



ONE CALL TO FIND THEM ALL

A National Proposal for Vulnerable Persons Alerts

A policy proposal to the Government of Canada, prepared by Parent Partnership Project Inc. (PPP), October 2026. It asks Canada to close the Alert Ready gap for missing persons who cannot keep themselves safe, using alerting infrastructure the country already operates.

Addressed to: Public Safety Canada; the federal ministers responsible for public safety and emergency management; and the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM).

Parent Partnership Project Inc.

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Summary

Every year, Canadian families lose someone who went missing because they could not keep themselves safe: an autistic child who bolts toward water or traffic, a parent with dementia who walks out of the house at night, a young child who slips out a door. Canada already has the technology to reach compatible phones across a search area directly. It is Alert Ready, the system that delivers AMBER Alerts and tornado warnings.

One Call to Find Them All asks Canada to use that system for these cases. It does not ask for a new alert system, a new brand, or new infrastructure.

The pieces already exist. Canada's alerting standard already contains an event code for a missing vulnerable person, called `missingVPer`. What is missing is a national standard for when and how that code is used, and a decision on whether it qualifies for the interrupting alert that reaches phones, television, and radio, which the system calls Broadcast Immediate.

The Ask

PPP asks the Government of Canada for three things.

1. **A technical interoperability review.** PPP proposes that a Specification Committee be established, through Public Safety Canada's Interoperability Development Office and the F/P/T Interoperability Working Group, to determine whether and how `missingVPer` is added to the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List, including the required CAP values, wireless parameters, and any associated technical changes.
2. **Designation of an operational-policy body.** PPP asks governments to designate the appropriate F/P/T body to consider a national operational standard: who qualifies, when an alert issues, what it says, and how use is reported.
3. **Federal interoperability funding.** PPP asks for time-limited funding to help provinces and territories align training, dispatch systems, and implementation with the national standard.

The first two are parallel requests to different bodies. A technical committee is not being asked to set police or training policy.

PPP has drafted the content for both. The companion *Proposed National Vulnerable Persons Alert (VPA) Operational Standard: Discussion Draft* sets out the eligibility test, the alert content rules, the technical questions, and the reporting requirements, so that no official has to start from a blank page.

Why Now

The infrastructure is already in place. Alert Ready operates nationwide, is already funded, and is used for weather and abduction emergencies. Next Generation 9-1-1 is modernizing dispatch systems across the country, and this proposal fits inside that work.

The elopement case in Calgary from summer 2026 showed the gap. On July 16, 2026, an 11-year-old nonspeaking autistic boy went missing from a day home in Calgary. Because the case did

not meet the usual threshold for an AMBER Alert, an emergency alert was not issued until July 18, two days later, and only after the Government of Alberta granted a case-specific exemption. The search ended on July 29, 2026, when he was found deceased. Under the current framework, a child in this situation reaches the public only through an exemption granted case by case, not through a standing category built for the purpose.

Governments and the public are already moving.

- Manitoba legislated a Silver Alert in 2017. Alberta has legislated a Silver Alert twice, in 2017 and again in 2023, with a threshold of 55 years or older. The Silver Alert provisions do not appear in the consolidated Missing Persons Act current to June 11, 2025, and PPP has not found evidence that they have been brought into force.
- On August 10, 2026, Alberta announced it would engage law enforcement, disability advocates, and community partners on emergency alert processes for missing vulnerable persons, including a review of its AMBER Alert criteria. PPP took part in the province's listening sessions in fall 2026.
- Bill C-263, the Silver Alert National Framework Act, passed second reading in the House of Commons on June 5, 2026 and is before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.
- Two petitions to the House of Commons are open. Petition e-7643, sponsored by MP Michelle Rempel Garner, closes November 5, 2026. Petition e-7703, sponsored by MP Mike Lake, closes December 22, 2026 and asks for shared national standards for a vulnerable missing persons alert framework.

Acting now is simpler than acting later. These efforts vary in scope: some address specific populations or jurisdictions, while others seek broader national coordination. Without federal coordination, Canada is heading toward up to thirteen provincial and territorial systems with different eligibility rules and different reach. Agreeing on one standard while few jurisdictions have legislated is far easier than reconciling thirteen mature frameworks afterward. A province that acts first on a functional basis should need less change later, although alignment with a national standard may still require amendments.

The Problem: One Operational Challenge

An autistic child who elopes, an adult with dementia who wanders, and a young child who slips away differ medically and in age. For police and emergency managers they present the same problem: a person has left a place of safety, may be unable to recognize danger or say where they are, and faces rising danger with every hour. That makes it one operational problem to solve, not several separate policy debates.

