



Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-184

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Delay to relief implementation for area codes 289, 365, and 905 in southern Ontario

The Commission **denies** the request of the 289/365/905 relief planning committee for approval of its Task Identification Form Report #2, which proposed a delay to the implementation of a new distributed overlay area code in the region served by area codes 289, 365, and 905.

Background

1. In *Relief for area codes 289, 365, and 905 in southern Ontario*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2020-362, 28 October 2020, the Commission determined that relief for area codes 289, 365, and 905 in southern Ontario was to be provided by the implementation of the new distributed overlay area code 742,¹ effective 16 October 2021.
2. The Commission also approved a consensus report from the 289/365/905 relief planning committee, Task Identification Form (TIF) Report #1, which included a proposed planning document and a relief implementation plan. The date of relief implementation (the relief date) was based on the January 2020 relief numbering resource utilization forecast (R-NRUF), released in April 2020, which indicated that the above-noted area codes would exhaust by December 2022.
3. The [July 2020 R-NRUF](#), released on 17 September 2020, indicated that the projected exhaust date had moved out to March 2023.
4. However, the January 2021 R-NRUF, released on 16 April 2021, indicated that the projected exhaust date had advanced by six months, to September 2022.

Report

5. On 5 February 2021, the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) approved and forwarded to the Commission for its approval the 289/365/905 relief planning committee's TIF Report #2 (the report), dated 3 December 2020.

¹ When an area code or area code complex runs out of assignable central office codes, a new area code is added to the geographical area served by the area code(s) that are expected to exhaust. Because it provides telephone numbers to the same geographical area, it is called a distributed overlay area code.

6. The report was drafted on the basis of the projected exhaust date indicated in the July 2020 R-NRUF.
7. In the report, the 289/365/905 relief planning committee noted that the relief date was 17 months ahead of the projected exhaust date and recommended that the relief date be postponed to 14 May 2022, ten months ahead of the projected exhaust date.
8. The report included a revised relief implementation plan, which set out a revised relief implementation schedule based upon the proposed relief date. The plan included an updated consumer awareness program, an updated network implementation plan, and a list of the responsibilities of individual telecommunications service providers (TSPs).
9. The report also included, as part of the revised relief implementation schedule, revised timelines for activities such as TSPs' communications to their customers and to operators of other telecommunications services,² the submission of the 289/365/905 relief planning committee's progress reports to the Commission, and network testing.
10. The 289/365/905 relief planning committee and the CISC requested that the Commission approve the report, including the revised relief implementation plan and relief implementation schedule.
11. The request for approval of the report was submitted before the Canadian Numbering Administrator's release of the January 2021 R-NRUF results moved the projected exhaust date to September 2022.

Commission's analysis and determinations

12. Pursuant to section 8.19 of the [Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline](#) (the Guideline), the implementation date for a new area code should generally be 12 to 18 months prior to the projected exhaust date of the current area code(s). This lead time provides a buffer to ensure the availability of central office codes should there be an unexpected increase in demand prior to the projected exhaust date. It also provides adequate time to make the changes needed to accommodate the new area code.
13. At the time of the submission of the report, the relief date of 16 October 2021 was 17 months ahead of the most recent projected exhaust date. This fell within the acceptable time period for the introduction of a new area code, but it was nevertheless reasonable for the 289/365/905 relief planning committee to recommend that the lead time for implementation of the new area code be shortened to ten months because overlay area codes are already in use in the area served by area codes 289, 365 and 905 and the introduction of another overlay area code would be straightforward.

² These telecommunications services users include 9-1-1 public safety answering points, alarm companies, Internet service providers, and payphone providers.

14. However, the most recent projected exhaust date, as indicated in the January 2021 R-NRUF, is now September 2022. The relief date recommended in the report, 14 May 2022, is thus four months in advance of the currently projected exhaust date. According to section 9.1 of the Guideline,³ this would place area codes 289, 365, and 905 in a jeopardy condition, because relief would be implemented less than six months before the projected exhaust date.
15. Because the relief date recommended in the report would place area codes 289, 365, and 905 in an immediate jeopardy condition, the Commission considers that the report should not be approved, and that the current relief date, which is 11 months in advance of the currently projected exhaust date, should not be changed. In light of the above, the Commission **denies** the request of the 289/365/905 relief planning committee to approve the report, including the revised relief implementation plan and the revised relief implementation schedule, and confirms that the current relief date, 16 October 2021, remains unchanged.

Policy Directions

16. In accordance with subparagraph 1(b)(1) of the 2006 Policy Direction,⁴ the Commission considers that denying a change to the relief implementation date will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.⁵
17. In accordance with the 2019 Policy Direction,⁶ the Commission considers that its decision can promote competition, affordability, and consumer interests by ensuring an adequate supply of central office codes so that TSPs can continue to provide services and choice to consumers served by area codes 289, 365, and 905.

Secretary General

³ The note at the bottom of the table in section 9.1 of the Guideline reads, in part: “If this assignment restriction is not in place after the CRTC has approved the RIP, then a Jeopardy Condition should be declared when the PED is identified as being 6 or fewer months after the Relief Date.”

⁴ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

⁵ The cited policy objective is 7(f): to foster increased reliance on market forces for the provision of telecommunications services and to ensure that regulation, where required, is efficient and effective.

⁶ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives to Promote Competition, Affordability, Consumer Interests and Innovation*, SOR/2019-227, 17 June 2019