



ONE CALL TO FIND THEM ALL

Proposed National Vulnerable Persons Alert (VPA) Operational Standard

Discussion Draft

Specification Document, Discussion Draft, October 2026. Prepared by Parent Partnership Project Inc. (PPP), Calgary, Alberta, for the One Call to Find Them All campaign. It supports a proposal to establish a Specification Committee under the CEMCS Change Management Process, and no government body has adopted or endorsed it.

Parent Partnership Project Inc.

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Foreword

This Specification Document is submitted by Parent Partnership Project Inc. (PPP), a parent-led not-for-profit organization based in Calgary, Alberta, and incorporated under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, in support of the One Call to Find Them All campaign.

This document is a discussion draft. It supports a proposal that a Specification Committee be established under the Change Management Process of the Canadian Emergency Management Communications Specifications (CEMCS), which include the Canadian Profile of the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP-CP), to develop the technical specification on which a National Vulnerable Persons Alert (VPA) Operational Standard would rely. Under that process, an individual, organization, or stakeholder community may propose a Specification Committee to Public Safety Canada's Interoperability Development Office, for consideration by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Interoperability Working Group (F/P/T IWG). PPP submits this document through that doorway.

PPP is making two parallel requests to government, and they belong to different bodies:

1. **A technical interoperability review** through the F/P/T IWG, limited to the technical questions in Section 6.11.
2. **Designation of an appropriate F/P/T operational-policy body** to consider the operational content: the two gates, the decision path, training, and reporting.

The technical committee is not being asked to adopt the operational content. Section 7.2 sets out both pathways.

PPP does not present this document as an approved standard. Public Safety Canada, the Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM), and the F/P/T IWG have not adopted or endorsed it. Every provision is offered for revision, amendment, or rejection by the officials and technical experts who would administer it.

The document is structurally modelled on a Specification Document under the CEMCS process, and has not been approved under that process (Section 7.8). Its parts are: Foreword, Introduction, Scope, Referenced Documents, Terms and Definitions, Objectives, Specification, and Conformance. A Specification Committee taking up this work would therefore not start from a blank page. The document removes a drafting burden; it does not pre-empt anyone's drafting authority.

1. Introduction, Purpose and History

1.1 History

The One Call to Find Them All campaign originated from the elopement case in Calgary from summer 2026. 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.

The case exposed a gap in Canada's public-alerting framework. There is no nationally coordinated, age-neutral and diagnosis-neutral operational pathway for applying Broadcast Immediate treatment to the existing missingVPer event code on the basis of functional vulnerability and time-sensitive risk. PPP has advocated on systemic issues facing vulnerable persons since 2018.

1.2 Purpose

Canada already operates the technical infrastructure a Vulnerable Persons Alert would use:

- The missingVPer event code already exists in the CAP-CP Event References list.
- The National Public Alerting System (NPAS) already defines Broadcast Immediate (BI) treatment.
- The National Alert Aggregation and Dissemination (NAAD) System, operated by Pelmorex Corp., already distributes qualifying alerts to the public.

What does not yet exist is a nationally coordinated operational standard specifying when and how this existing capability is applied to a qualifying vulnerable missing person. This document sets out PPP's proposed content for that standard. It leaves the responsible federal, provincial, and territorial (F/P/T) authorities to determine what technical, regulatory, policy, or legislative changes, if any, implementation requires.

1.3 What this document does not presume

- That CAP-CP requires amendment.
- That a new CAP-CP event code or classification is required.
- That adding missingVPer to the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List is the only technical step implementation requires.
- That the CRTC must amend any regulation, condition of service, or condition of licence.
- That every province or territory requires legislative amendment.
- That every local alert-authoring system is currently configured for the proposed workflow.
- Which existing F/P/T body should ultimately own the proposed national operational standard.

2. Scope

This Specification applies to missing-person cases involving a Vulnerable Missing Person (VMP), as defined in Section 4. It governs:

- the criteria under which a police service treats a report as a qualifying VMP case (Gate 1);
- the criteria under which a qualifying case is designated a Vulnerable Persons Alert (VPA) for Broadcast Immediate (BI) distribution (Gate 2);
- the process for verification, activation, escalation, cancellation, and review;
- the minimum content standard for an alert, and geographic targeting defaults;
- roles and responsibilities, adaptable to each jurisdiction's alerting structure;
- the national training competencies that support consistent application; and
- minimum common reporting metrics.

2.1 Out of scope

This Specification does not:

- replace or amend AMBER Alert criteria or classification;
- create a new public-alerting system, brand, or distribution network;
- mandate a specific provincial or territorial legislative, regulatory, or policy vehicle. Each jurisdiction determines its own legal architecture;
- require simultaneous adoption by every jurisdiction. The standard offers one common model, and adoption may occur at different times;
- override applicable federal, provincial, or territorial privacy, disclosure, or policing law;
- prescribe police command structure or the deployment of any particular search resource; or
- require that every VMP police response result in a public alert. A VPA is one response tool, used in the subset of VMP cases that meet Gate 2.

2.2 Normative language

This Specification uses three terms with fixed meaning:

- **Must** means required for conformity with this Specification.
- **Should** means recommended practice. Departure requires a documented operational justification.
- **May** means permitted or discretionary practice, left to the issuing authority's judgment.

3. Referenced Documents

The following documents are referenced in, and inform, this Specification. Where a companion PPP document conflicts with this Specification, this Specification governs.

3.1 Technical and governance instruments

Document	Version	Source
Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)	1.2	OASIS
CAP-CP Event References (including the missingVPer event code)	1.0	SOREM / Public Safety Canada
CAP-CP Location References	1.0	SOREM / Public Safety Canada
SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List	2.1, amended May 26, 2022	SOREM / National Public Alerting System
NPAS Common Look and Feel Guidance	2.1	Public Safety Canada
SOREM Public Alerting Layer (Broadcast Immediate and Wireless Immediate parameters)	Appendix B of the NPAS Common Look and Feel Guidance, Version 2.1	SOREM

Document	Version	Source
Change Management Process (CMP) for Canadian Emergency Management Communications Specifications (CEMCS)	1.0 (January 31, 2013)	SOREM F/P/T Interoperability Working Group; Public Safety Canada
Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2014-444	2014	CRTC
Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2017-91	2017	CRTC
Applicable provincial and territorial missing-persons legislation and regulations	Jurisdiction-specific	Provincial and territorial governments

3.2 Companion PPP documents

Document	Status
<i>One Call to Find Them All: A National Proposal for Vulnerable Persons Alerts (the Federal Proposal)</i>	Current federal proposal
<i>One Call to Find Them All: The Research Behind the Campaign. An Evidence Base for the Vulnerable Persons Alert Proposal</i>	Current evidence document
<i>One Call to Find Them All: Model First Responder Training & Local Implementation Manual</i>	Draft, October 2026

3.3 Evidence

Document	Source
<i>Guide for Implementing or Enhancing an Endangered Missing Advisory</i> , NCJ 232001	U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP, 2011
<i>National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland 2025</i>	Scottish Government, 2025
Alert Systems for People Living with Dementia who go Missing: Case Studies in Canada, Scotland, and the United States. <i>Canadian Journal of Nursing Research</i> , 58(3)	Adekoya, Liu, Boscart and Hirdes, 2026
Locating Missing Persons with Dementia: Using a Knowledge-to-Action Framework for Implementation of Alert Systems. <i>Canadian Journal on Aging</i> , 45(1)	Adekoya, Liu, Boscart and Hirdes, 2026 (published online October 2025). doi:10.1017/S0714980825100317
A balancing act: Exploring ethical and legal concerns associated with release of personal information in alert systems for missing persons with dementia. <i>BMC Medical Ethics</i> , 26, article 56	Adekoya, Daum, Miguel-Cruz and Liu, 2025

