

ITU-T

TELECOMMUNICATION
STANDARDIZATION SECTOR
OF ITU

E.164
Supplement 5
(11/2009)

SERIES E: OVERALL NETWORK OPERATION,
TELEPHONE SERVICE, SERVICE OPERATION AND
HUMAN FACTORS

International operation – Numbering plan of the
international telephone service

The international public telecommunication
numbering plan

**Supplement 5: Guidance with regard to the
selection of numbers for helplines for children**

Recommendation ITU-T E.164 (2005) –
Supplement 5

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Recommendation ITU-T E.164

The international public telecommunication numbering plan

Supplement 5

Guidance with regard to the selection of numbers for helplines for children

Summary

Supplement 5 to Recommendation ITU-T E.164 reviews and examines the idea of harmonizing an approach to the selection of national numbers on a global basis. National Administrations are invited to consider such global harmonization of numbers associated with helplines, specifically those helplines that are aimed at providing assistance for children.

Source

Supplement 5 to Recommendation ITU-T E.164 was agreed on 24 November 2009 by ITU-T Study Group 2 (2009-2012).

FOREWORD

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency in the field of telecommunications, information and communication technologies (ICTs). The ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) is a permanent organ of ITU. ITU-T is responsible for studying technical, operating and tariff questions and issuing Recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), which meets every four years, establishes the topics for study by the ITU-T study groups which, in turn, produce Recommendations on these topics.

The approval of ITU-T Recommendations is covered by the procedure laid down in WTSA Resolution 1.

In some areas of information technology which fall within ITU-T's purview, the necessary standards are prepared on a collaborative basis with ISO and IEC.

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Introduction

1 National telephone networks and systems have developed over different time-scales and at different rates. National numbering plans may be similar but each has its own national implementation. Some national numbering plans will have fixed number lengths, others may be variable and the dialling requirements for local and long-distance calls to the same number may vary.

2 The creation of what is now the ITU-T E.164 country code allocation of a specific code to each country or territory has enabled the creation of international numbers that are unique and unambiguous.

3 However, there have been moves to create a degree of harmonization of national dialling and numbering for specific purposes. With the increasing number of travellers, both for business and pleasure, it was acknowledged that there would be service and operational benefits if visitors to a country could use the telephone system of the visited country with the same ease as that of their home country. This would facilitate making international calls back to the visitor's home country. To achieve this, it was agreed to recommend '00' as the dialling prefix to be used for international calls. This does not have any impact on the national numbering plan.

4 More recently, an appeal was made on humanitarian grounds for consideration to be given to creating a harmonization of the national numbers used to alert, law enforcement, medical and rescue services of emergency situations. The proposal was not to attempt to standardize on one number globally but rather to suggest that Administrations might consider implementing a second number to facilitate the idea that one of the two numbers would apply in most countries of the world. See [ITU-T E.161.1], Guidelines to select Emergency Number for public telecommunications networks.

5 At the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis in 2005, it was recorded in paragraph 92 that, "**We encourage countries, and all other interested parties, to make available** child helplines, taking into account the need for mobilization of appropriate resources. For this purpose, easy-to-remember numbers, accessible from all phones and free of charge, should be made available."

6 During the discussions, the idea evolved into a more complex request that countries not only consider establishing helplines for children, but also consider the idea of achieving global harmonization of a national number for such helplines. ITU has been asked to consider if there are ways of achieving such a goal.

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Guidance with regard to the selection of numbers for helplines for children

1 Scope

This supplement addresses the issues relating to helplines accessed via the telephone service. It reviews the service, operational and commercial aspects. It considers specifically the issue of helplines for and about children. It invites National Administrations to consider mechanisms that might be available to arrive at a globally harmonized national short number for such helplines. To that extent, it further invites Administrations that are in the process of selecting a short telephone number for child helplines for the first time to consider the use of 116 111. It invites Administrations that already have numbers for child helplines to consider the assignment of 116 111 as a second and alternative number. These short numbers should be accessible from all phones and free of charge to the calling party.

