

Personal Alert Victoria Information sheet



Personal Alert Victoria

Personal Alert Victoria (PAV) is a personal monitoring and emergency response service. It is funded by the Victorian Government and provided free of charge to eligible frail, isolated older people and people with disabilities to help them keep living in their homes.

Am I eligible for PAV?

Eligibility for PAV is determined at an assessment that is done in your own home. To be eligible for the PAV service you must meet the following criteria.

Eligibility criteria

Part A

You must meet ALL of these (1, 2 and 3).

- 1 You agree to daily monitoring.
- 2 You are capable of using and willing to wear the PAV pendant at all times.
- 3 You live alone OR are alone for most of the day or evening OR live with a person who would be unable to get to the phone in an emergency or is unable to use the phone.

Part B

You must meet two of these (4, 5 and 6).

- 4 You have had at least one fall that needed medical attention in the previous six months, or be at risk of falls.
- 5 You suffer from a major medical or chronic condition that puts you at risk of medical emergencies or has some ongoing effect on your health or wellbeing.
- 6 You are taking six or more different medications on a permanent basis that are prescribed by your doctor or medical specialist.

Who does the assessment?

PAV assessment organisations are usually your local council, community health service, aged care assessment service, district nursing service and some publicly-funded community rehabilitation centres. Health organisations and local governments work together to provide referrals where necessary and help point you in the right direction.

Your doctor may suggest PAV for you, but a specific assessment must be undertaken by an assessor from a PAV assessment organisation.

What is the PAV service?

The PAV service includes both emergency response and daily monitoring. Emergency response ensures that help is available when you call. Daily monitoring provides a wellbeing check.

The PAV service relies on four linked parts:

- 1 A **pendant** is worn around the neck or wrist. It has a button that, when pressed, sends a signal to the receiver unit. The receiver unit then automatically dials the PAV service. The PAV pendant works within 50 metres of the receiver unit, on average. If you are someone who is 'always on the go' outside of your home, the PAV service will not suit you.
- 2 The **receiver unit** sits next to your telephone and is plugged into the telephone line. It receives the signal from the pendant then automatically dials the PAV service.
- 3 The **PAV service** has trained staff to respond to your call for assistance – 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- 4 **Contacts** are nominated – family members, friends or neighbours – who are willing to help. You will need three or four contacts who can assist you promptly (within about 30 minutes, or in rural locations, within a reasonable time). People without contacts nearby may be referred to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Response Service.

1 PAV Pendant



2 Receiver unit automatically dials PAV Service



3 PAV Service staff receive call and may ring nominated contact



4 Nominated contact



What happens when I press the button on the pendant?

If you are unwell, or have fallen or need help and you press the button on the pendant, the PAV service will contact you immediately to see why you called. PAV service staff can speak with you, through the receiver unit, within a certain range, even if you cannot get to the phone.

Depending on the circumstances of your call, the PAV service will:

- help or reassure you over the phone, or
- call one of your nominated contacts and ask them to check on you, or
- call emergency services.

Frequently asked questions

I don't speak English very well. Can I use the service?

Yes. The PAV service uses interpreters and family contacts through the phone system when they are talking to you.

I have different communication needs. Can I use the service?

Yes. People who are deaf, hearing-impaired or have complex communication needs can use the service. Equipment can be modified to meet the needs of most people.

Is there a waiting period for the service?

Yes. There will be a waiting period until a unit becomes available.

How is the waiting list set up?

Only people with high support and health needs are on the PAV service waiting list. People go onto the waiting list on date order that the referral is made by the assessor to the PAV service. The only exception is people aged 100 years and over. They go to the top of the waiting list as a priority.

What if I want the service immediately and do not feel that I can wait?

As the waiting list only has people with high support and health needs listed, the fairest way to assign units is by date order the referrals are made to the PAV service. Someone put on the waiting list in May will get a unit before someone who is put on the waiting list in June. If you feel that you are unable to wait, or you do not meet the PAV service eligibility criteria, then you may decide to buy a private service in the meantime. You are encouraged to refer to the Yellow Pages under 'Alerting systems or services' to select a provider.

For more information about assessment, contact your local council's Aged and Disability program. Local councils are listed in the Business and Government White Pages under 'Your Government'.

Other suggestions

If you are ineligible (or even if you are eligible) for the PAV service and are interested in thinking about other types of private monitoring or social support services, you may find the following suggestions useful.

- A listing of personal assistance call services is located in the Yellow Pages under 'Alerting systems and/or services', for you to contact.
- You may wish to arrange a daily telephone call with a family member, friend or neighbour. This may benefit both, especially if the other person also lives alone.
- Pre-program your telephone so you can quickly and easily dial family members with just the press of one button.
- Creating a telephone list of friends, neighbours and associates (maybe people from a club or group that you belong to or once belonged to) is a good idea. Each person rings the next person on the list to check on each other and provide some social support.
- Speak to your telephone company about mobile and cordless telephones and intercom systems.
- Telecross is run by Red Cross and operates across Australia. Telecross volunteers make a daily call to isolated people living in their own home who may be at risk of accident or illness. If the person cannot be contacted emergency procedures are activated. People must be cognitively able to participate to be eligible. For more information call 1800 246 850 or refer to www.redcross.org.au/vic/services and follow links to Telecross.
- Speak to trusted family, neighbours and friends about establishing some community watch activities. Developing a code to signal when assistance is required can be simple and effective. For example, raising the front room blinds during the day can be the code to show that you are well. Alternatively, uncollected newspapers and mail may show a need for assistance.
- Contact the Independent Living Centre on **(03) 9362 6111**. The centre has a variety of daily living aids on display.