

## Area Code Overlay Information and FAQ's – 313/679 Area Geographic Area

### **Background**

- In 2001, the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) approved an all-services overlay of the existing 313 area code, to be implemented once the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) determines when the area codes will exhaust. (See: [Case U-12880](#)) The new area code provided by the NANPA would be 679.
- Due to telephone number policy changes at the federal level and numbering conservation efforts, as well as area code relief projects that took place in the early 2000s, relief planning for the 313 area code has been able to be delayed until now.
  - Based on telephone numbering assignments in the 313 area code, the NANPA projected that 313 would exhaust in the 3rd Quarter of 2025. As a result, NANPA filed a petition with the MPSC on November 16, 2022 in [Case: U-21337](#) in order to allow enough time for the new area code to be in service by the time 313 is projected to run out of new numbers. While area code relief efforts will continue as scheduled in 2025, the exhaust date of the 313 area code has been extended to the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2027, however this date could move again due to changes in demand.
- NANPA's November 2022 petition explains that many topics covered by the MPSC's 2001 order, including customer education, dialing plan best practices, and technical milestones, have changed considerably in the two decades since the MPSC first approved the plan, and the telecommunications industry requests that these requirements be brought up to date to current standards. Among requested changes:
  - The telecommunications industry proposes that the dialing plan implemented for local calls be 10-digits with 1+10 digits permissible at each service provider's discretion, which is described as an Industry Best Practice.
  - NANPA proposes a 13-month schedule for implementation, which will allow the 679 NPA to be implemented 6 months prior to exhaust.
  - NANPA proposes some additional customer educational and technical milestone changes to conform with industry best practices.
- NANPA projects overlaying the 679 area code over the existing 313 service area will provide relief for approximately 46 years.

## General Information About an Area Code Overlay

An area code overlay occurs when more than one area code serves the same geographic area. With an overlay, all current customers keep their area code and telephone number. Numbers from this new area code may be assigned to new telephone customers or those adding additional lines. Because two area codes reside in the same geography, all local calls must be dialed using the area code + the seven-digit telephone number (10-digits). (Some states require 1+10-digit dialing.)

### Attributes of an Overlay:

- An overlay will not require existing customers to change their area code. There is no need to revise stationery, business cards and advertising unless they contain only seven-digit phone numbers.
- An overlay will require customers to dial 10-digits (or 1+10 digits) for all local calls within the geographic area.
- Once the current area code reaches exhaust, numbers from the new area code will begin to be assigned, however numbers from the current area code will still be available for reassignment through standard industry practices. Providers will also continue to assign 313 numbers to customers if they have existing inventory.
- Calls to 3 digit numbers like 911, 211, 811, 711 will continue to be able to be dialed as they are now.

## Area Code Relief – Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is area code relief necessary?

In recent years, a combination of new technologies and increased demand for new devices among consumers has contributed to an increased demand for numbering resources. Due to telephone number policy changes at the federal level and numbering conservation efforts, as well as area code relief projects that took place in the early 2000s, relief planning for Michigan area codes has been able to be delayed until now. Most states throughout the country are experiencing the same issue and are undergoing area code relief efforts in order to alleviate the strain on existing numbering resources.

### How is a new area code introduced in an overlay?

An overlay area code is introduced in three steps. The steps are designed to guide consumers by familiarizing them with the new area code and dialing plan change that is required with an overlay.

- Formal 10-digit Permissive Dialing: During a determined formal permissive 10-digit dialing period, customers are encouraged to begin using the area code + the seven-digit number to place all calls within the area code, although calls will still complete if only the seven-digit number is dialed. During this time auto-dialing equipment, or other types of equipment that are programmed to complete calls using only 7-digit numbers will need to be reprogrammed to complete calls to 10-digit numbers. Examples include: life safety systems or medical monitoring devices, PBXs, fax machines, fire or burglar alarm and security systems or gates, speed dialers, mobile or other wireless phone contact lists, call forwarding settings, voicemail services and other similar functions.
- Mandatory 10-Digit Dialing: Mandatory 10-digit dialing begins at the end of the formal permissive dialing period. Callers must use the area code + the seven-digit number for all calls within the area code. Calls incorrectly dialed using only seven digits will be referred to a recording which will inform the calling party it is necessary to dial the area code + the seven-digit telephone number to complete the call. This recorded announcement will remain indefinitely.
- Introduction of New Overlay Area Code: Numbers in the overlay area code are introduced at the beginning or shortly after the mandatory 10-digit dialing begins, and the available numbers from the original area code have been exhausted.