2 References

- [ITU-T E.161.1] Recommendation ITU-T E.161.1 (2008), *Guidelines to select Emergency Number for public telecommunications networks.*
- [ITU-T E.164] Recommendation ITU-T E.164 (2005), *The international public telecommunication numbering plan.*
- [ITU-T E.190] Recommendation ITU-T E.190 (1997), *Principles and responsibilities for the management, assignment and reclamation of E-series international numbering resources.*

3 Definitions

This supplement defines the following terms:

3.1 child helpline: A service accessed via the public telephone service, which is free of charge to the caller, provided specifically for or on behalf of children and which offers some form of intervention by way of counselling, and/or referral to other agencies or designated national institutions.

3.2 helpline: A service accessed via the public telephone service provided for or on behalf of a community of interest that offers some form of intervention by way of counselling, and/or referral to other agencies or designated national institutions.

4 Abbreviations and acronyms

This supplement uses the following abbreviations and acronyms:

CHL Child HelpLines

PSAP Public Service Answering Point

5 Helplines

5.1 In countries where helplines exist, there are probably at least two categories based on the cost of making a telephone call to the helpline facility. The helpline is established to give assistance and information to telephone callers on a specific topic. The national conventions and regulations for telephone helplines have been established as have the associated national numbering resources. Some of these numbering resources may be in the free phone area, whilst others may be from the premium rate area.

5.2 In general, helplines are not in the same category as public service answering points (PSAPs) associated with law enforcement, medical and rapid response rescue services. The latter are predominantly national government resources. They are often accessed by short numbers such as 112, 911 and 999. Calls are free of charge to the calling party and often special operational mechanisms pertain, such as the call remaining established until ceased by the called party, the PSAP.

6 Child helplines

6.1 This supplement is concerned with helplines in the social responsibility arena dedicated to children and children's issues, that is, "Child HelpLines" (CHL). In some countries, such helplines are run by charitable, non governmental agencies, whilst others are provided by the designated national institutions. Telephone calls to such agencies are often free of charge to the calling party but may use a normally offered free phone service from one or more national telephone companies. In order to protect the identity of the calling party, i.e., the child, such numbers often have special security and confidentiality features. In some countries, child helplines are assigned numbers in a similar category to the PSAP for the emergency services, and these are generally free of charge to the calling party.

7 Numbering examples

7.1 In the countries of the European Union and the CEPT, the issue of child helplines has been considered at length. It has been agreed that the number combination 116 111 and 116 000 will be made available for the purposes of child helpline. The decision makes no commitment as to how these numbers might be implemented amongst multiple agencies with more than one existing number for the child helpline purpose.

7.2 In East Africa, under the East African Communications entities Organisation (EACO), there is a harmonization discussion to use the short code 116 for Child HelpLine(s) service in the entire block of countries. Currently, the code 116 is nationally assigned for that purpose in almost all the five countries.

8 Invitation

8.1 Administrations are invited to consider that if the short code 116 or 116 111 is currently used or reserved for child helpline purposes, it would not be necessary to make any changes.

8.2 All Administrations are invited to assign the code (116 or 116 111) as a number giving access to helplines run by organizations dedicated to the welfare of children.

8.3 Those Administrations, whose countries do not have child helplines, are invited to recommend the use of either 116 or 116 111 for telephone access to any such child helplines that may be established in the future.

8.4 Those Administrations that have existing child helplines operating on a variety of numbers are invited to consider ways and means of introducing either the number 116 or 116 111 in parallel to the other numbers being used.

9 For further study

9.1 There are other aspects of child welfare, for example, the case of children who have been displaced from their country of origin or kidnapped and who might require special telecommunications applications, such as short numbers. It is proposed that such other aspects should be the subject of further study in the future.

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