

# FRG

HANDBOOK

2018

FAMILY  
READINESS  
GROUPS



**CNIC**  
• FLEET • FIGHTER • FAMILY

Fleet and Family  
Support Program

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# Introduction

Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are private organizations closely affiliated with a command that operate under the provisions of OPNAVINST 1754.5C, Family Readiness Groups. FRGs are an integral part of a support network that bundles key services such as ombudsmen, Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs), chaplains, school liaison officers and Child Development Centers at the command level. The assistance provided by FRGs help to support to military members and their families.

The purpose of this handbook is to assist FRG leadership and provide information and ideas for establishing and maintaining successful groups.

## FRG Defined

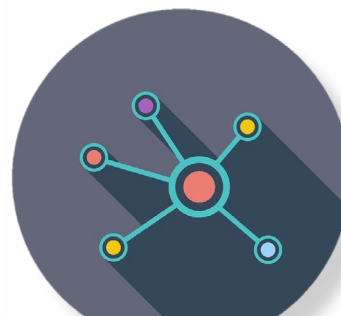
The purpose of a Family Readiness Group is to help plan, coordinate and conduct informational, caretaking, morale-building and social activities to enhance preparedness and command mission readiness and to increase the resiliency and well-being of Sailors and their families. FRGs may offer programs or services that complement appropriated-fund or non-appropriated-fund activities on an installation, but they should not compete with such programs.



Informative



Morale-Building



Social

# Family Readiness Groups Defined

## FRG History

FRGs commonly were associated with seagoing commands and provided support to deployed Sailors' families living near the command's homeport.

Family Readiness Groups formerly were called "wives' clubs" and were comprised mainly of women. The first documented club was the Navy Wives' Club of America (NWCA), chartered in 1936. The name changed in the 1980s as more women became active-duty Navy members. Since then, FRGs have gone by several names, including:

- ★ Family Support Group.
- ★ Family Support Club.
- ★ Friends and Family Support Group.
- ★ Command Family Association.
- ★ Spouse Group.

Today, with the Navy facing more diversity in the number and length of deployments, as well as the increased number of women serving in the military, the Navy has adopted the term Family Readiness Groups to reflect the change in the Operations Tempo (OPTEMPO) of commands. Families and Sailors need to be ready at all times. The days of planned deployments, with a long period at home afterward, are history. In addition, more Sailors on shore duty are being assigned to extended temporary duty through individual augmentee (IA) assignments. Because these Sailors deploy alone, their families have the same needs, and in many cases, additional needs, as those of a Sailor who deploys with a ship, squadron or battalion.

In September 2006, the first instruction establishing Navy policy and regulations on FRGs was developed and released. Navy leadership revised the instruction in 2011, and again in 2018. Anytime an FRG has questions about procedures or requirements, the first step should be to consult the most current version of the OPNAVINST 1754.5, *Family Readiness Groups*.



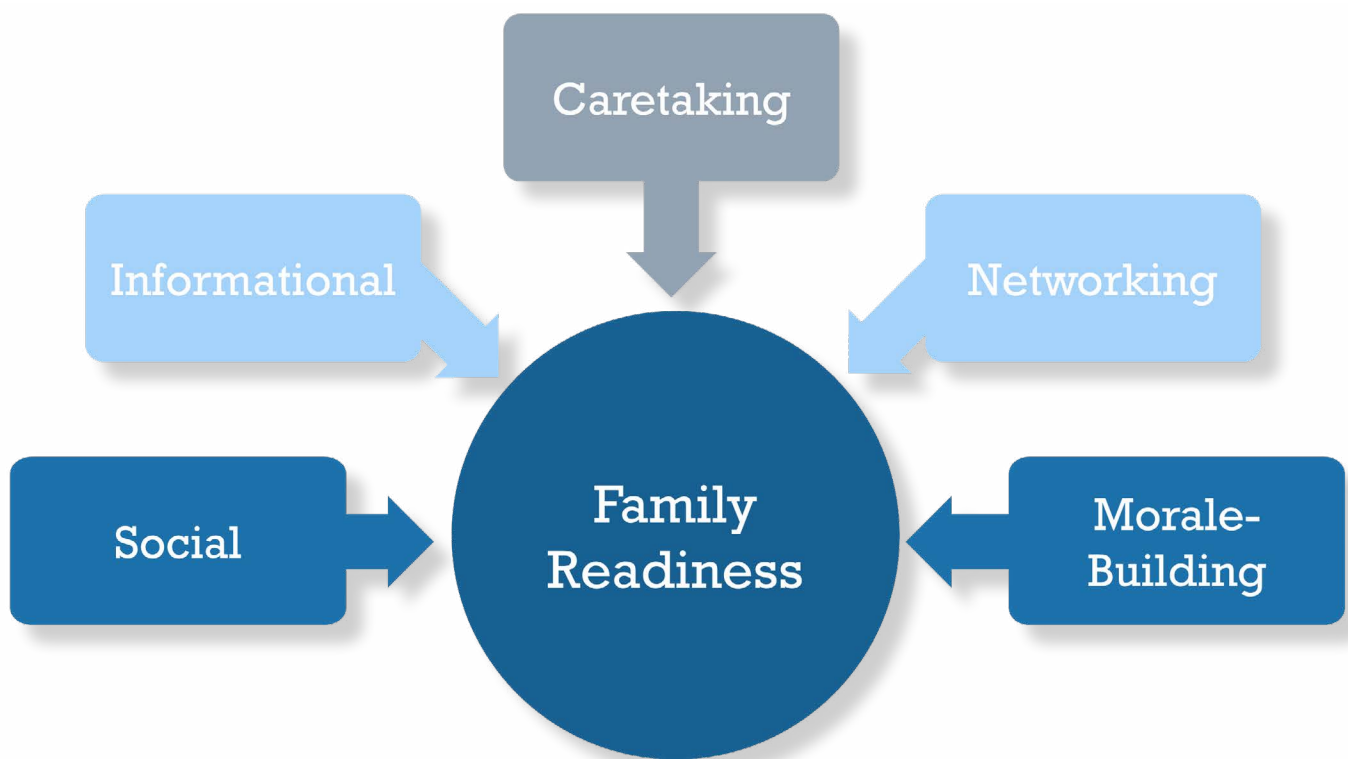
*Note: Family support groups that wish to remain an unofficial support group, separate from the command, may do so. Unofficial support groups do not receive command support (including, but not limited to, use of the command name, command spaces/equipment or command representatives).*

## Why Have a Family Readiness Group?

FRGs are an integral part of the military lifestyle. These groups serve the needs of individuals who share a common experience. An FRG's purpose is to:

- ★ Welcome/mentor members who are new to the Navy lifestyle.
- ★ Coordinate social events, such as holiday celebrations.
- ★ Prepare members for deployments and homecoming.
- ★ Provide family support during deployments.
- ★ Help families adjust to challenges and to support one another in times of personal, unit or area crises.

When families of service members know their resources, have fun and can draw on the strength of new friends, coping skills are enhanced. A group that works well together and promotes a team effort brings out the best of this challenging lifestyle. Lasting friendships, the satisfaction of helping others and a sense of pride are all positive results of belonging to a strong FRG.



# Actions Family Readiness Groups Perform

## FRGs SHOULD:

- ✓ Attend FRG training either in person at the local FFSC or virtually via the online training.
- ✓ Elect a president and treasurer (if fundraising).
- ✓ Establish bylaws for review by the commanding officer (CO); make them available to members.
- ✓ Open membership to all family members, Sailors and civilians associated with the command and its personnel.
- ✓ Plan, coordinate and conduct social events and informational activities designed to promote and improve family readiness.
- ✓ Establish an agenda and identify objectives for each meeting.
- ✓ Interact with installation activities (FFSC, Morale, Welfare and Recreation [MWR] and chaplains, etc.) to coordinate support and avoid duplication of services.
- ✓ Coordinate with the command liaison on matters of mutual interest to both the command and the FRG.
- ✓ Request the CO's endorsement or approval of FRG fundraising events when the event occurs within command spaces and is conducted among command members or families to raise money for the benefit of their own command members or families.
- ✓ Dissolve the FRG when a vote of its members determines that disestablishment is in the best interest of the FRG.
- ✓ Abide by the latest federal and state tax laws. Consult IRS.gov and your FFSC FRG Coordinator for assistance.

## FRGs SHOULD NOT:

- ⊗ Solicit or accept gifts on behalf of the command or the Department of the Navy.
- ⊗ Confuse FRG and ombudsman roles and responsibilities.
- ⊗ Fundraise in command spaces without the CO's approval.
- ⊗ Host a fundraising event on the base without approval from the installation commanding officer (when the location is not in a unit command space).
- ⊗ Allow an ombudsman to hold an FRG board or leadership position.
- ⊗ Imply that the Navy officially endorses fundraising events that occur off base.
- ⊗ Request the CO's endorsement of an FRG fundraiser to benefit a charity of the FRG's choosing.
- ⊗ Use the command's name without the CO's approval.
- ⊗ Use seals, logos or insignia of the command on any FRG letterhead, correspondence, titles or in association with programming without permission. See Appendix D for guidance.
- ⊗ Release personal information, obtained during official volunteer duties, without the proper consent of the individual(s) concerned.

# Family Readiness Group FAQs

1. What is the purpose of a Family Readiness Group (FRG)?

*FRGs help plan, coordinate and conduct informational, caretaking, 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. How is an FRG established? Does every command have to have one?

*Not all commands have FRGs. Any family member, Sailor or civilian associated with the command and its personnel can take the lead on establishing an FRG. The first step is to attend the FRG training offered by the FFSC.*

3. Who can be an FRG member?

*Family members, Sailors and civilians associated with the command and its personnel.*

4. What is the role of the ombudsman?

*An ombudsman may collaborate with the FRG on behalf of the command, and may participate in and speak at the FRG meetings and events, but the ombudsman cannot serve as an FRG officer.*

5. Is there training for FRG leadership?

*Yes. FFSCs offer FRG leadership training. Command leadership, their spouses and FRG leadership are encouraged to attend. FRG training is also online, via an on-demand training that can be taken in the comfort of one's own home and at any time during the day.*

6. Do FRGs need bylaws?

*Yes. To receive approval to operate in support of an operational unit or installation, or to use the command name, an FRG must submit its bylaws to the installation or unit CO for review and approval. Bylaws provide structure and guidance and clearly define leadership roles and responsibilities. The bylaws are then adopted by the group's members to govern and regulate activities.*

7. Can FRGs accept or solicit gifts?

*An FRG is free to accept solicited and unsolicited gifts offered in accordance with its bylaws. However, FRG members may not solicit gifts on behalf of the command or imply the Navy endorses the FRG's fundraising activities. An FRG may never accept a gift on behalf of a command or the Department of the Navy.*

8. What can the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) do for an FRG?

*An FFSC is your one-stop shop for family readiness programs and services including: FRGs, ombudsmen, deployment, relocation, transition, employment, life skills, personal financial management, new parent support, Navy Gold Star, Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), family advocacy and counseling. FFSCs offer FRG basic training and advanced trainings throughout the year.*



9. What is an FFSC FRG Coordinator?

*An FFSC FRG Coordinator will schedule and host FRG training sessions, maintain an FRG email roster for sharing and distributing helpful information and provides support to FRG groups by serving as an informational source, consultant and point of contact for FFSC informational speakers.*

10. What is the purpose of the command liaison/representative?

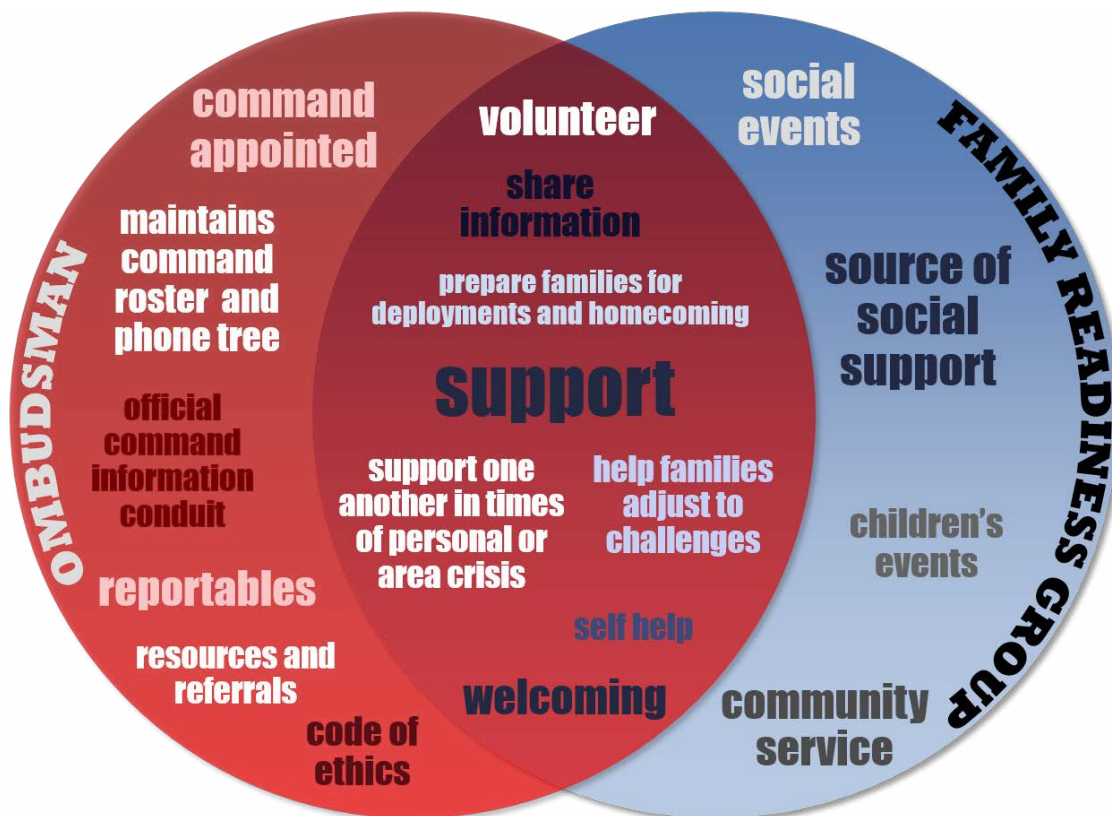
*The CO designates an official command liaison to the FRG to represent the command and act in an advisory capacity to the FRG in discussions of matters of mutual interest. The command liaison may speak at FRG events regarding the deployment schedule, command events or any topic of interest. In this manner, the command liaison serves as a conduit of information between the command and the FRG.*

11. Can FRG events/meetings be held in command spaces?

*Installation and unit COs may provide logistical support, such as access to installation/command spaces and use of equipment for permissible FRG events.*

12. How do FRGs and the Ombudsman work together to support the command?

*Both work to keep command families resilient and ready for Navy life. See the next page for more information.*





# Ombudsman and FRGs: Defining Roles

## Navy Family Ombudsman Program

Ombudsmen are dedicated volunteers who are appointed by the commanding officer (CO) to serve as the link between the command leadership and Navy families. They are trained to assist families in navigating the challenges of the Navy lifestyle.

### Ombudsmen:

- ★ Disseminate official command information to families.
- ★ Adhere to the strictest code of confidentiality to protect the privacy of individuals and maintain the credibility of the Navy Family Ombudsman Program.
- ★ Provide military and community resources to empower families.
- ★ Serve as a source of official information during times of crisis and disaster.

To learn more about the Ombudsman Program or to contact your ombudsman, visit [https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family\\_readiness/fleet\\_and\\_family\\_support\\_program/ombudsman\\_program.html](https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/ombudsman_program.html).

## Family Readiness Groups (FRGs)

FRGs are nonfederal entities that provide family members with an informational and social support network.

### Purpose of an FRG:

- ★ Plan, coordinate and conduct social events, such as holiday celebrations and informal activities designed to promote and improve family readiness.
- ★ Engage members in deployment and homecoming events.
- ★ Provide family support and networking opportunities during deployments.
- ★ Welcome members who are new to the Navy lifestyle and command.

### Membership includes:

- ★ Command members (active-duty personnel, Reservists and civilians) in their personal capacity.
- ★ Command members' spouses and children.
- ★ Other family members.
- ★ Other interested civilians associated with the command and its personnel.

