



Alliance for Telecommunications
Industry Solutions



Industry Numbering
Committee

A forum of the Carrier Liaison Committee

1200 G Street NW
Suite 500
Washington DC 20005
www.atis.org

VERTICAL SERVICE CODE ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

These guidelines are reissued in connection with the resolution to INC Issue 129.

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VERTICAL SERVICE CODE ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides guidelines for the assignment of Vertical Service Codes (VSC) for which standardization or consistency is desired across all industry sectors in the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). For the purposes of these guidelines, VSCs are customer-dialed codes in the *XX or *2XX dialing format for touch tone and the 11XX or 112XX dialing format for rotary phones. They are used to provide customer access to features and services (e.g. call forwarding, automatic callback, etc.) provided by network service providers such as local exchange carriers, interexchange carriers, Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) etc. For example, Call Forwarding is activated by dialing *72 or 1172.

VSCs are assigned to features or services to enable consistent accessibility throughout the PSTN. The purpose of common/standard VSCs is to minimize customer confusion and provide a standard service access approach for features and services within multiple individual networks (multi-network applications).

VSCs may be required and assigned for use across and/or among two or more networks on an inter-network basis (inter-network applications), where multiple networks must act upon a VSC in a consistent manner on a given call. Such assignments are to be made using the same VSC resource, but will be identified separately from multi-network applications. It is not the intent of these Guidelines to allocate any specific range of VSCs for exclusive inter-network or multi-network use.

These guidelines do not address VSCs used for single network applications (intra-network applications) within individual networks. Such proprietary usage is at the sole discretion and determination of the individual network.

2.0 ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1 These guidelines address VSC assignments for PSTN features or services in multi-network and inter-network applications in the *XX or *2XX format or any other industry agreed format as agreed to at the ICCF.
- 2.2 It may be necessary at some point in time to expand the supply of VSCs in order to avoid exhaust of the *XX resource. VSC expansion plans will be treated separately and are not included in these assignment guidelines. To facilitate expansion planning, the *XX resource codes *2X and *3X should not be assigned

unless the Industry, at the INC , agrees on an expansion plan which negates such a restriction. *1X will be assigned only after all other *XX codes (other than *2X and *3X) have been assigned.

- 2.3** Network providers assigned VSCs under the terms of these guidelines will not act upon an end-user dialed VSC passed to an interconnecting network either before or after call answer unless agreed upon through individual business arrangements.
- 2.4** Inconsistency currently exists in the use of VSCs for specific features or services. These guidelines do not address or resolve this situation, but should be considered an attempt at standardizing future assignments to the extent possible or desirable. Therefore, the assignment of a VSC by NANPA for a particular service or feature should not be considered assurance the assigned code can be used without conflict anywhere in the NANP (North American Numbering Plan) area.
- 2.5** PSTN providers will have the option of using VSCs assigned according to these guidelines and in doing so will be responsible for making any necessary changes or modification to switches or dialing-instructions to accommodate code usage.
- 2.6** Assignments of this resource do not confer exclusive use of an assigned VSC upon the assignee, as any network/service provider may use any code on an intra-network, multi-network, or inter-network basis without an official NANPA assignment.
- 2.7** The same VSC may be assigned for both a multi-network and inter-network application. It is recognized that the use of a given code for both a multi-network and inter-network application may result in conflicts, and it is the responsibility of the Requester to be aware of that.

3.0 ASSIGNMENT PRINCIPLES

- 3.1** NANP resources, including those covered in these guidelines, are collectively managed by the North American telecommunications industry with oversight of the North American federal regulatory authorities.

The NANP resources are considered a public resource and are not owned by the assignees. Consequently, the resources cannot be sold, brokered, bartered, or leased by the assignee for a free or other consideration.

If a resource is sold, brokered, bartered, or leased for a fee, the resource is subject to reclamation by the Administrator.

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- 3.2** From a local switching system perspective the scope of these guidelines will address VSC assignment for POTS features or services only, although use of the assigned codes in other environments, e.g., centrex or CPE/PBX is not precluded or prohibited.
- 3.3** VSCs will be assigned for features and services that have identical characteristics in multiple networks (i.e., available to a significant portion of the public) and have the potential for a high level of public interest or provide consistency in the use of assignments.
- 3.4** Any interested industry party may apply for assignment of a VSC under these guidelines. Codes will be assigned in a timely, impartial and fair manner.
- 3.5** In the assignment of VSCs, an attempt will be made to achieve maximum consistency of assignment for the same feature or service across the industry (e.g., IC, LEC, CMRS etc.) in circumstances where there is broad regional or national interest in a feature or service, recognizing this will not be possible in all circumstances.
- 3.6** VSCs are a finite resource that should be utilized in the most efficient and effective manner by those applicants requesting codes. Applicants for VSCs may be requested to provide technical or other information describing the need for a VSC to determine if a new code assignment is warranted and if a multi-network or inter-network resource is appropriate.
- 3.7** Information that is submitted by applicants in request of VSC assignment shall be kept to a minimum, shall be uniform for all applicants, and on request shall be treated as proprietary and adequately safeguarded. (See Section 4)
- 3.8** There will be no reservation of codes, i.e., assignments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis. Entities assigned VSCs are expected to implement the proposed VSC based service within a 6-month period from the date of assignment, or voluntarily return the code to the assignment pool.
- 3.9** Codes will be assigned from the available pool of unassigned numbers. Every attempt will be made to match a code assignment with a specific code request.
- 3.10** For a period of 3 years following Final Closure of INC Issue #061-August 2, 1996, in order to preserve 2-digit VSCs for networks that have not completed the transition to 3-digit codes, NANPA will initially request all applicants for VSCs to take a 2XX code. 2-digit VSCs will be assigned for services/ features which could be offered by networks transitioning to expansion. Thereafter there will be no differentiation in assignments.

