



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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OPNAVINST 1754.5C
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1754.5C

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: FAMILY READINESS GROUPS

Ref: (a) U.S. Navy Family Readiness Group Handbook 2011
(b) OPNAVINST 1750.1G
(c) DoD Instruction 1000.15 of 24 October 2008
(d) DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation (JER), August 1993
(e) OPNAVINST 4001.1F
(f) OPNAVINST 5380.1D
(g) OPNAVINST 1754.8

Encl: (1) Sample By-laws

1. Purpose. To establish policy, assign responsibilities, and prescribe procedures for interactions with family readiness groups (FRG) and their operations onboard Navy installations. This instruction has been updated to reflect new references, terminology, and Web site information. This instruction is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 1754.5B.

3. Applicability. All Navy commands.

4. Discussion

a. Nature of FRGs

(1) FRG is a private organization, closely-affiliated with the command, comprised of family members, Sailors, and civilians associated with the command and its personnel, who support the flow of information; provide practical tools for adjusting to Navy deployments and separations; and serve as a link between the command and Sailors' families. FRGs help plan, coordinate, and conduct informational, care-taking, morale-building, and social activities to enhance preparedness and command mission readiness, and to increase the resiliency and well-being of Sailors and their families.

(2) FRGs are an integral part of a support service network that includes ombudsmen, fleet and family support centers (FFSC), chaplains, school liaison officers, and child development centers at the command-level, to provide services in support of Service members and their families.

(3) FRGs interact with installation activities (e.g., FFSC, morale, welfare, and recreation chapel) and other Navy-affiliated private organizations (e.g., Chief Petty Officers Association, Navy Wives Club of America, Navy League Association, United Services Organization) to help coordinate activities for the support of unit members and their families.

(4) Sample by-laws for an FRG are contained in enclosure (1).

b. Structure of FRGs

(1) FRGs consist of elected officers and group members.

(a) FRG Elected Officers. If an FRG chooses to fundraise, at a minimum, the FRG must elect a president and a treasurer. FRGs may include additional elected officers; see enclosure (1).

(b) FRG Members. FRGs are open to all family members, Sailors, and civilians associated with the command and its personnel.

(2) Further details on FRG structure are contained in enclosure (1) and reference (a). Reference (a) is available for download from Commander, Navy Installations Command Web site at https://cnic.navy.mil/content/dam/cnic/hq/pdfs/n91_fleet_and_family_support_program/deployment_readiness/DeploymentFamilyReadinessGroupsHandbook.pdf.

c. Relationship Between Ombudsman and FRG. The ombudsman program is governed by reference (b). FRGs operate distinctly from the ombudsman, the official Navy representative tasked with improving mission readiness through family readiness. The ombudsman may collaborate with the FRG on behalf of the command, but will not serve as an FRG officer. However, ombudsmen are encouraged to attend FRG meetings and events.

d. Command Support. Installation commanding officers may permit properly approved FRGs that meet the requirements of reference (c), to operate on Navy installations. Individual commands will provide limited logistical support, such as access to command spaces, use of equipment, and command representatives for FRG events, based on the criteria listed in section 3-211 of reference (d) and as directed by reference (c). Expenditure of Navy appropriated and nonappropriated funds is generally not authorized for FRG social activities, to include provision of food and beverages. Questions regarding specific events should be referred to judge advocates or office of general counsel attorneys in the chain of command.

e. FRG Use of Command Name, Seals, Logos, or Insignia

(1) The FRG may use the name of the command in the name of the FRG, with the approval of the commanding officer (CO).

(2) FRGs may not use seals, logos, or insignia of commands on any FRG letterhead, correspondence, or titles.

(3) The FRG's status as a private organization must be apparent and unambiguous. Printed material, Web sites, and electronic media must include the prominent disclaimer contained in reference (c).

f. Fundraising

(1) As a private organization, an FRG may fundraise.

(2) As directed in reference (d), commanders may officially endorse and approve FRG fundraising events when the fundraising occurs within command spaces and is conducted among their own members or dependents to raise money for the benefit of their own command members or dependents.

(3) In regards to fundraising elsewhere on the base, FRGs must obtain approval of the installation CO to hold fundraisers on base when the location is other than unit command spaces.

(4) FRGs may solicit local businesses or conduct fundraising off the base. Commands do not approve or disapprove such activities. However, FRG members must not solicit gifts or donations on behalf of the command or imply that the Navy officially endorses their fundraising activity. Service members and civilian employees must never solicit donations from defense contractors, even if acting in their personal capacity as a private member of the FRG.

