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Montreal Business Phone Number: 514/438, VoIP and CRTC Rules

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514, 438 and 263: what the Montreal area codes mean

Montreal has three area codes covering the same territory. The Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) explains that an [area code overlay](#) "occurs when more than one NPA code serves the same geographic area" (NPA, or numbering plan area, is the technical name for an area code). Existing customers keep their numbers, new numbers come from the new code, and local calls between the codes need ten digits.

For Montreal, the sequence was:

- **514** was the original code for the urban area of Montreal.
- **438** was added as a distributed overlay. The CNA's [Planning Letter PL-341](#) set mandatory ten-digit local dialling from 28 October 2006, with the new 438 codes not activated before 11 November 2006. It defines the area as the Île-Perrot, Pointe-Claire, Ste-Geneviève, Roxboro, Lachine and Montréal exchanges, which is essentially the Island of Montreal plus Île-Perrot.
- **263** now serves the same exchanges. The CNA's [Southern Québec area code map](#) labels the Montreal zone "263/438/514", and its [central office code listing for NPA 263](#) shows 263 blocks in service in all six of those exchanges, with the first assignments dated May 2022. The CRTC introduced 263 as a distributed overlay [effective 22 October 2022](#) (Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-364).

What this means for a business:

1. A 514, 438 or 263 number is equally "Montreal". Callers dial ten digits for all of them anyway.
2. You usually cannot pick the area code. Providers hand out numbers from the blocks they hold, so you may be offered a 438 or 263 number rather than a 514.
3. The South Shore, Laval and North Shore are on a different overlay (354/450/579 on the [same CNA map](#)). A Longueuil number is not a Montreal number.

The CNA assigns [central office codes](#) (the three digits after the area code) to carriers but holds no list of individual numbers and has no role in the Do Not Call List. Your number always comes from a provider.

This article is educational and is not legal advice.

Do you need a local number?

A local number is not a legal requirement. People choose one for practical reasons:

- **Recognition.** Montreal clients see a local call.
- **Separation.** A business line keeps clients off your personal mobile.
- **Continuity.** A number you control follows the business when you move or change providers.
- **Remote founders.** Someone launching a Montreal company from Toronto or abroad can hold a 514/438/263 number and forward it wherever they are, often alongside a Montreal [business address](#).

Your options, described generically

Option	How it works	Points to check
Traditional landline from a carrier	A line tied to a fixed address, delivered over copper, fibre or cable	Installation at a physical address; 9-1-1 location tied to that address
Business mobile plan	A mobile number in a Montreal exchange	Personal and business use can blur; easy to port later
Fixed VoIP (internet phone at one address)	Calls carried over your internet connection to a phone or adapter at a registered address	Depends on power and internet; 9-1-1 level tied to the registered address
Nomadic VoIP or softphone app	Same number usable on a laptop or app from anywhere with internet	9-1-1 may not know where you are; you may have to state your location
Virtual or forwarding number	A Montreal number that rings through to another phone or app, often with menus and voicemail	Who holds the number; whether it can be ported out; any 9-1-1 support at all

Prices vary widely and are not listed here; compare written terms. The CRTC's 2005 VoIP decision distinguished [fixed](#), [nomadic](#) and ["foreign exchange"](#) VoIP, the last being a number from another city (its example: a customer in Ottawa with a Halifax local number). A founder in Toronto with a 514 number is in the same position.

How VoIP numbers are assigned and ported

A provider offering Montreal numbers holds central office codes in the Montreal exchanges or works with a carrier that does. Each number belongs to one exchange, which is why some providers can only offer Laval or Toronto numbers.

Local number portability lets you keep the number when you switch providers. Wireless portability arrived in 2007: the CRTC required carriers to let customers [switch to any service provider in the province, wireline or wireless, and keep their phone number](#), with port-outs by 14 March 2007. On 1 February 2008, in [Telecom Decision CRTC 2008-11](#), the CRTC confirmed that VoIP providers must port out numbers "assigned from both inside and outside of their operating territory" to other VoIP providers, local exchange carriers or wireless

providers, and that the rule applies equally to primary and secondary numbers. Porting *in* a number from outside the new provider's territory is at that VoIP provider's discretion, so a 514 number held by a Toronto-based VoIP service can always leave, but not every provider will accept it.

Porting in practice:

1. Ask the new provider to confirm that your number is portable to them. They need to serve that exchange.
2. Have the exact account name, service address and account number from your current bill ready; the new provider will ask for them and they must match the old account.
3. Let the new provider submit the request. Keep the old service active until they confirm the port is complete.
4. Test inbound calls, text messages (if you use them) and voicemail on the new service the same day.
5. Then close the old account and check the final invoice.