## Ombudsmen and FRGs Working Together:

- ★ FRGs operate distinctly from the ombudsman; however, the ombudsman may collaborate with the FRG on behalf of the command but may not serve as an FRG officer.
- ★ Ombudsmen advertise meetings and events in the ombudsman newsletter and ensure families are aware of FRG activities.
- ★ FRGs invite the ombudsman to introduce himself or herself at FRG meetings and provide members with official information from the command and other valuable resources.
- ★ Both help families adjust to challenges and support one another in times of a personal, command or local crisis.

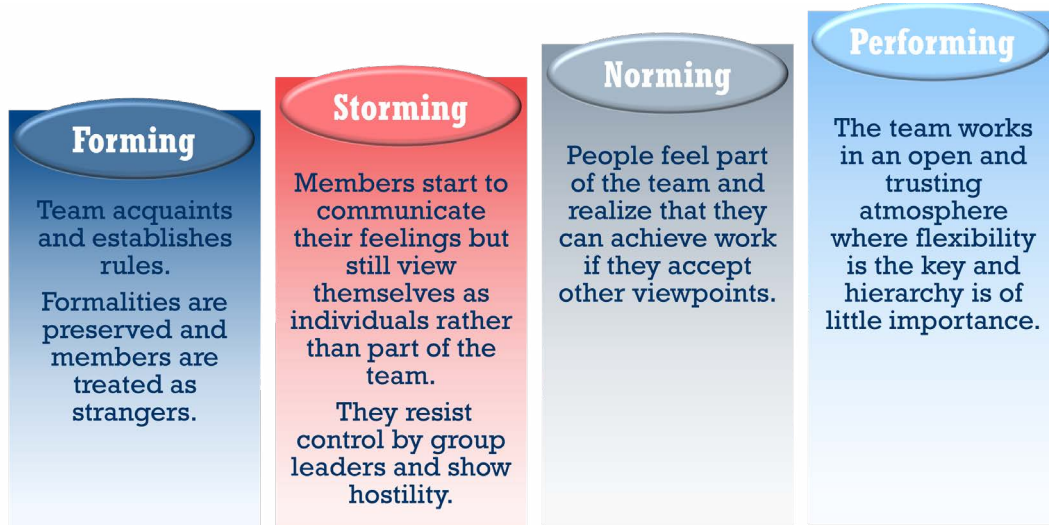
FRGs and ombudsmen are an integral part of a support network that also includes FFSCs, chaplains, school liaison officers and Child Development Centers.

# Family Readiness Group Checklist

## Our Family Readiness Group

- Has a copy of OPNAVINST 1754.5C, *Family Readiness Groups*.
- Has written bylaws that include: (OPNAVINST 1754.5C, enclosure 1)
- Group's name.
- Group's purpose.
- Leadership structure.
- Membership requirements.
- "Turn over" instructions for incoming board members.
- Bylaws have been submitted to the current CO for permission to use the command name.
- Has an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and an FRG bank account (if fundraising).
- Has filed the appropriate federal and state tax forms and are in compliance with the latest guidance for 501(c)(4), *Social Welfare Organizations*: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/life-cycle-of-a-social-welfare-organization>
- Has a budget or spending plan.
- Responsibly manages funds and conducts audits as needed.
- Has, at a minimum a president, a treasurer (if fundraising) and an official command liaison.
- Uses appropriate communication tools to reach out to command families.
- Periodically surveys membership to ensure needs are being met. Promote meetings and FRG-sponsored events.
- Invites newcomers to meetings. Creates an agenda for each meeting.
- Holds fun/informative meetings.
- Creates a warm, friendly meeting environment.
- Documents decisions made at meetings.
- Works effectively with the command ombudsman. (OPNAVINST 1754.5C, 4. d.)
- Knows and understands the rules of Operations Security (OPSEC).
- Has a social roster of interested members.
- Delegates responsibilities to members.
- Has a budget or spending plan.
- Responsibly manages funds and conducts audits as needed.
- Requests the installation commanding officer's approval for any on-base fundraising events when the location is not a unit command space.
- Effectively plans events/activities.
- Appropriately recognizes group members.
- Has a plan to support members and other command families experiencing crisis.

# My FRG Goal



What stage is your FRG currently in?

Our FRG is currently in this stage: \_\_\_\_\_

## What Does Success Look Like?

How will you know if your FRG is a success?

Success for our FRG is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Our Goal

What is a goal you have for your FRG? When would you like to achieve this goal?

Example: In one year, our FRG would like to move from the storming stage to the performing stage, having successfully planned and executed a homecoming party for our command.

My goal for our FRG is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

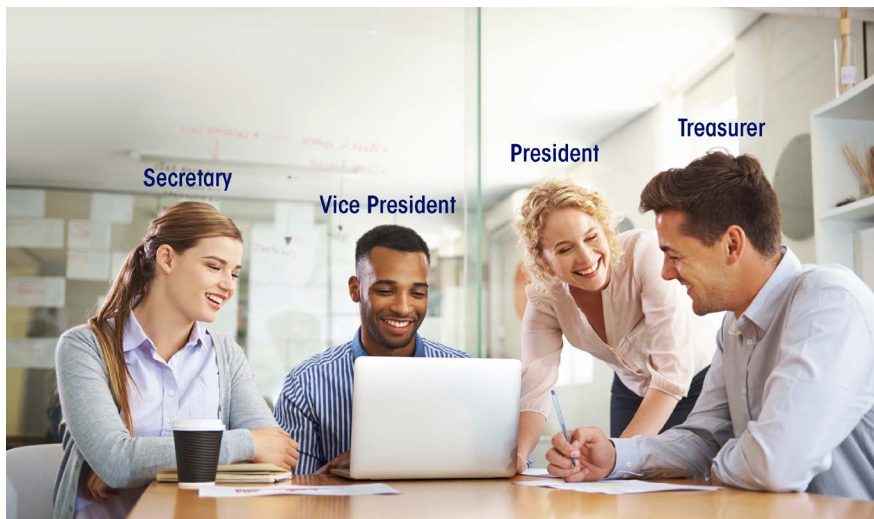


# Family Readiness Group Leadership Roles

Elected officers of an FRG must consist of a president and a treasurer at a minimum, if the group chooses to fundraise. Larger, more formalized groups may elect additional officers to lead the FRG. These officers often assume their new roles with little or no experience or guidance. FFSCs provide command and FRG leadership training.

Each role can be established for optimum effectiveness. These roles can be stated in your bylaws.

Turnover or pass-down information for each role should be given to incoming officers. Be sure to include all records of financial transactions and general information about the group that will help with the leadership transition.



## President

The president represents the FRG at all times—to the spouses and to everyone else he or she may meet while in the role of president.

- ★ Know your bylaws.
- ★ Have a prepared agenda for the meeting.
- ★ Start and end your meeting on time. You also need to think about:
  - Opening the building/room.
  - Arranging the room.
  - Cleaning up.
  - Locking up.
- ★ Sign official correspondence.
- ★ Appoint committee chairs and maintain a list of committees.
- ★ Establish a working relationship with your official command liaison.
- ★ Recognize committee volunteers.

### Tips for Presidents

- ★ Be prepared for your meetings.
- ★ Begin and end meetings on time.
- ★ Be diplomatic.
- ★ Be flexible.
- ★ Be a good listener.
- ★ Be courteous.
- ★ Be willing to delegate effectively.



- ★ Delegate responsibility evenly throughout your group or among committee members.
- ★ If fundraising, be familiar with the IRS notification and filing requirements.

For more formal meetings, be familiar with and ready to apply basic parliamentary law and procedure (see *Robert's Rules of Order*).



## Vice President

The vice president's job is probably the least well-defined. In the president's absence, the vice president traditionally performs the leadership duties for the FRG. Many groups have the vice president lead the Pledge of Allegiance and act as the event coordinator. The vice president may also act as a greeter at each meeting.

- ★ Chair the meeting in the president's absence.
- ★ Secure guest speakers.
- ★ Know your bylaws.
- ★ Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- ★ Coordinate publicity.
- ★ Perform other duties as assigned in your bylaws.
- ★ Be a neutral party to help dissolve gossip groups or cliques.

### Tips for Vice Presidents

- ★ Communicate with your president in order to be aware of all aspects of your group's activities.
- ★ Consult local papers, resources and ombudsmen for ideas on speakers for your group.

## Secretary

The secretary is responsible for the FRG's administrative needs. One main duty includes taking minutes during meetings. Minutes are written records of your group's meetings and contain what was accomplished—not what was said—by participants. It is a record of where the group has been and where it is going. Minutes also provide information about the last meeting for those who were not able to attend.

- ★ Write minutes of the meetings.
- ★ Proofread correspondence for content, grammar and spelling. It is better if someone else proofreads, too.
- ★ Read the minutes from the previous meeting at the next meeting (optional).
- ★ Keep attendance records of participants (optional).
- ★ Compose correspondence (official letters, email, social media posts).
- ★ Maintain a file of incoming and outgoing correspondence.

### Tips for Secretaries

- ★ Write the minutes as soon as possible after each meeting.
- ★ Type up formal or business correspondence.
- ★ Hand-write thank-you notes, personal invitations and condolence cards.
- ★ Note the date on all committee reports and minutes.
- ★ Note the process of organizing events such as parties, bake sales, etc. The process should include methods of organizing events, contacts, committee structure and lessons learned. Having this report to refer to will save time if you choose to repeat the event.
- ★ Confirm the spelling, title, rank and the appropriate mailing address for civilian or military guests.



- ★ Keep a box, binder or folder of official group business information. The following information should be available to incoming command liaisons and officers:
  - Minutes.
  - Committee reports.
  - Correspondence (copies).
  - Bylaws.
  - Attendance records.

## Treasurer

The treasurer manages the group's financial endeavors. Treasurers need to be trustworthy, good with money and possess excellent bookkeeping skills.

- ★ Maintain records of all funds.
- ★ Provide a statement of finances as often as required.
- ★ Provide a complete financial report after an audit.
- ★ Reconcile bank statements every month.
- ★ Submit receipts within 30 days of purchase.
- ★ Deposit money within seven days of receipt.
- ★ Obtain information regarding tax-exempt status and setting up a checking account. (Seek out further checking account information from your local bank or credit union.)
- ★ Do not hand out blank checks.
- ★ Audit accounts at least annually by the FRG Executive Board or another designated reviewer.
- ★ Require two signatures on checks to maintain "checks and balances."
- ★ If fundraising:
  - Be familiar with the IRS notification and filing requirements.
  - Determine your 501(c)(4) status.
  - Notify the IRS by filing Form 8976.\*
  - Ensure the FRG has filed the appropriate tax forms with the IRS.
  - File form 990-N (e-Postcard) annually.

\*Note: Failure to file Form 8976 within 60 days will result in a \$20 per day penalty, not to exceed \$5,000.



### Tips for Treasurers

- ★ Purchase and maintain a ledger.
- ★ Keep a file of receipts, ledger and account information.
- ★ Keep a box for cash, donations, dues, etc.
- ★ Keep accurate records.
- ★ Keep all receipts and log all check and cash transactions.
- ★ Ensure all transactions recorded in the ledger match receipts and check amounts.



## Command Liaison

The CO designates an official command liaison to the FRG to 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 may not 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.

- ★ Provide encouragement for the group.
- ★ Deliver command information, when appropriate, and knowledge of how FRGs work.
- ★ Keep the CO informed of FRG activities.
- ★ Serve as a source of resources and command knowledge for family members.

### Tips for Command Liaisons

- ★ Read the group's minutes and current bylaws to become familiar with the FRG's history.
- ★ Make the effort to get to know FRG officers.
- ★ Share your experiences with the group (the good ones as well as the challenging ones).
- ★ Attend as many meetings as possible.
- ★ Facilitate acknowledgment of members through certificates and recognition from the command.
- ★ Let command family members know of your involvement in the group.

## Command Support Team (CST) and/or Advisors

**The Command Support Team (CST) is designated by the commanding officer and typically includes the CO, XO, CMC/COB, Chaplain (if one is assigned), their spouses, the ombudsman and any other advocates designated by the CO as a CST member. The degree of involvement that any of these individuals will have may differ by command and by personal interest.**

**CST spouses can be an excellent sounding board for the FRGs. Their experience and knowledge can help navigate road blocks and can communicate with the command on behalf of the FRG, all roles should be well defined in the group's bylaws. It is recommended that CSTs attend FRG Basic Training, but not required.**

## Ombudsman

The ombudsman is usually the spouse of a service member with the command who is appointed by the CO to provide information and referrals for local military and civilian resources to family members.

FRG board members and command ombudsmen have separate and distinct responsibilities. The ombudsman is an official Navy representative tasked with improving mission readiness through family readiness. The ombudsman may collaborate with the FRG on behalf of the command but may not serve as an FRG officer.

See the *Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manual* at [www.cnrc.navy.mil](http://www.cnrc.navy.mil), under Supporting the Family/Ombudsman Program for further information.

- ★ Provide information on resources and referrals.
- ★ Communicate command information.
- ★ Maintain confidentiality.
- ★ Provide encouragement to and inspire camaraderie among command families.

### Tips for Ombudsmen

- ★ Work closely with your FRG officers.
- ★ Participate in group activities.
- ★ Keep informed of current command information.
- ★ Get to know command spouses.
- ★ Attend FRG meetings consistently.
- ★ Communicate effectively and maintain an open business relationship with the FRG. Remember, you are all striving for the same goal—command support!

## Event Coordinator

The event coordinator, often the vice president, is responsible for asking guest speakers to address your group. Here are seven steps to guide the event coordinator's activities:

- ★ **Learn.** What topics are the participants interested in? Are there specific needs to be addressed?
- ★ **Find.** Who can provide the information?
- ★ **Secure.** Secure a speaker. Contact the FFSC for further guidance or ideas for topics.
- ★ **Remind.** Verify the date, time and place of your meeting for the speaker.
- ★ **Greet.** Greet your speaker at the door.
- ★ **Introduce.** Introduce your speaker to the officers of your group.
- ★ **Thank.** Thank your speaker for attending your meeting and send a thank-you note within a week after the program. People are more likely to come back if they are formally thanked!.

### Tips for Event Coordinators

- ★ Provide your name and contact information to the speaker.
- ★ Coordinate base access for the speaker.
- ★ Secure any needed facility.
- ★ Confirm any needed equipment needed for video, projection or microphones.
- ★ Schedule your speaker's presentation before conducting your business meeting.
- ★ Send a thank-you note to the speaker promptly after the meeting.

### Tips for Securing a Guest Speaker

- ★ Keep presentation time slots short. Successful programs for FRGs tend to be relatively short (30 to 45 minutes).
- ★ Develop a six-month or annual plan for inviting speakers to come to your meetings, varying the topic areas.
- ★ Keep in mind that it is not necessary to have a speaker at each meeting—members need time to enjoy one another's company.



### Tips for Chairpersons

- ★ Set an initial meeting date for committee members.
- ★ Determine a timeline for the completion of tasks.
- ★ Inform committee members of your expectations.
- ★ Build in a backup plan for unforeseen events. Regularly check in with committee members.
- ★ Take challenges to the executive board.
- ★ Inform FRG and leadership of progress.

Many FRGs may not be large enough for or interested in having formal officers other than a president and a treasurer. Using a committee chairperson is an option when organizing a small group (fewer than 15 members). The chairperson hosts the committee meetings. The group, as a whole, plans and decides what interests they would like to pursue. Committees can then be formed to address specific tasks such as fundraising, handling publicity and organizing holiday parties or the homecoming celebration. A popular structure is a committee chairperson-at-large with several committee chairs under them. Participants in the group can join any committee in which they have an interest.

Serving on a committee is important, and accepting a committee chair position is a challenging commitment. Many people will depend on you to get the job done. Working on a major project is fun and rewarding, especially when you see the results of your efforts. Successful chairs and committee members have these abilities in common: They are dependable and can problem-solve, meet deadlines, communicate effectively and work for the benefit of the group.

An FRG may have standing committees, or a permanent committee that meets regularly. These may include, but are not limited to:

- ★ **Welcoming Committee:** comprised of FRG members (not necessarily officers) who agree to welcome new members to FRG meetings, make hospital visits and visit a new mom or new members at home. Members may put together and hand out “goodie bags” of appropriate small items for the occasion. Members may also send out birthday, get well or other greeting cards.
- ★ **Communications or Publicity Committee:** comprised of one or more FRG members who prepare meeting announcements, news items and articles for publication in the ombudsman or command newsletter, act as webmaster for the FRG webpage or social media page and otherwise handle communications and publicity.
- ★ **Special Events Committee:** assist the event coordinator in planning special activities and events for the group. These may include holiday parties, homecoming events and group picnics.
- ★ **Fundraising Committee:** plans and arranges for fundraisers, researching the applicable local regulations, obtaining necessary permissions and managing event logistics.

