

Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) and Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) News Release

REMINDER: 10-Digit Dialing in Indiana's 219 & 574 Area Codes Starts Tomorrow

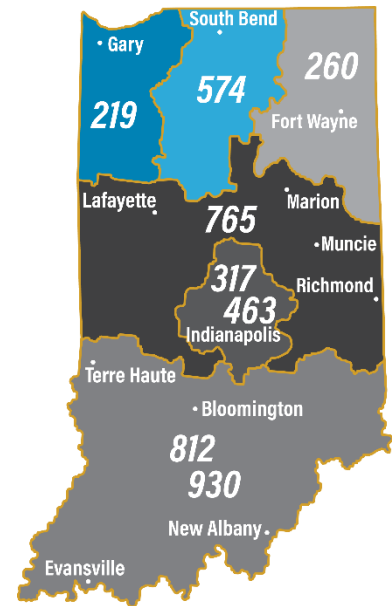
Six-Month Transition Period to Help Consumers Prepare

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS (April 23, 2021) – Beginning tomorrow, Saturday, Apr. 24, 2021, everyone in northern Indiana's 219 and 574 telephone area codes is encouraged to start using 10 digits, rather than seven, to make local phone calls. (For example, callers should start dialing "219-555-5555" or "574-555-5555" instead of "555-5555.") This will help ease into the upcoming transition to mandatory 10-digit dialing for local calls within the 219 and 574 area codes.

Local calls made with seven digits will still work until Oct. 24, 2021, to allow everyone ample time to adjust to the new dialing pattern and to make any required system changes before 10-digit dialing becomes mandatory for local calls.

The change to 10-digit dialing is necessary to accommodate the national "988" National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, as designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). All telecommunications providers in the United States are required to implement the three-digit 9-8-8 dialing code for the hotline by July 16, 2022. Under the FCC order, 10-digit dialing must be in place before then for any area code with a "988" prefix.



Timeframe and Guidance for the 219/574 Area

Effective tomorrow, **Apr. 24, 2021**, you should start using 10 digits whenever you place a local call from the 219 or 574 area code (dialing the area code followed by the number's remaining digits). If you forget and dial just seven digits (through Oct. 24, 2021), your call will still be completed.

Starting on **Oct. 24, 2021**, you must use 10-digit dialing for all local phone calls. After this date, if you do not use 10 digits, your call will not be completed and a recording will instruct you to hang up and dial again.

Beginning **July 16, 2022**, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline will be reachable by calling the three-digit 9-8-8 code. The lifeline can be reached before and after that date at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

The most important facts for residential consumers and businesses in these area codes to know are:

- Your telephone number, including current area code, will not change.
- You will need to dial area code + telephone number (a total of 10 digits) for all local calls in the 219 and 574 areas.
- You will continue to dial 1 + area code + telephone number (a total of 11 digits) for all long-distance calls.
- Calls that are local now will remain local.
- 10-digit dialing for local calls will not change the price of a call, your coverage area, or other rates and services.
- You can still dial three digits to reach 911 for emergency services.
- You can continue to dial three digits to dial 211 (social services), 411 (directory assistance), 711 (telecommunications relay service), or 811 (call to request utility locate before you dig).
- You should start including the area code together with your seven-digit local telephone numbers when providing numbers to others.
- You should make sure that all preprogrammed numbers for local calls are set to include the area code. Examples include life safety systems, medical monitoring services, PBXs, fax machines, Internet dial-up numbers, alarm and security systems, gates, speed dialers, mobile/wireless phone contact lists, call forwarding settings, voicemail services, and similar functions.
- You should check your website, stationery, advertising materials, personal and business checks, personal or pet ID tags and microchips, and other items to ensure that the phone number includes the area code.

Any safety and security equipment, including medical alert devices and alarm systems, must be programmed for mandatory 10-digit local dialing unless the calls are already directed to toll-free or long-distance telephone numbers. If you are not sure whether your equipment needs to be reprogrammed, contact your medical alert or security provider. All necessary reprogramming must be completed before Oct. 24, 2021. To avoid last-minute issues, consumers are strongly encouraged to address any needed changes as soon as possible after Apr. 24, 2021, when the six-month transition period begins.

Specific area codes in 35 states, including all four of Indiana's neighboring states, are implementing 10-digit dialing to accommodate the 988 Lifeline.

Mandatory 10-digit dialing has been in place for several years in Indiana's 317 and 812 area codes; it was implemented to accommodate the addition of new "overlay" area codes due to shrinking number supplies.

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The **Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC)** represents Indiana consumer interests before state and federal bodies that regulate utilities. As a state agency, the OUCC's mission is to represent all Indiana consumers to ensure quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education, and creative problem solving.

The **Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC)** is an administrative agency that hears evidence in cases filed before it and makes decisions based on the evidence presented in those cases. The Commission is required by state statute to be impartial and make decisions in the public interest to ensure regulated utilities provide safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates.