

NEWS

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Introducing Alabama's New 938 Area Code

In response to the near exhaustion of telephone numbers available for the 256 area code region, a second area code will be utilized beginning in July 2010. The second area code number will be 938.

Using more than one area code for telephone numbers within the same geographic boundaries is known as an area code "overlay". Area code overlays are employed in many surrounding states and in states throughout the nation. Overlays require that local calls be dialed using both the three-digit area code plus the seven-digit telephone number. This is referred to as "ten-digit dialing". One advantage of using two area codes within the same geographical region is that all telephone subscribers who currently have a telephone number that includes the 256 area code will retain that area code and number thus avoiding the cost and inconvenience of changing their area code.

The "ten-digit dialing" requirement will apply to all types of phone services within the existing 256 area code including wireless phones. Calls to 9-1-1, 4-1-1, and other N-1-1 calls will be dialed exactly as they are now. Calls that are local before the area code change will still be local calls after the new area code is assigned, even though all ten digits must be dialed. Calls that are long distance before the 938 area code overlay will remain long distance calls.

The use of both area code 256 and area code 938 within the same region will be implemented in preparatory steps. First, the "permissive dialing period" begins on November 7, 2009. During this period, all customers are encouraged to begin dialing ten-digits for all local calls. However, any calls that are dialed using only seven digits will still be completed. Second, the "mandatory ten-digit dialing period" will begin on June 5, 2010. At this point, the area code plus the seven-digit phone number must be dialed for local calls to be completed. Local calls dialed using only seven digits will result in a recorded message instructing the caller to hang up and dial the call again using all ten digits.

Important Dates

- November 7, 2009: Permissive Dialing Begins
- June 1, 2010: Mandatory Dialing Press Release
- June 5, 2010: Mandatory Dialing Begins
- July 10, 2010: First Code Activations for 938