### Tips for Committee Members

- ★ Ask yourself if you have the time to be on a committee.
- ★ Inform the chairperson of issues or challenges.
- ★ Keep in contact with the chairperson as needed.
- ★ Inform the chairperson if you are unable to fulfill your obligations.



## FRG Turn Over

Your group must also consider the steps it needs to take when members of your board change. The FRGs operating status should be included in the bylaws, including the steps the board needs to take when it turns over – including notifying the IRS of the changes.

Here are the steps you should follow:

1. Notify the board or FRG that a board position will be open or vacant.
2. The board member who is listed as the responsible party on the EIN and on the bank accounts is responsible for updating names and social security numbers. This should be well document in your bylaws and a standard practice when there is board turnover of responsible parties.
3. When the responsible party resigns their position it is important to notify the IRS by filling out form 8822-B, "Change of Address or Responsible Party – Business." The on-line application takes you through a series of steps, (identify, authenticate, addresses, details and your EIN confirmation).

If you need assistance filling out the application utilize the help topics on the IRS.Gov website or call IRS Tax-Exempt Government Entities Office Customer Account Services at (877) 829-5500.



# Effective Meetings

Meetings may be informal or formal, depending the size of the group. If the group is small (fewer than 15 participants) using chairpersons and committees makes sense. The group will not appear to be leadership-heavy.

Bylaws should reflect the simplest way of running a meeting to keep order and to have a process of decision-making. Keeping bylaws uncomplicated with limited rules and regulations will help the group run most efficiently. An example of bylaws is included in Appendix A, Enclosure 1, of the OPNAVINST 1754.5C, *Family Readiness Groups*. Sample standing rules are included in Appendix C.

- ★ Have an agenda for all meetings, both formal and informal. Post it or distribute it to membership.
- ★ Start meetings on time to discourage latecomers. If meetings always start on time, participants are less likely to be late.
- ★ Be prepared to discuss dates for future meetings. It is easier to set dates and times if everyone is encouraged to bring a calendar or smartphone with a calendar app to the meetings.
- ★ Set time limits on agenda items to be discussed. An agenda item that is discussed repeatedly may be frustrating to your group.
- ★ Assign a committee to take ideas for action and research. Have the committee report their findings at a future meeting.
- ★ Establish a convenient voting method. One simple method of voting is to allow only those in attendance at the meeting to vote. Groups can sometimes be bogged down in a complicated voting procedure that inhibits the group, and the voting procedure itself can become an issue.
- ★ Report issues to the command and talk to the command liaison if decisions are controversial and warrant command attention.



# Strategic Planning: First Meeting Checklist

Use this checklist to plan your first FRG meeting.

## At Least One Month Before

- Meet with your CO:
  - Learn how the CO believes the FRG can best support the command and families.
  - Ask who will serve as the group's command liaison.
  - Invite the CO to attend the first meeting.
  - Ask if a social roster exists which can be released to the FRG.
  - Ask if future check-ins can be informed of the FRG and consent to release of their personal contact information for FRG phone and email trees.
- Talk with the command liaison, ombudsman and potential FRG leadership to begin planning the establishment of a group or to re-energize a group.
- Complete a needs assessments or interest survey of command family members. (Appendix F)
- Select a day, time and place to meet. (Allow approximately two hours for the meeting.)
- Arrange child care on-site with a certified child care provider(s), if possible. (Consider the cost to be charged to each person who uses it.)
- Prepare a meeting agenda:
  - Welcome.
  - Ask someone to take notes of decisions made (if a secretary has yet to be appointed).
    - Distribute a sign-in list to collect names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers.
    - Introductions.
    - CO remarks.
    - Share survey results.
    - Discuss group goals.
    - Select leadership (even if it is just temporary).
    - Select one or more individuals to draft/review bylaws.
    - Ask the treasurer to set up an FRG bank account, if none exists.
    - Arrange time/location of the next meeting.
    - Wrap up.
  - Request to publicize meetings at quarters (the morning meeting), the plan of the day/week/month, posters at the command, phone calls, command or ombudsman newsletter and direct mail. Provide directions to the meeting and, if available, advertise child care and the cost of such care, if any.



### **Few Days Before Meeting**

- Confirm meeting location.
- Confirm child care.
- Ask attendees to bring light refreshments.
- Call, text message or email reminders to potential members, command leadership, their spouses, ombudsmen, etc.
- Make copies of the agenda.
- Make directional/welcome signs to post at the meeting site.
- Purchase name tags, markers or other needed materials.

### **One Hour Before Meeting**

- Post directional/welcome signs.
- Arrange chairs so participants can see one another.
- Place agendas on chairs or tables.
- Set out refreshments.
- Set out name tags and markers.
- Ensure there is a trash receptacle.
- Note locations of restrooms and child care.

### **Thirty Minutes Before**

- Take a deep breath and smile.
- Welcome participants as they arrive.
- Chat with participants and introduce them to one another.
- Offer refreshments.

### **Meeting Start Time**

- Ask everyone to sit.
- Deliver a formal welcome and consider doing an icebreaker
- Follow prepared agenda.

### **Within a Week after the Meeting**

- Draft meeting minutes.
- Establish an FRG social roster, with contact information.
- Distribute minutes to all participants who provided an email address. Include a nice note.
- Call anyone who did not provide an email address.
- Begin planning for the next meeting.

## Sample Agenda

- ★ Call the meeting to order.
- ★ Welcome participants.
- ★ Introduce new members/participants to the group.
- ★ Introduce guests or guest speaker.
- ★ Have the secretary read the minutes from the previous meeting and ask for corrections or additions. If there are none, say, "Minutes stand approved as read."
- ★ Ask for the treasurer's report.
- ★ Ask for committee reports.
- ★ Review unfinished business.
- ★ Ask for new business.
- ★ Ask for announcements.
- ★ Adjourn the meeting and socialize.

## Sample Minutes

- ★ Name of the organization.
- ★ Date, hour and location of the meeting.
- ★ Attendance and who presided over the meeting.
- ★ Guest speaker and topic.
- ★ State each main motion and the name of the person making it.
- ★ State whether the motion was passed or not passed and record the vote on the question.
- ★ State whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read or corrected.
- ★ List committee reports and who read them.
- ★ Record old and new business agenda items discussed.

<b>USS BEST SHIP EVER FRG MEETING</b> <b>Meeting Agenda</b> 1 April 2018 1730 – 1815 p.m.	
<b>Objectives:</b> <i>At conclusion of today's meeting, the FRG will complete the details on the homecoming party planning.</i>	
1730 – 1835 (5 minutes) Jenny (facilitator)	Review agenda and any changes
1735 – 1800 (25 minutes) CMC Hicks, (guest speaker)	Information on Navy Base's homecoming Discussion of options
1800 – 1810 (10 minutes) Erica (facilitator) and consensus	Vote on homecoming options Assignment of tasks
1810 – 1815 (5 minutes) Jenny (facilitator)	Questions Wrap-Up
1815	End





# Icebreakers and Ideas

The purpose of icebreakers is to give people the opportunity to get to know one another and find out what they have in common. Even if family members do know one another, it is still a great way to start meetings or even a social event. It is an upbeat way for everyone to relax and get to know the people in the room, not just their close friends.

## Questions for Participants

Answering questions helps start discussions and increases comfort levels between members. Questions should be general in nature and not too personal. Have participants take turns going around the room, giving their names and responses to questions like:

- ★ What is your home state?
- ★ How many children do you have?
- ★ What is your favorite vegetable?
- ★ What is your ZIP code?
- ★ Where did you meet your spouse?

## Name Tent or Name Tag Activity

Fold sheets of construction paper into thirds, forming long tents. Have participants write their names on the front of the tents and draw their hobbies on the reverse side. Participants then walk around the room to introduce themselves and guess one another's hobbies. There are probably other people in the room with similar interests. Another option is to use name tags. Have participants put their names and hobbies on the front of a name tag.

## Who Am I?

Pin the name of a famous person on the back of each group member. Have everyone ask questions requiring "yes" or "no" answers of one another for a preset amount of time. At the end of the time limit, go around the room, starting with yourself, and have everyone guess who they are. Keep the game as simple as possible by using themes—famous couples, star athletes, actors or other recognizable celebrities.

## Don't Say "I"

Give each person three pennies. Ask participants to move around the room, introducing themselves to one another and asking questions that might prompt a person to say "I."

If anyone does, the participant collects a penny from

the person who said "I." The person with the most pennies at the end of the preset amount of time wins a small door prize.

## No Hands Directions

Divide the group into smaller groups of two or three. Ask participants to sit on their hands facing each other and then give directions to their house or directions from their house to the closest mall. Ask participants how hard it was to remember street names or indicate left or right turns without using their hands.

## M&M Game

Pass around a bag of small candy such as mints, Skittles, M&Ms, etc., and tell everyone to take some. After they have taken some, say, "OK, now you have to tell us something about yourself for each piece of candy in your hand."

## Navy Jargon

Using an online word search creator, make a word search using Navy terminology (e.g., galley, racks, scuttlebutt, compartment, head, leave, LES) for family members to complete while they wait for meetings to start. Variations of this icebreaker include creating a word scrabble or "bingo" using Navy terminology.



# Membership and Participation

Participation in your group is based upon several factors, including stateside or overseas location and whether the command is deployed or in port. Typically, participation will grow as commands get ready to deploy and will decline after the deployment. Why? Because of the perception that support of the group is no longer needed when the command returns from deployment. Keeping the basic structure of the group is an important factor when it starts to become active again. Develop an annual or strategic plan and work with the command to keep activities varied; it may help membership grow and/ or stabilize. A sample guide to developing a strategic plan is in Appendix G.

Group membership may be low. Many spouses work and/or volunteer, and some may not choose to participate in the FRG. It is not the number of members that is important. It is the sense of command support, camaraderie and friendship that makes even a small group successful.

## Ideas for Participation and Membership

- ★ Publicize your group and events as widely as possible. A notice in base newspapers, the command Careline, email and personal phone calls are successful tools. Two to four weeks' notice before an event gives participants plenty of time to plan.
- ★ Request to use the command newsletter(s) to promote your group, its purpose, accomplishments and scheduled activities. Remember to include the meeting time, place and phone number or email for a point of contact.
- ★ Send a welcome letter to new spouses through command Welcome Aboard Packets. A letter given to service members at their ship indoctrination is another way to let them know about your group and what activities are planned.
- ★ Assign someone to greet new members and make them feel welcome and comfortable at meetings. This can be done on a rotating basis. This is one of the most important aspects of success for your group. New members may not return to another meeting if they feel unwelcome or ignored.
- ★ Sponsor a Captain's Call or a CMC/COB's Call to give spouses the opportunity to talk with the captain, command master chief or chief of the boat.
- ★ Ride share. Some spouses may not be familiar with the area. Offer a ride to those who may not come to a meeting because they are unsure about its location.
- ★ Consider meeting every other month or quarterly when the command is in port.
- ★ Provide child care whenever possible. Contact local Navy Child and Youth Programs to discuss available child care options and cost to members.
- ★ Use a questionnaire to gather ideas for activities that would interest group members. If the activities are fun, varied and cost-effective, you will please most of the people most of the time.
- ★ Keep participants actively involved in the group by inviting them to join various committees. Be careful not to pressure people into a committee role. You want volunteers who are interested in the job.
- ★ A person who has been volunteered may not be effective if they are uninterested or lack the skills to fit the position or task. If participants feel a sense of belonging and contributing to the group, they will take ownership of their commitments and ensure a productive organization.
- ★ Show shipboard videotapes at your meetings. Encourage spouses to attend and see their service member.
- ★ Sponsor a "Bring a Friend" night and give away prizes.
- ★ Offer interesting topics for discussion. Hosting speakers to facilitate discussion on a wide variety of topics is fun and can be a draw for your meetings. Typical topics of interest are deployment, parenting and financial planning.
- ★ Offer variety in your meetings. Alternating business, craft, potluck and outside social events will satisfy your group's interests.

## Recognizing and Showing Appreciation for FRG Members

Remember, members of your Family Readiness Group are volunteers. When you recognize people's efforts, it provides them with an opportunity for reflection, offers a reward for their effort and can motivate and increase further participation.

There are many ways to recognize FRG members. Here is a starter list:

1. Say thank you or write a personal thank-you note.
2. Send a card of welcome to new members.
3. Introduce new members at meetings or on social media groups.
4. Tell members when they do a good job.
5. Provide food at meetings.
6. Say something positive to each member.
7. Decorate chairs at FRG meetings for those celebrating birthdays during the month.
8. Recognize volunteers involved with fundraising by taking a small box of raisins and attaching a note saying, "Thanks for raisin' all those funds."
9. Give them a roll of Life Savers candy and thank them for being a "life saver."
10. Give a packet of flower or vegetable seeds to members "who have helped us grow."
11. Give a cupcake with a note that says, "You take the cake."
12. Give a potpourri packet with a note saying, "You've given our project the sweet smell of success."
13. Give members a bag of mixed nuts with a note attached stating, "We would go 'nuts' without you."
14. Create a "way to go" box for members to thank each other. Read contributions at meetings.
15. Ask the CO to write members a letter/email of thanks.
16. Celebrate major accomplishments.
17. Give a certificate of accomplishment or appreciation.
18. Publish the member's picture in the base newspaper as an outstanding volunteer.



### Where did everyone go?

When commands return from deployment, FRGs may experience lower levels of participation and attendance at meetings. This turn of events can be disheartening for the group's officers, especially if the FRG was strong during deployment. Members may find the support group that helped them during the deployment is no longer needed. Their spouses are home, and even though they may stay in contact with some FRG members, they may not have the time or desire to meet on a regular basis. Groups will typically re-energize before the next deployment cycle, and the process will start again.

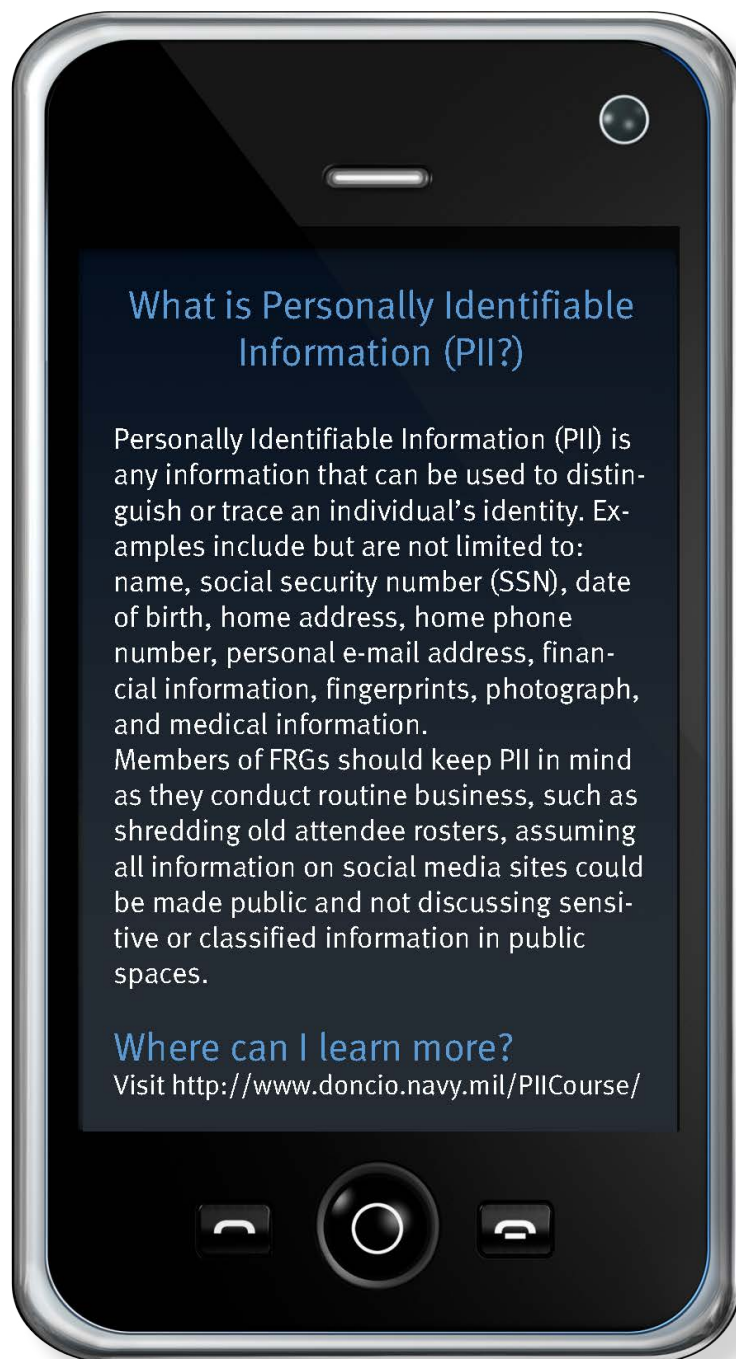
# Communicating with Family Readiness Group Members

## Operations Security (OPSEC)

Whether communicating on a social media site, by phone or in public, always limit the amount of personal information you discuss. FRGs should remain vigilant in not disclosing any information that could put our Sailors in harm's way. Do not discuss sensitive information such as ship/unit movements, personnel rosters, training/deployment schedules or anything else that may compromise the personal privacy of the crews, their families and the command's mission. Deployment information, as well as daily operations, are in many cases classified, and FRG members should recognize the importance of keeping sensitive information secure. Remind family members to be aware of what they are posting online and educate them about OPSEC. Visit [http://www.navy.mil/ah\\_online/OPSEC/index.asp - services](http://www.navy.mil/ah_online/OPSEC/index.asp-services) for more information.

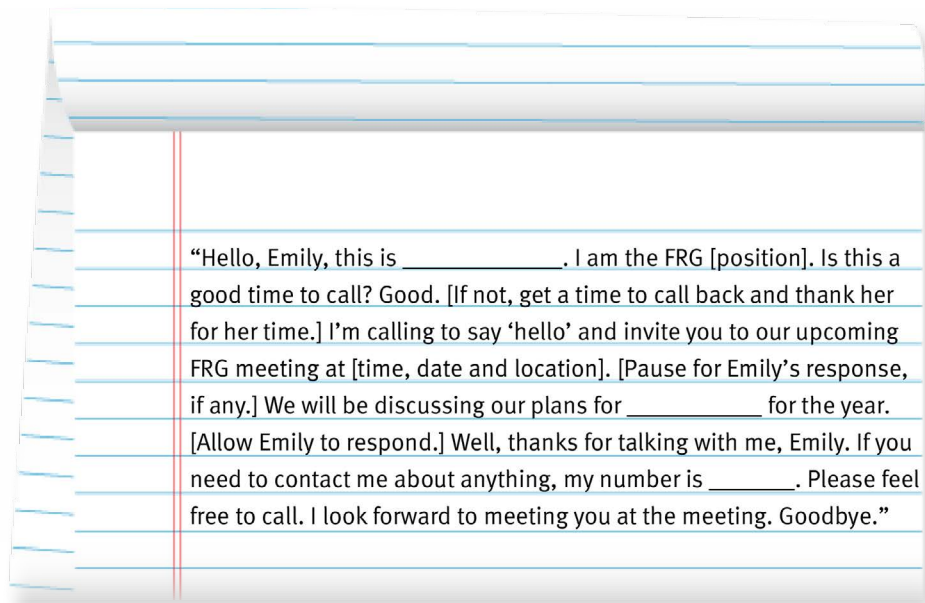
## Websites

FRGs may provide information to be posted on the command's official website, or an FRG website may be linked to the command website if it contains official information. The FRG website may not contain commercial endorsements or attachments if linked to the command website. The FRG website may contain links to other websites containing useful information for family members, even if those websites contain commercial links. Web links to outside sites listed on the FRG website will advise users that they are exiting a Department of the Navy (DoN) website and that DoN does not endorse the outside website.



## Increasing FRG Participation through Effective Communication

One way to attract potential FRG members is by making personal phone calls. Identify volunteers who are willing to call 10 to 12 other FRG members. Provide them with a list of individuals to call with a written message to be relayed. Below is a sample message:



## Phone and Email Tree Etiquette and Usage

Phone and email “trees” are a great way for FRGs to communicate quickly with members. They are called trees because the message goes out to a few people, who call a few more people, and so forth, so that the message branches out to the whole group. It is an alternative to a prerecorded Careline. Participation for both must be voluntary.

Please note, the command and ombudsmen cannot share official roster information with the FRG.

When setting up an email account for the FRG, be sure to verify how many email addresses you can send to at one time and to prevent your email from going to the spam accounts of your members. You may need to break up your email tree by groups of 50 or 100.

At command indoctrinations, explain how phone/email trees work. Discuss these communication methods at your meetings and deployment briefs, so all spouses know they exist. Ask the ombudsman to include them in the newsletter. You may also ask the command to include them in the ship’s newsletter.

Phone, text and email trees may be used to notify group members of upcoming meetings and social events or share command specific information and updates. FRG members may not use phone, text or email trees for their own financial benefit, such as for sales or solicitations.

To start a phone/text/email tree, an FRG officer calls the phone/text/email tree committee chairperson to activate the tree. The committee chairperson then calls each “branch” of the tree. In turn, these volunteers call each group member on their list.



Phone Tree Etiquette	Text/Email Etiquette
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Write down the message from the committee leader and read it back for clarification.</li> <li>★ During the call, read the message as it was stated to you.</li> <li>★ Be friendly and brief.</li> <li>★ Do not give out unauthorized ship information.</li> <li>★ Do not repeat or encourage rumors.</li> <li>★ Encourage group members to participate in making calls to others.</li> <li>★ Refer group members to the ombudsman for assistance with problems or resources.</li> <li>★ Leave messages on machines, if necessary.</li> <li>★ Call back if a child takes the message for the parent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Do not type in all uppercase letters, because it may be construed as anger or yelling.</li> <li>★ Do not forward jokes.</li> <li>★ As a courtesy to others on the email list, blind carbon copy (BCC) all email addressees to discourage others who might abuse the email list with spam.</li> <li>★ Be careful of "Reply to all"—such a reply goes to everyone previously emailed. Only reply to the intended recipient.</li> <li>★ If you do not feel comfortable writing it on a postcard, do not say it in an email.</li> <li>★ Ask for permission from family members before forwarding emails to or from them.</li> <li>★ Do not ask the ombudsman for the command roster/ email list. That list is strictly for command use.</li> <li>★ Above all—remember OPSEC.</li> </ul>

## Recommended Social Media Guidelines

If your FRG decides to set up a social media page, please consider the following:

- ★ Discuss with your CO what social media privacy settings would be best suited for your FRG (open, closed or private group—see below for more.)
- ★ Include a disclaimer in your group's description section. Example: "Welcome to the USS Eversail's social media page. This page is intended to provided updated information and discussion of the USS Eversail" (See below for more.)
- ★ Abide by OPSEC rules and regulations. OPSEC is the process by which we protect unclassified information that can be used against us. Avoid posting pictures or information that is pertinent to the command on the group's page. More information and guidelines regarding OPSEC can be found by visiting [http://www.navy.mil/ah\\_online/OPSEC/](http://www.navy.mil/ah_online/OPSEC/).

	Public	Closed	Secret
Who can join?	Anyone can join or be added or invited by a member	Anyone can ask to join or be added or invited by a member	Anyone, but they have to be added or invited by a member
Who can see the group's name?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see who is in the group?	Anyone	Anyone	Only current members
Who can see the group description?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see what members post in the group?	Anyone	Only current members	Only current members
Who can find the group in a search?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see stories about the group on Facebook (i.e., News Feed and search)?	Anyone	Only current members	Only current members

### Sample Social Media Disclaimer

"Welcome to the [NAME OF FRG]'s Facebook fan page. This page is intended to provide updated information and discussion on the [NAME OF FRG]. Please visit our home page at [HOMEPAGE URL].

While this is an open forum, it is also a family friendly one, so please keep your comments and wall posts clean. In addition to keeping it family friendly, we ask that you follow our posting guidelines as set forth here. Comments and posts that do not follow these guidelines will be removed:

- ★ We do not allow graphic, obscene, explicit or racial comments or submissions, nor do we allow comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization.
- ★ We do not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
- ★ Apparent spam will be removed and may cause the author(s) to be blocked from the page without notice.
- ★ You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information provided.
- ★ Never post personal information about members without their permission. Help protect their privacy.
- ★ Never post details about command deployments or operations. Revealing such information may threaten OPSEC.
- ★ The appearance of external links on this site does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the Navy or the Department of Defense.

Thank you for your interest in and support of the men and women of the [NAME OF FRG]."

## Using Social Media for Marketing

You can use social media to help promote your FRG, gain interest and increase membership. Here are some tips for using social media:

- ★ **Start a conversation.** Putting out information is important, but engaging and interacting with members is the key. Build relationships through two-way conversations by sharing news and ideas, such as, “I found this great website for care package ideas! What great ideas have you used in the past?”
- ★ **Use images.** On Facebook and Twitter, there are thousands of posts every second. To get your content noticed, add visual appeal with a photo.
- ★ **Deliver content constantly.** One of the best ways to build your audience is to be a reliable source of information and interaction. If an FRG member posts a question about an upcoming time for an event and it goes unanswered for days, people will see that your social media site is not effective (or helpful!).
- ★ **Create events.** In Facebook, an event is a calendar-based resource which can be used to notify people of upcoming occasions. Events can be created by anyone and the creator can invite members of the FRG group.

## Social Media Events

Events are a perfect way to get people’s attention and keep it. With Facebook’s calendar connection, most people have their Facebook events connected to their smartphones. If notifications are turned on, members will get notifications pushed to them, saving your FRG time and effort.

Here are some tips for creating events:

- ★ **Choose a name.** Try using a name that is creative and attention-grabbing.
- ★ **Write a thorough description.** Provide important details for your event, such as location, time, pricing, special guests and the agenda/schedule.
- ★ **Choose an eye-catching cover photo.** People are more drawn to visuals over text, so as they scroll through their newsfeed, they will be more likely to notice a photo.
- ★ **Let people post to the event wall.** When you create an event, you have the option to only allow hosts to post to the event wall, posts to be approved by an administrator, or anyone to post. The more active an event looks, the more excited people are going to be about it. It is difficult to spark conversation when people are not allowed to post to the event page.

## Social Media for FRGs

Social media can be leveraged for more than just pushing out information to your command families, your FRG can use it to learn and grow as a group, too. The *U.S. Navy FRG Leadership Discussion Group* on Facebook allows FRGs to network with each other, share best practices, and dispense information and resources. The closed group is designed for FRG leaders, including all elected officers and committee chairs, and can be found via Facebook by searching, “U.S. Navy FRG Leadership Discussion Group.”



# Tips for Effective Newsletters and Articles

The ombudsman or the command may produce newsletters. To show that the FRG is in touch with everyone in the command, take time each month to write a short paragraph to incorporate into the newsletter. Some commands support the dissemination of a separate FRG newsletter. An FRG committee may be established to coordinate production, collect information and maintain dissemination of birthday/special occasion lists for command families. Talk with your command to see how you can make newsletters an effective tool for communicating with command families.

Items you may want to include:

- ★ **Mark your calendar.** Dates and times of upcoming events, such as spouse group meetings, board meetings, command-sponsored fundraising events and socials.
- ★ **Special acknowledgments.** Welcome new spouses and note farewells to departing spouses. A special section of birthdays/special events is nice for families to see in the newsletter.
- ★ **Ship's quiz.** Helps build awareness of the command's history. List the questions one month and follow up with answers the next.
- ★ **Author, author.** Offer to print short stories and poems that spouses would like to share.
- ★ **Chef's corner.** Highlight a member's favorite recipe for all spouses and families to share.
- ★ **Year in review.** In January, publish a year-in-review article to highlight the activities of the command and the FRG. Incoming families will see the accomplishments, and it may generate interest in your group.
- ★ **Command notes.** Invite the command to note promotions and other shipboard news.
- ★ **Messages from the CO, executive officer (XO) or CMC.** Invite the CO/XO or CMC to write an article for your newsletter. The same applies to the CO/XO spouses.
- ★ **Tip of the month.** Provide tips on home/auto maintenance, gardening, places to visit or eat, etc.

## Formats

<i>Letter</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Combination</i>
Letter style is the quickest and easiest to produce. Short paragraphs and the occasional use of emphasis type (boldface, italics) help readers remain interested. The length is usually one to two pages.	Newspaper style is the most time-consuming style to produce. This style most closely resembles a professional publication. It contains larger, bolder headlines, artwork, calendars, news stories, special columns and has a specially prepared banner. The usual length is four to eight pages.	Combination style blends the letter and newspaper styles. It may be printed on letterhead stationery or on paper with a special newsletter banner. Occasional pieces of artwork may be added to emphasize a special theme or to give a seasonal flair. The length is usually two to four pages.

## Banner

### Consider the following when designing a banner:

- ★ Choose a descriptive title and subtitle.
- ★ Isolate or emphasize important words.
- ★ Choose appropriate typography.
- ★ Use secondary words to add graphic contrast.
- ★ Carefully select banner size and position.

## Columns

If space in the newsletter is at a premium, consider using two- or three-column formats. Most word processing programs will automatically format columns.

## Artwork and Lines

Use artwork relevant to the adjacent text. Do not use artwork to fill white space. Size it proportionally.

Lines and borders are the most effective graphic aids. They highlight text, give the page a sense of order, and direct the reader's eye to information you want to highlight.

## Effective Design

The following design tips keep your newsletter looking professional and inviting:

- ★ Keep pages uncomplicated and the overall design clean.
- ★ Put short items in groups. Use graphics only when they have a purpose. Keep headlines and subheadings consistent in style and size.
- ★ Vary the size of artwork, photos and headlines. Put boxes and shading around important items.

## Font Styles

Serif fonts are traditional fonts and historically used for many print products:

**Times New Roman   Garamond   Book Antiqua**

Sans serif fonts are perceived as modern, cosmopolitan, scientific and up-to-date.

**Arial   Verdana   Century Gothic**

Variety within the same font family is fine (italics, bold, other point sizes). Variety among typefaces (mixing completely different families) creates a hodgepodge effect. Remember, a single font may come in:

**Boldface   Italic   SMALL CAPS**

Using all caps for body text is more difficult to read than using uppercase and lowercase characters:

Text in all caps takes up to one-third more line space than standard lettering.

TEXT IN ALL CAPS TAKES UP TO ONE-THIRD MORE LINE SPACE THAN STANDARD LETTERING.



## Writing Tips

The following writing tips may help prevent writer's block:

- ★ Grab the readers' attention with a catchy headline or rhetorical question.
- ★ Start with the most important information in the first paragraph and then add supporting information.
- ★ Use simple, action-oriented verbs.
- ★ Use familiar words.
- ★ Keep it short and simple. Paragraphs of four to six sentences and stories of five or fewer paragraphs are ideal.
- ★ Use active voice—subject first, then verb.
- ★ Use present tense even though many events occurred in the past. To show the future, use infinitives, such as "to award" or "to eliminate."
- ★ Speak directly to readers using a normal speaking pattern (but do not use slang, profanity, shorthand speech or incorrect grammar).
- ★ Ask yourself: If I had no knowledge of this topic, would I understand the message of this article? Did I answer the six basic questions of reporting: Who, what, when, where, why and how?
- ★ Writing is a learned skill. Write, rewrite and then rewrite again.
- ★ Welcome edits. Ask others to read articles to ensure they make sense.

## Common Writing Errors

Try to avoid common writing errors:

- ★ Expressing more than one point or idea per paragraph.
- ★ Changing the verb tense in the same sentence.
- ★ Capitalizing words that are not proper nouns.
- ★ Connecting two sentences with a comma and creating a run-on sentence.
- ★ Choosing a design, style or format and failing to hold to it.
- ★ Including needless words.
- ★ Using vocabulary or jargon that readers will not understand.
- ★ Using an abbreviation or acronym without telling the reader what it means the first time it appears in the article.

## Effective Headlines

Choose short, concise words for headlines. Express one thought only—the most important story idea. Capture the story. Do not be so brief that readers miss the idea or are misled. Is it understandable? Avoid standard, repetitive headlines. Be impartial. Leave out puns and rhymes.

