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Mandatory 10-Digit Dialing Begins in August for 518 Area Code — New 838 Area Code Will Take Effect September 2017 —

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today announced that beginning August 19, 2017, residential, business and wireless consumers within the existing 518 area code in eastern upstate New York will have to dial 10 digits when making a telephone call. The additional dialing is required as a result of the introduction of the new 838 area code which will formally take effect on September 19, 2017.

The creation of the new 838 area code allows telephone companies to accommodate the increasing need for telephone numbers in northeastern New York, and also addresses predicted demand for new telephone numbers, all pointing to a thriving telecommunications market in New York.

To ensure a continuing supply of telephone numbers in the eastern upstate portion of New York, the Commission in September 2016 approved an area code overlay for the area served by 518. The new area code will be superimposed over the same geographical area as the existing 518 area code. The 518 area code is located within all or part of 17 counties: Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Dutchess, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saint Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington.

The area code overlay requires consumers to dial 10 digits (area code + 7 digit local telephone number) in the 518/838 area or 1+10 digits for calls to other area code regions. To allow consumers time to adjust to the new dialing pattern, a permissive dialing period has been in place since March 18, 2017. However, beginning August 19, 2017, the mandatory dialing period begins, when all calls within and between 518/838 must be placed using the 10-digit telephone number (518 or 838 plus the 7-digit local telephone number). Under the mandatory dialing scheme calls to other area codes must also continue to be dialed as 1+10 digits.

The most important facts that consumers and businesses need to know about the upcoming 838 area code overlay are:

- Current telephone numbers, including current area code, will not change;
- Beginning August 19, 2017, all calls within and between 518/838 must be dialed with the area code plus the 7-digit local telephone number (“ten-digit dialing”);
- Consumers will continue to dial 1+ area code + telephone number for all calls to other area codes;
- What is a local call now will continue to remain a local call;

- The price of a call, and the price of other telephone services, will not change due to the new overlay area code;
- Calls to reach 911 Emergency Service will remain three digits; and
- If 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 or 811 services are currently available in the community, consumers will still dial these codes with just three digits.

Customers should identify their telephone number as a 10-digit number (area code + 7-digit local telephone number) when giving the number to friends, family, business associates and business customers, etc.

Customers should ensure that all services, automatic dialing equipment, applications, software, or other types of equipment recognize the new 838 area code as a valid area code. Some examples are: life safety systems, fax machines, Internet dial-up numbers, alarm and security systems, gates, speed dialers, mobile phone contact lists, call forwarding settings, voicemail services, and similar functions. Business stationery, advertising materials, personal checks, and personal or pet ID tags should include the area code. All calls within the 518/838 area must be programmed to dial using 10-digits and the digit prefix "1" must be included for all calls to other area codes.

The Commission's decision in this proceeding, may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 16-C-0297 in the input box labeled "Search by Case Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release. For more information, you may also visit your service provider's website.