Document	Source
Mobile alert app to engage community volunteers to help locate missing persons with dementia. <i>PLOS ONE</i> , 16(7)	Neubauer, Daum, Miguel-Cruz and Liu, 2021
Do Advisories, Warnings, or Color Coding Matter to Risk Perception and Precautionary Decisions? <i>Weather, Climate, and Society</i> , 14, 569–583	Gulacsik, Joslyn, Robinson and Qin, 2022

4. Terms and Definitions

4.1 Eligibility and activation terms

Term	Definition
Vulnerable Missing Person (VMP)	The underlying case type: a missing person whose cognitive, intellectual, developmental, or other functional capacity impairs their ability to recognize danger, communicate their location or identifying information, seek assistance, or return to a place of safety. The impairment may arise from any condition or circumstance. Dementia, a medical condition, a developmental disability, autism spectrum disorder, and acquired brain injury are illustrative, non-exhaustive examples. Eligibility does not depend on a specific diagnosis, on any external statute's clinical threshold, or on the person's age.
Functional-Risk Indicators	The operational indicators in Section 6.1 used to assess whether a missing person's circumstances show functional vulnerability, independent of any named condition.
Functional-Risk Profile	The plain-language description of the indicators that apply to a particular person, gathered under Section 6.3. It is an internal investigative tool, not alert text.
Gate 1: VMP Operational Qualification	The threshold for treating a report as a qualifying VMP case and beginning the enhanced police and search response (Section 6.1, Elements A to C). Gate 1 is not, by itself, a decision to issue a public alert.
Gate 2: Public Alert / Broadcast Immediate Qualification	The separate threshold for designating a Gate-1-qualifying case for public alerting (Section 6.1, Elements D and E). Not every case satisfying Gate 1 will satisfy Gate 2.
Vulnerable Persons Alert (VPA)	The public-alert designation applied to a VMP case that satisfies both Gate 1 and Gate 2. A VPA is not a new CAP-CP event code. It governs when the existing missingVPer code receives Broadcast Immediate treatment.

Term	Definition
Qualifying Event	The disappearance of a VMP where both Gate 1 and Gate 2 are satisfied. This definition points to Section 6.1 so that one activation standard governs throughout.
Activating Agency	Under this proposed model, and subject to jurisdictional authority, the police service of jurisdiction responsible for determining whether an incident satisfies Gate 1 and Gate 2 and, where satisfied, initiating the Activation Request. The Activating Agency decides; the Alerting Authority issues.
Alerting Authority	The CAP-CP-recognized originator with technical authority to submit a validated alert message for aggregation and distribution. It may be the police service itself or, in some jurisdictions, a provincial or territorial body acting on police request.
Alert Distributor	A broadcaster or wireless service provider that delivers a distributed CAP-CP alert to the public under CRTC requirements. Also called a Last Mile Distributor (LMD).
Resolution	The point at which the person is located, whether or not physically recovered by the Activating Agency, and the alert is formally cancelled or updated under Section 6.8.

4.2 Technical and governance terms

Term	Definition
CAP-CP	The Canadian Profile of the Common Alerting Protocol, the technical message standard used to originate and distribute alerts through Canada's public alerting system.
missingVPer	An existing CAP-CP Event References code for a missing vulnerable person. This Specification does not presume a new event code or CAP-CP classification is required.
Broadcast Immediate (BI)	The distribution treatment for alerts that match an entry on the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List, including its Urgency, Severity, and Certainty conditions. It is not automatically applicable to every CAP-CP event code. This Specification uses "Broadcast Immediate" only; the guidance cautions that it should not be confused with "Broadcast Intrusive".

Term	Definition
Broadcast Immediate Parameter (BIP)	The parameter (Layer:SOREM:1.0:Broadcast_Immediately) an authorized issuer applies to indicate that an alert meets the BI criteria.
SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List	A SOREM-maintained instrument, separate from CAP-CP Event References, listing the event codes and required Urgency, Severity, and Certainty conditions that qualify for BI treatment. Version 2.1 includes amber and silver. It does not include missingVPer.
Wireless Immediate Parameter (WIP)	The SOREM Public Alerting Layer parameter indicating whether an alert is intended for wireless alert processing and distribution.
Wireless Public Alerting (WPA)	Delivery of alerts to compatible mobile devices on LTE or newer networks within a targeted geographic area.
NPAS / Alert Ready	The National Public Alerting System, Canada's overall public-alerting system. Alert Ready is its public-facing brand.
NAAD System	The National Alert Aggregation and Dissemination System, operated by Pelmorex Corp. under CRTC conditions of licence. It aggregates validated CAP-CP messages and makes them available to Alert Distributors.
CEMCS	The Canadian Emergency Management Communications Specifications, the family of specifications that includes CAP-CP and is governed by a Change Management Process.
F/P/T IWG	The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Interoperability Working Group, which establishes and oversees Specification Committees under the CEMCS process.
Specification Committee	A technical body established by the F/P/T IWG to develop the substantive content of a Specification Document.
SOREM	Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management, the F/P/T body whose approval is required for major revisions under the Change Management Process, and which maintains the Broadcast Immediate Events List.
EMO	Emergency Management Organization, the provincial or territorial body that in some jurisdictions acts as the Alerting Authority on behalf of police.

5. Objectives

This Specification is designed to achieve five objectives.

National consistency. One national operational standard, implemented through each jurisdiction's own legislative and operational architecture, so that eligibility, activation, and alert content do not vary arbitrarily between provinces and territories.

Rapid public notification. Broadcast Immediate notification to phones, television, and radio for qualifying imminent-risk cases, using the existing Alert Ready and CAP-CP infrastructure and not a lower-visibility, opt-in, or social-media-only method.

Functional-capacity assessment, not diagnosis. Eligibility turns on what a condition does to a person's ability to keep themselves safe, not on which diagnosis they carry.

Minimum necessary public disclosure. An alert conveys only what the public needs to help locate the person, not full case detail.

Proportional geographic dissemination. Alerts target the smallest area reasonably likely to be effective before expanding, to protect both public attention and the alert system's long-term effectiveness.

6. Specification

6.1 Eligibility and Activation Criteria

Eligibility under this Specification is a two-gate test. Gate 1 determines whether a report is treated as a qualifying VMP case and triggers the enhanced police and search response. Gate 2 determines whether that case also justifies a public Vulnerable Persons Alert with Broadcast Immediate treatment. The two gates answer different questions and are assessed separately. A case can satisfy Gate 1 without ever satisfying Gate 2.

Scope of public alerting. Gate 1 governs the case response. Gate 2, assessed separately, governs the public alert. A vulnerable missing person does not automatically generate a public alert.

Gate 1: VMP Operational Qualification

A case qualifies under Gate 1 only where all three elements are satisfied. Every element must be met, and none is sufficient by itself.

Element	Requirement
A. Missing	The person's whereabouts are unknown, and the disappearance is sufficiently confirmed.
B. Vulnerability	The person's functional capacity materially impairs their ability to recognize danger, seek help, communicate identifying or location information, or independently reach safety.
C. Risk	The available circumstances create a reasonable basis to believe the person faces a materially elevated, time-sensitive risk of death or serious bodily harm.

