

# 10-Digit Local Dialing Required for New 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Today across the United States, a toll-free hotline number is available which provides free and confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for those in emotional distress or suicidal crisis. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) was launched in 2005 and can currently be reached by dialing 1-800-273-8255 (TALK).

Last summer, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved 988 as a new three-digit number to be used nationwide to reach the Lifeline starting on July 16, 2022.<sup>1</sup> Beginning on that date, dialing 988 will route calls to the Lifeline. This dialing arrangement gives easy access to a potentially life-saving resource by designating a short, easy to remember, number.

## Will implementing the new three digit 988 code require any other dialing changes?

Yes. Placing local calls by dialing the usual seven digits will no longer be available in those area codes containing telephone numbers with a 988 prefix (for example 988-XXXX in a 7-digit telephone number).

In such area codes, all local calls will need to be dialed on a 10-digit basis, meaning the caller must dial the called party's full telephone number (the area code plus the seven digit local telephone number). Nationwide 82 area codes need to transition to 10-digit local dialing, which includes four area codes in Missouri: 314, 417, 660 and 816. The Missouri area codes of 573 and 636 are not affected and can still use 7-digit local dialing. The map, below, shows in blue the geographic area of the four area codes that will need to transition to 10-digit local dialing.

## When do consumers in the 314, 417, 660 and 816 area codes need to start dialing ten digits (area code + telephone number) for all local calls?

Local voice service providers have some flexibility in converting to 10-digit local dialing as long as certain deadlines are met. All voice service providers in these area codes must offer 10-digit local dialing no later than by April 24, 2021. Consumers will then have at least a six month permissive dialing period where local calls can be dialed on a seven or 10 digit basis. Voice service providers can then begin to eliminate 7-digit local dialing any time from October 24, 2021 through July 15, 2022. When 7-digit local dialing is eliminated, a caller dialing only seven digits will hear a recording stating their call cannot be completed as dialed and that they must hang up and dial again using the area code with the 7-digit telephone number.

### Ten-Digit Dialing Implementation Schedule

- 10-digit local dialing must be available to callers by April 24, 2021. Local calls can still be completed with 7-digit dialing.
- Telecommunications providers can begin eliminating 7-digit local dialing anytime between October 24, 2021 and July 15, 2022.
- 10-digit dialing required for local calls by no later than July 15, 2022.

## What other adjustments may be needed within Missouri's four area codes that will be eliminating 7-digit local dialing?

Any service programmed to complete local calls using only seven digits will need to be reprogrammed to complete local calls by using 10 digits. Such services can include medical alert devices and security systems but may also include:

- medical monitoring devices
- company PBX networks
- fax machines
- internet dial-up numbers
- fire alarms, security systems or gates
- speed dialers
- mobile contact lists
- call forwarding settings
- voicemail services

<sup>1</sup> Implementation of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018, WC Docket No. 18-336, Report and Order, FCC 20-100, July 17, 2020 available at: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-20-100A1.pdf>.

Reprogramming during the April 24, 2021 to October 23, 2021 time period will help avoid any interruption of service. Be sure to ensure your website, stationery, advertising materials, checks, contact information, personal or pet ID tags, and other such items include the area code.

### What is not affected by the transition to 10-digit dialing to accommodate the 988 Suicide Prevention Lifeline?

- Your telephone number, including your area code, will not change.
- The price of calls and coverage area will not change due to the change in dialing.
- Local calls will remain local regardless of the number of digits dialed.
- When dialing from a multi-line phone system (hotel, office building, etc.) continue to dial a prefix (such as 9) as required.
- You can still dial just three digits to reach 711 (relay services) and 911 (emergency services).
- Any 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, or 811 services available in your community can still be reached by dialing their three-digit code.
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached by dialing 1 800 273-8255 (TALK) or 988 once the 988 code is in effect.

### What role does the Missouri Public Service Commission have in the transition to 10-digit dialing?

The Missouri Public Service Commission has a minimal role in the transition to 10-digit dialing for 988. The FCC order approving the designation of

988 required the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) to develop, based on input from covered providers, an implementation schedule that will allow all covered providers to meet the transition deadline in an efficient manner.

Transitioning to 10-digit dialing involves both the technical work needed to implement mandatory 10-digit dialing by service providers as well

as educating consumers about the transition to 10-digit dialing. NANPA is responsible for ensuring this is completed. The Missouri Public Service Commission is working with NANPA and the industry to ensure the transition meets certain deadlines and consumers are adequately informed.

