canada's [National Services Tariff, Item 516, SIP Trunking Service](#).

to meet its customer's unique-purpose service requirements and will not significantly impact telephone number exhaust in the Gatineau exchange.

Conclusion

11. In light of the above, the Commission approves, by majority decision, Bell Canada's request for one additional CO code in the exchange of Gatineau, Quebec.
12. Further, the Commission notes the Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering's recommendation that carriers promptly return unused thousands-blocks in a thousand-block pooling environment. All carriers are strongly encouraged to return any blocks that are not placed in service to the CNA once thousand-block pooling has been implemented.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Implementing thousand-block pooling*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024-26, 5 February 2024
- *Call for comments – Implementing thousand-block pooling*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2023-92, 23 March 2023, as amended by Telecom Notices of Consultation CRTC 2023-92-1, 27 March 2023; and 2023-92-2, 18 April 2023