## Proofreading

Proofreading is difficult work. Always ask someone else to proofread the newsletter or newsletter contributions. It is difficult for the person who created the material to see errors because they are too familiar with the product. A proofreader should read material one element at a time. Read the body copy, then the headlines, then all of the extra material, such as page numbers.

Check for trouble spots when proofreading:

- ★ Spelling.
- ★ Consistency.
- ★ Commas.
- ★ Periods.
- ★ Capitalization.
- ★ Quotation marks.
- ★ Apostrophes.
- ★ Numbers.
- ★ Headings.

# Family Readiness Group Activities and Event Ideas

Building a unified FRG is necessary for maintaining good teamwork. Joint activities are one way to build a team/cultivate teamwork. Choose any of the ideas presented in this chapter that fit your group size, activity level and interest. An event planning worksheet for elaborate functions is in Appendix I.

These ideas will get you started. With a little imagination from you and your group, the list will grow.

- ★ Invite guest speakers to your group.
- ★ Learn a craft or a new recipe.
- ★ Meet socially at the movies, at a cafe or at the gym.
- ★ Attend command picnics and parties.
- ★ Make a calendar for the year using an annual plan.
- ★ Dine out and follow up with a play, movie or sporting event.
- ★ Go bowling for one night or form a league team.
- ★ Be a tourist and see the local sights.
- ★ Learn simple auto-maintenance tips from the base hobby shop or other trained mechanics.
- ★ Find home or handy maintenance tips to share at meetings.
- ★ Throw a come-as-you-are party, where you call everyone over for an impromptu get-together.
- ★ Have a fun evening with good food.
- ★ Hold an auction where everyone brings a “white elephant” (a usable, inexpensive item). Participants “bid” on items by placing a dime in a basket that circulates around the room. Set a timer for a random amount of time, and when it goes off, the last person to put a dime in the basket gets the item.
- ★ Learn a new skill or attend a class to increase your knowledge about something you have always wanted to try. MWR and some community centers may offer classes in golf, sailing, scuba diving—the list is endless. Home improvement stores have classes on techniques from wallpapering to repairing drywall. Take a class as a group or with a few people—it can be lots of fun!
- ★ Rent movies.
- ★ Pop popcorn and sit on the floor. Have each member bring a favorite movie.
- ★ Play cards and games. Pinochle, Spades and Monopoly are favorites. Host a potluck dinner, inviting participants to bring their favorite recipe (a twist to the standard potluck dinner).
- ★ Build-a-sub night. Each person brings an ingredient to share.
- ★ New recipe night. This is the time for everyone to try those great-sounding recipes they have been reluctant to fix because they did not want to eat it for a week. Everyone prepares a new recipe for the meal.
- ★ Hold a salad night where guests bring prepared items for a salad.
- ★ Wok works. Each person brings an ingredient that is pre-sliced and ready to add to the stir-fry. Garden or plant exchange. Everyone brings a plant or cutting to exchange.
- ★ Learn a craft. Have members of your club share their craft with the rest of the group.
- ★ Security night. Have a police officer talk about car, home and personal safety.



- ★ Shared albums. Share your life with the group—each member tells a story about his or her life.
- ★ Whose hand is this? Send a photograph of each spouse's hand to the command. Each service member attempts to select his or her spouse's. This can be done commandwide. For large commands, be sure to sort pictures into divisions before sending to the command, so that they do not have to track everyone down.
- ★ Spouse jigsaw puzzles. Take a picture of each spouse and cut it into a jigsaw puzzle (or have it made professionally). This can also be a group picture for everyone to work on together.
- ★ Care packages. Have each spouse bake a dozen cookies or other sweets and send them to the command to be shared by all. Single Sailors will enjoy the gesture as well. Decorative pillowcases. Have computer-image photographs of spouses imprinted on pillowcases or decorate the pillowcases using permanent markers or inks.
- ★ Handprint hankies. Have the children draw pictures or put their handprints on handkerchiefs. Sew them together and send to the ship for display on the mess decks.
- ★ Healthy outings. Hiking, biking, walking and other outside activities are a great way to keep busy and be healthy and active. A group of friends makes it more fun.
- ★ Calendar days. Create a calendar page for each month with messages on special dates for deployed members. Mail to the deployed command.
- ★ Record a video of a support-group function.
- ★ Set some of the highlights to music and send the videotape to the command.
- ★ Collage. Gather pictures from the families of as many crew members as possible. Organize them into a collage for display in a prominent place with the deployed command for all to enjoy.



# Children's Activity Ideas

Having parties and social events can be a great way to bring military children together for friendship and a sense of belonging. Here are some ideas to get you started:

## Holiday Parties for Children

Holidays are a special time for families, but especially exciting for children. There are many books on planning children's parties available in stores, at the library or on the internet. When you plan the parties, remember that a little activity goes a long way. Children are often overwhelmed with too much stimulation and are often content simply being with other children. Some ideas may include:

- ★ **Children's Sunday Sundae Parties.** Have each family bring their favorite toppings. Let the club furnish the ice cream, if funds allow.
- ★ **Picnic in the Park.** Have parent/child potato sack and three-legged races. Each family brings a salad to share, something to grill and drinks for themselves.
- ★ **Meet at the Beach.** Beach parties are a fresh and inventive way to have a party and, best of all, unless you're planning a huge party under a pavilion, you don't need to rent a space on the sand!
- ★ **Meet at the Pool.** Use on-base pools or water parks. Check to see whether your base pool offers party packages.
- ★ **Craft Day.** Make a simple craft with the children. One idea is laminated place mats, for holiday or everyday use. There are probably talented people in your group, and there are many craft books available in the library.
- ★ **Costume Party.** Costumes can be worn for more than just Halloween! Consider a Princess and Pirate theme, or come dressed as your favorite book character or superhero.
- ★ **Garlands.** Have the kids decorate their own holiday or everyday construction-paper garland. Join the links to form a garland to decorate the mess decks, wardroom, ready room or work space.
- ★ **Wands and Crowns.** Children can make wands out of cardboard boxes, aluminum foil, straws and ribbons. Make crowns out of construction paper.
- ★ **Children's American Flag.** Create a large paper or cloth American flag where each red stripe is made of red handprints from children (add their name at the bottom of their handprint) and the middle of each white star has a small headshot of each child taped within it.
- ★ **Mail-a-Hug.** Trace the outline of the child with their arms outstretched from the waist up, have the child color it in, and mail it to the deployed parent.

## Valentine's Day

- ★ Valentine Tic Tac Toe Game
- ★ Valentine's Day Printable Coloring Pages
- ★ Pin the Arrow on the Heart Game
- ★ Cookie Decorating Party for Kids
- ★ Stained Glass Heart Craft



## Spring Fling

Tip: Divide the children into groups and rotate them through the games. This creates a more organized atmosphere.

- ★ A piece of felt (relating to the holiday theme) stapled to a sheet of plywood makes a great target for Ping-Pong balls with Velcro glued onto them. The eyes, nose and mouth are prize-winning target areas.
- ★ Sponsor an egg hunt with treats inside plastic eggs.
- ★ Offer face painting.
- ★ Have a picnic or barbecue.
- ★ Mark off a corner for story time.
- ★ Have a bunny-hop race.
- ★ Have a craft table for children to color, stamp, paint, make hats or stickers.

## Fall Harvest

Celebrate the fall season with these events and activities:

- ★ Hay rides from local veterans' groups or other community volunteers.
- ★ Have your own large plastic bucket to bob for apples and award a prize to the winner.
- ★ Have a costume party.
- ★ Create your own beanbag toss game.
- ★ Goodie bags stuffed with \$1 items.

## December Holiday Party: Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa

This is by far the most involved, yet most appreciated, of all parties. Be sure to start early in the year—September is not too early. First on the agenda is finding a location, because they go fast. Reserve your location and Santa suit rentals as far in advance as possible. Check with local toy wholesalers for novelty prizes. Order early and in sufficient quantities. It is better to overestimate and save leftovers for the future than to run short. Some ideas for holiday parties are:

### Holiday Gifts

Have parents bring a wrapped gift for each of their children. Be sure each gift is labeled with a name or sex and age. Set a dollar limit (\$20, for example) for individual gifts.

### Tickets to a Show

Take the children to see the local ballet's production of "The Nutcracker" or other holiday programs. Group discounts may be available.

### Make Holiday Ornaments

Use the recipe for No-Bake Craft Dough (found under the Children's Activity Ideas section). Use cookie cutters in festive shapes.



# Halfway Celebrations

The halfway celebration is a recognition of having made it through the first half of a deployment, and it is a time to rejuvenate the skills developed in the first half of deployment to get through the second half. Start planning for the halfway celebration and homecoming early in the deployment.

If the group wishes to have a theme for the deployment, determine what it will be at your first or second meeting. A group may meet formally only five more times before the end of the deployment. Some successful themes include: "Follow the Yellow Brick Road," "Right Here Waiting for You," "Back in the U.S.A." or anything that might represent the group, such as the time of year, a popular song or a movie. Maintain the theme throughout all the deployment projects.

Planning a successful halfway celebration is much like planning any party. Form a committee to do the research and legwork for the group.

## What?

Observe the halfway celebration in any way the group sees appropriate. Potluck dinners, dinners out or having parties at base clubs, hotel ballrooms and restaurants are popular choices.

## Where?

Good places to suggest are local hotels or clubs (for catered affairs), dinner theaters or restaurants (for simple "meal only" affairs). Consider on-base facilities that may charge a nominal fee.

## When?

There is no exact halfway point, so choose a date somewhere in the range and go with it.

## Cost

Finding places to have your celebration can be challenging and fun. You will want a location that appeals to the majority of the group.

Offer a variety of activities or places to go. Some places may be out of reach financially for some members of your group, so sensitivity to this fact is important. One option would be to subsidize the cost through fundraising activities, so all can participate. Contact another command FRG to see what they did for an event.

## Advertise

Get the word out early to everyone invited, so they have time to save (especially for large affairs). Make sure everyone knows the details as far in advance as possible.

## Reservations

Be sure to allow plenty of time between the RSVP and the date of the affair. At least two weeks is necessary.

To cut down on no-shows, charge a small registration fee that can be refunded at the door or used to cover a portion of the cost of the evening.

If the plan is to have the party at a popular restaurant or nightclub, be sure to make reservations two months in advance and ask about their policy on reservations and cancellations. Calling too late means the room or date that you have promised to your group may not be available.

Safety is always a concern for spouses. When making plans, take into consideration the location, parking, outside lighting and other safety factors. Carpooling can add fun to the event.

# Homecoming

The best homecoming day is a planned one. Planning for homecoming is a big job and should begin the minute the command deploys. If FRGs chose to raise funds, this is when they typically spend most of their money, time and effort for that special day. A homecoming committee should be established at the first or second meeting. This will allow enough time for the group to decide on activities, banners, music, etc. The most important sight for service members is their families standing on the pier to welcome them home. FRGs should coordinate with the command and MWR to establish expectations, and to prevent duplication of services and resources.



## Night-before Party

Many FRGs choose to have a reception the night before homecoming. The reception is for all FRG members and out-of-town guests. It allows FRGs to discuss any last minute important information, crew families to meet one another the night before and share the excitement of the command's return from sea. It is also a good time to talk to everyone—especially extended family members—about safety on the pier and ship.

## Final Fling

Homecoming at last! Final Fling is a celebration of the upcoming homecoming that occurs about 10 days before the command's arrival and is a significant event aboard the ship. FRGs may choose to celebrate this as well. Going out to dinner or having a potluck is a good way to celebrate the ship coming home. This may be an option for groups who choose not to have a reception the night before the command returns.

## Flags and Buttons

Sell or give away American flags or command buttons to have on their pier or in the hangar.

## USO

Check your local United Service Organizations (USO) to see what assistance they can provide on your homecoming day. Some USO members may hand out drinks or food.

## Music

Use bands, disc jockeys or playlists. The host command may coordinate securing a Navy band, if one is available. If a band is unavailable, ask the point of contact to check into obtaining a local high school band. The host command may be able to set up a sound system for prerecorded music that you provide or military music that they provide.

## Welcome Home Banner

Family members can decorate banners on sheets, canvas, poster board or butcher paper with paints and markers. Use your imagination! Check with the host command for details on placement.

- ★ Ask local awning and tent companies or boat yards for donations of canvas. Latex exterior enamel paints are best because the colors are varied, and they do not run like oil-based paints. The cost is minimal, and cleanup is easier.
- ★ Design the banner entirely on graph paper before even picking up a paintbrush. To ease transfer of the design, graph the entire face of the canvas in 1- or 2-inch squares and copy the design from the paper.
- ★ Locate a large area to paint in, such as a basement, empty parking lot or driveway. If inside, ensure the space is well-ventilated. If outside, be sure to anchor the corners and edges of the canvas to avoid wind damage. Start painting in the center of the sign and work out to the edges so there is plenty of workspace for everyone.
- ★ Allow a suitable drying time (usually two days in sunny, 70-degree weather), and attach grommets at 18-inch intervals on all four sides. Do not attempt to fold the sign until you are sure it is dry. Cut slits at regular intervals to allow wind to pass through while the banner is hanging.

## Pillowcase Banner

Start this project as soon as the command leaves for deployment. Each family cuts open a pillowcase and draws a cute saying or love note on it. Sew the pillowcases together and mail the banner to the ship for the command to display on the mess decks or other prominent location. Crew members can cut their pillowcases off or invite family members on board to a duty-night dinner for the occasion.

## “Burma Shave” Signs

These are signs with a progressive message, made famous by a shaving company who posted humorous poems or sayings on small sequential highway road signs. Some FRGs create elaborate cutouts in the shape of the command mascot; some make simple as words on squares. These quarter-inch-thick plywood signs nailed to 2-by-2-inch wooden posts will last through many homecomings. Once again, latex exterior enamel paints are a good choice. Some rules to remember:

- ★ Use short phrases, or one or two words per sign, so reading is easier to the passer-by.
- ★ Space signs at least 3 feet but no more than 5 feet apart at the most-used exit from the base.
- ★ Be sure to remove signs one week after homecoming.



## Pennants

Cut felt or cloth into long triangles. Hem the straight edges to allow quarter-inch dowels in the hems. If time or ability is taxed with hemming, simply hot glue the straight edge of the cloth to the dowel. Pennants can be personalized or standardized for distribution on the pier or in the hanger. Designs can be added with craft paints, letter cutouts or markers.

## Picket Signs

Staple sheets of poster board to 1- by 12-inch wooden slats for handles. This is a good activity for groups. Either decorate alike or personalize.

### New Parents

Be sure to reserve a special area for the new additions to the command's family.

## Leis

There are many ways to make bow leis. The simplest and least expensive leis are made from plastic bags. Red, white and blue bags can be ordered locally or online from businesses advertising plastic, sheeting or business supplies. The host command can help you decide on the length you need, and the plastics distributor can help you order the quantity of bags you need.

- ★ Cut the bags into strips 18 inches wide by 36 inches long. Fold the strips in half to make an 18-inch square and tie the strip around a half-inch clothesline cut to a length of approximately 100 feet. The lei will look lifeless and limp at first, but it can be puffed up by gently separating the layers of plastic.
- ★ Leis are fun to construct. Have a picnic or potluck and make a day of it. Unlike painting projects, children enjoy making the lei, because it is difficult for them to make a mistake.
- ★ Set up a time with the host command to get the lei to your command via a tugboat. Identify volunteers to get the lei from storage to the host command.

Other options and tips for making your lei:

- ★ Use white trash bags and spray paint colors of your choosing.
- ★ Instead of trash bags, use plastic tablecloths. Rolls of long plastic tablecloths can be ordered from a party store in a wide variety of colors. The plastic can be cut into strips and tied to your clothesline.
- ★ Use a rope instead of clothesline.
- ★ Borrow or rent a lei from a sister ship.
- ★ If you plan to mail the lei to the ship instead of working with the host command, mail it at least 30 days before the return date.
- ★ Depending on your ship, leis may be 75 to 175 feet long.
- ★ Be sure to leave ample space at each end of the lei for it to be properly hung.

