

Area Code Overlay Approved for the South Carolina 843 Area Code

To ensure a continuing supply of telephone numbers, the new 854 area code will be added to the area served by 843. This is known as an area code overlay. **Get ready to change the way you dial your local calls!**

What is an area code overlay?

An overlay is the addition of another area code (854) to the same geographic region as an existing area code (843). **An overlay does not require customers to change their existing area code.**

Who will be affected?

The 843 area code generally covers the Coastal Counties and principally serves the communities of Charleston, Hilton Head Island, Myrtle Beach, and Florence. The new **854 area code** will serve the same geographic area currently served by the existing 843 area code.

What will be the new dialing procedure?

To complete local calls, the new dialing procedure requires callers to dial **area code + telephone number**. This means that all calls in the 843 area code that are currently dialed with seven digits will need to be dialed using ten digits, that is, the **area code + telephone number**. The same dialing procedure will apply to telephone numbers assigned to the new 854 area code.

When will the change begin?

Effective **March 14, 2015**, you should begin using the new dialing procedures whenever you place a call from the 843 area code. If you forget and dial just seven digits, your call will still be completed.

Beginning **September 19, 2015**, you must use the new dialing procedures, as described above for all calls. After this date, if you do not use the new dialing procedures, your calls will not be completed and a recording will instruct you to hang up and dial again.

Beginning **October 19, 2015**, new telephone lines or services may be assigned numbers using the new 854 area code.

What will you need to do?

In addition to changing your dialing procedures, all services, automatic dialing equipment, or other types of equipment that are programmed to dial a 7-digit number will need to be reprogrammed to use the new dialing procedure. Some examples are life safety systems or medical devices, PBXs, fax machines, Internet dial-up numbers, alarm and security systems or gates, speed dialers, mobile phone contact lists, call forwarding settings, voicemail services, and similar functions, etc. Be sure to check your website, business stationery, advertising materials, personal and business checks, contact information, and your personal or pet ID tags to ensure the area code is included.

What will remain the same?

- Your telephone number, including current area code, will not change.
- The price of a call, coverage area, or other rates and services will not change due to the overlay.
- What is a local call now will remain a local call regardless of the number of digits dialed.
- You will continue to dial 1+ area code + telephone number for all long distance calls.
- You can still dial just three digits to reach 911.
- If 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 or 811 are currently available in your community you will still dial these codes with just three digits.

Who may you contact with questions?

If you have any questions regarding information provided in this notice, please call HTC at 843-365-2154 or access www.htcinc.net/854-area-code for more information. You can also visit the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff's website at www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov for further information.

