

CHICAGO TELEPHONE EXCHANGE NAMES & HISTORY

Prior to 1892 there were smaller four and five digit telephone numbers that would have been used. From 1892 to 1921, one would have placed a call by telling the operator the name of the exchange, followed by the callee's specific number. For example, present day (773) 525-0421 would have been Lake View 421. In 1921, this was changed to a 3 letter – 4 digit system.

The example number becomes LAK-0421. This was cut back to 2 letters -5 digits (2L-5D) in 1948, lasting officially until 1977.

Area codes were introduced in 1947; however, the issue does not become confusing in Chicago until 1996. Our number in 1948 became (312) LA5-0421. 2L-5D is the variety that remains...if you look at old advertising or ghost signage.

Exchange prefixes were not necessarily based on a logical location. There were some common ones recycled from city to city. However, some do refer to local landmarks.



Chicago Telephone Exchange Names

The figure is part of the exchange name—always use it. When dialing, dial only the first TWO letters (capitals) and the PROPER figure of the exchange name, then dial the four figures of the telephone number. Note that telephone names may be duplicated—as either SEley 3 or SEley 8, GRaceland 7 or GRaceland 2. These duplicated names are marked by a star (*); use this directory for the correct number. Don't guess.

Ask For	Dial	Ask For	Dial	Ask For	Dial	Ask For	Dial
ABerdeen 4	...AB 4	DIversey 8	....DI 8	KEystone 9	....KE 9	REpublic 7	....RE 7
ALbany 2	....AL 2	DOrchester 3	..DO 3	KIldore 5	....KI 5	ROckwell 2	....RO 2
AMbassador 2	..AM 2	DRexel 3	....DR 3	LAfayette 3	....LA 3	ROdney 3	....RO 3
ANdover 3	....AN 3	EAstgate 7	....EA 7	LAkeview 5	....LA 5	*ROgersPark 1	..RO 1
ARdmore 1	....AR 1	EDgewater 4	...ED 4	*LAwndale 1	..LA 1	*ROgersPark 4	..RO 4
ARmitage 6	....AR 6	ENglewood 4	...EN 4	*LAwndale 2	..LA 2	SAcramento 2	..SA 2
ATlantic 5	....AT 5	ESsex 5	....ES 5	LIncoln 9	....LI 9	SAginaw 1	....SA 1
AUstin 7	....AU 7	*ESTebrook 8	..ES 8	LIvingston 8	....LI 8	*SEley 3	....SE 3
AVenue 3	....AV 3	*ESTebrook 9	..ES 9	LOngbeach 1	..LO 1	*SEley 8	....SE 8
BAyport 1	....BA 1	EVerglade 4	...EV 4	MAnsfield 6	...MA 6	SHeldrake 3	...SH 3
BElmont 5	....BE 5	FAirfax 4	....FA 4	MErrimac 7	....ME 7	SOuthChicago 8	SO 8
BErshire 7	....BE 7	FInancial 6	....FI 6	MIchigan 2	....MI 2	SOuthShore 8	..SO 8
BEverly 8	....BE 8	FIre 7	....FI 7	MIdway 3	....MI 3	SPaulding 2	....SP 2
*BIshop 2	....BI 2	FRanklin 2	....FR 2	MOhawk 4	....MO 4	SPring 7	....SP 7
*BIshop 7	....BI 7	*FRontier 4	....FR 4	MONroe 6	....MO 6	*STate 1	....ST 1
BIttersweet 8	...BI 8	*FRontier 6	....FR 6	MUlberry 5	....MU 5	*STate 2	....ST 2
BOulevard 8	...BO 8	*GRaceland 2	..GR 2	MUseum 4	....MU 4	STewart 3	....ST 3
BRiargate 4	....BR 4	*GRaceland 7	..GR 7	NAtional 2	....NA 2	SUnnyside 4	....SU 4
BRunswick 8	....BR 8	GRovehill 6	....GR 6	*NEvada 2	....NE 2	SUperior 7	....SU 7
BUckingham 1	..BU 1	HArrison 7	....HA 7	*NEvada 8	....NE 8	TAylor 9	....TA 9
BUtterfield 8	...BU 8	HAymarket 1	..HA 1	NEwcastle 1	....NE 1	TRiangle 4	....TR 4
CAlumet 5	....CA 5	HEmlock 4	....HE 4	NOrmal 7	....NO 7	TUxedo 9	....TU 9
CANal 6	....CA 6	HIlltop 5	....HI 5	OAkland 4	....OA 4	UNderhill 7	....UN 7
CApital 7	....CA 7	HOllycourt 5	...HO 5	OFficial 3	....OF 3	UPtown 8	....UP 8
CAthedral 8	....CA 8	*HUdson 3	....HU 3	PAlisade 5	....PA 5	VA n Buren 6	...VA 6
CEdarcrest 3	...CE 3	*HUdson 8	....HU 8	PEnsacola 6	....PE 6	VIctory 2	....VI 2
CEntral 6	....CE 6	*HUmboldt 6	...HU 6	PLaza 2	....PL 2	VIcennes 6	....VI 6
CHesapeake 3	..CH 3	*HUmboldt 9	...HU 9	POlice 5	....PO 5	VIrginia 7	....VI 7
CLiffside 4	....CL 4	HYde Park 3	...HY 3	POrtsmouth 7	..PO 7	WA bash 2	....WA 2
COlumbus 1	....CO 1	INdependence 3	..IN 3	PRospect 6	....PR 6	WA gner 4	....WA 4
COmmodore 4	..CO 4	INteroccean 8	...IN 8	PUllman 5	....PU 5	WA lbrook 5	...WA 5
COmelia 7	....CO 7	IRving 8	....IR 8	RAycliffe 3	....RA 3	WA lterfall 8	...WA 8
CRawford 7	....CR 7	JU niper 8	....JU 8	RAvenswood 8	..RA 8	WEather 4	....WE 4
DA nube 6	....DA 6	KE dzie 3	....KE 3	REgent 4	....RE 4	WEbster 9	....WE 9
DEarborm 2	....DE 2	*KENwood 6	...KE 6	REliance 5	....RE 5	WEllington 5	...WE 5
DElaware 7	....DE 7	*KENwood 8	...KE 8			WEntworth 6	...WE 6
DICKENS 2	....DI 2					WHitehall 4	...WH 4
						YA rds 7	....YA 7

* MARKS DUPLICATED EXCHANGE NAME—CONSULT DIRECTORY FOR CORRECT NUMBER