

Mandatory 10-Digit Dialing in Florida 850 Area Code Starts in Less than a Year

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE, FL (August 17, 2020) - Within the next year, all residential and business consumers throughout the Florida panhandle will need to make changes in their telephone dialing patterns.

Beginning February 20, 2021 all local calls made within the Florida 850 Area Code will have to be placed using the 10-digit telephone number (area code + the 7-digit telephone number). Calls that are currently local will continue to be local, even though 10-digit dialing will be required.

A six-month grace period will begin on August 22, 2020 to give consumers adequate time to adjust to the changes. During that period, local calls can be made with either 7 or 10 digits.

To ensure a continuing supply of telephone numbers, the new 448 area code will be added. This is known as an area code overlay.

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) ordered an area code overlay for the 850 Area Code in Florida on November 5, 2019. **An overlay does not require customers to change their existing area code.**

Beginning March 20, 2021, new telephone lines or services may be assigned numbers using the new 448 area code.

The most important facts for consumers to know about the upcoming 850/448 area code overlay are:

- Your current telephone number, including current area code, will not change.
- If you seek new phone service after March 20, 2021, you may be assigned a phone number with the 448 area code.
- You will need to dial area code + telephone number for all local calls.
- You will continue to dial 1 + area code + telephone number for all long distance calls.
- What is a local call now will remain a local call.
- The price of a call, coverage area, or other rates and services will not change due to the overlay.
- You can still dial just three digits to reach 911. You can also dial three digits to reach 211 and 811, as well as 311 and 511, where available.



Please remember to identify your telephone number as a 10-digit number (Area Code + 7-digit telephone number), and include the area code when giving the number to friends, family, business associates and customers, etc.

Customers should ensure all services, automatic dialing equipment, applications, software, or other types of equipment recognize the new 448 area code as a valid area code. Examples include life-safety systems, fax machines, Internet dial-up numbers, alarm and security systems, gates, ankle monitors, speed dialers, mobile phone contact lists, call forwarding settings, voicemail services, and similar functions. Be sure to check your business stationery, advertising materials, personal checks, and your personal or pet ID tags to ensure the area code is included in your telephone number.



Important safety and security equipment, such as medical alert devices, and alarm and security systems must be programmed to use 10-digit dialing. Many systems operate on 10-digit dialing by default but some older equipment may still use 7 digits. Please contact your medical alert or security provider if you are not sure whether your equipment needs to be reprogrammed to accommodate the upcoming change to 10-digit local dialing. Any needed reprogramming of alarm and home security equipment should be done between August 20, 2020 and February 20, 2021.

Remember that all local calls must be programmed using 10-digits and you need to add '1' for all long distance calls.

For additional information, please visit the PSC website at <http://www.floridapsc.com/> or contact your local telephone service provider.