### IMPORTANT

- ★ Get permission for guests (extended family members, invited vendors on the pier, etc.). If an FRG asks DJs or radio stations to come aboard the military installation, they must have permission from the public affairs office (PAO). Coordinate this with the host command's point of contact.
- ★ Have a backup plan in case it rains or the command comes in a day early or a day late.
- ★ Keep a select number of activities to a minimum. Too many activities may cause children to be overwhelmed.
- ★ Remember, the Navy does not allow vendors to sell their wares on the pier, tarmac or in aircraft hangars.
- ★ Advise out-of-town guests on pier safety. There are holes, hoses, valves and other hazards that could cause someone to fall. Grease and oil could stain clothing. High heels are not advisable aboard ships, because they may lead to slips and falls on ladders or the brow.

# Funding a Family Readiness Group

*Choosing to raise money is completely optional and NOT a requirement to have an FRG. All FRGs should review IRS Federal and local State tax requirements and become compliant before beginning to fundraise, charge dues, or collect donations..*

There are several ways to secure financial support and fund a Family Readiness Group. They may include:

**Dues or membership fees.** Most groups do not charge dues because it may discourage membership. Groups that have a membership fee often offer “scholarships” to anyone who asks for a fee waiver. Members also may wish to donate to the FRG. Donations are strictly voluntary, and no one should ever coerce any Sailor or family member to donate.

**Donations.** Area businesses can make unsolicited or solicited donations. Such donations are usually in the form of free or discounted products. FRGs may never accept a gift on the behalf of the command or the DoN. Receipt of all gifts should be in accordance with FRG bylaws.

**Fundraisers.** The unit CO must approve FRG fundraising events held within command spaces. The installation CO must approve fundraisers held elsewhere on the base. Fundraising events must be conducted among command members or dependents to raise money for the benefit of their own command members or dependents.

**Command support.** The command may be able to provide limited logistical support. If resources allow, the CO may authorize the following:

- ★ Use of installation facilities at no charge.
- ★ Use of government equipment (e.g., tables, chairs and public address system).
- ★ Command speakers for FRG events.
- ★ Incorporating FRG information in the command/ombudsman newsletter or welcome aboard publications.
- ★ Posting FRG information on the command’s official website, or an FRG website may be linked to the command website.

Normally, the command will be unable to provide funds or underwrite FRG events. There are certain special occasions when both the command and the FRG support a command event. Homecoming is a command event that might be organized and coordinated with FRG members, MWR, the installation or a sister command. However, keep in mind that resources are always limited by the command’s mission requirements.

Remember, an FRG’s funds should not duplicate what other organizations or agencies already provide.

**Note:** FRGs do NOT have to fundraise. There are alternate ways to have a strong family readiness group that doesn’t require fundraising. Social events can often be arranged with little or no cost to members, such as packing sandwiches and meeting up for a picnic at a local park, or utilizing the services offered by MWR.

Any activity—even one as simple as meeting at the gym or for coffee—that allows members a chance to meet one another reinforces the FRG’s ultimate goal: Providing informational, morale-building or social activities that support families. By providing these opportunities, friendships may develop, support networks may be built and senior spouses may mentor junior ones.

## Setting Up an FRG Fund Account

1. Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from IRS using Form SS-4, *Application for Employer Identification Number*.
2. Apply for state tax exemption (if applicable).
3. Select a bank.
4. Identify authorized users; two signatures should be required on checks and for cash withdrawals.
5. Prepare authorization letter for bank, including the FRG as the account name and list all the names and Social Security numbers of all persons authorized on the account.
6. Open the account.
7. Notify the IRS by submitting Form 8976, Notice of Intent to Operate Under Section 501(c)(4) and pay a \$50 fee.\*
8. File form 990-N (ePostcard) annually with the IRS by May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, or group's calendar year end date as established by the IRS.

Tax requirements change often. Ensure you know the most current information by visiting [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

\*Failure to file Form 8976 within 60 days will result in a \$20 per day penalty, not to exceed \$5,000. (Please note, the IRS wants to work with your FRG to get you in compliance.)





# FRGs and Tax Considerations

FRGs are volunteer organizations governed by bylaws and may choose to operate as tax-exempt social welfare organizations. Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section 501(c)(4) defines a social welfare group as a not-for-profit organization operated exclusively to promote social welfare.

IRS Tax Law established on 18 December 2015, all 501(c)(4) 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 Form 8976 within 60 days can result in a \$20-per-day penalty, not to exceed \$5,000. Organizations may electronically submit Form 8976 at the IRS website ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)).

The FRG must satisfy an annual filing requirement by 15 May of each year. The Annual Electronic Filing Requirement for Small Exempt Organizations - Form 990-N (e-Postcard) is available online from the IRS website.

For more information on Social Welfare Organizations and the step-by-step process, visit: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/life-cycle-of-a-social-welfare-organization>

*Please note: It is the FRG's responsibility to know the latest federal and state tax requirements.*

## 501(c)(4) Recommendations

It is recommended 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. Resources, including a FRG Tax Guidance FAQs document, are located at: [https://cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family\\_readiness/fleet\\_and\\_family\\_support\\_program/deployment\\_readiness/family\\_readiness\\_groups.html](https://cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/deployment_readiness/family_readiness_groups.html).

## Employee Identification Number (EIN)

In order to open a bank account in the FRG's name, financial institutions may require the FRG to provide an Employee Identification Number (EIN). The EIN is obtained from the IRS and also is needed for tax-exempt organization status.

An EIN can be obtained online at:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>.

Once the EIN is obtained, the FRG may want to e-mail or phone the state comptroller's office requesting an exemption from paying state sales taxes for taxable goods and services purchased by the FRG. See Appendix J for detailed steps on applying for an EIN, as well as your state comptroller's to see if your FRG can qualify for sales tax exemption.

If there are changes in membership to your FRG board, you must update the responsible party and address change, if any. You may notify the IRS of these changes by submitting Form 8822b, Change of Address or Responsible Party: <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-8822b>

After receiving confirmation from the IRS of the group's intent to operate as a tax exempt 501 c 4, an FRG needs to submit a Form 990-N (e-Postcard) with the IRS by May 15 each year, or your group's calendar year end date as established by the IRS. This electronic form can be completed online and is designed specifically for small not-for-profit organizations (those that have annual receipts of less than \$50,000). For more information on filing the e-Postcard, see <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement-for-small-exempt-organizations-form-990-n-e-postcard>.

## FRGs are Not Charity Organizations

*A common misconception is that FRGs are charities. Often, the term "tax exempt" is misinterpreted to mean that donations to the FRG are tax deductible to individuals and businesses, which is incorrect.*

*Contributions to civic leagues or other section 501(c)(4) organizations generally are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. They may be deductible as trade or business expenses, if ordinary and necessary in the conduct of the taxpayer's business. Also, the organization may be required to disclose that contributions are not deductible when it solicits contributions. <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/donations-to-section-501c4-organizations>*

*Another misconception is that an FRG can register as a 501(c)(3) instead, but unless the FRG is doing charitable work outside the normal scope of FRG activities (in which case, a separate EIN and bank account for charitable activities should be established), FRG activities do not qualify as charitable under 501(c)(3).*

*FRGs could register for 501(c)(7) status, but this would require the FRG to collect membership dues, and would limit their ability to fundraise.*

Tax requirements change, please review the IRS website for the most current information and guidance.



# Family Readiness Group Spending Plan

Once an FRG has opened its bank account, the next step may include setting up a budget for its planned events or activities. A budget or spending plan is a written method to achieve your financial goals by measuring and managing the money that comes into and goes out of your FRG account.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Income	
Cash on Hand	\$
Income/other	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	\$
Estimated Expenses	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$

Total income – total expenses = net balance

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Fundraising

Family Readiness Groups are non-federal entities that may choose to raise money to support their activities. On-base fundraisers must be approved by the installation or unit commanding officer, depending on the location. When you raise money, remember to keep it simple. Large, involved projects are time-consuming and take an enormous commitment. Committee members must be dedicated and give their full attention to the project at hand. The majority of the money raised should be used to fund projects and plans within a six-month or one-year period to benefit the members who have contributed their time, effort and money before they leave the command. If ever in doubt, always refer to your command liaison and OPNAVINST 1754.5C.

Tell group members the reason for the fundraiser. For example, the money will be used to cost-share the price of tickets to local attractions, pay for halfway-celebration activities or cater general membership meetings.

Marketing is another important factor. Groups are sometimes limited by where they can sell their items. Make sure there is a market for what you make or develop. For example, cookbooks are fun to put together; however, if the command is small, you may not be able to sell all of the cookbooks you have ordered. Do the homework! Determining the cost, who will buy it and where it will be sold are important decisions that need to be made before you go ahead with any moneymaking activity.

## Ideas for Fundraising

### *“Make It, Bake It, Grow It” Sale*

Have a “Make It, Bake It, Grow It” sale at a meeting. Each person brings an item from one of those categories, and everyone bids on them.

### *T-shirts*

Designing a T-shirt is a good outlet for creativity. Consider having a T-shirt design contest and encourage your FRG members to contribute their ideas. Do not duplicate or sell T-shirts that are sold in the ship’s store. FRGs cannot be in competition with anything associated with the command, or in the command’s store. Be aware of copyright and trademark laws.

### *Bake Sale*

Have a bake sale at your meeting, at the command, on base or in the community. Ask for donations instead of pricing items; you will reap a larger profit.

### *Calendar Squares*

For deploying commands on a ship or boat, you can sell calendar squares as both a fundraising tool and a morale booster for the crew. Using note cards or paper squares, create a large wall calendar that can be hung on the ship. Families can purchase these calendar squares and decorate them. The FRG will then collect all the dates and mail them to the ship or boat to be posted where the crew can see.



## Theme Baskets

Decorate a basket with a specific theme—holidays, romance, cooking and kids are popular choices. Have a drawing for the basket.

Additional ideas:

- ★ Waffles/pancakes/doughnuts/breakfast sandwich/burrito/sub/pizza sale on board (get command permission).
- ★ Hot lunches or lunch bags (sandwich, chips and drink sold on board with CO's permission).
- ★ Chili sales.
- ★ Keychains.
- ★ Mouse pads.
- ★ Silent auctions.
- ★ Holiday ornaments.
- ★ Throw blankets.
- ★ Sweatshirts.
- ★ Drinking cups/glasses/tumblers.
- ★ Car washes.
- ★ Local restaurant fundraising opportunities.
- ★ Community/command family member yard sale.

## Shoobox Auctions

Shooboxes filled with items related to a specific theme are mailed to the ship and Sailors bid to win the contents. This serves as both a morale booster for the crew and a fundraiser for the FRG.

Ideas for shoobox themes may include, but are not limited to:

- ★ Movie box (DVDs, popcorn, candy).
- ★ Gaming box (gamer's magazine, video games, candy, handheld game system, batteries).
- ★ Reading box (books, reading light, gift card to an online book retailer).
- ★ Coffee box (coffee, biscotti, powdered creamers, mug).
- ★ Workout box (health magazine, vitamins, lifting gloves, PT shirt, power bars or shake mix).
- ★ Candy box (chocolate is not recommended due to varying temperatures).
- ★ Car box (car magazine, miniature cars, hand-held driving game).
- ★ Fishing box (fishing magazine, fish crackers, fish candy, gummi worms, Go Fish playing cards, fisherman's hat, lip balm, sunscreen, toy boat).
- ★ Good morning box (cereal bars, oatmeal packets, dehydrated fruits or fruit leather, coffee, tea, hot cocoa packets, powdered creamer, mini doughnuts, peanut butter, jelly).
- ★ Hot box (wasabi peas, cinnamon candy, hot and spicy peanuts, hot and spicy jerky, hot sauce, spicy trail mix, nacho cheese with jalapeños).

## Prohibited Fundraisers

Be aware of these prohibited fundraising practices:

- ★ Raffles (illegal in some states without a license).
- ★ Selling or auctioning off military leave/passes.
- ★ Chain letters.
- ★ Door-to-door solicitations.
- ★ Dispensing or acquiring controlled substances.
- ★ Any activity that competes with Navy Exchange or MWR facilities.
- ★ Any activity on private property without proper permission.
- ★ Any activity that violates a state or local ordinance.
- ★ Any activity or product that is dangerous, risky, immoral, illicit, illegal or casts the Navy in a negative light.

# Fundraiser Checklist

- Review the results of last year's fundraiser; note satisfaction or room for improvement.
- Develop your event goals—financial goals, what the fundraiser will contribute to/support.
- Create your event budget. Be detailed about supplies or venue costs.
- If on base, within command spaces, does the CO approve of the fundraiser?
- How much money can the group realistically expect to earn?
- Is the group likely to earn enough money to be worth the effort involved?
- Are group members eager to support this fundraiser?
  - Have you asked?
  - How have you created buy-in?
  - How have you created excitement?
- How much initial outlay of funds is required to implement the fundraiser?
- What is the "What's in it for me?" (WIIFM) for the potential customer? (If that cannot be stated clearly, is the idea worth pursuing? Additionally, it will be difficult to market.)
- Will this be easy to market? (If no one knows about it, you will not make any money.)
- If selling a product, is there a minimum number of an item the group must commit to selling?
- Who will most likely use/buy our product (target market)?
- Will anything conflict with the success of the fundraiser? (For example, a bake sale during the physical readiness test, rain on the day of a car wash, other groups doing the same fundraiser at a nearby location?)

## Who?

- ★ Will the event be open to the entire FRG?
- ★ Families only?
- ★ Children?
- ★ Single Sailors?
- ★ Extended family members and friends?

## Where?

- ★ Will the event involve travel?
- ★ Will the event be held at a location on the base or off the base?
- ★ How far is the location from the base or base housing?
- ★ What are opening and closing times?
- ★ Do they allow patrons to bring food and drinks?



## When?

- ★ Match events with the seasons.
- ★ Check the calendar for holiday weekends and other special weekends (Super Bowl, for instance).
- ★ Check the command's training schedule to avoid conflicts.
- ★ Propose logical dates and alternates for each event.

## How?

- ★ Special events (lead committee—site reservation, coordinate with other committees regarding tasks and schedules).
- ★ Entertainment (games, activities, equipment, etc.).
- ★ Food and drink (potluck, barbecue, purchase at site, etc.).
- ★ Phone/email tree (get the word out to everyone).
- ★ Newsletter (get the word out to everyone).
- ★ Fundraiser (plan and supervise fundraisers).
- ★ Treasurer (inform leadership of available funds; disburse as needed).
- ★ Other committees as needed to help transport equipment to/from the site, set up, dismantle equipment, supervise games, etc.

## How much?

- ★ If traveling by bus, what is the cost?
- ★ What is the admission fee for adults and children?
- ★ Will the management give a volume discount?
- ★ How will everyone be fed, and what is the cost?
- ★ If renting a site, what is the cost and reservation deadline?
- ★ If family members need child care during the event, what is the cost?
- ★ What are the overall costs for the event?
- ★ How will these costs affect low-income Sailors and families?
- ★ How will expenses be paid?
- ★ Will the FRG need to hold a fundraiser (or two or three) to pay for the event?



# Emergency Preparedness

Most Navy families live far from their extended family, and when a crisis occurs, the distance can compound the feeling of being overwhelmed and alone. The FRG can rally support for those affected by a personal, command or community crisis. An FRG may:

- ★ Work with the command ombudsman to initiate the phone tree or draft a message for social media.
- ★ Coordinate meal delivery to affected families.
- ★ Arrange information and support group meetings.
- ★ Coordinate transportation.
- ★ Locate accommodations for out-of-town guests.
- ★ Arrange emergency child care.
- ★ Be available to families at the hospital.
- ★ Attend memorial services.

## Three Keys to Preparedness

Commander, Navy Installations Command's Ready Navy program suggests three steps to help families prepare and cope with a disaster:

### 1. Be informed:

- ★ Know what emergencies are most likely to affect you and your family.
- ★ Learn your local emergency warning system.
- ★ Educate yourself and your family on the different ways to prepare for a disaster.

### 2. Have a plan:

- ★ Prepare multiple emergency plans for the disasters common to your region (e.g., what to do, where to go, whom to call).
- ★ Communicate your emergency plan with everyone in your family.
- ★ Practice your emergency plan and update it every six months.

### 3. Build a kit:

- ★ Assemble an emergency kit with essential supplies for survival plus medicine and items for special needs and pets.
- ★ Store valuable documents in a portable and waterproof container.



## Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS)

There are two things Navy families should do immediately following a declared disaster: muster with their command and complete a needs assessment with NFAAS at <https://navyfamily.navy.mil/>.

NFAAS is a survey tool to assess disaster-related needs. The system allows families to assess their needs across 19 categories, including medical, missing family locator, transportation, housing and personal property, financial, employment, child care, education, legal services, counseling, and mortuary and funeral assistance.

