



## Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-269

PDF version

Reference: 2025-15

Gatineau, 10 October 2025

*Public record: 8621-C12-01/08*

### Relief for area code complex 367/418/581 in Quebec

#### Summary

Telephone numbers are critical to our modern communications system. According to the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA), the region served by area codes 367, 418, and 581 in Quebec is in need of a new area code by 2027 to ensure Canadians continue to have access to this finite resource.

In Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-15, the Commission asked the CNA to chair an ad hoc committee to consider the introduction of new numbering resources within this region. In response, the CNA's ad hoc committee filed a report recommending the introduction of a new area code to increase the availability of telephone numbers in the region.

In this decision, the Commission approves the ad hoc committee's report and is implementing area code 273, effective 27 February 2027.

#### Introduction

1. In September 2024, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA)<sup>1</sup> advised the Commission that area code complex<sup>2</sup> 367/418/581 in the province of Quebec is in need of a new area code by August 2027 to ensure Canadians continue to have access to new telephone numbers as needed.

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<sup>1</sup> In making assignment decisions, the CNA follows regulatory directives and industry-developed guidelines. As necessary, it participates in and contributes to the technical requirements associated with the planning, administration, allocation, assignment, and use of North American Numbering Plan numbering resources. The CNA is not a policy-making entity.

<sup>2</sup> Due to an ever-increasing demand for telephone numbers in some areas, more than one area code is required for the same geographical area. These multiple area codes serving the same geographical area are referred to as area code complexes.

2. The Commission issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-15 on 20 January 2025, in which it established a CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC)<sup>3</sup> ad hoc relief planning committee (ad hoc committee) chaired by the CNA for planning a new numbering resource in the 367/418/581 area code complex. The ad hoc committee was to examine options and make recommendations for increasing phone number availability in the region.
3. Subsequently, the CNA issued a Proposal for Relief of an Overlay NPA [Numbering Plan Area] Complex (PROC) and, in February 2025, the ad hoc committee met to review the PROC and contributions on the planning document and relief implementation plan. This led to the filing of report 367/418/581RE01A (the report) with CISC in March 2025.

## **The report**

4. In the report, the ad hoc committee recommended that:
  - the relief method be a distributed overlay<sup>4</sup> area code on area code complex 367/418/581;
  - the new area code be 273; and
  - the implementation date for the new area code should be 27 February 2027 to provide carriers and customers with advanced notification and sufficient lead time for implementation in area code complex 367/418/581.
5. Along with the report, the ad hoc committee submitted planning documents, which included analyses of the various options considered for providing additional number resources and recommendations on how they should be implemented. The ad hoc committee also submitted a relief implementation plan, which included the detailed steps to be taken by all affected parties to implement a new area code.

## **Should the Commission approve the report?**

### **Relief method**

6. As set out in the [Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline](#) and approved by the Commission in Telecom Decision 2021-217, the only relief measure now considered

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<sup>3</sup> CISC is an organization established by the Commission to assist in developing information, procedures, and guidelines as may be required in various aspects of the Commission's regulatory activities within its jurisdiction.

<sup>4</sup> When an area code or area code complex runs out of assignable central office codes, a new area code is added to the geographic area served by the original area code(s). This new area code is referred to as an overlay on the original area code(s). When it provides telephone numbers to the same geographical area as the original area code(s), it is considered a distributed overlay area code.

in Canada is the distributed overlay method. This method does not require customers to change their telephone numbers, as other previous methods required.<sup>5</sup> The distributed overlay does not increase the number of separate areas for which future relief planning must be considered and thereby does not increase the administrative burden on the telecommunications industry.

7. In eastern Quebec, there are already two distributed overlay area codes in place over the original area code 418. The Commission considers the most logical method for providing access to new phone numbers is the addition of another distributed overlay area code.

### **Relief area codes**

8. In Telecom Decision 2025-113, the Commission directed the CNA to set aside area code 273 as the future area code for area code complex 367/418/581. The Commission therefore determines that area code 273 is to be used to add phone numbers in area code complex 367/418/581.

### **Implementation date**

9. As of the CNA's January 2025 numbering resource utilization forecast, the CNA projects that area code complex 367/418/581 will need a new area code by November 2027.
10. The NPA Relief Planning Guideline, as approved by the Commission in Telecom Decision 2021-217, sets out a six-months-to-exhaust lead time for the implementation of new area codes.
11. The ad hoc committee recommended that the new area code 273 should be activated by 27 February 2027, which is nine months before the projected exhaust date of November 2027. This additional lead time allows for volatility in the projected date so that if it were to advance by a few months, there would be no need to review the ad hoc committee's proposed relief implementation plans. This timing also provides telephone service providers and customers the necessary time to implement the new area code into their systems, databases and telecommunications equipment.
12. Accordingly, the Commission determines that area code 273, used as the new area code for area code complex 367/418/581, will take effect on **27 February 2027**.

### **Conclusion**

13. In light of all of the above, the Commission:

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<sup>5</sup> Previous methods included area code splits, area code boundary realignments, and concentrated overlay area codes.

- approves report 367/418/581RE01A, including the planning documents and relief implementation plans; and
- determines that area code 273, to be implemented as the new area code for area code complex 367/418/581 in Quebec, will take effect on **27 February 2027**.

Secretary General

### **Related documents**

- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering report CNRE137B – Setting aside of three remaining reserved Canadian Geographic NPA codes for relief of exhausting NPA complexes*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-113, 20 May 2025
- *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for relief planning for area codes 367, 418, and 581 in Québec*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-15, 20 January 2025
- *CISC Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering – Consensus report CNRE126A – Revised Appendix B, Canadian NPA Relief Planning Timeline, to the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-217, 8 July 2021