



Telecom Decision CRTC 2019-24

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CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE124A regarding the streamlining of the relief planning process

*The Commission **approves** consensus report CNRE124A by the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee’s Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN). In the report, the CSCN recommended streamlining the relief planning process for area codes that are set to exhaust by removing the concentrated and boundary extension overlay options as relief options that are required to be evaluated.*

Background

1. The Canadian Numbering Administrator administers telephone numbering resources in Canada. It conducts numbering resource utilization forecast (NRUF) activities for Canadian Numbering Plan Area (NPA) codes¹ on a yearly basis or as required in accordance with the Commission-approved Canadian Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast (C-NRUF) Guideline. The NRUF is used to identify NPAs that will exhaust within a specified relief planning window and that will require numbering relief. The purpose of numbering relief is to provide additional numbering resources in an NPA prior to the exhaust of the existing numbering resources.
2. NPA relief planning is the process of (i) identifying and assessing relief options – that is, approaches for providing relief to an exhausting NPA, (ii) recommending a relief option and relief date to the Commission for approval, and (iii) developing and executing a relief implementation plan to guide carriers, telecommunications service providers, and customers in the implementation of the relief NPA code in the exhausting NPA.
3. For each NPA requiring relief, the Commission issues a notice of consultation to establish an ad hoc relief planning committee (RPC) under the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC).
4. The Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline (the Relief Planning Guideline) identifies the relief methods that can be used to provide numbering resources when an

¹ An NPA is a discrete geographic area within the area served by the North American Numbering Plan to which one or more NPA codes (also referred to as area codes) may be assigned.

NPA is nearing exhaust. Typically, the RPC reviews these options and selects the most effective method.

5. Under the distributed overlay method, a new NPA is overlaid on
 - a single existing geographic NPA that is served by a single NPA code,
 - a single existing geographic NPA that is served by multiple existing overlaid NPA codes, or
 - multiple existing geographic NPAs served by multiple NPA codes within a province.
6. Under the concentrated overlay method, a new NPA code is overlaid on part of the NPA requiring relief. This method may be considered in situations where the majority of demand for new customers is concentrated in one section of the NPA.
7. Under the boundary extension overlay method, the boundary of one NPA that has spare capacity is extended to overlay part of or all of the coverage area of the exhausting NPA.

Consensus report CNRE124A

8. On 27 September 2018, the Commission received the following consensus report from the CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN):
 - *Streamline the Relief Planning Process*, 14 September 2018 (CNRE124A)
9. The consensus 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.
10. In the consensus report, the CSCN proposed revisions to the Relief Planning Guideline to streamline the relief planning process. Specifically, the CSCN proposed to make the distributed overlay method the default relief method, while allowing for the concentrated and boundary extension overlay options (hereafter, the alternative overlay methods) to be considered in exceptional circumstances.
11. The CSCN submitted that during the relief planning process, the RPC must examine several approaches for providing relief to an exhausting NPA. It noted that although the distributed overlay method is usually chosen, the industry must spend many hours and resources preparing and reviewing the various approaches. The CSCN also noted that all the RPCs that the Commission has established over the past ten years have recommended the distributed overlay method. Further, in each case, the Commission has approved the RPC’s recommendation.
12. The CSCN further submitted that networks and systems implementation, customer communications, administration, and future relief are generally more complex for the alternative overlay methods reviewed. It submitted that circumstances in which an

alternative overlay method would be preferred to a distributed overlay would be the exception rather than the rule.

13. Accordingly, the CSCN proposed that the alternative overlay methods be removed from the Relief Planning Guideline, which would streamline the relief planning process and save time and effort. The CSCN noted that in 2014, the split and boundary realignment methods were removed from the Relief Planning Guideline, and now would be proposed only when directed by the Commission.² It submitted that similarly, in exceptional cases where the Canadian Numbering Administrator or an RPC participant considers that an alternative overlay method would be appropriate for the specific NPA to be relieved, the method could be introduced in the Initial Planning Document or proposed by an RPC participant in a contribution to the RPC.
14. The CSCN also proposed to include Appendix I in the Relief Planning Guideline. Appendix I provides a template for creating a less complicated planning document called a Proposal for Relief of an Overlay NPA Complex (PROC),³ to be used in cases where relief of an NPA with more than one NPA code is required. It submitted that an Initial Planning Document would continue to be used for relief of a geographic NPA served by a single NPA code. The CSCN also proposed an updated Appendix H, which identifies the alternative relief methods that are not contained in the revised Relief Planning Guideline.
15. The CSCN recommended that the Commission approve the consensus report, including the associated updated Relief Planning Guideline and appendices H and I.

Commission's analysis and determinations

16. In *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus Report CNRE106A*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2014-603, 20 November 2014, the Commission approved a consensus report in which the CSCN recommended eliminating the consideration of the split and boundary realignment relief methods during relief planning. In that decision, the Commission acknowledged that evaluating the various options in accordance with the Relief Planning Guideline in effect at that time required significant work and effort. The Commission noted that the split method had not been used since 1999 and that the boundary realignment method had never been used. Further, the Commission noted that the CSCN's proposal would reduce the industry's workload by simplifying the relief planning process.
17. Accordingly, relief planning under the Relief Planning Guideline was limited to evaluation of the concentrated, boundary extension, and distributed overlay options

² Under the split method, the geographic area served by an existing NPA is divided, or split, into two or more unique geographic areas. Under the boundary realignment method, the boundary between the NPA that requires relief and an adjacent NPA is realigned such that some of the customers in the exhausting NPA have their telephone numbers changed to use the NPA code of the adjacent NPA.

³ An overlay NPA complex is an NPA that has multiple NPA codes and mandatory 10-digit dialing in place.

unless the Commission, for exceptional reasons, directed the RPC to also examine the split and/or boundary realignment methods.

18. The Commission notes that the distributed overlay method is the only method that has been used in the last 10 years, and considers that relief planning for overlay NPA complexes should not require consideration of the alternative overlay methods. The elimination of these methods will reduce the work of future RPCs. However, depending on the circumstances, the Commission could require, or telecommunications service providers could request, that the alternative overlay methods be evaluated in these cases.
19. With regard to the PROC, the Commission considers that the document reflects the CSCN's proposal to recommend evaluation of the alternative overlay methods in cases involving overlay NPA complexes.
20. With regard to the CSCN's proposal that the Initial Planning Document continue to be used, the Commission notes that this document requires evaluation of the distributed overlay, concentrated overlay, and boundary extension methods, as well as the impacts of introducing 10-digit dialing in areas where a new NPA code would be overlaid on an NPA with a single NPA code.⁴ The Commission considers that continued use of the Initial Planning Document is appropriate in these cases to ensure that the complexities of introducing 10-digit dialing are properly evaluated.
21. In light of all the above, the Commission **approves** consensus report CNRE124A, including the proposed updated Relief Planning Guideline and appendices H and I.

Secretary General

⁴ NPA 807, which covers a portion of Ontario, and NPA 867, which covers northern Canada, are the only two NPAs in Canada that currently have a single NPA code.