"Sufficiently confirmed" (Element A). The Activating Agency has a reasonable operational basis to conclude that the person's whereabouts are presently unknown. It does not require exhausting investigative or search steps first.

No minimum period of time missing. No minimum period is required before Gate 1 may be satisfied or Gate 2 assessed. Elapsed time bears on risk under Element C and on operational utility under Gate 2. It is not a prerequisite. A short period near a freeway, a body of water, or extreme weather can carry more urgency than a longer period in a controlled environment.

Applying Element C. Death or serious bodily harm need not be certain, imminent to the minute, or already occurring. Element C is satisfied where the available circumstances provide a reasonable operational basis to believe that the person's disappearance creates a materially elevated, time-sensitive risk of death or serious bodily harm. The assessment must consider the person's functional capacity in relation to the circumstances of the disappearance. Relevant circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- **Environmental exposure:** exposure or potential exposure to water, traffic, extreme temperatures, remote terrain, or other hazards against which the person may be unable to protect themselves.
- **Escalating medical risk:** dependence on medication, medical equipment, supervision, or essential care, where continued absence may materially increase the likelihood of serious harm. A precise medical-risk window is not required where other reliable information establishes urgency.
- **Unrecognized hazards:** known or reasonably anticipated movement toward dangerous locations or circumstances that the person may be unable to recognize, avoid, or respond to safely.

The assessment must be based on information reasonably available at the time. Uncertainty about the person's exact location, movements, or eventual outcome does not, by itself, defeat Element C. The decision-maker must document the circumstances supporting the risk determination and reassess it as material information becomes available. This is a proposed operational test, not an established Canadian public-alerting threshold.

Functional-Risk Indicators (Element B). The following indicators are illustrative and non-exhaustive. The presence of one triggers consideration of functional vulnerability. The Activating Agency decides on the totality of the circumstances.

- Diminished capacity to recognize danger, communicate needs, or respond to searchers, including verbal, auditory, or processing barriers.
- A known tendency to elope, wander, or travel toward a fixation such as water, transit, or a former residence, without regard to personal safety.
- Dependence on medication, medical equipment, or routine care, where absence beyond a defined window creates escalating medical risk.
- Environmental exposure risk disproportionate to the person's capacity to protect themselves: temperature, water, traffic, or remote terrain.
- A disappearance inconsistent with the person's known baseline behaviour, as judged by a caregiver or another person with routine knowledge of that baseline.

Factors informing Elements B and C. These inform the assessment and do not themselves establish eligibility:

- elapsed time since the person was last seen, as a factor bearing on urgency;
- environmental danger present (water, traffic, weather, remoteness);
- rapidly escalating danger;
- the specific functional impairment and its bearing on the person's ability to keep themselves safe;
- any history of prior missing episodes and how they resolved; and
- the reliability and completeness of available identifying information.

What does not, by itself, satisfy Gate 1.

- A diagnosis or disability label alone, without functional vulnerability.
- Passage of a fixed period of time alone, without corroborating risk factors.
- A family or caregiver request alone, without the Activating Agency's own assessment. A declined request must still be logged and is subject to the escalation mechanism in Section 6.4.

If Gate 1 is not met. The ordinary missing-person response continues, and the case is reassessed as circumstances change.

Age and diagnosis are not the trigger, but diagnosis-neutral does not mean diagnosis-blind. A person's functional inability to keep themselves safe is the trigger. Age and diagnosis are neither necessary nor sufficient for Gate 1, and this Specification deliberately avoids a list of qualifying diagnoses. Once Gate 1 is satisfied, known characteristics such as diagnosis, disability, and age can inform search strategy, communication approach, likely movement, hazards, and responder tactics.

Open policy question (Element C). This Specification uses "death or serious bodily harm" as its threshold. The Specification Committee should confirm this terminology against existing Canadian imminent-threat and alerting standards. It should also consider whether exploitation, trafficking, environmental exposure, or inability to obtain necessary medication fall within "serious bodily harm" or need separate treatment.

Gate 2: Public Alert / Broadcast Immediate Qualification

A Gate-1-qualifying case qualifies for VPA designation only where both further elements are satisfied.

Gate 2 is an operational policy test. Satisfying it establishes that a public alert is operationally justified. It does not by itself authorize Broadcast Immediate distribution, which depends on the technical determination described in Section 6.11.

Element	Requirement
D. Public utility	There is information capable of producing useful public observations or actions.
E. Geographic utility	There is an identifiable, operationally defensible dissemination area in which recipients could reasonably contribute to locating the person.

No single information type is required (Element D). A recent photograph is preferred and should be requested. It is not mandatory where the available information as a whole is sufficient to support useful public observation or action.

Direction of travel (Element E). The absence of a confirmed direction of travel does not, by itself, establish that no defensible dissemination area exists.

Alert-fatigue safeguard. Broadcast Immediate treatment is reserved for cases in which Gate 1's urgency and vulnerability, together with Gate 2's expected public utility, jointly justify an interruptive alert. Satisfying Gate 1 alone is insufficient.

Factors informing Elements D and E. These inform the assessment and do not themselves establish eligibility:

- time sensitivity: whether delay would materially reduce the value of public notification;
- actionability of the available identifying information;
- public utility and net safety benefit of interruptive dissemination, including whether dissemination could increase risk to the person;
- mobility and likely search behaviour, as they bear on whether an effective alert geography can be established; and
- whether the proposed area is reasonably likely to reach people positioned to assist.

If Gate 2 is not met. The enhanced VMP search response already under way continues, and no public alert is issued. Gate 2 is reassessed as new information arrives. Being a Vulnerable Missing Person does not automatically mean an Alert Ready alert.

6.2 No Delay to Search

Verification and activation processes under this Specification must never delay the immediate life-safety response. This principle governs every other section. The alerting process exists to support the search and must not become a precondition for it.

Immediate precautionary action comes before formal qualification. Urgent search measures do not wait for Gate 1. Where a report raises a reasonable suspicion that the person may be vulnerable and at risk, responders should begin appropriate urgent measures at once, on that suspicion alone.

Formal Gate 1 qualification follows as information allows. It confirms and sustains the enhanced response, and it is the precondition for assessing Gate 2. Uncertainty about any Gate 1 element must never prevent or delay urgent life-safety action.

Once Gate 1 is satisfied, the enhanced search response is confirmed and sustained. Gate 2 assessment, verification, and message preparation must proceed in parallel with, not before, immediate search and investigative measures, including:

- ground search and containment;
- K9 deployment;
- Search and Rescue (SAR) activation;
- water search;
- aviation resources;
- transit system notification;
- CCTV and digital-evidence preservation; and
- any other immediate measure available to the Activating Agency.

No provision of this Specification should be read or implemented in a way that makes any of these measures wait on the activation decision.

This section governs sequencing, not resourcing. It does not mandate deployment of any particular search resource, which remains an operational decision of the responsible agency.

6.3 Verification and Information Gathering

Priority information set. The Activating Agency should gather:

- full name, age, and a recent, accurate physical description;
- a recent photograph, where available and consistent with the person's current appearance;
- the Functional-Risk Profile: the indicators that apply, in plain operational language (for example, "does not speak, will not respond to name being called, drawn to open water") and not in diagnostic shorthand;
- last known location and time, and direction of travel if known;
- clothing at the time of disappearance;
- known fixations, prior locations of concern, or predictable destinations; and
- any medical or medication dependency with a defined risk window.

