

Common Questions and Answers Regarding Area Code Changes

1. What happens if another area code is needed where I live?

- If another area code is needed, It will be implemented through either an area code split, or an overlay.

2. What is an area code split?

- Traditionally, area codes have been split to provide more prefixes for the telecommunications industry and its customers, thus creating smaller geographic areas. Area code splits create new area codes by splitting a geographical region in multiple ways.
- Only one area code is assigned to a particular geographical region. Some people will be able to retain the existing area code while others will have to change their area code to the newly assigned area code.

3. What is an area code overlay?

- An area code overlay is a form of area code change that typically adds a second area code to the same geographic region. Therefore, multiple area codes can co-exist within the same geographic region. People with telephone numbers within the exhausting area code will retain their current telephone number(s) and area code. Individuals that would like to have new or additional telephone numbers or telecommunications services may be given telephone numbers with the new overlaid area code.

4. Why is another area code needed?

- Carriers are allocated prefixes (i.e., the first three digits of a seven digit telephone number) with telephone numbers. Once an area code no longer has any whole prefixes it is considered to be at exhaust. Exhaust occurs, because the available telephone numbers in the existing area codes are limited, and cannot support the needed demand for telephone numbers in the long-term - and if there is no area code change made, then customers may have difficulty getting new telephone numbers.

5. How about giving cellular phones, faxes, ATM machines, and other non-geographical devices or services the new area code instead?

- This form of area code change is referred to as a technology-specific overlay (TSO).
- On three occasions, the CPUC has requested the FCC for authority to implement a form of a technology-specific overlay. In the first two instances, the CPUC requested that phone numbers from wireless services get a separate area code. However, the FCC has not acted on these CPUC requests.
- In September 2005, in response to the CPUC's third request for authority to implement a TSO, the FCC partially granted the CPUC's request. However, the FCC did not grant the CPUC authority to permanently maintain seven-digit dialing in the geographic region(s) where the TSO would be implemented. Moreover, the phone numbers associated with wireless services were excluded from the list of those phone numbers that would get a separate area code. The FCC's partial granting of the CPUC's request did not include

enough of the elements of the CPUC's proposal. As a result, the benefits of implementing the TSO the FCC authorized, did not outweigh the costs of doing so.

6. Will I be affected by an area code change?

- If you have a telephone number within an exhausting area code, you will be affected by an area code change regardless of the area code change option implemented.
- If an area code split is implemented then some individuals will have to change their area code to the new code. This depends on the rate center associated with the telephone number.
- If an area code overlay is implemented then individuals will be able to retain their current telephone number and area code, but will need to dial 1+ the area code and the telephone number for all calls.

7. What will the new area code be?

- The new area code will be selected by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator.

8. Who will get the new area code in a change?

- The CPUC does not decide in advance which region will receive the new area code if an area code split is implemented, and it weighs various factors in rendering such a decision.
- Those consumers who order new telephone numbers or services will most likely receive the new area code if the CPUC implements an area code overlay.

9. How will customer directory listings be impacted?

- The telecommunications industry, will be updating the directory listings in the white pages for all affected communities to identify the associated area code of a telephone number. Individual customers are responsible for any changes to listings appearing in other directories. Each customer is responsible for telephone numbers appearing in any display advertising.

10. When will telephone numbers with the new area code be available?

- Telephone numbers with the new area code will be available after the implementation of the area code change is completed.

11. Will the area code change be implemented immediately?

- No. Typically the area code relief process takes at least one year before the new area code is ready for implementation.

12. Will the way I dial my calls i.e., dialing procedure, change?

- No, if an area code split is implemented.
- Yes, if an area code overlay is implemented. Individuals must dial 1 + the area code and the telephone number for all calls. Even if you are calling your next door neighbor or within a house, you must dial 1 + the area code and the telephone number.

13. Why do I have to dial 1 + the area code and then the telephone number?

- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires dialing the area code + telephone number for all calls where an area code overlay exists. The FCC believes that this would maximize numbering resource optimization, minimize anti-competitive effects due to dialing disparities, and avoid customer confusion.
- The North American Numbering Plan Administrator no longer assigns new area codes that have a zero or a one in the middle digit. This was the indicator that allowed the switching network to identify an area code. Since the new area codes look similar to prefixes, the telecommunications service providers operating in California decided to use the "1" to identify that the following three digits dialed, represent the area code and not the prefix.

14. Will there be a change in how I dial emergency calls to 9-1-1?

- No. Individuals can still just dial only three digits to reach 9-1-1. No additional digits will be required to make emergency calls.

15. Will there be a change in how I dial other N-1-1 phone numbers?

- No. Individuals can still just dial only three digits to call N-1-1 phone numbers such as 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, and 711.

16. What can individuals do to prepare, if the CPUC decides to implement an area code split?

- Reprogram equipment or features i.e., automatic dial, speed-dial, call forwarding, modems for computer or internet dial-up access, etc., to dial the new area code (if you received the new code).
- Update items like stationary, checks, etc., to include the new area code (if you received the new code).
- Teach families, friends, etc., to dial the new area code (if you received the new code).
- When asking for someone else's number, remember to ask for the area code too.
- Check with your service provider if manual or over-the-air reprogramming of your cell phone is needed to account for the new area code (if you received the new code).

17. What can individuals do to prepare, if the CPUC decides to implement an area code overlay?

- Contact security or alarm vendors, to update dial-up numbers to avoid a break in security routines and contacts.
- Reprogram equipment or features i.e., automatic dial, speed-dial, call forwarding, modems for computer or internet dial-up access etc., programmed to dial seven digits to dial "1" + area code + telephone number.
- Update items like stationary, checks, etc., to include your area code + telephone number.
- Start thinking of dialing 1 + the area code + telephone number for all calls.
- Teach families, friends etc., to dial 1 + the area code + telephone number for all calls.
- Provide your area code + telephone number, not just the telephone number, as needed.
- When asking for someone else's number, remember to ask for the area code too.
- Remember that the previous area code and the new area code will co-exist within the same geographic region.

18. What can businesses do to prepare, if the CPUC decides to implement an area code overlay?

- Notify alarm service providers of the appropriate area code + telephone number(s) so alarm service records and equipment can be updated as needed.
- Ensure security door and gate systems are reprogrammed to dial "1" + area code + telephone number.
- Reprogram any call-forwarding, automatic-dial or speed-dial features to dial "1" + area code + telephone number.
- Test telephone equipment to determine if it can dial and receive "1" + area code + telephone number. Questions regarding changes in telephone equipment should be directed to telephone equipment vendors.
- Update items like stationary, checks, business cards, advertisements, promotional items, brochures, internet web pages, catalogs etc., to include your area code + telephone number.
- Teach employees, coworkers, customers etc., to dial the area code + telephone number for all calls.
- Provide your area code + telephone number, not just the telephone number.

19. Who is responsible for costs incurred to update customer phone equipment, advertising materials, etc., if necessary.

- Individual consumers are responsible for these costs.

20. Will the cost of a call differ because of the area code change?

- No.

21. Will calls between a telephone number with the new area code and a telephone number with the old area code be considered a long distance call?

- Calls that were local before the area code change will remain local calls. The distance, time of day, and length of a call determine the price of a call.

22. If I dial a "0" before the area code + telephone number, will there be special charges for that call?

- It is possible for there to be special charges if an individual dials a "0" before the area code + telephone number. There may be special operator-assisted rates or credit card rates for this type of a call. It depends on your telecommunications service provider. Check with your service provider for additional information.

For specific information on an area code currently engaged in relief activity, please see the link below.

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/hottopics/2telco/areacodes.htm>