Porting out is a regulatory obligation, but contracts can still carry early-termination fees, so read what yours says before signing.

9-1-1 and VoIP: limits you must understand

The CRTC set the VoIP emergency-call rules in 2005:

- **Fixed VoIP** providers must offer the [same level of 9-1-1 service as the incumbent phone company](#) in that area, which is Enhanced or Basic 9-1-1.
- **Nomadic and foreign exchange VoIP** providers had to provide an [interim service "comparable to Basic 9-1-1"](#).
- Customers must be told about the limitations before service begins and give ["express acknowledgement"](#) that they understand them.

The difference matters. [Enhanced 9-1-1 automatically sends the customer's location](#) to the emergency centre; with Basic 9-1-1, the call reaches a central call centre and the caller must state where they are before help is sent.

In October 2005 the CRTC detailed how providers must notify customers: through [marketing material, service agreements, terms of service, starter kits, installation software and telephone-set stickers](#), in [Telecom Decision CRTC 2005-61](#), and again to existing customers [at least once per 12-month period](#). These [Telecom Decision CRTC 2005-21](#) and [2005-61](#) obligations still frame what your provider must tell you; its 9-1-1 notice is where it describes the level it actually delivers.

Habits for an office or team:

- Register the correct street address, suite and floor with the provider, and update it the day you move.
- Make sure staff on softphones know they may have to state their address.
- Keep at least one mobile or landline available in the office for emergencies.

Calling customers: the Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules

Once you start calling prospects, the CRTC's Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules apply. The National Do Not Call List (DNCL) operator describes them as three sets of rules: the Telemarketing Rules, the Automatic Dialing-Announcing Device (ADAD) Rules and the National DNCL Rules. Every telemarketer must follow the Telemarketing Rules and the ADAD Rules, even when making calls that are exempt from the DNCL Rules.

Not every unsolicited call is telemarketing. The operator lists product recalls, appointment reminders, payment or collection calls, public service announcements and pure market research or polling as non-telemarketing calls that do not follow the DNCL Rules but may still be subject to the ADAD Rules. If you plan automated reminder calls, read the ADAD Rules first.

The DNCL is operated by Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton Consulting Inc. under contract with the CRTC, and the rules are enforced by the CRTC. The full text is the CRTC's consolidated Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules.

Under Part III (the Telemarketing Rules), as of October 2026:

- **Calling hours.** Telemarketing calls are allowed only from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on weekdays and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, in the time zone of the person called. Where provincial legislation governing an activity sets stricter hours, those apply to calls made for that activity.
- **Caller ID.** You must display the originating number, or another number where you can be reached.
- **Identification.** Say who is calling and for which business at the start of the call, and on request give a local or toll-free number and a name with a mailing or email address for questions and do-not-call requests. If that number goes to voicemail, calls must be returned within three business days.
- **Predictive diallers.** Abandoned calls may not exceed 5% of calls in any calendar month, with monthly records kept for three years.

The National Do Not Call List in practice

Consumers can register a home, mobile, fax or VoIP number for free, and telemarketers have 31 days from registration to stop calling. A registered number stays on the list permanently.

What an organization must do:

- **Register.** Organizations on whose behalf telemarketing is done must register with the operator, and even if all your calls are exempt, you must still register. New registrants go through an identity check with Dun & Bradstreet and may need a D-U-N-S number first.
- **Subscribe and scrub.** Organizations making non-exempt calls must subscribe, pay fees and check their calling lists; calling a number registered for more than 31 days is prohibited.
- **Do not share.** A subscription cannot be shared with another company, an affiliate or association members; a third-party list-scrubbing service may access it on your behalf.

Fees as listed in the operator's telemarketer FAQ as of October 2026 (download subscriptions are sold for 1, 3, 6 or 12 months; the 1-month and annual prices are shown):

Subscription	1 month	Annual
Download, one area code	\$290	\$3,218
Download, all area codes	\$6,112	\$62,166
Query by number	\$0.50 per number, up to 100 per session	—

Illustrative example. A two-person renovation firm buys a list of 300 Montreal homeowner numbers for a one-month calling campaign. Querying all 300 numbers costs $300 \times \$0.50 = \$150$ at the October 2026 rate. Downloading the 514, 438 and 263 lists for one month would cost $3 \times \$290 = \$870$. It must also register, keep an internal list and identify itself on every call.