Incomplete information must not delay the immediate response or prevent activation where the criteria in Section 6.1 can otherwise be established.

Caregiver information. A family member, caregiver, or support worker is a primary and often uniquely knowledgeable source of the Functional-Risk Profile. Caregivers should be supported through a structured, rapid information-gathering process that does not delay search activity. Where a family holds a pre-completed safety plan or profile, the Activating Agency should request and use it immediately.

Information flow to incident command and SAR. Caregiver-provided information relevant to locating the person must be passed to incident command and, where activated, SAR. It must not be kept only as intake documentation. At minimum this includes:

- known attractions and aversions, and sensory responses;
- communication method and limitations;
- likely direction and pattern of movement;
- history of prior elopements and hiding behaviour; and
- the person's typical response to being approached or called by searchers or strangers.

6.4 Activation Authority, Decision Path and Escalation

Who decides. This Specification proposes police as the operational decision-maker, as with an AMBER Alert, subject to each jurisdiction's legal authority and alerting arrangements. Under this proposed model the police service of jurisdiction, as Activating Agency, determines whether Gate 1 and Gate 2 are satisfied. The Alerting Authority issues the alert.

This Specification does not prescribe police command structure. Each jurisdiction should name the specific rank or role that holds activation authority, for example an on-duty patrol supervisor or a designated missing-persons coordinator, so that authority is never ambiguous. The decision should not sit with call-takers or with the family. The activation process must not require external multi-agency approval, or any other approval step that introduces avoidable delay once the criteria are satisfied.

Decision path.

1. A report is received by 9-1-1, a non-emergency line, or in person. Dispatch applies the Preliminary Screening Checklist (Appendix A) without delaying dispatch of an immediate response.
2. Where functional-risk indicators are present, urgent search measures begin on reasonable suspicion (Section 6.2), and the case is escalated for Gate 1 assessment. These measures do not wait for Gate 1.
3. Gate 1 is assessed. Once it is satisfied, the urgent measures already under way are confirmed and sustained as the enhanced search response, which continues regardless of the steps that follow.
4. Once Gate 1 is satisfied, the designated decision-maker assesses Gate 2 without delay, while search and investigative measures continue in parallel.
5. Where Gate 2 is satisfied, the Activation Request Form (Appendix B) is completed and routed to the Alerting Authority.
6. The Alerting Authority validates CAP-CP formatting, applies the distribution treatment authorized for VPA incidents (Sections 6.7 and 6.11), and submits the alert for aggregation and distribution.
7. Alert Distributors deliver the alert to the public within the designated geographic scope.

Urgent search measures start at step 2, before Gate 1 is decided. The Gate 2 assessment starts once Gate 1 is satisfied and runs alongside the search, never ahead of it. A case moves to an active search response whether or not it ultimately meets Gate 2.

Escalation where activation is declined. Where a family or caregiver requests activation and the Activating Agency declines, the Activating Agency must:

- log the request and the reason for declining; and
- provide a documented escalation mechanism: a named secondary reviewer, such as a shift supervisor or duty inspector, reachable within a defined window to revisit the decision as new information arrives.

The specific reviewer, rank, and window may be set by each jurisdiction. This is a process safeguard. It is not a mechanism for overriding professional judgment by request alone, and it does not itself create a legal right unless adopted in applicable legislation or regulation.

6.5 Alert Content Standard

A VPA must include only the minimum information reasonably necessary to help locate the missing person, drawn from information the issuing agency is already authorized to disclose under applicable law. This Specification sets a common national ceiling on content. It cannot override privacy or disclosure law, and lawfully disclosable does not mean necessary to disclose.

A standard, plain-language message should name the general population category (for example, a missing child, a missing older adult, or a missing person with a disability). It must not include diagnostic labels, stigmatizing language, or medical detail beyond what is necessary for public recognition and safe approach.

Mandatory minimum. Every VPA must state all four of the following. An alert that cannot state them should not issue.

1. That a vulnerable person is missing.
2. The issuing authority.
3. The last known area.
4. What the public should do, including the reporting contact or 9-1-1 instruction.

Additional fields. The table covers every other field. None of them is a precondition for issuing an alert.

Category	Fields
Added where known, relevant, technically supported, and lawfully disclosable	Time last seen; physical description; clothing; photograph or visual identifier where supported; direction or mode of travel; vehicle information if relevant; timestamp.
Optional, only where operationally necessary	Communication differences; behavioural or sensory information; incident-specific safety or approach instructions (for example, do not approach, or do not call out).
Normally excluded	Diagnosis; detailed medical history; family circumstances; disability information not necessary for safe identification or approach.

Safety and approach instructions are drawn from the Functional-Risk Profile and set by the Activating Agency for that incident. They are not fixed generic wording applied to every VPA.

Language and accessibility. Alerts must be issued in at least one of Canada's two official languages, in accordance with the issuing government's legislation. The NPAS Common Look and Feel Guidance, Version 2.1, encourages alerting authorities to include both official languages wherever possible and practical. Where an alert is issued in both English and French, Last Mile Distributors should present both language versions in accordance with applicable legislative and regulatory requirements. Public-facing text should use short sentences, plain language, and direct instructions, and should avoid clinical or technical terms.

6.6 Geographic Targeting and Duration

Dissemination should default to the smallest effective and operationally defensible area. Broader distribution, including province-wide or region-wide alerting, requires an operational justification and should be reassessed as new information becomes available. CAP-CP supports targeting by geopolitical area or defined geospatial area, not only by radius, and the area should be represented using the CAP-CP location mechanism that fits the incident.

A vulnerable missing person is not a static hazard. Unlike a tornado polygon or a fixed hazard zone, a missing person moves. Geographic targeting must be able to move with them and must not be fixed to the location last seen.

Reassessment and expansion. Authorized agencies keep discretion to expand the area if initial dissemination does not locate the person. Reassessment should consider:

- elapsed time and the person's mobility;
- access to transit, and any vehicle involvement;
- known or likely direction of travel;
- water, terrain, or other geographic corridors;
- confirmed sightings and proximity to transportation hubs; and
- jurisdictional boundaries relative to the person's plausible travel area.

Duration. The issuing authority must document a review time when the alert is issued and at each later review. It must reassess immediately when a new sighting or new travel information arrives. An alert should not be left open-ended without a review point.

Cross-jurisdiction expansion. Geographic targeting must not be artificially constrained by municipal or police boundaries where the person's plausible travel area crosses them. Where the likely search or alert area crosses a police-service, municipal, provincial, or territorial boundary:

- the Activating Agency must immediately notify and coordinate with the affected alerting and police authorities;
- the receiving jurisdiction should rely on the original Gate 1 and Gate 2 determination, and should not require a second one solely because a boundary has been crossed; and
- expansion should proceed without unnecessary delay.

These rules operate within each jurisdiction's legal and technical authority. An Alerting Authority cannot issue an alert in an area where it has no authority to do so; there, expansion depends on the neighbouring authority. Neighbouring jurisdictions should agree in advance how such requests are made and actioned.

Where information indicates possible international movement, the Activating Agency must initiate existing cross-border law-enforcement notification mechanisms. This Specification does not replace them.

