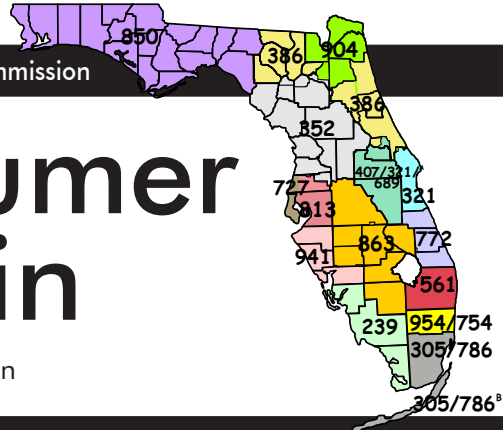




Florida Public Service Commission



# Consumer Bulletin

Braulio L. Baez, Chairman

## An Overview of How Area Codes Are Implemented

Some consumers may have noticed that the number of telephone area codes in Florida has increased significantly since the late 1980s. Prior to 1988, there were three area codes serving the entire state (305, 813 and 904). However, during the decade of the 1990s, steady population growth in Florida and an expanding use of technologies that rely on the use of telephone numbers contributed to a greater demand for new area codes.

In addition, another contributing factor to area code growth was the method used to distribute phone numbers. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the national regulatory agency for the telephone industry, previously required that every local phone company licensed to do business in a state be assigned phone numbers in blocks of 10,000 — whether they needed that many numbers or not. In order to address this problem, numbers are now being assigned in blocks of 1,000. This process, known as “number pooling,” has already been implemented for all of the state’s area codes. Currently, there are 17 area codes serving Florida.

### How Do We Know

#### When A New Area Code Is Needed?

When blocks of 1,000 numbers are assigned to phone companies, these blocks can be identified by what is known as an NXX code, which consists of the first three digits of a seven-digit local telephone number. Typically, there are 792 NXX codes (or 792,000 phone numbers) available for assignment to local telephone companies within an area code.

If nearly all of the NXX codes in an area code are assigned to telecommunications service providers, the area code is said to be “exhausted.” However, this does not mean that all the numbers within the NXX codes have been assigned to customers. When the numbers are nearing exhaustion, a new area code must be implemented. New area codes are usually implemented in one of two ways.

### What Are The Two Ways

#### To Implement New Area Codes?

First, area codes can be implemented through a “geographic split.” The geographic area using an existing area code is split into two parts, with some telephone customers continuing to be served through the existing area code while others change to a new area code.

Second, new area codes can also be implemented through an “area code overlay,” which occurs when the new area code covers the same geographic areas as an existing code, but with new customers in that area being assigned to the new (or overlay) area code. In some cases where an overlay occurs, a customer may have a different home and wireless area code number or a different area code than a neighbor across the street.

### How Do Geographic Splits And Area Code Overlays Affect The Way Local Calls Are Made?

When a geographic split takes place, local calls are still made by dialing seven digits. This applies to both the area that retains the existing area code as well as the area that receives the new area code.

However, in geographic areas covered by an area code overlay, the FCC has required 10-digit dialing between and within area codes. This means that every local call, even if it is a call to someone in the same area code as the caller, must be dialed using 10 digits. Regardless of which area code relief plan is chosen, consumer phone rates remain the same.

### Who Is Responsible For Choosing How A New Area Code Will Be Introduced?

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has the authority to resolve matters involving the implementation of new area codes in Florida, subject to certain specific federal regulations.

### Current Area Codes Serving Florida

The 17 area codes currently serving Florida are provided below along with their respective projected exhaust years:

Current Florida Area Codes	Projected Exhaust Year
239	2017
352	2015
386	2025
561	2015
727	2017
772	2026
813	2016
850	2008
863	2015
904	2018
941	2020
305/786	2014
305A (Keys)	2007
321A (Brevard Co.)	2021
407/321	2008
954/754	2022

### Useful Tips To Deal With Area Code Changes

If a new area code is about to be implemented in your area, you may want to keep the following suggestions in mind:

- 1 Be aware of “permissive” and “mandatory” dialing periods. During permissive periods, customers may dial both the old area code or the new area code to complete calls. During mandatory periods, only the new area code can be used to complete calls;
- 2 Reprogram modems, fax machines, automatic dialers, burglar alarms, security systems and any other equipment that requires the use of an area code;
- 3 Plan ahead when ordering stationery, checks and other supplies that list your area code; and
- 4 Do not forget to inform your relatives, friends and customers about the change in your area code.

If you have any questions about area codes or require additional information, you may contact the PSC’s Division of Regulatory Compliance and Consumer Assistance toll-free at **1-800-342-3552**, or by e-mail at [contact@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:contact@psc.state.fl.us). The PSC’s Web site is located at [www.floridapsc.com](http://www.floridapsc.com) and offers information on a range of utility topics. Please feel free to visit this Web site to review our many brochures and reports about the industries that we regulate.

**Braulio L. Baez is the Chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission. The PSC sets the rates regulated utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 37 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately owned.**