

Dialing Rules

A supplement to Chapter 9 of “Windows Vista: The Missing Manual”

To control how your modem dials to get onto the Internet, begin in the Control Panel. In the Search box, type dial. Click the link that says “Set up dialing rules.”

The first time you do this, you come face to face with the Location Information dialog box, where you’re supposed to specify where you are now. That’s important; it’s how Windows will know whether, for example, to add area codes when dialing numbers in the same city. Click OK to proceed to the Dialing Rules dialog box.

Dialing Rules Tab

The Dialing Rules tab (Figure 1, left) is made for travelers. As you move from place to place, you may wind up in locations that have very different dialing requirements. The area code may change, not to mention the requirement to dial 9 for an outside line, the availability of touch-tone dialing, and so on.

To set up the dialing rules for your current location, click its name and then click the Edit button. The New Location box appears (Figure 1, right), bristling with enough controls to make your modem sing, dance, and stand on its head.

General tab

Here are the guidelines for filling out this dialog box:

- **Location name, Country, Area code.** These boxes inform Windows where you’re presently located. When your modem dials another city or country, Windows Vista will know when to dial a 1 (and a country or area code, when necessary) before dialing.

- **To access an outside line for local/long distance calls.** In many offices and hotels, you must dial a number (usually 8 or 9) to get an outside line. If you enter numbers into these text boxes, Windows will dial them before the regularly scheduled Internet number.

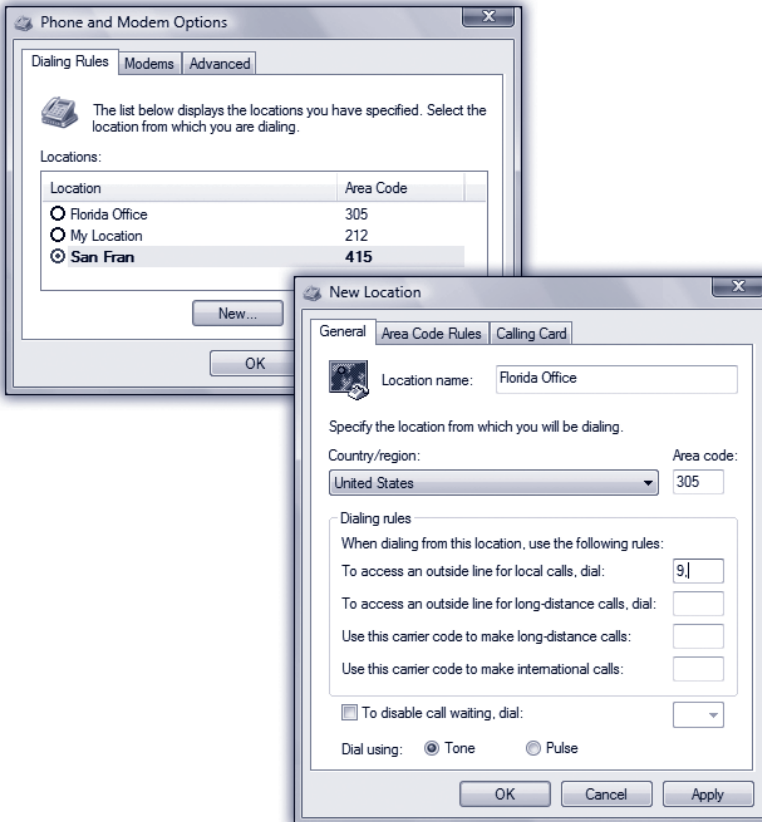


Figure 1: Left: This dialog box has two priorities: to establish rules for dialing out, and to define as many different sets of rules for dialing as you need. If you're setting up dialing properties for a desktop computer, you won't need to change these settings after the first successful call.

Right: Setting up a new dialing rule.

- **Use this carrier code to make long distance/international calls.** These options specify the codes that you have to dial, even before the area code, when dialing internationally. For example, in the United States, the long distance carrier code is 1. For international calls, the carrier code consists of the digits you dial before the country code—to make international calls from the United States, for example, the carrier code is 011.
- **To disable call-waiting.** If you have call-waiting service, that little beep that announces another incoming call can scramble your Internet connection. Fortunately, Windows Vista will be delighted to automatically disable call-waiting whenever you use the modem. Turn on this checkbox; from the drop-down list to its right, choose from the list of the common call-waiting disabling key sequences (*70,

70#, and 1170). (If you don't know which sequence works for your local phone company, check the front of your phone book.)

When the modem disconnects from the Internet after your online session, call-waiting automatically returns to the phone line.

- **Tone or pulse dialing.** Specify whether your telephone service is touch-tone (push-button) or pulse (as on old-fashioned rotary-dial phones).

