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## **LOCAL CALLS WILL REQUIRE AREA CODE DUE TO NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE ROLLOUT**

*Area code must be dialed for all calls in Montana starting Oct. 24, 2021.*

HELENA, Montana — On July 16, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) approved the designation of 988 as the new, nationwide, 3-digit abbreviated code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The 988 hotline will provide a phone number for Americans in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors.

Some area codes, like the 406 area code in Montana, currently allow 7-digit dialing to complete a local phone call. As a result of FCC Order 20-100, area codes that allow 7-digit dialing and already have the 988 prefix assigned as a working number must move to mandatory 10-digit dialing (406 area code plus the 7-digit phone number) for local calls by Oct. 24, 2021. Montana is one of 37 states and 83 area codes that will be impacted.

The North American Numbering Plan Administrator has worked with industry providers to develop an implementation plan for impacted area codes to transition to 10-digit dialing. Beginning April 24, 2021, customers should use 10-digit dialing to complete a telephone call. During this period, a call attempted with 7-digit dialing will still be completed; however, 10-digit dialing will be permissible and encouraged for practice. Beginning Oct. 24, 2021, 10-digit dialing will become mandatory. All calls in Montana, including local calls, will not be completed unless the 406 area code is dialed with the 7-digit telephone number.

In addition to manual dialing on a telephone, all services that use automated dialing equipment will be impacted and will need to be programmed to include 10-digit dialing. This includes, but is not limited to: fire alarm systems, security systems, life-saving systems, medical monitoring devices, mobile/wireless contact lists, call forward settings, and all other automated dialing systems.

Existing numbers will not change (other than requiring the area code for dialing), and what is currently considered a local call will remain local regardless of the number of digits dialed. Three-digit dialing services, such as the 911 emergency number, will continue to work as a three-digit number with no need to dial an area code.

The 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline will be available beginning July 16, 2022. Prior to that date, customers may continue to use 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) to reach the Lifeline for suicide prevention and emergency mental health counseling.

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