



**CHANGES ARE COMING FOR THE 715
AREA CODE ON JULY 17, 2010!**

**ALL LOCAL CALLS MUST BE DIALED
WITH 10-DIGITS.**

(the area code and the 7-digit phone number)

In November 2008, the Public Service Commission (Commission) considered area code relief options for the 715 area code (Dockets 5-TN-100) and approved an ‘overlay.’ An overlay means that another area code – 534 – will start to be placed into use in that part of the state now served by the 715 area code. No customers will need to change their area code or telephone numbers, but all local calls will have to be dialed using 10 digits – the applicable area code and the 7-digit phone number.

Before making this overlay decision, the Commission explored options, took comments and conducted public hearings at 9 locations throughout the 715 area code.

As the Commissioners noted there is no option for area code relief that pleases everyone. Both methods of relief, either an overlay or a geographic split, have perceived “pros and cons.” However, for the 715 area code the Commission found that an overlay is the best alternative because it allows for the most efficient use of Wisconsin’s new numbering resources, it minimizes many potential implementation problems and it does not impose a financial burden on those customers forced to change their area code – which happens with a geographic split.

Facts about this change:

- The 534 area code will be added to (or overlaid on) the area currently served by the 715 area code in order to ensure a continuing supply of telephone numbers. Since both area codes will serve the same geographic region, residents making local calls within the 715/534 area will need to dial the correct area code and 7-digit telephone number (10-digit dialing).
- The need to dial with 10 digits is a requirement of the Federal Communications Commission, which has ultimate authority over all telephone numbering matters.

- To ease the transition to the new area code and the new dialing requirement, the Commission ordered a 9-month “permissive dialing” period. During the permissive dialing period (which began on October 17, 2009, and will end on July 17, 2010) customers were encouraged to use the 10-digit dialing procedure when making local calls. However, if the caller forgot and dialed only the 7-digit number, the call still completed.
- Beginning on **July 17, 2010**, all residents in the 715 area code *must* use the new 10-digit dialing procedure for all local calls. This applies to landline phones and cell phones. After this date, local calls made without the area code will not complete and a recording will instruct callers to hang up and dial again.
- The dialing procedure for long distance or operator assisted calls will not change.
- All customers with a 715 area code telephone number today **will keep** the 715 area code for that number. All customers will keep their current 7-digit telephone numbers. Phone numbers with the 534 area code may be assigned in some areas starting August 14, 2010.
- The price of calls, the coverage of local and long-distance calling areas and other rates and services will not change as a result of the area code overlay. What is now a local call will remain a local call regardless of the number of digits dialed.
- Residents will continue to dial three digits to reach 911. If 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 and 811 are currently available in the community, or from the customer’s provider, they will continue to dial just three digits for those uses.
- In addition to changing their local dialing procedure, residents in the 715 area code will need to reprogram any automatic dialing equipment and any other equipment that is currently programmed to dial a 7-digit local number. Examples of programmed equipment and features that may need reprogramming include: PBX systems, life safety systems, fax machines, Internet dial-up numbers, alarm and security systems, gates, speed dialers, call-forward settings, voice mail and similar services. These devices and services need to be reprogrammed with the new 10-digit dialing procedure prior to **July 17, 2010**. Notice of the need to make these changes has been given over the past several months.

REMEMBER – If you are in the 715 area, start dialing 10 digits for local calls on July 17!

For additional information regarding area code relief, please see the Commission’s website at: <http://psc.wi.gov/utilityInfo/tele/areaCodes/home-areaCodeRelief.htm>.