The risk is well documented:

- A 2022 Government of Canada news release states that if a person with Alzheimer's disease is not found within 12 hours, there is a 50 percent chance they will be found injured or dead.
- The Alzheimer's Association estimates that about 6 in 10 people living with dementia will wander at least once.

- A 2012 study in *Pediatrics* found, in a parent-reported U.S. survey, that 598 of 1,218 autistic children (49 percent) had attempted to elope from a safe environment at least once after age four.
- A 2017 study in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that drowning was substantially overrepresented among recorded deaths of people with autism, with particularly elevated relative mortality among children.

What these people share is not a diagnosis or an age. It is a functional inability to keep themselves safe. This proposal is built on that fact: eligibility turns on what a person can and cannot do, never on a diagnosis or a birthday.

The Gap in Today's Framework

Alert Ready does not itself decide what gets alerted. Authorized agencies issue alerts using a technical standard called CAP-CP, and a separate list maintained by SOREM, the Broadcast Immediate Events List, determines which kinds of events get the interrupting alert on phones, television, and radio.

	AMBER (abducted child)	Silver (missing older adult)	Missing vulnerable person
Event code exists in CAP-CP	Yes	Yes	Yes (missingVPer)
On the Broadcast Immediate Events List	Yes	Yes	No
Operational program in practice	Yes	Varies by jurisdiction; BI-list inclusion does not itself establish an operational program	No standing program

Three things follow.

The event code exists, but it has no standing Broadcast Immediate designation. The missingVPer event code already exists in CAP-CP, but it is not currently listed as a qualifying event on the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List. There is therefore no standing, nationally coordinated Broadcast Immediate pathway established for this event code. The technical and operational changes needed to create that pathway require determination through the appropriate national processes.

The existing Silver entry is defined by age and diagnosis. The list describes it as covering "a missing, wandering older adult who may be suffering from a documented cognitive disability or degenerative memory disorder." People whose risk is the same but whose age or diagnosis differs fall outside it.

Legal authority is not the same as reach. A province can legislate an alert without that alert ever reaching a phone. A provincial alert program may rely on news media and social media instead. A social media post reaches only people who follow the right account, are on that platform at that moment, and are shown the post. An Alert Ready alert can reach compatible devices within the

targeted alert area without requiring recipients to follow a particular social media account or install a separate app.

The result is a patchwork in which a missing person's access to rapid public notification depends more on their province, age, and diagnosis than on the danger they face.

The Proposed Solution

PPP proposes a Vulnerable Persons Alert (VPA): a national standard for using the existing missingVPer code, delivered through the existing Alert Ready system.

Today and under this proposal

Today	Under this proposal
A vulnerable person goes missing and 9-1-1 is called.	The same.
Police attend and investigate.	Police assess the report against defined national criteria.
Police may post to social media, at their discretion.	Where the criteria are met, police request an Alert Ready alert, subject to the applicable technical and jurisdictional authorization.
Media may pick up the story.	Compatible phones in a targeted search area are alerted directly.
The public learns hours or days later, unevenly.	The nearby public can help from the start.

A two-gate test

The standard separates two decisions, so that not every vulnerable missing person generates a phone alert.

Gate	What it triggers	What must be true
Gate 1	The sustained, enhanced police and search response	The person is missing, functionally vulnerable, and at a materially elevated, time-sensitive risk of death or serious bodily harm
Gate 2	The public alert	The public can usefully help, and a defensible alert area exists

Three rules protect the people this is for:

- **The search never waits for the alert decision.** Urgent search measures begin on reasonable suspicion, before either gate is formally decided.
- **No minimum time missing is required.** A child heading toward water should not have to be missing for a set number of minutes.
- **Age and diagnosis are never the test.** They can inform how the search is run, but they neither qualify nor disqualify anyone.

PPP proposes that police make the activation decision, as they do for an AMBER Alert, subject to each jurisdiction's legal authority and alerting arrangements.

Safeguards

The biggest risk to any expanded use of Alert Ready is public backlash from alerts that are too broad or too frequent. The standard is deliberately narrow:

- **Geographic targeting.** Alerts are geographically targeted to the smallest defensible area likely to support an effective public response. Broader distribution, including province-wide alerting, requires an operational justification and should be reassessed as new information becomes available.
- **Minimum necessary content.** An alert says only what the public needs to help. A diagnosis is normally excluded, and is disclosed only where necessary and lawful.
- **Prompt cancellation.** The alert is cancelled or updated as soon as the person is located, whatever the outcome.
- **Public reporting.** Use is reported every year, and audits check both alerts that should not have issued and cases where an alert should have issued and did not.
- **Mandatory review.** The standard is reviewed within three years of adoption.

