



918/539 SCHEDULE AND FAQ's

After months of town hall meetings with the public, meetings with state and local officials, meetings with industry, media outreach and a consumer survey, on January 4, 2010 the Oklahoma Corporation Commission approved a plan to prevent so-called “number exhaust” in the region served by the 918 area code while at the same time allowing current residents, businesses, schools and local governments to keep their existing numbers.

Called an “overlay,” the plan will add another area code (539) to the entire existing 918 area code geographic area. There would be no change to existing numbers. Eventually, all new numbers in the area will get the new 539 area code and after a lengthy transition phase, all local calls would be 10 digits (the area code and the 7 digit number). There will be no change in local call boundaries, or to 9-1-1 or 2-1-1 services.

The first phase of the program begins on August 7, 2010. The following pages contain the schedule of the program, Frequently Asked Questions, and contact listings for more information.

SCHEDULE

- No change until August 7, 2010
- August 7, 2010 – “Permissive Calling Period” begins
 - o Customers will be able to complete a call using 7 digits or 10 digits (area code plus number)
 - o Runs for 7 months
- March 5, 2011 – “Permissive Calling Period” ends, 10 digit dialing will be required.
- April 1, 2011 – New 539 area code numbers made available
 - o Customers may still ask for and receive a 918 number if they are still available
- Fourth Quarter, 2012 – Predicted exhaust of 918 numbers
 - o NOTE: This is an estimate, and subject to change.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: If all local calls require an area code, will there be long distance charges?

A: No. There will be no change in what is a local call, regardless of its area code. The change in the area code does not change whether a call is local. For example, if you have a 918 number and call a 539 number that's located in an area that was part of the original local calling area, it will be still be a local call. Please note that for all local calls, you will NOT need to dial a "1" before the area code, and any call improperly dialed with a "1" is automatically blocked.

Q2: Do I have to use 10 digit dialing starting this August?

A: No. August 7, 2010 is the start of the "permissive" dialing period. You will be able to use 7 digits or 10 digits for local calls, but you should begin dialing 10 digits for local calls in order to become accustomed to the practice. However, if you dial only 7 digits for a local call during the permissive dialing period, your call will still go through.

Q3: How will I know when I will have to start using 10 digit dialing?

A: You should begin dialing 10 digits during the "permissive" dialing period (see question #2), but you won't be required to dial 10 digits until **March 5, 2011**. At that time, calls made using only 7 digits will not be completed, and you will hear a recording instructing you to hang up and dial again using the proper area code.

Q4: If 539 numbers won't be available until April 1, 2011, why does mandatory 10 digit dialing start almost a month before then?

A: This period is set aside to be sure the system is operating properly, and to give users more time to become accustomed to 10 digit dialing.

Q5: How will I know whether to use 539 or 918 for a particular number?

A: Local telephone listings will include the area code. If you use the wrong area code on a local number, a recording will inform you.

Q6: Will this be the first time 10 digit dialing has been required?

A: No. In recent years, the vast majority of area code changes in the U.S. have employed an overlay, with resulting 10-digit dialing. It is expected that eventually all local calls in the U.S. will require 10 digits.

Q7: Will I be able to request a 918 number in the future?

A: Yes. However, whether your request can be granted depends on whether there are 918 numbers available at the time of your request.

Q8: Why is it necessary to dial the area code + the seven digit number (10 digits) for overlays?

A: That's a requirement of the Federal Communications Commission. 10 digit dialing is a regulatory requirement established for an overlay area code by the FCC in its Second Report and Order (FCC 96-333) to mitigate any anti-competitive effects that would advantage incumbent providers and disadvantage new providers and their customers, and to ensure dialing equality between the two area codes.

This dialing requirement results from a concern that customers in the original area code and customers with the overlay area code would have different dialing arrangements for the same geographic area. Those in the original area code could reach a party in their same geographic area with a seven digit call, while those in the overlay area code would have to dial 10 digits to reach the same party.

Q9: Why is this change necessary? Why are we running out of numbers?

A: In recent years a combination of new technologies and increased demand for regular telephones in homes and offices, cellular and PCS phones, pagers, lines used for fax machines, modems, burglar alarms, ATM machines, internet access, and other uses have strained existing telephone number resources. Also, new local telephone service providers need telephone numbers in order to provide service to their customers. All of these factors have resulted in an increased demand for numbers in the 918 area code. As a result, telephone number shortages have occurred at what's called the *prefix* level. A *prefix* is the three-digit number that is between the area code and your 4-digit line number.

Q10: How does a new area code affect other services?

A: 911 Services will NOT be affected by the introduction of a new area code. Emergency calls will continue to be handled just as they are today.

411 Services will NOT be affected by the introduction of a new area code. Directory assistance calls will continue to be handled just as they are today. There is no change in the cost of a directory assistance call because of an area code change.

211 Services will NOT be affected. Calls to 211 will continue to be handled just as they are today.

Q11: Who decides when the supply of numbers will exhaust? Who chooses the numbers for the new area code?

A: The numbers for the 539 area code, and for all area codes in the U.S., are chosen by the North American Numbering Plan Administration (NANPA), which also forecasts when the supply of numbers will exhaust.

Q12: Why not simply assign a new area code to faxes / wireless services as a way to provide more numbers?

A: Perhaps the most common suggestion from the public facing an area code change is to create an area code that can be assigned to wireless services, fax machines, or other non-wire line, non-voice uses, e.g. credit card verification and Point of Sale. The reason we can't do that is because the federal government won't allow it. The FCC (Declaratory Ruling and Order, FCC Docket 95-19, IAD File No. 94-102, adopted January 12, 1995) has banned such a use of area codes. This Order specifically precludes area code plans that exclude a particular kind of telecommunications service from an area code or that segregate services and technologies into different area codes. The reasoning is that this prohibition is needed to protect new telecommunications services from discrimination or disadvantage. If a new area code were assigned to cellular services, for example, all calls between a cellular customer and a wire line customer would require 10 digits while a wire line-to-wire line call could be made with seven digits. Some would argue that this would favor wire line customers at the expense of cellular customers. Currently, with local number portability, wireline numbers are now being ported to wireless service providers and vice-versa. Therefore, there is a co-mingling between the technologies of numbers within the assigned blocks and codes of numbers that prevents them from being separated by area codes. Area code relief is done at the full prefix level and involves all numbers associated with each prefix.

Q13: How can I get more information on the background of this matter and the Commissioners' decision?

A: The Commission's Final Order contains all case details and history. It can be accessed at:

<http://imaging.occeweb.com/AP/Orders/OCC4206536.PDF>

More questions? Here is a list of contacts:

Main Commission number: 405-521-2211

OCC Consumer Services Division: 405-521-2331 (OKC area), 918-581-2869 (Tulsa area), or 1-800-522-8154 (statewide).

Email questions to: m.skinner@occemail.com or j.palmer@occemail.com or j.briley@occemail.com