Exemptions: business-to-business and existing relationships

The National DNCL Rules do not apply to telemarketing calls made to businesses, including calls to a personal number also used for business, and business numbers are not to be registered on the list. A firm that only calls other businesses does not scrub against the DNCL, but the Telemarketing Rules, ADAD Rules and internal-list duties still apply.

Calls made by or for registered charities, political parties, riding associations and candidates, survey takers and newspapers seeking subscriptions are also exempt.

An **existing business relationship** exempts the call when the consumer, with your organization, has bought, leased or rented a product or service in the last 18 months; has a written contract still in effect or expired within the last 18 months; or made an inquiry or application within the last six months. Record the date of each purchase, contract and inquiry.

Even on exempt calls, you must identify at the start of the call the person or organization on whose behalf it is made.

Internal do-not-call lists

Every telemarketer and client of a telemarketer keeps its own list, and it applies to exempt calls too. When a consumer asks not to be called, you must add their name and number within 14 days and keep them there for three years and 14 days from the request. If an agency calls for you, it has to make sure your list is updated within the same 14 days.

A shared spreadsheet recording the name, number and request date is enough for a small team, if everyone checks it before calling.

Penalties and compliance habits

Under section 72.01 of the Telecommunications Act, each contravention of the CRTC's unsolicited telecommunications rules is a violation carrying an administrative monetary penalty of up to \$1,500 for an individual and up to \$15,000 for a corporation (as of October 2026). Penalties are per violation.

Habits that keep a small team out of trouble:

- Keep DNCL registration, subscription receipts and scrub dates in one folder. Agencies must keep clients' registration and subscription records [for three years](#); doing the same is sensible.
- Scrub consumer lists within the 31-day window before each campaign.
- Schedule consumer calls inside 9:00-21:30 on weekdays and 10:00-18:00 on weekends.
- Write a short call script that opens with the business name.
- Log every "don't call me" request the same day.

Texts and email are a separate regime. A promotional SMS or email to a prospect falls under Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL), which has its own consent and unsubscribe rules. See our guide to [CASL consent for email, SMS and LinkedIn](#) before you send bulk texts from your new number.

Setup checklist for a small business

1. **Decide what the number is for:** inbound only, outbound sales, or both.
2. **Pick the type:** mobile, landline, fixed VoIP, softphone or forwarding number.
3. **Ask each provider in writing:** which Montreal exchanges and area codes they can offer, whether they will port in your existing number, what 9-1-1 level they provide and how you update the address.
4. **Read the 9-1-1 notice and acknowledge it;** register the exact office address.
5. **Port, don't replace:** if you already have a number customers know, port it, and keep the old service until the port is confirmed.
6. **Publish the number consistently:** website, invoices, email signatures and online business listings.
7. **Before calling consumers:** register with the National DNCL operator, buy the subscription or query access you need, and scrub.
8. **Set up the internal list** and the 14-day update routine.
9. **Before texting or emailing prospects:** check CASL consent.
10. **If you work remotely,** make sure your address and number tell the same story; our overview of [virtual office rules in Canada](#) explains what an address can and cannot be used for.

Founders who want a physical Montreal presence to go with their local number sometimes pair it with a business address, such as those offered at 2727 Coworking on the Lachine Canal in Griffintown.

Sources

- [FAQ](#) (Canadian Numbering Administrator)
- [Planning Letter PL-341: NPA 438 to Overlay NPA 514](#) (Canadian Numbering Administrator, via NANPA)
- [Canadian Area Code Maps](#) (Canadian Numbering Administrator)
- [CO Code Status for NPA 263](#) (Canadian Numbering Administrator)
- [CRTC decision on 9-1-1 emergency services for VoIP service providers](#) (Canada.ca news archive, April 2005)
- [CRTC issues specific customer notification requirements for local VoIP service providers regarding 9-1-1 service](#) (Canada.ca news archive, October 2005)

- CRTC extends the benefits of number portability to wireless consumers (Canada.ca news archive, December 2005)
- Telecom Decision CRTC 2008-11: Review of local number portability for VoIP services (CRTC, 1 February 2008)
- Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-364: Relief for area codes 438 and 514 (CRTC, 1 November 2021)
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- Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules (CRTC)
- National Do Not Call List (CRTC / National DNCL Operator)
- Who can still call you (National DNCL)
- Exemptions (National DNCL)
- Frequently asked questions for consumers (National DNCL)
- Frequently asked questions for telemarketers (National DNCL)
- Telecommunications Act, section 72.01 (Justice Laws Website)

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

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Website: <https://2727coworking.com>

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