## Ready Navy

Ready Navy is a Navywide program that emphasizes emergency preparedness. FRGs can help with emergency preparedness by being informed and by offering educational activities on Ready Navy to command families.

## 72-Hour Emergency Kit

### *Build a Disaster Supplies Kit for Your Home*

Your family will cope best by being prepared for a disaster or emergency before it strikes. There are nine basic supplies you should stock for your home in case of an emergency: water, food, medications, tools, sanitary supplies, clothing and bedding, emergency car kit, important family documents and a first aid kit. Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container.

### *Suggestions and Reminders*

- ★ Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members.
- ★ Keep a smaller version of your disaster supplies kit in the trunk of your car. Keep items in airtight plastic bags.
- ★ Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh.
- ★ Rotate your stored food every six months.
- ★ Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year.
- ★ Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- ★ If you store important records on computers, make backup copies and/or keep hard copies on file.
- ★ Keep the fuel tanks in your vehicles full of gas for emergency evacuation.
- ★ Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

## Water

Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as paperboard milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need more.

- ★ Store one gallon of water per person per day.
- ★ Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person.



## Food

Nonperishable food to support everyone in the household for at least three days. Include a selection of the following foods:

- ★ Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables.
- ★ Canned soups (with a low salt and high liquid content).
- ★ Instant coffee, tea bags.
- ★ Dry pasta.
- ★ Canned juices.
- ★ Staples.
- ★ High-energy foods.
- ★ Vitamins.
- ★ Food for infants.
- ★ Comfort/stress foods.

## First-aid Kit

Assemble a first-aid kit for your home and one for each car:

- ★ Twenty (20) adhesive bandages, various sizes:
  - 5-inch by 9-inch sterile dressing.
  - Conforming roller gauze bandage.
  - Triangular bandages.
  - 3-inch by 3-inch sterile gauze pads.
  - 4-inch by 4-inch sterile gauze pads.
  - Roll 3-inch cohesive bandage.
- ★ Germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ★ Antiseptic wipes.
- ★ Pair large medical grade non-latex gloves.
- ★ Adhesive tape, 2-inch width.
- ★ Anti-bacterial ointment.
- ★ Cold pack.
- ★ Scissors (small, personal).
- ★ Tweezers.
- ★ CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield.

## Non-Prescription Drugs

- ★ Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever.
- ★ Anti-diarrhea medication.
- ★ Antacid (for stomach upset).
- ★ Laxative.

## Special Items

Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

- ★ For baby:
  - Formula.
  - Powdered milk.
  - Diapers/wipes.
  - Bottles.
  - Medications.
- ★ For adults
  - Heart and high blood pressure medication.
  - Insulin/diabetic supplies.
  - Prescription medication.
  - Denture needs.
  - Contact lenses and supplies.
  - Extra eyeglasses.

## Tools and Supplies

- ★ Mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils.
  - ★ Emergency preparedness manual.
- ★ Battery-operated radio and extra batteries.
  - ★ Flashlight and extra batteries.
- ★ Cash or traveler's checks, change.
  - ★ Non-electric can opener, utility knife.
- ★ Fire extinguisher (small canister, ABC type).
  - ★ Tube tent.
    - ★ Pliers.
    - ★ Tape.
    - ★ Compass.
  - ★ Matches in a waterproof container.
    - ★ Aluminum foil.
  - ★ Plastic storage containers.
- ★ Signal flare.
  - ★ Paper, pencil.
  - ★ Needles, thread.
  - ★ Medicine dropper.
- ★ Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water.
  - ★ Whistle.
  - ★ Plastic sheeting.
- ★ Map of the area (for locating shelters).

## Sanitary Supplies

- ★ Toilet paper, towelettes.
- ★ Soap, liquid detergent.
- ★ Feminine supplies.
- ★ Personal hygiene items.
- ★ Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses).
- ★ Plastic bucket with tight lid.
- ★ Disinfectant.
- ★ Household chlorine bleach.

## Clothing and Bedding

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- ★ Sturdy shoes or work boots.
- ★ Rain gear.
- ★ Blankets or sleeping bags.
- ★ Hat and gloves.
- ★ Thermal underwear.
- ★ Sunglasses.

## Entertainment

Include items to keep you and your family members entertained, based on the ages of each member.

- ★ Games, cards and books.
- ★ Portable music device.
- ★ Colored pencils, coloring book and paper.

## Important Family Documents

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container.

- ★ Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds.
- ★ Passports, Social Security cards, immunization records.
- ★ Bank account numbers.
- ★ Credit card account numbers and companies.
- ★ Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers.
- ★ Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates).

More information on family preparedness can be found on these websites:

- ★ Ready Navy: [www.ready.navy.mil](http://www.ready.navy.mil)
- ★ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): <https://www.fema.gov>
- ★ Ready America: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

### Other sources of information:

Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness (IS-22) is FEMA's most comprehensive source on individual, family and community preparedness and is also available in Spanish. Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness provides the following:

- ★ A step-by-step approach to disaster preparedness explaining how to get informed about local emergency plans, how to identify hazards that affect their local area and how to develop and maintain an emergency communications plan and a disaster supplies kit. Other topics covered include evacuation, emergency public shelters, animals in disaster and information specific to people with disabilities.
- ★ In-depth information on specific hazards, including what to do before, during and after each hazard type. The following hazards are covered: floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, thunderstorms and lightning, winter storms and extreme cold, extreme heat, earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides and debris flows (mudslides), tsunamis, fires, wildfires, hazardous materials incidents, household chemical emergencies, nuclear power plant emergencies, and terrorist activity (including explosions and biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological hazards).

## Ready Navy Resources

Organization	Website	Telephone Number	Services Provided
American Red Cross	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>	Disaster Response 1-866-438-4636 1-877-272-7337	Provides emergency assistance in times of disaster.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>	1-800-232-4636	Disseminates information on diseases, biological agents and possible pandemics.
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	<a href="http://www.fema.gov">www.fema.gov</a>	1-800-621-FEMA 1-800-621-3362	Provides information about natural and man-made hazards as well as giving guidance on protecting family and personal property.



Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC)	<a href="http://www.ffsp.navy.mil">www.ffsp.navy.mil</a>	Check local listings	Offers resources in emergency situations and can become the coordination point for Navy crisis response.
Military OneSource	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.mil">www.militaryonesource.mil</a>	1-800-342-9647	Provides information and makes referrals on emotional support, personal finances, child care, life skills and more.
Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System	<a href="https://navyfamily.navy.mil/">https://navyfamily.navy.mil/</a>	Emergency Coordination Center 1-877-414-5358 1-866-297-1971 (TDD)	Responds to disaster-related Navy family needs after a family member completes a needs assessment survey.
Petfinder.com	<a href="http://www.petfinder.com">www.petfinder.com</a>		Lists animal welfare locations and pet emergency preparedness information.
Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society	<a href="http://www.nmcrs.org">www.nmcrs.org</a>	1-703-696-4904	Provides financial and other assistance to naval-service-eligible family members in times of need.
Ready.gov	<a href="http://www.ready.gov">www.ready.gov</a>		The U.S. Department of Homeland Defense's campaign to educate and empower Americans to prepare for emergencies.
The Salvation Army	<a href="http://www.salvationarmyusa.org">www.salvationarmyusa.org</a>	Check local listings	Provides services that include immediate emergency assistance and long-term assistance.
TRICARE	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil">www.tricare.mil</a>	Visit <a href="https://tricare.mil/Home/ContactUs/CallUs/AllContacts">https://tricare.mil/Home/ContactUs/CallUs/AllContacts</a> to look up the number for your region.	Notify TRICARE within 24 hours of emergency care to ensure proper authorization and continued care if needed.
World Health Organization	<a href="http://www.who.int/en">www.who.int/en</a>		Find resources for epidemic alert and response issues.

# Spouse Sponsorship Program

While the Command Sponsor Program is designed to support the service member, an FRG can establish their own Spouse Sponsorship Program to help support the service member's spouse and children. This program aims to work in conjunction with the Command Sponsor Program (not to replace or compete with it) and can be developed by individual FRGs, so that the program may meet the unique needs of the FRG's respective commands.

When creating your FRG's Spouse Sponsorship Program, be sure to develop an outline of information or services you intend to provide to Navy families you sponsor. Topics that you may wish to consider when cultivating your program:

- ★ Site-specific things to bring (dehumidifier, rugs, etc.).
- ★ Transporting/relocating pets and quarantine rules.
- ★ Shipping a vehicle.
- ★ Language barriers.
- ★ Cultural differences.
- ★ Tour information.
- ★ Local activities.
- ★ Free classes.
- ★ FFSC services and loaner locker items.
- ★ Cost of living (the cost of a gallon of milk, rent for a two-bedroom apartment, etc.).
- ★ Blogs or social media accounts that might be helpful to follow.
- ★ Child sponsorship (connecting an incoming child with a child at your installation, similar to a pen pal).

If your FRG decides to put together welcome baskets for new command families, here are ideas of things you may wish to include:

- ★ Welcome letter from CO.
- ★ Brief handwritten note.
- ★ FRG information (FRG mission statement, contact info, list of FRG officers, upcoming meeting schedule, fundraisers, events).
- ★ Local area maps.
- ★ Phone numbers.
- ★ Information on area schools.
- ★ Point of contact for FFSC Spouse Employment Program.
- ★ List of items available for loan.
- ★ Information about cultural exchange programs (OCONUS).

- ★ Recommendations for things to do/see.
- ★ Safety pamphlet.
- ★ Donated items.
- ★ Ship/submarine/Navy key chain.
- ★ Water bottle/juice.
- ★ Granola bars, breakfast pastries, small boxes of cereal.
- ★ Tube of sunscreen.
- ★ Small coloring book with crayons.

Resources that specifically support relocations outside Continental United States (OCONUS) include:

### **Expat Exchange**

<http://www.expatsexchange.com>

Information about moving and living abroad.

### **Families in Global Transition**

<http://www.figt.org/incEngine>

Resources for families and individuals who live, move and work throughout the world.

### **Plan My Move**

[www.planmymove.militaryonesource.mil/](http://www.planmymove.militaryonesource.mil/)

A personalized calendar and checklist with resources for moving to a new installation.

### **Transitions Abroad**

<http://www.transitionsaboard.com/index.shtml>

Information and publications on working, studying and living abroad.



# Resources

## **Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC)**

[https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family\\_readiness/fleet\\_and\\_family\\_support\\_program.html/](https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program.html/)

## **Department of the Navy Issuances**

<http://doni.daps.dla.mil/default.aspx>

## **Deployment Support Handbook**

[http://www.cnic.navy.mil/content/dam/cnic/hq/pdfs/n91\\_fleet\\_and\\_family\\_support\\_program/deployment\\_readiness/DeploymentSupportHandbook.pdf](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/content/dam/cnic/hq/pdfs/n91_fleet_and_family_support_program/deployment_readiness/DeploymentSupportHandbook.pdf)

## **Expat Exchange**

<http://www.expatschange.com>

## **Families in Global Transition**

<http://www.figt.org/incEngine>

## **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

<https://www.fema.gov>

## **Google Hangouts**

<https://hangouts.google.com>

## **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**

[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## **IRS – Employer Identification Number**

<https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs>

## **Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)**

[http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense\\_ethics/ethics\\_regulation](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/ethics_regulation)

## **Military Spouse Employment Partnership**

<https://msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil/>

## **Military OneSource**

[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

## **Naval Operations Security (OPSEC) Support Team**

[http://www.navy.mil/ah\\_online/OPSEC/](http://www.navy.mil/ah_online/OPSEC/)

## **Naval Services FamilyLine – Family Readiness Groups Handbook**

[www.nsfamilyline.org/publications/NavyFRGHandbook.pdf](http://www.nsfamilyline.org/publications/NavyFRGHandbook.pdf)

## **Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS)**

<https://navyfamily.navy.mil/>

## **Navy Gold Star Program**

[www.navygoldstar.com](http://www.navygoldstar.com)

## **Navy Individual Augmentee (IA)**

[www.ia.navy.mil/](http://www.ia.navy.mil/)

## **Navy Social Media Handbook (2018)**

[www.navy.mil/strategic/2018-NavySocialMediaHandbook.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/strategic/2018-NavySocialMediaHandbook.pdf)

## **Plan My Move**

[www.planmymove.militaryonesource.mil/](http://www.planmymove.militaryonesource.mil/)

## **Ready America**

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

## **Ready Navy**

[www.ready.navy.mil](http://www.ready.navy.mil)

## **Robert’s Rules of Order**

[www.rulesonline.com](http://www.rulesonline.com)

## **Transitions Abroad**

<http://www.transitionsabroad.com/index.shtml>

## **U.S. Navy FRG Leadership Discussion Group**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/924345064281904/>

# Appendix A — OPNAVINST 1754.5C, Family Readiness Groups



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
2000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 1754.5C  
N170  
25 Jan 2018

## 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](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>



R. P. BURKE  
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations  
(Manpower, Personnel, Training  
and Education)

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.

Enclosure (1)

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

## Appendix B — NAVADMIN 194/17, Family Readiness Groups and IRS Tax Law Changes

UNCLASSIFIED

ROUTINE

R 081845Z AUG 17

FM CNO WASHINGTON DC

TO NAVADMIN

BT

UNCLAS

NAVADMIN 194/17

SUBJ/FAMILY READINESS GROUPS AND IRS TAX LAW CHANGES//

MSGID/GENADMIN/CNO WASHINGTON DC/DNS/AUG//

REF/A/OPNAVINST 1754.5B

NARR/REF A IS OPNAV INSTRUCTION ON FAMILY READINESS GROUPS.//

RMKS/1. Per reference (a), the purpose of a Family Readiness Group (FRG) is to help plan, coordinate and conduct informational, caretaking, 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. FRGs are an integral part of a care network to provide services in support of Service members and their families.

2. Training for FRGs is available through the Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs) located at Navy Installations. FRG training consists of eight hours of live classroom training and is divided into five modules: Leadership Training-Establishing an FRG, FRG Membership Building-Attracting and Motivating FRG Members, Financial Planning and Fundraising Policies, Event Planning, and Emergency Response.

3. The topic of FRGs and taxes was recently identified as requiring clarification. FRGs are volunteer organizations governed by bylaws and may choose to operate as tax-exempt social welfare organizations. Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section 501(c)(4) defines a social welfare group as a not-for-profit organization operated exclusively to promote social welfare. Prior to 18 December 2015, small organizations could “self-declare” their status as a 501(c)(4) organizations - meaning they were not required to apply for official recognition with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and could declare themselves tax-exempt by simply operating within the requirements of a 501(c)(4).

a. Due to the change to IRS Tax Law on 18 December 2015, all 501(c)(4) 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 Form 8976 within 60 days can result in a \$20-per-day penalty, not to exceed \$5,000. Organizations may electronically submit Form 8976 at the IRS website ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)).

b. If an FRG is operating as a 501(c)(4) tax-exempt social welfare organization, the FRG must satisfy an annual filing requirement by 15 May of each year. FRGs eligible to submit a Form 990-N may do so online. The Annual Electronic Filing Requirement for Small Exempt Organizations - Form 990-N (e-Postcard) - is available online from the IRS website.

c. Some FRGs have reported receiving letters from the IRS revoking their organization’s tax exempt status. If an FRG has been notified that its status has been revoked, the FRG may refer to the reinstatement process found on the IRS website.

d. It is recommended 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.

e. Resources, including a FRG Tax Guidance FAQs document, are located at: **[https://cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family\\_readiness/fleet\\_and\\_family\\_support\\_program/deployment\\_readiness/family\\_readiness\\_groups.html](https://cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/deployment_readiness/family_readiness_groups.html)**.

4. Commanders, Commanding Officers, and Officers-in-Charge are requested to pass this information to command FRGs.

5. Commander, Navy Installations Command point of contact is Ms. Carrie Mast, Ombudsman Program Coordinator, (202) 433-4701 (DSN 288), [carrie.mast1@navy.mil](mailto:carrie.mast1@navy.mil).

6. Released by VADM J. G. FOGGO, Director, Navy Staff.//

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# Appendix C — Standing Rules

## *Recommended Roles/Officer Functions*

**President.** This person represents the FRG to anyone he or she may meet while in this role.

### Duties

- a. Know the current bylaws.
- b. Prepare agendas for meetings.
- c. Start and end meetings, make arrangements for opening the building/room, arranging the room, cleaning and locking up.
- d. Sign official correspondence
- e. Appoint committee chairpersons and maintain list of committees. Establish a working relationship with the command liaison.
- f. Recognize committee volunteers.
- g. Delegate responsibility evenly throughout the group or among committee members.
- h. Is familiar with basic parliamentary law and procedure for more formal meetings.
- i. Familiar with IRS Federal and State tax requirements if fundraising or seeking donations.

