



Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-113

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Gatineau, 20 May 2025

Public record: 8621-C12-01/08

CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering report CNRE137B – Setting aside of three remaining reserved Canadian Geographic NPA codes for relief of exhausting NPA complexes

Summary

Telephone numbers are a finite resource and critical to our modern communications system. Due to the emergence of new telecommunications services in recent years (such as Internet of Things applications), and the continued increase in cellphone use, the demand for Canadian telephone numbers is increasing.

The Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN) is an expert committee that provides the Commission with advice on the management of Canada's telephone numbering resources. Further to this role, the CSCN has filed a report identifying three regions in Quebec and Ontario that will require additional area codes in the next five years. The CSCN recommends the Commission set aside new area codes for these three regions now, so that providers can begin to add the new codes to their systems.

The Commission approves the CSCN's report and directs the Canadian Numbering Administrator to set aside certain area codes for future use in three regions of Quebec and Ontario.

Background

Reservation of area codes for future area code relief

1. In 2010, the Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN) filed report [CNRE087A](#) – *Reservation of Future Canadian Geographic NPA Codes for relief of existing Canadian NPAs forecast to exhaust in the next 25-year timeframe*. In that report, the CSCN recommended that the Commission direct the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) to request the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) reserve¹ several Numbering Plan Area (NPA) codes (commonly called area codes) for future use in Canada. The CSCN noted several

¹ NANPA reserves NPA codes for Canada's use, the Commission, through the CNA, sets aside these NPAs for use in specific NPA complexes.

benefits to reserving future area codes at that time. Among other things, knowing which codes are being reserved ahead of time allows:

- telecommunications service providers and their customers to add the area codes to their systems gradually; and
 - the CNA to avoid assigning these codes to other areas, reducing the risk of dialing issues when the new area codes are introduced.
2. In *CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee consensus item – Reservation of area codes for future area code relief*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2010-784, 22 October 2010 (Telecom Decision 2010-784), the Commission expressed the view that setting aside area codes would ensure they are not used for other purposes. The Commission then directed the CNA to set aside area codes for future use when needed.

The report

3. On 30 October 2023, the Commission received, for its approval, CSCN Consensus Report [CNRE137B](#) – *Setting aside of 3 remaining reserved Canadian Geographic NPA Codes for relief of exhausting NPA complexes* (the Report).
4. The report was developed by the CSCN sub-group Task Information Form (TIF) 116, established specifically for the development of this report.
5. The CSCN reported that nearly all the area codes set aside through Telecom Decision 2010-784 are in use or are in the process of being put into use. Only three area codes remain unassigned and available for future use.
6. The CSCN also reported that there are three area code complexes that will soon need new area codes but for which new area codes have not been set aside or reserved. Therefore, the CSCN is of the view that these three remaining unassigned area codes should be set aside for these three complexes, as follows:

Proposed set-aside plan

Area code complex	Region	Current projected exhaust date	Proposed relief area code
367/418/581	Eastern Quebec	June 2027	273
343/613/753	Eastern Ontario	March 2029	871
226/382/519/548	Southwestern Ontario	June 2030	487

7. The CSCN chose the proposed area codes based on the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline, the current NPA Code Selection Tool,² and the goal of minimizing costs for upgrading legacy switching equipment.³
8. The CSCN recommends:
 - the Commission direct the CNA to set aside these three area codes for future relief in accordance with the table above; and
 - CISC close TIF 116 contingent on the approval of report CNRE137B.

Commission's analysis

9. Setting aside area codes provides telecommunications service providers early notice, which allows them to add new area codes to their systems while performing other maintenance and updates. This helps them reduce costs by combining tasks instead of handling area code changes separately.
10. By setting aside these area codes now, the Commission establishes the conditions needed for the CNA to begin planning new area codes when the current ones approach exhaust.
11. In light of the above, the Commission considers that setting aside these three area codes now for future use in the listed regions is reasonable, as evidenced by the logistical and cost-saving benefits resulting from previous area codes having been set aside in this manner.

Conclusion

12. In light of all of the above, the Commission approves report CNRE137B from the CSCN and directs the CNA to set aside the three remaining NPA codes as follows:
 - NPA 273 in NPA Complex 367/418/581;
 - NPA 871 in NPA Complex 343/613/753; and
 - NPA 487 in NPA Complex 226/382/519/548.
13. The closure of CISC working group TIFs being within the CISC's purview, does not require a Commission determination.

² The NPA Code Selection Tool is used in determining which of the NPA codes currently available for assignment in Canada are most suitable for relief of an exhausting NPA.

³ This is mainly a factor for the Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers who are required to implement additional switch software to support local dialing across NPA boundaries where the new NPA assignment conflicts with the equivalent CO Code in the neighbouring NPA.

Secretary General