Area Code Rules tab

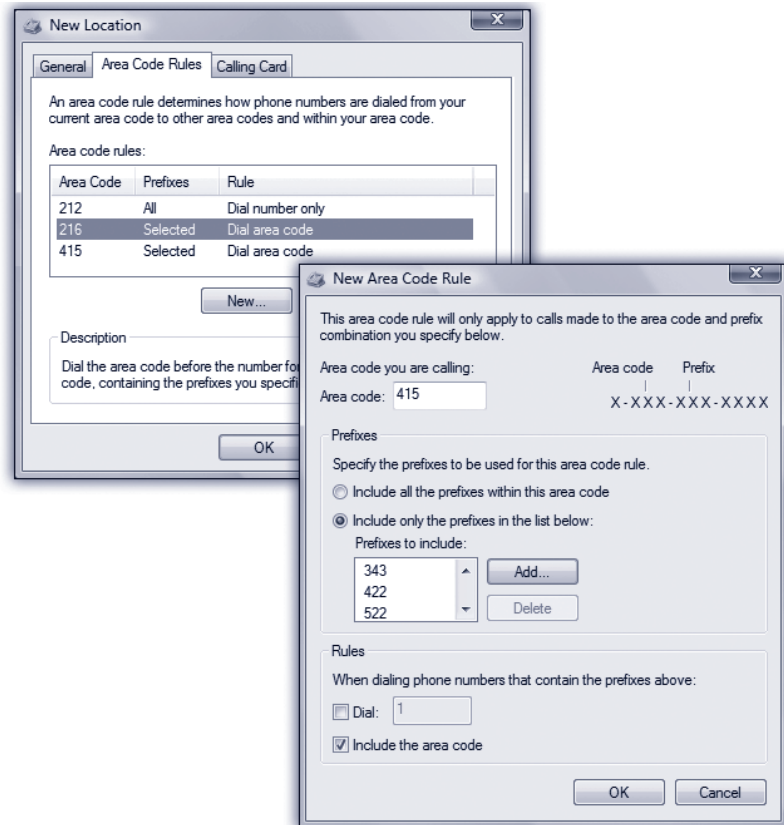
It used to be easy to dial the telephone in America. For local calls, you dialed a seven-digit number. Calls to other area codes started with 1 and then the area code.

Not any more. Many metropolitan areas now require *ten-digit dialing*—an insidious system that requires you to dial the full area code even for your next-door neighbor. Worse, some cities have several *different* area codes—not all of which require a 1+ area code dialing pattern. To confuse things further, in some cases, you dial *only* the area code plus the seven-digit number.

Figure 2:

Left: Here's where the area-code adventure begins.

Right: This dialog box can handle any weird and convoluted area code rule in your town. (If there aren't special rules yet in your area, it's only a matter of time.) When your local phone company changes the rules, don't forget to open this dialog box and explain the changes to your modem.



To clue your modem in on the vagaries of your own area's area code practices, click the Area Code Rules tab (Figure 2, left). From there, set up the dialing sequences for certain locations by clicking the New button to open the New Area Code Rule dialog box. The resulting options (Figure 2, right) let you specify the area code and three-digit prefixes. Click OK to return to the New Location dialog box.

Calling Card tab

If you, the shrewd traveler, feel that there's a better use for your money than paying most of it to your hotel's \$3-per-minute long distance scheme, this dialog box is for you. It lets you train your modem to bill its calls to a calling card (Figure 3).

Note: Creating a calling card profile doesn't mean you must use it every time you use your modem. In fact, you can choose whether or not to use the calling card each time you dial out.

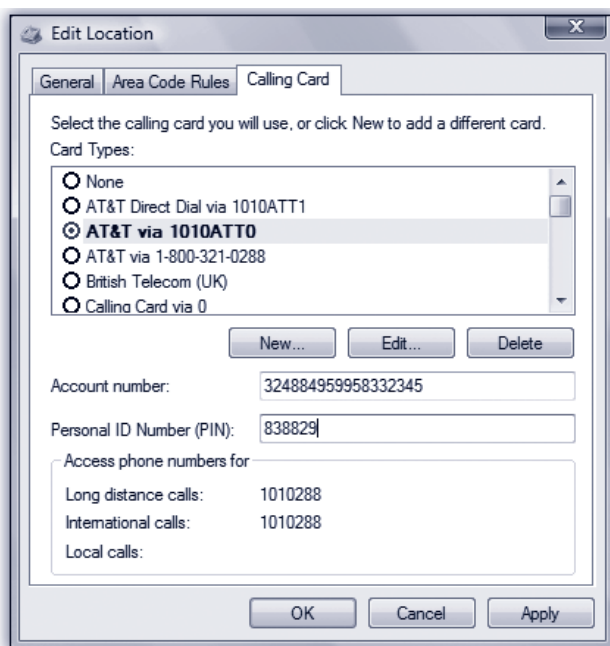


Figure 3:

Windows Vista already knows about the dialing requirements for most major calling cards. When you choose one from the Card Types list box at top, Windows Vista automatically fills in the fields at the bottom with the correct information. On the remote chance you can't find your own card, just type in the necessary dialing codes manually.

If your calling card isn't listed, you can create a setup for it yourself, which Windows then adds to the list. Armed with the instructions from your calling card company, click the New button. In the resulting dialog box, specify the card name, account number, PIN, and so on.

By clicking the Long Distance tab in the New Calling Card dialog box, you can specify the steps needed to use the card for long distance. For instance, you may need to dial a number and then wait for a tone that confirms that the number has been accepted.

In this dialog box, you can specify the number of seconds you want Windows to wait. (You can set up the same kinds of rules for international and local calls by clicking the appropriate tabs.)

Once you've set up a calling card, it becomes part of one of these dialing rules. Now when you want to go online, you'll be able to bill your modem calls to your calling card on a case-by-case basis.

To do so, start by double-clicking your connection icon. When the dialog box appears, use the "Dialing from" drop-down list to choose the name of the dialing-rule setup that contains your calling card configuration. Now click Dial to start your call.