



## RESOLUTION 2020-01

### National Public Alerting System

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#### **Preamble:**

Approved by governments across Canada in 2010, the Communications Interoperability Strategy for Canada (CISC) was developed by a wide range of public safety and emergency management experts from F/P/T governments, Chiefs of Police, Fire, and Paramedic Services, and many other stakeholders. The CISC is evidence based and founded upon the Canadian Communications Interoperability Continuum which outlines five key strategic "lanes" for improving communications interoperability between public safety partners; governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training, exercises, and ongoing usage.

CISC governance flows from F/P/T Ministers with Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM) designated as the body responsible for overseeing it. The CISC approved governance model includes the SOREM Response Working Group with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Fire, and Paramedics as key governance stakeholders.

Launched in 2014 on radio and televisions platforms, the National Public Alerting System, known as Alert Ready is a key component of the CISC. Alert Ready delivers critical and potentially life-saving alerts to Canadians through television, radio and now LTE-connected and compatible wireless devices.

The Alert Ready system was developed with partners that included federal, provincial and territorial emergency management officials, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Pelmorex, the broadcasting industry and wireless service providers.

In 2016, the OACP, amongst many others, urged the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications (CRTC) to compel all wireless service providers to implement public alerting capabilities using already available technology. In addition, the Public Alerting Working Group (sponsored by Public Safety Canada) acknowledged the need to establish a different governance entity than is currently in place at the Pelmorex Alerting Governance Council. *"There are recognized gaps in the overall governance of an integrated National Public Alerting System (NAPS). There was/is no governance entity that includes government and industry stakeholders and has a mandate to establish NPAS-level policies".*

The CISC is mandated for review and revision in consultation with key stakeholders every three years, or more frequently if necessary. The Action Plan attached to the CISC, is to be "reviewed and updated at least annually and approved by SOREM. The F/P/T Interoperability Working Group will report to SOREM annually, or more

frequently if necessary, on the progress in implementing the Action Plan and will make recommendations for amendments”.

The CISC has not been reviewed in over five years.

***Review of Communications Interoperability Strategy for Canada – Prioritizing the National Public Alerting System***

The *Police Services Act* of Ontario defines the duties of a police officer to include, but not be limited to 42 (1) (b): preventing crimes and other offences and providing assistance and encouragement to other persons in their prevention. Further, as was reinforced in *Jane Doe v. Metropolitan Toronto Police*, the public have a common law duty to warn the public or where known, a target segment of the public.

The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police recognizes that public alerting is an important tool for ensuring the safety of all Canadians during severe events. In emergencies, vital, accurate and timely information saves lives. It is critical to notify and communicate with anyone who is at risk whether they are local residents, businesses, or visitors to any area.

**WHEREAS** to have an impact on public safety, effective public alerting requires a chain of interconnected events; issuance, distribution and reception of broadcast immediate alert messages, and;

**WHEREAS** public alerts are authenticated and collated by the National Alerts Aggregation and Dissemination (NAAD) System, operated by Pelmorex Communications Inc. or, in Alberta by the Alberta Emergency Alert System, and;

**WHEREAS** only authorized government agencies are permitted to issue alerts, and;

**WHEREAS** at present, alerts are issued by F/P/T organizations and those designated as alerting authorities (e.g. Amber Alerts in Ontario are issued by the Ontario Provincial Police), and;

**WHEREAS** a significant governance gap exists that must be addressed with respect to the issuance of police related civil emergency and terrorism events.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police calls on the Ministry of the Solicitor General, as the Ontario representative on SOREM, to urge SOREM to commit to a comprehensive review of the Communications Interoperability Strategy for Canada and all of its action plans.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that in this review, a priority be placed upon a review on the National Public Alerting System with a focus on international best practices and including all five lanes of the Canadian Communications Interoperability Continuum.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this review include active participation of police, fire, and paramedic services from across Canada.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this review explore the possibility of extending alerting authorities to first responder public safety agencies based upon a range of emergencies including but not limited to; active shooters, missing persons and other localized emergencies.