(5) FRGs are volunteer organizations governed by bylaws and may choose to operate as a tax-exempt, not-for-profit social welfare organization. The Internal Revenue Service has specific registering and filing requirements for tax-exempt organizations and may levy fines for those that are non-compliant. Internal Revenue Code 501 (c)(4) defines a social welfare group as a not-for-profit organization operated exclusively to promote social welfare. Due to changes to Internal Revenue Service tax laws in 2015, organizations must now notify the Secretary of the Treasury within 60 days of formation through IRS Form 8976 Notice of Intent to Operate Under Section 501(c)(4) and pay a \$50 fee. Failure to file IRS form 8976 within 60 days can result in a \$20 per day penalty, not to exceed \$5,000. It is highly encouraged that FRG leadership consult with a tax professional regarding any questions about tax exempt status and required filing actions. FFSCs and military legal assistance attorneys are not authorized to review or complete tax documents on behalf of an FRG.

g. Gifts

(1) An FRG is free to accept solicited and unsolicited gifts offered to the FRG without command approval but compliant with its by-laws. An FRG must never accept a gift on behalf of a command or the Department of the Navy. Similarly, a CO must never accept a gift on behalf of an FRG.

(2) Any donation of gifts from an FRG to the command must be processed following Navy's gift acceptance rules; reference (e) applies.

5. Action

a. Commander, Navy Installations Command must:

(1) Establish implementing guidance for FRG operations on Navy installations.

(2) Provide command and FRG leadership standardized curriculum and training through the local FFSC to include information on establishing an FRG; financial planning and fundraising policies; tax reporting requirements; event planning; and emergency response.

(3) Publish and maintain an FRG handbook (reference (a)) and other materials to assist commands and FRGs in maintaining appropriate support programs and activities.

b. United States Fleet Forces Command must:

(1) Establish implementing guidance for afloat units.

(2) Utilize the local FFSC to execute FRG leadership training.

c. COs of Operational Units and Installations

(1) Must review by-laws prior to permitting an FRG to use the command name. COs must ensure the FRG does not improperly use the command name in a way that either implies Navy endorsement or is otherwise discrediting to the command or the United States Navy.

(2) Must protect personal information about command members and dependents, releasing it only as directed in references (f) and (g). Commands must obtain written consent from command members before releasing personal information to an FRG.

(3) Must designate an official command liaison to the FRG as directed by section 3-201 of reference (d). The command liaison may officially represent the command and act in an advisory capacity to the FRG in discussions of matters of mutual interest. In this manner, the command liaison serves as a conduit of information between the command and the FRG. The

command liaison cannot direct or otherwise be involved in matters of management or control of the FRG. This liaison may be an officer, senior enlisted member, or civilian employee of the command.

(4) May provide logistical support, such as access to command spaces, use of equipment, and command representatives, for permissible FRG events, consistent with section 3-211 of reference (d) and available resources.

(5) Must not endorse off-base FRG fundraisers when the FRG solicits from anyone other than command members or their dependents, and when using proceeds of a fundraiser to benefit someone other than the command members and their dependents. As examples:

(a) The CO must not endorse FRG solicitation of local businesses.

(b) The CO must not endorse an FRG fundraiser to benefit a charity of the FRG's choosing.

(6) Must not solicit or accept gifts on behalf of an FRG.

(7) Must not directly manage or control an FRG, as directed in section 3-202 of reference (d).

(8) Will, in those instances where FRGs are not complying with applicable rules or conditions for continued support, revoke FRG permission to use the command name, deny requests to endorse or otherwise support FRG events or fundraisers, and decline to accept gifts or services from the FRG. Any such action will be communicated to the installation commander.

(9) Must review FRG by-laws or charter to determine whether the FRG will be approved to operate onboard an installation or unit, as appropriate.

d. Installation Commanding Officers (in addition to subparagraph 5c) must:

(1) Review the input of the unit CO, when analyzing whether to provide support to an FRG.

(2) Authorize or provide support for permissible FRG events on the installation, to include access to appropriate installation spaces and use of equipment, consistent with references (d) and (c), and available resources.

(3) Act as the approval authority for all FRG fundraising events on the installation when they are not conducted within affiliated command spaces.

e. Operational Unit COs (in addition to subparagraph 5c) will provide input to installation COs to assist in analyzing whether to provide support to a unit FRG (e.g., after review of FRG by-laws, unit CO will inform installation CO of favorable support of FRG, and request approval for fundraising on the base outside of unit spaces).

6. Disestablishment. When in the best interest of the FRG to disestablish, the FRG may be dissolved by a vote of its members.


7. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

8. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, Chief of Naval Operations, Manpower Personnel Training and Education (CNO (N1)) will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1.

9. Forms and Information Management Control.

a. Data collection requirements for Family Readiness Group volunteers and volunteer training contained in paragraph 4 and subparagraph 5a(2) has been assigned (pending) OMB 0703-XXXX.

b. IRS Form 8976 Notice of Intent to Operate Under Section 501(c)(4) can be electronically submitted. Instruction on how to electronically submit and link to Form 8976 Electronic Notice Registration System can be found on the IRS Website:
<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/electronically-submit-your-form-8976-notice-of-intent-to-operate-under-section-501c4>



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Releasability and Distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, <http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil/>

SAMPLE BY-LAWS

[This sample may be altered to reflect the specific desires and procedures to be observed by the individual FRG. For further reference, refer to Robert's Rules of Order, available at most libraries.]

Article I – Name

The name of this group will be the _____ FRG. Attached is the memorandum from the commanding officer granting permission to use the command name.