### **How will an overlay and 10-digit dialing impact home and business telephone service?**

Customers currently in the impacted area code should begin dialing and making changes after permissive dialing begins in preparation for the scheduled mandatory dialing date.

*Both residential and business customers should:*

- Dial all calls using the area code plus the seven-digit number (10 digits).
- If you have equipment or services that are programmed to dial out using only 7-digits, it's important to reprogram to 10-digit dialing on all calls before the mandatory dialing date. Update any life safety systems or medical monitoring devices, PBXs, fax machines, fire or burglar alarm and security systems or gates, speed dialers, mobile or other wireless phone contact lists, call forwarding settings, voicemail services, and similar services to dial 10 digits for all calls.
- Update items such as stationery and checks to include 10-digit numbers.
- Notify family, friends and business associates about your 10-digit number.
- Teach children their 10-digit telephone number and how to dial home.
- Educate elderly relatives and friends on the need to dial 10-digits.

*Additionally, business customers should:*

- Update other sophisticated services and equipment such as message detail recording equipment, alternate route or least-cost routing systems, toll restriction, mobile telephone service, and alarm circuits.
- Include 10-digit numbers on all printed materials, such as stationery, checks, business cards, advertisements, promotional items, brochures, and catalogs.
- Inform employees and customers about 10-digit dialing, and request that they dial all calls by using 10-digits.
- Notify alarm service providers of 10-digit dialing requirement so alarm service records and equipment can be updated as needed.
- Test telephone equipment to determine if it can dial and accept 10-digit dialed calls. Questions regarding changes in telephone equipment should be directed to equipment vendors. Any updates or changes to equipment must be made prior to the scheduled mandatory dialing date.
- At least 30 days prior to the start of permissive dialing, a test number will be established. This will allow business customers to verify that their equipment can complete calls to the new area code. The test number will only be active for a specified time period.

### **Will the cost of calls change because of a new area code overlay?**

No, calls that were local before the introduction of the new area code will remain local calls. Local calling areas do not change when a new area code overlay is established.

**Who is responsible for costs incurred to update customer phone equipment, if necessary?**

10-digit dialing and area code modifications are the result of normal growth and innovation in the telecommunications industry and costs incurred for updating equipment are the responsibility of individual customers.

**Will I still be able to obtain a telephone number from the old area code?**

Telephone numbers that are no longer in use are routinely returned to the numbering pool for reassignment. Telephone companies that provide service in the area code may also continue to have numbers in their inventory for a period of time after the new area code is introduced. Once the area code reaches exhaust, however, those telephone companies may not be able to receive any brand new numbers from the NANPA.

**How are numbers added in this state?**

An area code (technically called a Numbering Plan Area Code, NPA Code,) serves a geographic area and consists of 792 available prefixes, each consisting of 10,000 numbers. A prefix (NXX) is the three-digit number that is between the area code and the 4-digit line number.

In the past, numbers were allocated to telecommunications service providers by prefix consisting of 10,000 numbers. As the 792 prefixes are allocated, the area code approaches exhaust. Exhaust, in turn, creates the need for an additional area code for that geographic area.

The telecommunications industry has implemented code optimization measures to reduce the rate of code exhaust and improve code utilization rates. These measures include thousands-block number pooling, utilization threshold requirements and rate center consolidations where possible. Telecommunications service providers request prefixes from the NANPA, or blocks of 1,000 numbers from the National Pooling Administrator, which is also administered by NANPA. NANPA assigns new prefixes, monitors the usage of prefixes within an area code and forecasts when an area code will most likely exhaust and a new area code will be required.

**What is the planning process to establish a new area code?**

The NANPA notifies the state regulatory commission and the telecommunication industry three (3) years in advance of when it is anticipated that a particular area code will run out of prefixes. The area code planning process begins with NANPA and the telecommunications industry group meeting to identify viable solutions. When developing and evaluating area code relief plans, the industry is required to follow regulations established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the state commissions, as well as the telecommunications industry guidelines cooperatively developed by industry representatives. The industry is also constrained to follow rate area boundaries. After feasible alternatives are developed, the industry strives to reach consensus on the best plan for the area as a whole.

The plan, with the industry's recommendation, is then submitted to the state commission. If the industry is unable to reach consensus on a relief plan, the planning results are submitted to the state commission. The state commission makes the final decision on all area code relief plans. If an area code split is approved, they decide which area will retain the existing area code or receives a new area code.

Further information regarding area code relief can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions Guide provided by the NANPA - [FAQs Area Code Relief \(nationalnanpa.com\)](https://www.nationalnanpa.com), or by contacting telecommunications provider or equipment vendor.