6.7 Distribution Channels

Distribution uses Canada's existing Alert Distributors, subject to the distribution treatment resolved under Section 6.11:

- **Broadcast.** Television and radio carriage by broadcasters, under the CRTC requirements that apply to the alert's distribution designation.
- **Wireless.** Wireless Public Alerting to compatible devices on LTE or newer networks within the geographic scope, where the alert carries the applicable designation.
- **Secondary channels.** Authorized police, emergency-management, municipal, and community-partner digital channels, as appropriate to the jurisdiction.

This Specification does not require a new national distribution network.

6.8 Cancellation, Resolution and Recovery

Three separate events are involved, and each must be recorded with its own time:

- **Technical cancellation:** the CAP-CP cancel or update message that ends the alert.
- **Public resolution messaging:** telling the public the alert has ended.
- **End of the active search:** the operational decision to stand down or refocus the search, which may come before or after the alert ends.

An expired or cancelled alert does not by itself end the search, and a continuing search does not by itself justify keeping an alert open.

1. Upon confirmed location of the person, the Activating Agency must immediately request or initiate cancellation or update of the CAP-CP alert, and the Alerting Authority carries out the technical cancellation. Where the police service is both, the two actions coincide. This applies whether the person is located safely, requires medical response, or is found deceased. Cancellation does not depend on the outcome.
2. Resolution must be communicated to the public through the channels authorized and available to the Activating Agency. These may include a non-BI CAP-CP update, a public statement, or the secondary channels in Section 6.7.
3. The family should be notified first, or at the same time as public resolution messaging, wherever operationally possible.
4. EMS and SAR engagement continues through physical recovery, independently of cancellation or update of the public alert.

The issuing authority should remove or update alert information on channels under its control as soon as practicable. It cannot guarantee removal from secondary sources such as screenshots, rebroadcasts, news reporting, or third-party archives.

Execution uses CAP's existing update and cancel mechanisms. The technical and regulatory limits on distributing a cancellation as a Broadcast Immediate alert are a matter for national determination (Section 7.7).

6.9 Privacy and Retention

The Functional-Risk Profile and supporting information contain sensitive personal and, at times, medical information. Collection, use, disclosure, retention, and disposal must comply with applicable privacy, records-management, and law-enforcement requirements. In addition:

- Public disclosure must be limited to what Section 6.5 allows.
- The Functional-Risk Profile is an internal investigative tool. It must not automatically become alert text.
- Retention and disposal follow applicable law and the Activating Agency's records schedule. This Specification does not prescribe a retention period or require deletion, because retention needs vary by jurisdiction and may extend beyond the active investigation.
- Vulnerability does not remove an adult's privacy, autonomy, or legal rights. Public alerting must rest on the Gate 1 and Gate 2 criteria and lawful authority, not solely on a caregiver's request or a diagnosis.

Consent and lawful disclosure. Where practicable, the Activating Agency should consider the missing person's known wishes, capacity, and any legally relevant consent or substitute decision-making arrangements before publicly disclosing personal information. Where consent cannot reasonably be obtained, disclosure must still have an independent lawful basis and satisfy the necessity and proportionality requirements in Section 6.5. This provision does not create an additional activation gate or require an urgent, otherwise lawful alert to be delayed while consent is sought. It should be reviewed against each jurisdiction's privacy and policing legislation before adoption.

6.10 Roles and Responsibilities

The table is a template. Jurisdictions differ on whether police act as the alert originator or route a request through a provincial or territorial EMO. Each jurisdiction should adapt the Activating Agency and Alerting Authority rows to its actual CAP-CP originator structure.

Role	Primary responsibility	Trigger point
9-1-1 / Dispatch	First point of contact. Applies the Preliminary Screening Checklist (Appendix A) without delaying dispatch of an immediate response.	Missing-person report received
Police of jurisdiction (Activating Agency)	Proposed owner of the Gate 1 and Gate 2 decisions, subject to jurisdictional authority. Conducts or directs verification, completes the Activation Request Form, and is accountable for the accuracy of alert content.	Gate 1 for the search response; Gate 2 for the alert
Alerting Authority (police, or a provincial or territorial EMO)	Validates CAP-CP formatting, applies the authorized distribution treatment, and submits the alert.	Activation Request Form received
NAAD System	Aggregates a validated CAP-CP message and makes it available to Alert Distributors within the designated geographic scope.	Valid message submitted by an authorized Alerting Authority
Broadcasters and wireless service providers (Alert Distributors)	Deliver the alert to the public under the CRTC requirements that apply to its distribution designation.	Alert received from NAAD
EMS	Where engaged, provides medical-response support and supports recovery planning. May help police interpret time-sensitive medical risk.	Requested by police
Search and Rescue (ground, air, water)	Carries out physical search operations informed by the Functional-Risk Profile and caregiver information. Receives briefing from police incident command.	Activated by police incident command
Family or caregiver	Primary source of the Functional-Risk Profile, a recent photograph, and physical description. Not the activating authority and does not control alert content. May request escalation review (Section 6.4).	Initial report; ongoing liaison through resolution

6.11 Technical Layer: CAP-CP and CEMCS

This layer is the messaging language: event codes, parameters, geography, and message structure. It is not the policy manual.

How the instruments relate.

1. The missingVPer CAP-CP event code identifies the event type. It already exists.
2. The SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List defines, for each listed event code, the CAP Urgency, Severity, and Certainty conditions required for Broadcast Immediate status. missingVPer is not on this list. amber and silver are, both with Urgency "Immediate", Severity "Severe or Extreme", and Certainty "Observed".
3. A qualifying alert is issued with the Broadcast Immediate Parameter set to "yes".
4. Under the NPAS Common Look and Feel Guidance, Last Mile Distributors should present a Broadcast Immediate alert immediately, and are not required to validate it against the BI Events List where a valid BI indicator is present. Their binding distribution obligations are set by the CRTC and should be confirmed against the applicable CRTC requirements.

A valid CAP-CP event code and BI qualification are therefore two different questions, governed by two different instruments. The national implementation question is not whether CAP-CP can represent a missing vulnerable person. It already can. The question is whether and how missingVPer is added to the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List, and with what Urgency, Severity, and Certainty conditions.

What this does not establish. Adding missingVPer to the BI Events List may not be the only step implementation requires. Authoring-interface configuration, wireless treatment, governance, jurisdictional authority, and Common Look and Feel changes may also be involved. This finding gives a Specification Committee a narrower starting question. It does not replace the need for one.

Open question: Urgency, Severity, and Certainty. If missingVPer is added to the list, its values must be set. Whether they should mirror amber and silver or differ for a functional-risk population should be determined through the Change Management Process.

Mapping requirement. Gate 1 and Gate 2 are operational determinations. Satisfying them is not automatically equivalent to meeting the CAP Urgency, Severity, and Certainty conditions required for Broadcast Immediate distribution. The national standard must therefore include an explicit mapping: which CAP values a VPA carries, and how Certainty is established for a person whose location and condition are, by definition, unknown. The existing amber and silver entries require Certainty "Observed", so the Specification Committee should state what must be observed or confirmed for a VPA to meet it.

Appendix C offers a proposed mapping as a starting point. It is informative only and is marked for technical validation.

Open question: wireless treatment. Whether a VPA delivered through Wireless Public Alerting requires the Wireless Immediate Parameter, and what message-construction requirements apply, should be determined through the same process.

Observation: the existing silver entry. The BI Events List describes silver as covering "a missing, wandering older adult who may be suffering from a documented cognitive disability or degenerative memory disorder." That entry uses age-specific and diagnosis-specific language. The Specification Committee may wish to consider it alongside the functional-risk approach proposed here.