Article II – Purpose

The purpose of this FRG will be to plan, coordinate, and conduct informational, care-taking, morale-building and social activities to enhance preparedness, command mission readiness, and to increase the resiliency and well-being of Sailors and their families. The FRG will promote friendship and mutual support among the members.

Article III – Membership and Dues

- a. Membership is open to command members (both military and civilian employees) in their personal capacity, their spouses, children, other family members, and other civilians associated with the command (e.g., retired members).
- b. The FRG will not unlawfully deny membership based on race, color, creed, sex, age, disability, national origin, or unlawfully discriminate against any individuals.
- c. Dues (if desired). Dues of this FRG will be _____ (e.g., per month or year). Payment of dues will (or will not) be a required condition of FRG membership.

Article IV - Slate of Officers

- a. The elected officers of this FRG will be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer. They will govern and operate the group per these by-laws. The term of office will be for _____ (e.g., 1 year) and no officers may succeed themselves. (All elected officer must be up-to-date, dues paying members of this FRG.)
- b. The executive board will consist of the elected officers of this FRG, the advisors (if any), the chair of all standing committees, and other members as invited by the executive board.

c. The commanding officer has appointed an official command liaison to this FRG. This liaison officially represents the command and acts in an advisory capacity to the FRG in discussions of matters of mutual interest. The command liaison is not a member of the executive board, and may not direct or otherwise be involved in matters of management or control of this FRG.

Article V - Nomination and Election of Officers

a. All FRG officers will be nominated by a committee headed by a chair, appointed by the president, plus three to five FRG members.

b. The names of all nominees will be published to the entire FRG membership. At the next regularly scheduled meeting, the slate will be presented to those FRG members present to be voted on by secret ballot. All members present will be eligible to vote.

c. The newly elected officers will assume their duties at an installation ceremony which will be arranged by the outgoing executive board.

Article VI - Duties of Officers

a. The president will preside at all regular meetings of the group and perform all other duties necessary to carry out the business of the group. The president will be a former officio member of all committees except the nominating committee. The president chairs the gift acceptance committee.

b. The vice president will assist the president and, in his or her absence, will assume the duties of the president.

c. The secretary will keep the minutes of all meetings of the group and the executive board. The secretary will have the minutes ready for duplication upon request by the next regularly scheduled meeting. The secretary is the custodian of all the permanent records of the group. The secretary will handle all the correspondence of the group as directed by the president and the executive board.

d. The treasurer will be responsible for all FRG funds, to include those funds raised by dues, FRG fundraising activities, or private donations. The treasurer is responsible for safeguarding funds, establishing and overseeing accounts in appropriate financial institutions, reconciling financial statements, providing a statement of finances at all regular FRG meetings, filing necessary Federal, State, and local tax documents (if applicable), and submitting to an audit at least annually by the executive board or other designated reviewer. The treasurer sits as a member of the gift acceptance committee.

e. Two signatures will be required to sign checks or to withdraw cash. Both the treasurer and the president will be authorized to sign checks on the group bank accounts. Any expenses incurred by the routine operations of the group or its activities may be reimbursed by the authorization of either the treasurer or president. Any expenses for other than routine operations must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the board members present at any duly constituted meeting.

Article VII - Meetings

a. The regular meetings of the FRG will be held on the _____ (e.g., 1st Wednesday of every month) at a place designated at the previous meeting and approved by the executive board.

b. Should a meeting have to be called prior to the regular meeting or a decision made, the president or two officers will give their approval. The president or two FRG officers must give approval to convene an emergency meeting.

c. All members are to be notified of all regular general meetings.

Article VIII– Accepting Gifts

a. This FRG will accept only those gifts that further the purpose of enhancing preparedness, command mission readiness, and increase the resiliency and well-being of Sailors and their families.

b. Only the gifts listed in this subparagraph may be accepted: cash, gifts-in-kind (such as materials, equipment, food, supplies) that can be utilized by the members in carrying forth the purpose of this FRG and or in support of specific FRG events, and gifts of services, where properly related to the purpose of the FRG and associated events.

c. Gifts will only be accepted where offered directly to the FRG and approved by the gift acceptance committee. The president and treasurer serve as chair and assistant chair of the committee, along with at least three members appointed by the president from the general membership of the FRG. Proposed gifts that are not in keeping with the FRG purpose, or are otherwise inconsistent with the traditional values of this military community, will be declined. A record of the proposed gift, value, and the committee's final acceptance decision will be maintained and reported at the next general meeting.

d. The FRG will not accept any gift that is offered to or intended for the command or the Department of the Navy. Such gift offers will be referred to the command for processing.

e. No gift will be accepted that inures to the personal financial benefit of any individual member(s).

Article IX - Amending the By-laws

The by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the participating members during a regularly scheduled meeting, provided the elected officers are present, and notice of the proposed amendment is given 30 days prior to the meeting.

Article X – Termination

Upon dissolution of the group, after paying or making provision for payment of all debts, any remaining money will be distributed to charitable organizations chosen by the final members of the group.

ADOPTED by a majority vote of assembled FRG members, this _____ day of _____, 20__.

President

Secretary