



Summary of CCGA CRTC Application and Reply Comments to broaden the assignment and use of the 811 Dialing Code

1. Protecting Canada's Critical Underground Infrastructure

- 1.1. Underground infrastructure, including energy infrastructure, is a strategic asset critical to supporting Canada's economy, health care, and the well being of people.
- 1.2. Greatest risk to Canada's underground infrastructure is people digging without information about the location of underground infrastructure. Consequences can be fatal and destructive.
- 1.3. Reducing the risk requires one nationwide three-digit telephone number for *Call Before You Dig*. Reducing the risk will help protect critical infrastructure, and support worker and public safety.

2. 811 Dialing Code Use Today

- 2.1. In the United States, 811 was introduced in 2007 nationwide for *Call Before You Dig*. As a result, by 2009, damages to underground infrastructure dropped by 40 per cent.
- 2.2. In 2005, 811 was assigned in Canada to non-emergency health services by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).
- 2.3. Today, almost seven years later, only four provinces (BC, NB, NS, QC) and one territory (YK) use 811 for the assigned Canadian purpose of non-emergency health services.
- 2.4. An N11 ("n one one") code is a special abbreviated dialing telephone number within the North American Numbering Plan, which allows public access to special services. N11 codes are a limited resource – only eight N11 codes exist, including 411 and 911.
- 2.5. Independent public survey results indicate overall awareness of 811 in the four provinces using 811 today is low (16 per cent); and, overall usage even lower (8 per cent). These results demonstrate a need to improve the public benefit of this limited N11 resource.

3. Application and Opportunity for Shared Use of the 811 Dialing Code

- 3.1. CCGA filed an application with the CRTC on July 15, 2011 requesting the assignment of 811 be broadened to include *Call Before You Dig* services in support of public safety.
- 3.2. Requesting shared use of 811 for both non-emergency health services and *Call before You Dig*.
- 3.3. CCGA wants to collaborate with provincial health ministries to boost usage of 811 and pay for public awareness of 811 for the health, safety, and security of all Canadians.

4. Support for Shared Use of the 811 Dialing Code

- 4.1. By the close of the CRTC comment period on September 16, 2011 over 210 interested parties responded with comments, including 200 letters of support from federal, provincial and territorial representatives, regulatory agencies such as the National Energy Board, associations such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and companies including John Deere and Royal & Sun Alliance. CRTC had never before received so many letters for an N11 application.
- 4.2. The Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety, sent a letter of support to the CCGA.
- 4.3. The Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources Canada publicly stated support for shared use of 811 in a speech in late September 2011.

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5. Concerns of Health Ministries and CCGA Reply Comments

Provincial health ministries raised concerns with the CCGA application for shared use of 811. The key concerns and CCGA reply comments are:

5.1. *Concern: Adding front-end routing to the 811 process would delay service to citizens.*

Reply: With shared use, 811 would still provide quick access to health care through a phone menu. Users would press 1 for non-emergency health services, and 2 for *Call Before You Dig*. Regular users could bypass the menu by pressing their known option.

Result: Continued efficient service to citizens.

5.2. *Concern: Shared use of 811 will increase confusion for the public regarding who to call for telehealth/telecare services.*

Reply: Currently, overall awareness is low and usage is even lower. CCGA will fund new public awareness campaigns to promote dual use of 811 (where applicable).

Results:

- In provinces currently using 811: Increase in public awareness and use of 811 will significantly enhance public health and safety.
- In provinces not currently using 811: New use 811 for both non-emergency medical services and *Call Before You Dig* where neither is currently available.

5.3. *Concern: Sharing [telecommunications] infrastructure would result in delays when changes to the system are required.*

Reply: Calls can be effectively and efficiently routed using standard and readily available telecommunications technology, and intelligent call switching technology exists to simplify upgrades. Also, sharing calling infrastructure has the potential to lead to lower total costs.

Result: Better use of public money, specifically health care dollars.