CRTC requirements. PPP's understanding is that existing CRTC requirements already provide for distribution of alerts on SOREM's Broadcast Immediate list, as amended from time to time, so no

CRTC amendment is presumed. Broadcasters are bound mainly by regulation, and wireless service providers by a condition of service. If the CRTC determines a change is needed for broadcast or wireless distribution, PPP asks that it follow the national standard.

6.12 Implementation Model: Four-Layer Architecture

This Specification proposes a four-layer implementation model. Layer 2 holds the substantive content of the national operational standard. Layers 3 and 4 are jurisdiction-neutral: each province, territory, and local agency determines its own legal and operational vehicle.

Layer	What it holds	Who is responsible
1. Technical (CAP-CP / CEMCS)	The missingVPer event code, the Broadcast Immediate Events List, parameters, geography, and message structure (Section 6.11).	F/P/T IWG, Specification Committee, SOREM
2. National VPA Operational Standard	The functional-capacity definition, Gate 1 and Gate 2, the content ceiling, the geographic default, national training competencies, and common reporting metrics. This layer does not yet exist as a named instrument.	The national body designated under Section 7.3
3. Provincial and territorial authority	Legal and policy authority for a designated alerting authority to apply the VPA criteria; police activation authority; privacy and disclosure law; 9-1-1 and dispatch integration; training adoption and quality assurance; data collection and publication.	Each province and territory
4. Local operational delivery	The call, the assessment, the search, the alert, cancellation, and review, together with local training delivery.	Police services, dispatch centres, SAR, alerting authorities

Layer 2 is not CAP-CP. CAP-CP supplies message syntax. It is not the national missing-person policy manual. The functional-capacity definition and the activation gates belong in the operational standard. The structure parallels how the NPAS Common Look and Feel Guidance already layers operational rules on top of CAP-CP.

Layer 3 is jurisdiction-neutral. Each province or territory establishes or confirms authority through whatever instrument fits its legal architecture: statute, regulation, ministerial policy, or police policy, alone or in combination. This Specification does not assume that every jurisdiction needs legislation. A jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction implementation matrix, verified against each jurisdiction's enabling authority, should be maintained as a separate companion document.

Layer 4 runs in parallel, not in sequence.

1. CALL, URGENT MEASURES, ASSESS, GATE 1, ESCALATE: carried out by the police service or dispatch centre. Urgent search measures begin on reasonable suspicion and do not wait for Gate 1.
2. From ESCALATE, two paths run at the same time:
 - o SEARCH: the urgent measures already under way continue as the sustained, enhanced search under local and SAR protocols, whether or not Gate 2 is ever met.
 - o ALERT: Gate 2 is assessed. If it is met, a missingVPer CAP alert is prepared and, subject to the applicable technical and jurisdictional authorization, issued with the approved distribution treatment.
3. Both paths converge at RECOVER or RESOLVE, then CANCEL or UPDATE, then REVIEW. After-action reporting feeds data back to the Layer 3 collection function.

Whether every local alert-authoring interface currently exposes missingVPer and BI in a workable way is a fact to confirm during implementation, not to assume in advance.

6.13 Training Specification

PPP's companion *Model First Responder Training & Local Implementation Manual* is the applied-skills layer for this Specification. It is a draft. The competencies below are a model starting point for a Specification Committee's own training work, not finished content.

Level	Primary responsibility	Training role
Federal / national	Coordinate development of national model competencies, interoperability principles, and VPA training objectives with provinces, territories, and operational partners.	Coordinate model curriculum development with policing, SAR, emergency management, disability, dementia and autism expertise, lived experience, and research partners.
Provincial / territorial	Adopt or adapt the national model and establish applicable training requirements.	Identify required roles, approve delivery pathways, and connect training to academies, in-service systems, exercises, and quality assurance.
Municipal / local	Train personnel to the applicable standard and put it into practice through local protocols, supervision, and exercises.	Ensure role-appropriate completion, local protocol orientation, scenario practice, supervision, and after-action learning.

Core competency domains: risk assessment; functional vulnerability; caregiver and informant intelligence; search-behaviour considerations; autism-informed and dementia-informed response; communication; public-alert (Gate 2) decision-making; geography; privacy; cancellation; and after-action learning. The companion manual defines each in full.

A national competency framework should be developed collaboratively, not by a single municipality or diagnosis-specific organization. Where practical it should be hosted on existing national police and public-safety learning infrastructure; the Canadian Police Knowledge Network is one example. Subject-matter experts and people with lived experience should take part in curriculum design, review, and updating.

National competencies should establish minimum outcomes, not identical tactics. Jurisdictions must be able to adapt search, communications, staffing, and exercise delivery to urban, rural, remote, northern, Indigenous, and contract-policing environments while preserving the common functional-risk and alerting principles.

PPP's family preparedness resources, the Elopement Safety Plan & Response Workbook and its companion High-Risk Elopement Area Preparedness Guide, should be kept aligned with the priority information set in Section 6.3, so that a family completing them in advance has, in effect, pre-populated the Functional-Risk Profile.

6.14 Reporting Metrics and Post-Incident Review

Post-incident review. Every VPA activation, and every declined activation escalated under Section 6.4, must receive a structured post-incident review. Review of declined and escalated cases is required because those cases can reveal false-negative patterns, gaps in the criteria, or information that was unavailable or under-weighted at the time.

Review must examine both under-activation and over-activation: cases where no alert was issued but the criteria may need refinement, and cases where an alert was issued but public alerting was unlikely to help.

Each review must record, at minimum, these timestamps:

- time from report to the start of immediate search and life-safety measures, which is the direct compliance measure for Section 6.2;
- time from report to Gate 1 assessment;
- time from Gate 1 satisfaction to the Gate 2 determination;
- where Gate 2 is met, time from that determination to dissemination;
- where activation was first declined, time from decline to secondary escalation review; and
- time from activation to resolution.

These timestamps use fixed definitions, so that agencies measure the same thing:

- **Report:** the time the missing-person report is first received by 9-1-1 or police.
- **Activation:** the time the authorized decision-maker approves the Activation Request.
- **Dissemination:** the time the alert is confirmed as distributed to the public. Where confirmation is unavailable, the time the CAP-CP message was submitted is recorded instead, and marked as such.
- **Resolution:** the time the person's location is confirmed.

Each review must also assess whether the geographic scope was adequate, and any gap between the Functional-Risk Profile provided and what proved operationally relevant.

Minimum common reporting metrics. Each authorized agency should report on the following. They are defined once, nationally, as part of VPA governance, and are not asserted as a condition of CAP-CP use, which CAP-CP has no mechanism to enforce.

- The number of VPA-designated alerts issued.
- The timestamps listed above, in aggregate.
- Cancellations, update timeliness, and their reasons.
- Geographic scope, and how often the initial area required expansion.
- The percentage of Gate 1 and Gate 2 determinations that met the criteria on audit.
- Aggregated outcomes: located alive, located deceased, expired without the person being located, or cancelled for another reason.
- Alert contribution to recovery: whether information from the public materially assisted.
- The reasons Gate 2 designation was declined for audited Gate-1-qualifying cases, in aggregate.
- After-action identification of missed or delayed qualifying cases.
- Complaints or privacy incidents, in aggregate.
- Technical delivery failures or errors.