What this proposal does not do

- It does not replace or change AMBER Alerts.
- It does not replace local police investigations.
- It does not create a new alert network, brand, or app.
- It does not require every missing-person report to trigger an alert.
- It does not require any province or territory to adopt a particular law.

Who Does What

The proposal builds on existing federal, provincial, and territorial responsibilities and Canada's established public-alerting infrastructure. The responsible authorities must determine whether implementation requires any changes to legislation, regulations, policies, technical specifications, or alert-authoring systems. This proposal does not presume that new federal legislation or regulatory amendments are necessary.

Body	What it already does	What this proposal asks of it
Public Safety Canada	Coordinates the federal role in F/P/T emergency management and interoperability. Its Interoperability Development Office receives proposals for Specification Committees.	Receive PPP's proposal for a Specification Committee and put it before the F/P/T Interoperability Working Group. Coordinate the federal role. Bring forward an interoperability funding proposal.
F/P/T Interoperability Working Group	Establishes and oversees Specification Committees under the Change Management Process.	Establish a Specification Committee for the technical questions.
Specification Committee	Develops the technical content of a specification.	Determine whether and how missingVPer joins the Broadcast Immediate Events List, with what Urgency, Severity, and Certainty conditions, and how wireless delivery applies.
SOREM	Approves major revisions under the Change Management Process and maintains the Broadcast Immediate Events List.	Consider and approve the resulting change.
An F/P/T operational-policy body, to be designated	Not yet designated for this purpose.	Consider and adopt the national operational standard: the two gates, the decision path, training, and reporting.
CRTC	Requires broadcasters and wireless carriers to distribute alerts on SOREM's Broadcast Immediate list.	No action is presumed. If the CRTC determines a change is needed for broadcast or wireless distribution, PPP asks that it follow the national standard.
Finance Canada and Treasury Board	Finance advises on the fiscal framework. Treasury Board approves specific spending authority.	Consider and approve a time-limited interoperability envelope.

Public Safety Canada does not direct SOREM, and SOREM does not draft or approve technical content on its own. The route above follows the existing Change Management Process.

The critical path runs through the technical review. Until missingVPer is on the Broadcast Immediate list with defined conditions, no jurisdiction can rely on a standing interrupting alert for these cases. The operational standard and the funding request can proceed in parallel and do not need to wait for it.

What remains provincial and territorial

- The legal and policy authority for a designated alerting authority to apply the criteria, through whatever instrument fits each jurisdiction: statute, regulation, ministerial policy, or police policy.
- Police activation decisions in individual cases.
- 9-1-1 and dispatch integration.
- Training adoption, and collection and publication of the jurisdiction's own data.

The purpose of the federal role is not to replace provincial authority over policing or missing-persons law. It is to make sure every province and territory can connect to one common, interoperable framework. The proposed national standard would establish common eligibility and interoperability principles while preserving provincial and territorial authority over policing, alert issuance, and local implementation. PPP has prepared a companion proposal for each of the ten provinces and three territories.

Federal interoperability funding

PPP asks for a time-limited funding envelope to help provinces and territories align with the national standard. It would support:

- development of the standard and its training material;
- front-line training for police and dispatch;
- technical alignment of dispatch and alert-authoring systems; and
- annual public reporting.

It is not for new satellites, towers, carrier infrastructure, or a distribution network. Those already exist and are already paid for. The funding should carry a mandatory review within three years, so that spending is revisited on a fixed schedule without the alert designation itself lapsing.

Accountability

The proposal builds on existing public-alerting infrastructure, but implementation may require technical, policy, regulatory, or legislative changes. An additional risk is delay caused by uncertainty over which body is responsible for each decision. PPP recommends that the responsible authorities publish a public implementation timeline identifying the actions, accountable bodies, and expected decision dates.

How This Relates to Other Federal Activity

Several current efforts address parts of this problem. This proposal is designed to fit with them, not compete with them.

Effort	Whom it addresses	How this proposal relates
Bill C-263, Silver Alert National Framework Act	Missing older adults	The functional test covers the same people, without an age line.
Petition e-7643	Missing vulnerable children	The functional test covers the same children, and adults at equal risk.
Petition e-7703	A national standards framework for vulnerable missing persons	This proposal offers drafted content for such a framework.

Some of these efforts address one population, and others seek broader coordination. PPP's framework covers children and adults under one functional test and one existing event code, so that Canada does not end up with a separate alert, with separate rules, for each age group or diagnosis.

