

# Area Code Overlay Approved for the Virginia 540 Area Code

## *Attention: Alarm, Security, and Elevator Service/Equipment Providers*

To ensure a continuing supply of telephone numbers, the Virginia State Corporation Commission approved the addition of the new 826 area code to the geographic region served by the 540 area code. This process is known as an area code overlay.

### *What is an area code overlay?*

An overlay is the addition of another area code (826) to the same geographic region as an existing area code (540). An overlay does not require customers to change their existing area code but does require using a new dialing procedure to complete calls.

### *What will be the new dialing procedure?*

The new dialing procedure will require that all calls in the 540 area code that are currently dialed with seven digits will need to be dialed using **area code + telephone number**. The same dialing procedure will apply to telephone numbers that are assigned in the new 826 area code.



### *How does this affect providers of alarm and security services and equipment?*

As a result of the overlay, a new local dialing procedure requires callers to dial area code + telephone number.

**Alarm, security, and elevator services and equipment currently located in the 540 area code and programmed to dial only seven digits must be updated or reprogrammed to dial area code + telephone number for all calls in the 540 and 826 area codes.**

**Reprogramming of alarm equipment should be completed by May 14, 2022.**

To verify that equipment can complete calls to the new 826 area code, a special test number, 826-990-TEST (8378), will be in service beginning March 14, 2022 and will remain active through July 14, 2022.

### *When will the change begin?*

Effective **November 13, 2021**, the new dialing procedure should be used whenever a call is placed from the 540 area code. If the caller forgets and dials just seven digits, the call will still be completed.

Beginning **May 14, 2022**, the new dialing procedure must be used, as described above. On and after this date, if callers do not use the new dialing procedure, calls will not complete. A recording will instruct the caller to hang up and dial again including the area code.

Beginning **June 14, 2022**, new telephone lines or services may be assigned numbers with the new 826 area code. Anyone with a telephone number that has an 826 area code must dial the area code + telephone number or the call will not complete.

### *What will remain the same?*

- 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.
- Emergency services can still dial just three digits to reach 911.
- If 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 or 811 are currently available in your community, these calls may still be dialed using just three digits.

### *Who may you contact with questions?*

Customers with questions regarding the dialing procedure change should be directed to their local service provider, or they can contact the Virginia State Corporation Commission at <https://www.scc.virginia.gov>.

Sincerely,

Co-Chairs for the VA 540/826 Area Code Industry Team:

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