Compliance, not outcome. These metrics measure compliance with the activation criteria. They do not judge a decision by its outcome. A police service that reasonably activates on the information available should not be scored as having made a "false" activation because the person turned out to be safe.

Audit population. The audit must include a sample of Gate-1-qualifying cases in which no VPA was issued, not only cases in which one was. Auditing issued alerts alone can show high compliance while qualifying cases that were never alerted go undetected. Metrics that ask only whether the system alerted too often create an incentive toward under-activation.

Denominators and sampling. Every compliance percentage must state its denominator. For Gate 1, the denominator is the number of audited missing-person reports in which functional-risk indicators were recorded. For Gate 2, it is the number of audited Gate-1-qualifying cases, whether or not a VPA was issued. The sampling method, including whether the audit is a census or a random sample, its size, and its period, must be defined nationally before results are compared across agencies.

Because the Gate 1 denominator depends on indicators having been recorded, the audit must also draw a random sample of ordinary missing-person reports in which no indicators were recorded. That sample tests whether indicators were present but missed or not documented.

Publication. This data should be published annually in a publicly accessible form. Aggregated, de-identified review findings must feed back into this Specification and the companion training manual on a defined review cycle. Which national or F/P/T body aggregates and publishes the combined data is an open governance question (Section 7.7).

6.15 Evidence Base Supporting This Specification

The design choices in this Specification are supported by comparative-jurisdiction and peer-reviewed evidence. Some of it directly supports an operational requirement, and some only informs a design choice. Where a point is a design rationale and not a research finding, it says so. PPP's companion Evidence Base sets out the first five points, and the sixth rests on sources listed in Section 3.3.

- **Use existing national infrastructure.** The standard uses Canada's existing public-alerting infrastructure and does not create a separate distribution system. The U.S. Endangered Missing Advisory was likewise built onto existing AMBER Alert infrastructure, and Scotland's National Missing Persons Framework onto existing multi-agency structures.
- **Determine eligibility by functional risk, not diagnosis.** The Endangered Missing Advisory criteria described by the U.S. Department of Justice are functional. A 2009 survey reported in its guide found 34 U.S. states with formal plans, 16 of them with no age restriction. Scotland's 2025 National Missing Persons Framework confirms that, in some areas, the Herbert Protocol has also been used to gather information for people without dementia who are otherwise identified as at risk of going missing. The Herbert Protocol is a preparedness and information-sharing tool, not a public alert.
- **Provide rapid wireless notification for qualifying imminent-risk cases.** Lived-experience research by a Canadian team (Adekoya et al., 2026) documents a family member's belief that mobile notification could have changed the outcome in a case where the Silver Alert did not reach mobile phones.
- **Target alerts geographically and apply strict activation criteria.** Precision protects public attention and the alert's effectiveness, and answers alert-fatigue concerns by design. Neubauer et al. (2021) developed and evaluated a geographically targeted, opt-in community alert application for missing persons living with dementia. Their findings support the feasibility of involving community volunteers in locating missing people, while not establishing the effectiveness of mandatory Broadcast Immediate distribution.
- **Standardize activation, responder training, and intergovernmental coordination.** Adekoya et al. (2026) contrast Scotland's nationally embedded Herbert Protocol training with a Canadian officer's account of an unmet training gap.
- **Use one understandable vulnerable-person category.** Adekoya et al. (2025) recommend that alert systems share only minimal, relevant information, and disclose cognitive impairment only when necessary for the person's safety. That weighs against alert categories whose names announce a diagnosis. Gulacsik et al. (2022) found that alert labels and formats change how people rate risk and respond. Neither study compares condition-specific alert categories directly, so this point is a design rationale and not a research finding.

Pieces of this model exist in other jurisdictions. PPP's review did not find a single jurisdiction that combines age-neutral eligibility, a functional test, and Broadcast Immediate delivery.

7. Conformance

7.1 Conformance requirements

This section describes a proposed future conformity standard. While this document remains a discussion draft, it binds no jurisdiction, participation is voluntary, and no jurisdiction can yet be described as conformant or non-conformant.

An implementation conforms with this Operational Standard where it:

- preserves the Gate 1 and Gate 2 tests in Section 6.1, and the separation between them;
- applies the No Delay to Search principle in Section 6.2;
- applies the minimum-necessary content and privacy requirements in Sections 6.5 and 6.9;
- applies the proportional geographic-targeting principle in Section 6.6, including the cross-jurisdiction rules;
- uses the applicable CAP-CP and NPAS technical treatment established through the authorized interoperability process;
- implements role-appropriate training consistent with the national competencies in Section 6.13; and
- collects the nationally defined minimum reporting metrics in Section 6.14.

Conformance is not identical local procedure. A jurisdiction may decide who authorizes a VPA, what legislation or policy supports it, what dispatch software it uses, and how officers are trained locally. It may add its own administrative steps, such as supervisory authorization, documentation of the activation rationale, recordkeeping, or bilingual messaging requirements.

A jurisdiction may not remove a Gate 1 or Gate 2 element, collapse the two gates into one, or add substantive eligibility criteria that narrow either gate, such as a diagnosis requirement or a minimum time missing, and still describe its standard as conformant.

Assessing conformity. This draft does not designate a body to assess conformity. That is a governance function to be assigned under Section 7.3. Formal conformity assessment is reserved for an adopted standard. Until then, a jurisdiction may report which of the requirements above it has implemented. Such a report describes implementation only, and must not be presented as conformance.

7.2 Formal entry point

This proposal needs two adoption pathways, and they should not be confused.

The technical pathway. The CEMCS Change Management Process permits an individual, organization, or stakeholder community to propose a Specification Committee to Public Safety Canada's Interoperability Development Office, for consideration by the F/P/T IWG. This document is submitted through that entry point. That process covers emergency communications specifications. For this proposal, that means the technical questions in Section 6.11: the Broadcast Immediate Events List entry, the Urgency, Severity, and Certainty mapping, wireless treatment, and any Common Look and Feel changes.

The operational-policy pathway. A Specification Committee cannot by itself impose police search, training, or activation requirements. The operational content of this Specification (the two gates, the

decision path, training competencies, and reporting) needs adoption through F/P/T emergency-management and policing governance, and then by each province and territory under its own authority. No existing instrument is designated for that purpose. PPP asks governments to designate the body and mechanism through which the operational standard would be adopted nationally.

7.3 Governance and change control

Technical content under this Specification would be developed by a Specification Committee established by the F/P/T IWG, which oversees that process. Major revisions require SOREM approval under the Change Management Process. Public Safety Canada supports and coordinates the federal role. It does not unilaterally direct SOREM, and SOREM does not unilaterally draft or approve technical content.

Sustained national interoperability also requires a standing governance function. This Specification does not assign that function to a specific body. National adoption must define who performs each of the following:

- ownership of the national standard text and its version history;
- periodic review and amendment;
- approval of substantive changes, including consultation with the CRTC, SOREM, provincial and territorial alerting authorities, the NAAD operator, and Alert Distributors where technical implementation needs them;
- maintenance of technical interoperability across jurisdictions; and
- review and publication of aggregated post-incident data under Section 6.14.

7.4 Federal interoperability funding

PPP asks for federal interoperability funding to help provinces and territories align training, dispatch systems, and implementation with the national standard. The funding supports standards development, training material, and technical alignment. It is not for new alerting hardware or a new distribution network, which this Specification does not require.