Cost

Canada already operates the core public-alerting infrastructure this proposal would use. Establishing a national VPA pathway would not require building a separate alert-distribution network. However, standards development, technical configuration, dispatch integration, training, governance, and reporting would involve implementation costs that must be assessed with the responsible jurisdictions. PPP proposes a time-limited federal interoperability funding envelope to support that work.

Measuring Success

Annual public reporting should track:

- time from report to the start of the search response;
- time from report to the alert decision, and from that decision to the alert going out;
- time from alert to the person being located, and aggregated outcomes;
- how often the alert area had to be expanded;
- the share of decisions that met the criteria on audit; and
- cases where the criteria were met but no alert issued.

These measures test whether the criteria were followed. They do not judge a decision by its outcome. A police service that reasonably activates on the information it has should not be scored as having made a false activation because the person turned out to be safe. Auditing only the alerts that were issued would hide the cases that were missed, so the audit covers both.

Implementation Sequence

1. Public Safety Canada's Interoperability Development Office receives the proposal for a Specification Committee, and the F/P/T Interoperability Working Group considers it.
2. A Specification Committee develops the technical content, and SOREM approves the resulting change to the Broadcast Immediate Events List.
3. In parallel, governments designate the operational-policy body, which considers and adopts the national operational standard.
4. In parallel, Public Safety Canada brings forward the interoperability funding proposal.
5. Provinces and territories align their own authority, dispatch systems, and training, each on its own timeline.
6. Annual public reporting begins, with a mandatory review within three years.

Steps 2, 3, and 4 can run at the same time. Provinces and territories do not need to act simultaneously.

Recommendation

PPP recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. support the establishment of a Specification Committee, through the F/P/T Interoperability Working Group, to determine whether and how the existing missingVPer event code is added to the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List, with the required CAP values, wireless parameters, and any associated technical changes;
2. work with provinces and territories to designate the F/P/T body that will consider a national Vulnerable Persons Alert operational standard, using PPP's proposed standard as a starting draft; and
3. provide time-limited interoperability funding so that all thirteen provinces and territories can align with that standard.

PPP requests a written response identifying the federal officials or bodies responsible for considering these recommendations, the next procedural steps, and an anticipated timeline for an initial decision or further engagement.

This lets Canada build on its existing public alerting system, and improve consistency and public safety, without creating a new one.

Stakeholders to Consult

This proposal is a starting point for consultation, not a finished design. PPP recommends engaging, at minimum:

- Alzheimer Society of Canada
- Autism advocacy and self-advocacy organizations
- Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police
- Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians
- Emergency Medical Services Chiefs of Canada
- Paramedic and first-responder organizations
- Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada
- Provincial and territorial emergency management organizations
- Indigenous emergency management representatives
- Provincial 9-1-1 authorities
- Privacy commissioners

Who We Are

Parent Partnership Project Inc. (PPP) is a parent-led not-for-profit organization based in Calgary, Alberta. It is incorporated under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act (corporation number 1830094-1). It produces free resources and pursues both direct family support and systemic policy advocacy for families of children and adults with disabilities. PPP has advocated on systemic issues facing vulnerable persons since 2018.

This proposal is one of fourteen: one federal, and one for each of the ten provinces and three territories. It is supported by three companion documents:

- *Proposed National Vulnerable Persons Alert (VPA) Operational Standard: Discussion Draft*
- *The Research Behind the Campaign: An Evidence Base for the Vulnerable Persons Alert Proposal*
- *Model First Responder Training & Local Implementation Manual (draft)*

Sources

- Government of Canada, news release on search and rescue for people living with dementia, June 29, 2022.
- Alzheimer's Association, public estimate of lifetime wandering.
- Anderson et al., "Occurrence and Family Impact of Elopement in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders," *Pediatrics* 130(5), 2012.
- Guan and Li, "Injury Mortality in Individuals With Autism," *American Journal of Public Health* 107(5), 2017.
- SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List, Version 2.1, amended May 26, 2022.
- [NPAS Common Look and Feel Guidance, Version 2.1](#), Public Safety Canada.
- [Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2014-444](#) and [Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2017-91](#).
- [Bill C-263](#), LEGISinfo, Parliament of Canada.
- Alberta, Missing Persons (Silver Alert) Amendment Act, 2017 (Bill 210); Missing Persons (Silver Alert) Amendment Act, 2022, SA 2023, c. 4 (Bill 204); Missing Persons Act, Alberta King's Printer consolidation current to June 11, 2025.
- House of Commons petitions e-7643 and e-7703.