- 3.11** A block of VSC's, from *94 to *99, has been reserved for local assignments and may be used at the discretion of any service provider. Assignment of VSC's in accordance with these guidelines will not be made in this range, or in similar local assignment ranges that are established in the future.

4.0 CRITERIA FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF VERTICAL SERVICE CODES

The assignment criteria in the following sections shall be used by the code administrator(s) in reviewing a Vertical Service Code Assignment request from a Network provider:

- 4.1** To obtain a Vertical Service Code, the Network Service Providers must certify that the service need is immediate and is either multi-network in nature within the NANP area or requires an inter-network assignment in order to implement the desired service.
- 4.1.1** Applicants for Vertical Service Code assignment will certify (see 4.1.2) that the feature/service is planned for use in at least two operating telephone companies or interexchange carrier networks or CMRS networks, other networks or combinations thereof, or for a common application across or involving more than one network.
- 4.1.2** Applicants for Vertical Service Code Assignment shall provide evidence that the service/feature will be provided within a reasonable period of time (i.e., 6 months.) Evidence requirements are satisfied by any of the following: proposed tariff filings, vendor provided feature/service descriptions, requirements documents (e.g., FSD's, TR's, etc.), or similar documentation.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CODE ADMINISTRATOR(S)

The code administrator(s) shall:

- 5.1** Provide copies of the Vertical Service code assignment guidelines when requested by applicants.
- 5.2** Review the documentation and determine if the code request is justified based on conditions set forth in these guidelines. In cases where a code application is denied, provide specific reasons to the applicant in writing with instructions on how and where to appeal the decision. (See Section 7.0 - APPEALS)
- 5.3** The code administrator will discuss with the requester to determine and assign a code from the appropriate resource pool (i.e., inter-network vs multi-network) and

determine, jointly with the requester, if an existing assignment satisfies the requesters need.

- 5.4** The code administrator will send written confirmation of the Vertical Service Code Assignment within 10 working days after the codes are assigned. The length of time required for the allocation process is dependent on several factors, however, it is expected that it will normally take 5 to 10 days from the date that all relevant information has been received. In addition, the code administrator will notify Bellcore to publish the assigned code and service provider identification information in the Local Exchange Routing Guide (LERG).
- 5.5** Publish quarterly information in the LERG that includes a listing of the most current standard multi-network and inter-network VSC assignments.
- 5.6** Consult with the INC to identify and develop industry recommendations related to the assignment and administration of VSCs and modification of these guidelines.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CODE APPLICANTS AND HOLDERS

Network providers applying for the assignment of a Vertical Service Code will:

- 6.1** Apply to the appropriate code administrator, in writing, providing all necessary information requested by the code administrator as specified in these guidelines.
- 6.2** Network providers interested in obtaining a Vertical Service Code Assignment should forward a written request to:

Director - NANP Administration
1133 15th Street, NW
12th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-756-5796
FAX: 202-887-0331
Web Site: www.nanpa.com

- 6.3** Written requests should include the exact corporate name and address, contact name and telephone number, the date each code is planned to be activated. Network providers should also include a service description, or other appropriate information which facilitates the VSC assignment and its identification in the LERG VSC assignment log, etc.

7.0 APPEALS

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- 7.1 In the event a code request is not provided to the satisfaction of the requester, an appeal of the administrator's actions may be taken to the INC for further review.
- 7.2 This appeal process does not preclude the right of any entity to take this matter to the appropriate legal and/or regulatory authorities for consideration and relief.

8.0 MAINTENANCE OF THESE GUIDELINES

It may be necessary to modify these assignment guidelines periodically to meet changing circumstances. The INC will be the industry group responsible for reviewing and concurring on any modifications to these guidelines.

9.0 GLOSSARY

INC - (Industry Numbering Committee). A standing committee of the Industry Carriers Compatibility Forum (ICCF). INC was formed to provide an open forum to address and resolve industry-wide issues associated with the planning, administration, allocation, assignment and use of numbering resources and related dialing considerations for public telecommunications within the North American Numbering Plan area.

Inter-network application (VSC) - A Vertical Service Code used to provide access to a feature or service that requires multiple individual networks to act upon the code in a consistent manner on a given call. The code must have the same meaning to more than one public switched telephone network on a single call. For example, a call originates from a LEC network, is delivered to an interexchange carrier, and is terminated on another network. An inter-network VSC dialed by the originating caller would be understood by each network involved with the call and acted upon within an individual network accordingly.

Intra-network application (VSC) - A vertical Service Code used to access a feature or service within an individual network providers network. The use of this code is internal to a particular network. It does not require a standard assignment, nor is it dependent on a standardized assignment process.

Multi-network application (VSC) - A Vertical Service Code used to provide access to a feature or service that is common across more than one network. Multiple networks use the same code to access the same service. (There is no interaction between networks.) This allows for consistent accessibility throughout the PSTN of a feature or service. For example, Call Forwarding is a multi-network application since it is a service that is provided by several local exchange carrier providers.

NANPA - North American Numbering Plan Administration

NANP area - Consists of the United States, Canada Bermuda and the 16 Caribbean administrations currently within NPA Code 809.

POTS - Plain Old Telephone Service is a term used to refer to lines connected to local switching system that have basic service capability. Such lines are not identified within a closed user group such as centrex or connected to Customer Premises Equipment, i.e., PBX.

PSTN - Public Switched Telephone Network the switched network that enables full and mutual access between public users via E.164 numbers. It is an integrated system of transmission and facilities, signaling processors, and associated operational support systems that are shared by customers.