7.5 Mandatory review

PPP proposes a mandatory review of activation data, criterion-compliance rates, and recovery outcomes within three years of this Specification's adoption. The VPA designation should not lapse automatically if that review is late. Any federal interoperability funding should carry the same three-year review.

7.6 Public accountability

PPP recommends that the responsible body publish a short public timeline once a Specification Committee is struck, identifying which body is expected to complete which action by when. This reduces the risk that the next step stalls between bodies that consider the work important but not urgent.

7.7 Matters requiring national determination

This Specification identifies the following questions and does not resolve them. They require determination through the Change Management Process and by the bodies named in Section 7.3, not by a police service during an individual incident.

- Whether and how missingVPer is added to the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List, and with what Urgency, Severity, and Certainty conditions.
- Whether a VPA delivered through Wireless Public Alerting requires the Wireless Immediate Parameter, and what message-construction requirements apply.
- The technical and regulatory limits on distributing a cancellation or resolution update as a Broadcast Immediate alert, and how a non-BI resolution update is standardized nationally.
- Whether "death or serious bodily harm" is the correct threshold wording for Element C.
- Which federal, provincial, or interjurisdictional body holds each governance function in Section 7.3, including aggregation and publication of national data.
- Whether the CRTC considers any change necessary for broadcast or wireless distribution.

7.8 Status of this document

This is a discussion draft. It does not itself constitute a CEMCS-conformant Specification Document. Its technical content (Section 6.11) is PPP's proposed starting point for a Specification Committee. Its operational content is PPP's proposed starting point for the operational-policy body that governments designate (Section 7.2). Conformance with the finished Specification Document will be determined by the Specification Committee and the F/P/T IWG, not by this document.

Appendix A: Preliminary Screening Checklist (Dispatch and Call-Taking)

For use at first contact to identify functional risk and route the report for expedited review. This checklist supports Gate 1 triage only. It does not authorize activation, and it must not delay dispatch of an immediate response (Section 6.2).

Missing-status confirmation

- ☐ Are the person's whereabouts unknown, and not explained by a scheduling miscommunication?

Uncertainty at first contact must not delay the immediate response where the circumstances indicate potential life-safety risk.

Functional-risk screen

- ☐ Does the caller identify any of: elopement or wandering history; limited ability to communicate or respond to searchers; medication or medical-equipment dependency; attraction to a specific hazard such as water, a roadway, or transit?
- ☐ Is the disappearance inconsistent with the person's known baseline behaviour?
- ☐ Do weather, terrain, or time of day increase urgency?
- ☐ What is the caller's relationship to the person and basis of knowledge (for example parent, group-home worker, teacher, stranger)? This helps responders weigh baseline information. It is not a credibility test on the report.

Any single affirmative indicator, or any combination of circumstances reasonably suggesting elevated risk, triggers expedited review against Section 6.1. No minimum number of affirmative answers is required. Unknown or incomplete answers must not be treated as negative answers.

Information collection (does not determine risk)

- ☐ Recent photograph requested?
- ☐ Physical description obtained?
- ☐ Clothing description obtained?
- ☐ Last known location and time obtained?
- ☐ Direction of travel obtained, if known?
- ☐ Does the family have a pre-completed safety plan or profile? If so, request it.

Appendix B: Activation Request Form (Template Fields)

Case fields

- The missing person: name, age, physical description, recent photograph (attached or not available).
- Functional-Risk Profile, in plain language (Section 6.3).
- Last known location, time, and direction of travel.
- Clothing description.
- Verifying officer or investigator: name and badge or ID number.
- Gate 1 checklist: confirmation that Elements A, B, and C are each met.
- Gate 2 checklist: confirmation that Elements D and E are each met.
- Recommended geographic scope and rationale.
- Approving decision-maker: name, rank, and time of approval.
- Time submitted to the Alerting Authority for CAP-CP issuance.

Timing and distribution-treatment fields (for post-incident review, Section 6.14)

- Time report received.
- Time immediate response and search began.
- Time of Gate 1 assessment.
- Time of Gate 2 determination.
- Distribution treatment applied (BI, BIP, WIP, as applicable).
- Time received by the Alerting Authority.
- Time CAP-CP message submitted.
- Whether the alert was confirmed as disseminated to the public, as distinct from submitted to NAAD, and the time of that confirmation.

Change log (one entry per change, for post-incident review)

- Each change to geographic scope: time, new area, rationale, and who authorized it.
- Each alert update issued: time and what changed.
- Cancellation authorization: name, rank, and time.
- Time the CAP-CP cancel or update message was submitted.
- Time public resolution messaging was issued, and through which channels.
- Time the active search ended or was refocused.
- Resolution outcome category (Section 6.14).

Appendix C: Proposed CAP Mapping for a VPA (Informative, for Technical Validation)

This appendix is informative. It is PPP's proposed starting point for the mapping requirement in Section 6.11. It has not been validated against the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List or the CAP-CP rules, and a Specification Committee may replace it entirely.

Every value below is proposed and subject to technical validation. Confirmation of the qualifying disappearance is not the same as certainty about the person's whereabouts, and "Observed" is not established merely because Gate 1 and Gate 2 are satisfied.

Element and proposed value	Basis	Still to be validated
Event code: missingVPer	The existing code is used unchanged.	Whether any event-code change is needed.
Urgency: Immediate	CAP 1.2: "Responsive action SHOULD be taken immediately". Gate 2 requires that public action now could help locate the person.	Whether "Immediate" fits every Gate 2 case.
Severity: Severe or Extreme	CAP 1.2: "Significant" or "Extraordinary threat to life or property". Element C requires a risk of death or serious bodily harm.	Whether the two values need separate criteria.
Certainty: Observed	CAP 1.2: "Determined to have occurred or to be ongoing", applied to "the subject event of the alert message". The subject event is the disappearance. Once police confirm it, it has occurred and is ongoing, though the person's location remains unknown, as under amber and silver.	Whether the CAP-CP rules and SOREM read "Observed" this way, and whether Element A's "sufficiently confirmed" is high enough to count as "determined".
Broadcast Immediate Parameter: Yes	Set only where Gate 1 and Gate 2 are both satisfied.	Depends on missingVPer being added to the BI Events List.
Wireless Immediate Parameter: Yes	Wireless delivery is central to the objective in Section 5.	Whether and how the parameter applies to a VPA.

The proposed Urgency, Severity, and Certainty values match those the SOREM Broadcast Immediate Events List, Version 2.1, already requires for amber and silver. The CAP 1.2 definitions are quoted from the [OASIS Common Alerting Protocol Version 1.2](#) standard.

The Certainty row remains the hardest question. On the CAP 1.2 wording, "Observed" describes the subject event and not the person's whereabouts, which supports the proposed value. That reading is PPP's, and it is not settled until the Specification Committee confirms it against the CAP-CP rules.

Revision Note: Documents This Draft Replaces

This document is the single statement of the proposed standard. It replaces three earlier PPP documents:

- *National Framework for Vulnerable Persons Alerts* (2026);
- *Federal Responsibilities: A Body-by-Body Breakdown of Required Federal Action* (2026); and
- *National VPA Operational Standard, External Review Draft 0.92* (September 2026), whose operational content is merged into Section 6 and the appendices.

The first two described this proposal as requiring a new CAP-CP alert profile, drafted and approved by SOREM at Public Safety Canada's direction. On review of CEMCS governance materials, PPP found that framing inaccurate and has corrected it here. No new CAP-CP event code or alert profile is presumed. Section 7.2 sets out the two adoption pathways.