

Get ready for 10-digit dialing

Starting in June, 10-digit local dialing will be standard practice across most of Ontario and Quebec

Starting June 17, 2006, people living or working in regions served by area codes 519 and 613 in Ontario, and 450, 514 and 819 in Quebec will have to dial 10 digits — the area code followed by the 7-digit phone number — for all local communications.

Why 10-digit dialing?

In recent years, North America has seen a dramatic increase in the demand for new phone numbers, due in part to the growing popularity of wireless communications devices and Internet services.

"Just ten or fifteen years ago, the typical Canadian business person would have a single phone line. Today, it is not uncommon for that same professional to have as many as two or three numbers. And the same trend can be observed among families — the result being a major increase in demand," said Johanne Lemay, telecommunications analyst and spokesperson for the Telecommunications Alliance, a grouping of Canada's major telecommunications companies. "The solution: 10-digit dialing. It paves the way for the addition of a new area code to a given region, thus enabling the creation of millions of new phone numbers."

Many regions across Canada and the U.S., including the Greater Toronto and Vancouver areas, have already introduced new area codes and made the successful transition to 10-digit local dialing. To all appearances, this dialing method will soon be the standard across North America.

New area codes added to the 519 and 514 regions

As part of the changes, new area code 226 will be added to the region served by the 519 area code in south-western Ontario and area code 438 will be added to the 514 region serving the Island of Montreal. These new area codes will be introduced starting in October 2006 and will coexist with the current codes.

Worried the new code coming to your region will change your phone number or split up your local calling area? Have no fear.

Rather than having to divide up a region, with the overlay method a new area code can simply be added to the same geographic area as the existing code —

Checklist

Use the following checklist to make sure your business is ready for 10-digit local dialing:

Reprogram telecommunications functions, systems and equipment to include the area code

- Speed-dial lists
- Telephone options and functions (e.g. call forwarding)
- Fax machines
- Modems and Internet connections
- Cellular phones and other wireless devices
- Security systems
- Private branch exchanges and voice messaging
- Auto-dial systems
- Database updates, etc.

Start providing your area code with your telephone numbers in all communications

- Notify your employees, customers, partners and suppliers

Update your communication tools and ensure your 10-digit telephone numbers appear on all administrative and marketing documents, including

- Brochures, catalogues
- Stationery, business cards, invoices
- Company directories
- Company vehicles and signs, etc.

South-western Ontario = 519 + 226

Montreal = 514 + 438

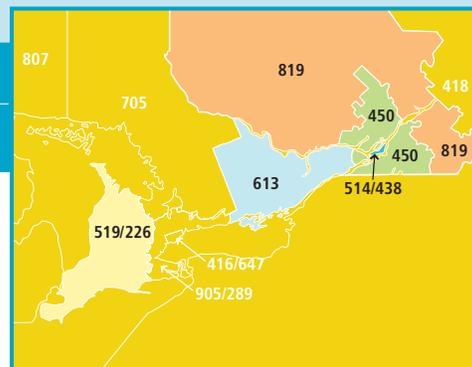
which means no impact on existing phone numbers. The new area code does not replace the existing one, nor is the region split in two. Simply put, the two area codes coexist, serving the same purpose within the exact same geographic territory.

The new area code added in each region will be introduced gradually and will be assigned only to new telephone numbers. Starting in the fall, telecommunications companies will allocate new phone numbers using either the new or existing area code, depending on availability, until all numbers in the existing area codes have been exhausted.

Get ready now

Businesses need to prepare for 10-digit dialing starting now. To ensure a seamless transition, all that is required is a little preparation and a change in habits. All necessary adjustments must be made before 10-digit dialing is introduced on June 17, 2006.

Between June and October 2006, there will be a four-month transition period during which communications using only seven digits will be connected, but only after a network announcement prompts callers to dial all 10 digits the next time. Businesses should be aware



that this message may disrupt data transmission (faxes, Internet, etc.).

"To avoid any inconveniences, we recommend that businesses program their communications equipment and adopt 10-digit dialing right away," said Ms. Lemay. "They should also check to make sure their private telecommunications systems and equipment are able to accommodate 10-digit dialing. They can contact their service provider for more information."

For answers to frequently asked question and information specific to your region, go to www.dial10.ca — the website of the Telecommunications Alliance, whose members include Bell, Rogers, TELUS, Fido, Télébec, Allstream and Vidéotron, as well as the telephone companies represented by the Ontario Telecommunications Association and the Association des Compagnies de téléphone du Québec.