**Vice president.** This position is probably the least well-defined. This person traditionally performs the duties of the president in the president's absence. The position may be combined with being the group's event coordinator and may act as greeter at each meeting.

### Duties

- a. Chair the meeting in the president's absence.
- b. Secure guest speakers.
- c. Know the bylaws.
- d. Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- e. Coordinate publicity.
- f. Perform other duties as assigned in the group's bylaws.
- g. Familiar with IRS Federal and State tax requirements if fundraising or seeking donations.

**Secretary** (corresponding/recording). The secretary is responsible for taking minutes at meetings and keeping a record of the group's meetings and what was accomplished. The secretary is also responsible for preparation of group correspondence.

- a. Transcribe minutes of meetings.
- b. Keep attendance records of participants (optional).
- c. Maintain a membership list.
- d. Compose correspondence.
- e. Maintain a file of incoming and outgoing correspondence.
- f. Familiar with IRS Federal and State tax requirements if fundraising or seeking donations.



## Duties

**Treasurer.** The treasurer manages the group's finances. Treasurers need to be trustworthy, good with money and have excellent bookkeeping skills.

- a. Maintain records of all funds.
- b. Provide a statement of finances as often as required by the group.
- c. Provide complete financial report after an audit.\*
- d. Reconcile bank statements monthly.
- e. Submit receipts within 30 days of purchase.
- f. Deposit money within seven days of receipt.
- g. Obtain information regarding tax-exempt status and setting up a checking account. Seek further checking account information from your local credit union, or banking constitution.
- h. Require two signatures on checks to maintain "checks and balances" and do not hand out blank checks.
- i. Familiar with IRS Federal and State tax requirements if fundraising or seeking donations.

## Duties

\* Submit records annually for audit to the executive board or other designated reviewer.

**Event coordinator.** The event coordinator, often the vice president, is responsible for setting up a schedule of programs, activities or events for the group. In large groups, the coordinator may lead a program committee.

- a. Learn what program topics, activities and events the group is interested in or needs.
- b. Secure guest speakers or facilitators for programs or activities.
- c. Make logistical arrangements for the meetings and guest speakers (obtain visitor passes or escort guests onto and off the installation, if necessary).

## Duties

**Command liaison.** Designated by the commanding officer to officially represent the command and act in an advisory capacity to the FRG in discussions of matters of mutual interest. The command liaison serves as a conduit of information between the command and the FRG. This liaison may be an officer, senior enlisted member or civilian employee of the command.

**Ombudsman.** FRG member(s), officers and command ombudsmen have separate and distinct responsibilities. Ombudsman duties are established by command and require specific training for the position. The duties in regard to FRGs:

- a. Provide information, resources and referrals.
- b. Communicate command information.
- c. Maintain confidentiality.
- d. Provide encouragement to and inspire camaraderie among command families.

**Advisers.** The Command Support Team (CST) is designated by the commanding officer and typically includes the CO, XO, CMC/COB, Chaplain (if one is assigned), their spouses, the ombudsman and any other advocates designated by the CO. CST spouses shall act in an advisory capacity to members of the FRG, using their experience and knowledge as a sounding board for its decisions. It is recommended that CSTs attend FRG Basic Training, but not required.

**Standing committees or functions.** These may include, but are not limited to, the following suggested committees and functions:

- a. Welcoming Committee is comprised of volunteers (not necessarily officers) who agree to welcome new members to FRG meetings, make hospital visits and visit new moms or new members at home. Members may put together and hand out “goodie bags” of appropriate small items for the occasion. Members may also send out birthday, get well or other greeting cards.
- b. Communications or Publicity Committee is comprised of one or more volunteers who prepare meeting announcements, news items and articles for publication in the ombudsman or command newsletter, act as webmaster for the FRG webpage and otherwise handle communications and publicity for the group.
- c. Special Events Committee will assist the event coordinator in planning special activities and events for the group that may include holiday parties, homecoming events and group picnics, for example.
- d. Fundraising Committee will plan and arrange for fundraisers for the group, researching the applicable local regulations, obtaining necessary permissions, and arranging and managing logistics for the events.

#### *Sample of Standing Rules*

Standing rules may be changed by a simple majority vote. Standing rules should include any rules which the group believes will need to be changed or altered frequently. This will eliminate the need for rewriting the bylaws each time a minor change is desired. Such rules might include:

- a. The amount of dues.
- b. The amount of money to be kept in the “general morale” subaccount.
- c. The number of meetings to be held each month.



# Appendix D — Command Logos

## FAMILY READINESS GROUP LEGAL NEWSLETTER



## USE OF COMMAND LOGOS

ALL FAMILY READINESS GROUPS MUST RECEIVE APPROVAL FROM THE OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH FOR USE OF COMMAND LOGOS OR SEALS.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ms. Nadine Santiago at the Naval Research Trademark and Licensing division

Email at [nadine.santiago@navy.mil](mailto:nadine.santiago@navy.mil) or Phone at (703)696-4002

### Acceptable Practices

- Licensing command logos or seals for use on products to be sold through the Trademark Licensing office and using an authorized vendor.
- Designing your own logo for your FRG that uses components of the command without violating trademark law. Example: superimposing a submarine outline over the state of New Mexico with the words New Mexico FRG above or below.
- Not selling merchandise with the command logo.

### Unacceptable Practices

- Using the command seal or logo WITH OR WITHOUT licensing on letterhead, emails, flyers.
- Using the command seal or logo without licensing it on items to be sold.

Family Readiness Groups (FRG) hold special status granting them authority to operate onboard Navy installations and ships, while requiring them to follow additional rules and guidelines as laid out in OPNAVINST 1754.5C. FRGs can have ties to the Navy but those ties do not make them a part of the government or allow them any greater rights than those granted to them by instruction. For example, FRGs can use the NAME of a ship, command, or installation if given permission by that CO. This means that the FRG for Naval Submarine Base New London can call itself the Naval Submarine Base New London Family Readiness Group if the base CO gives them written permission. However, COs **DO NOT** have the authority to grant FRGs the right to use the command's LOGO or SEAL on their letterhead or in emails, advertisements, or saleable merchandise like hats, shirts, blankets, coins etc. This is because the CO does not own the rights to the logo or the ability to license its use. This authority is held by the Office of Naval Research Trademark Licensing division under SECNAVINST 5720.44C. FRGs are required to go through the trademark licensing office before selling items with the command logo.

NOTE: This office may charge a fee for them to use the logo or may require them to go through a pre-licensed vendor to purchase the items. Typically the cost to license these items is negligible and easy to arrange.

Contact your Staff Judge Advocate for more information

## Appendix E — Sample FRG Welcome Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Family,

Welcome to [name of command]! I am [name], the [FRG position] for the [FRG group name].

As a Family Readiness Group (FRG), our mission is to provide for the well-being of the families of [name of command]. Our goal is to foster a caring, supportive and responsive group that can assist you when needed.

We host meetings, events and fundraisers throughout the year. These provide social support, engagement and valuable information about Navy life. Attending FRG events is a great way to meet your fellow [name of command] families, and we always welcome new faces.

Our email address is [FRG email address]. Please feel free to contact us anytime. We also have a private Facebook group which, once you are a confirmed member, will keep you up to date on our news and events.

On behalf of the [FRG group name], welcome aboard and we look forward to getting to know you and your family!

Sincerely,

[name]

[FRG group name]

[FRG email address]



# Appendix F — Family Readiness Groups Interest Survey

Please take this opportunity to fill out our Family Readiness Group survey. Your thoughts and feelings are important to us. With your help, we will be able to create a readiness group that will offer you the kind of fun, information, friendship and support you want and need.

1. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to be contacted at (phone number) \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to receive text messages at (cell number) \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to be contacted via Facebook \_\_\_\_\_.

My email address is: \_\_\_\_\_.

2. List two reasons why you like to attend Family Readiness Group activities:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please check what program topics would interest you:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TRICARE                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Morale, Welfare, Recreation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stress management               | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition/exercise           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fleet and Family Support Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking classes              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homecoming brief                | <input type="checkbox"/> Time management              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deployment issues               | <input type="checkbox"/> Car/home maintenance         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug and alcohol abuse          | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal beauty tips/fashion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tips on budgeting            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Navy Child and Youth Programs   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please list: _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal safety                 |   |

4. Would you like to know more about the mission of the command?  Yes  No

Would you like a question-and-answer session with the commanding officer or command master chief?  Yes  No

Give us an idea of what areas or concerns/topics you would like to address with the CO or CMC/COB.

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Indicate at least two characteristics or skills you might like to volunteer:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to bake treats.           | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an effective writer.                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to talk on the telephone. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have typing/computer skills. I have access to a computer. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am friendly and outgoing.      | <input type="checkbox"/> I could sell ice cream during a blizzard.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have fundraising experience.   | <input type="checkbox"/> I have experience writing newsletters.                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a good organizer.           | <input type="checkbox"/> I have experience with social media.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can motivate people.           | <input type="checkbox"/> I am familiar with the community.                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am artistic/create crafts.     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please list: _____                                   |

5. Check activities you want most from this group

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities with children      | <input type="checkbox"/> Craft activities as a group           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Activities with other adults          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational presentations     | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer work as a group             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potlucks or go out for dinner | <input type="checkbox"/> Homecoming preparation                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picnics                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about the command or Navy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support our Sailors           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please list: _____             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet other spouses            |  |

6. How involved can you be in the group? Check all that apply:

- I have too much time on my hands.
- I am readily available to help the group.
- My time is limited, but I want to be involved as much as I possibly can.
- I want to come to meetings, but I really am unable to do anything outside the meetings.
- I am not sure how involved I want to be.
- I cannot come to many meetings, but I will help in other ways.
- I must have child care to be able to participate.
- I might like to volunteer but want to know more about the different jobs/positions available.

7. What more can we do to interest you in participating?

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8. Would you come to an FRG activity if the command was not deployed?  Yes  No



9. Is transportation to and from meetings a problem?  Yes  No

Optional: Briefly explain your situation: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you require child care for meetings?  Yes  No

Possible solutions? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How often would you like to meet?

Once a month

Every other month

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which is best for you?

Weekend day

Weekend night

Weeknight

13. What day of the week is best for you? \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix G — Strategic Planning Guide

Having a plan will provide stability and focus to the Family Readiness Group. Use this guide as a tool in developing your annual plan.

TASK	NOTES	
Questions to ask the commanding officer or point of contact:		
Ask for permission to use the command name.		
Determine the limitations/guidelines for fundraising, publicity methods and FRG role in command functions.		
Clarify role of ombudsman in relation to the group.		
Determine the command's needs with respect to supporting the command and families.		
Find out who the FRG's command liaison will be.		
GENERAL INFORMATION	DATE	NOTES
Establish your FRG's mission statement.		
Write or review your FRG's bylaws.		
Decide child care issues.		
Select a meeting day and time.		
Establish publicity methods.		
Establish the structure of the group (formal officers/committee chairpersons).		
Determine if your group will be fundraising.		
Become familiar and compliant with all IRS federal and state tax requirements.		
Develop a budget.		
Establish a plan for emergencies.		
Call your FFSC command representative.		

ANNUAL CALENDAR (enter dates on a calendar)	NOTES	
Command picnics/parties or sporting events.		
Holiday parties (all seasons).		
FRG board meetings, regular meetings, social functions.		
Command underway schedule/yard periods.		
Scheduled deployment dates:		
DEPLOYMENT PLANNING	TARGET DATE	DELEGATED TO
Establish a plan for keeping out-of-town families. .informed		
Establish a plan for FRG family activities.		
Children's parties.		
Fundraising.		
Membership.		
Plans for halfway celebration.		
Plans for homecoming.		
Single Sailor support (optional).		

# Appendix H — Sample Meeting Agenda

## FRG for the USS Eversail Our Local Library June 1, 2018 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Objectives: This meeting will focus on OPSEC and we will introduce our newest fundraiser idea: shoebox auctions.

3:30-3:35 p.m. (5 minutes) Ashley Sims (FRG President)	Call the meeting to order Pledge of Allegiance Welcoming remarks Introduce new members
3:35-3:40 p.m. (5 minutes) Crystal Johnson (FRG Secretary)	Share minutes from last meeting
3:40-3:45 p.m. (5 minutes) Tyler Smith (FRG Treasurer)	Treasurer's report
3:45-4:00 p.m. (15 minutes) Jessica Mitchel (FRG Vice President)	New business
4:00-4:20 p.m. (20 minutes) Kevin Kent (FFSC Guest Speaker)	OPSEC training
4:20-4:30 p.m. (10 minutes) Ashley Sims (FRG President)	Questions Wrap-up
4:30 p.m.	Closing Social time

# Appendix I — Event Planning Worksheet

Determine the audience for the event. This helps you target your plans. How will you publicize the event? Why would someone want to come?

# 1

What do we want to happen?

Event/Occasion: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

# 2

What's the best way to make this happen?

*(plans + implementation)*

Details of Plan

- ★ Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Chair/committee: \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Theme/colors: \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Games/icebreaker: \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Rough timeline/deadlines:

Checklist:

1.	7.
2.	8.
3.	9.
4.	10.
5.	11.
6.	12.

Food:

Food/Dish	Dessert	Drinks	Supplies (napkins, coolers, ice, etc.)

Shopping list:

Estimated total cost:	

Marketing:

- ★ Email/social media/mail: \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Who should attend/receive invites: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Will child care be provided?  Yes  No

Do I need permission for this event?  Yes  No



# Appendix J — Steps to File for an Employer Identification Number

## EIN Application Process

1. **Identify responsible party.** Determine who will be the responsible person who will control, manage and direct the applicant entity and the disposition of its funds and assets (in most cases, this is the FRG treasurer).
2. **Apply for the EIN.**
3. **Notify the IRS.** FRGs are non- federal entities that can fundraise if they choose. If an FRG chooses to fundraise they must notify the IRS, by filing form 8976. FRG's are considered to be 501c (4) Social Welfare Organizations:

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/life-cycle-of-a-social-welfare-organization>

- ★ Your FRG will need to notify the IRS that they are operating as a 501(c)(4), Social Welfare Organizations. Navigate to the IRS on-line form 8976, Notice of Intent to Operate Under Section 501(c)(4):
- ★ <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/electronically-submit-your-form-8976-notice-of-intent-to-operate-under-section-501c4>
- ★ Helpful information for Step 3:
  - You will need to provide your social security number (SSN) for information purposes only.
  - If you are fundraising check the "Other" box (tax exempt, or government organizations). If you are not fundraising check the "For banking purposes only" box.
  - Under "Identify your type of organization," select "Additional Types, including tax exempt and governmental organizations," click "Other non-profit/tax-exempt organizations."
  - For the question, "Why is the non-profit/tax exempt organization requesting an EIN?" Click, "For banking purposes."
- 4. Annual Filing of Form 990-N. (e-Postcard). This is an annual requirement that FRGs must file to the IRS by May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/filing-tips-for-form-990-ez>

If you have an active EIN and bank account but have not notified the IRS follow the steps above to establish your group and notify the IRS.

To check the status of your EIN:

1-800-829-4933

<https://sa.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp>

If there is turn over in your FRG and you need to change the address or responsible party, use form 8822-B: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8822b.pdf>

If you need assistance filling out the application utilize the help topics on the IRS. Gov website or call **IRS Tax-Exempt Government Entities office Customer Account Services: (877) 829-5500.**

# Appendix K — FRG Tax Information



FRGs are non-federal entities that can fundraise if they choose. If an FRG chooses to fundraise they must notify the IRS. FRG's are considered to be 501(c)(4) Social Welfare Organizations: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/life-cycle-of-a-social-welfare-organization>

Effective Dec. 18, 2015, 501(c)(4) organizations are required to provide notification to 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 Form 8976 within 60 days will result in a \$20 per day penalty, not to exceed \$5,000. Electronically Submit Form 8976, Notice of Intent to Operate Under Section 501(c)(4)

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/electronically-submit-your-form-8976-notice-of-intent-to-operate-under-section-501c4>

All FRGs should be submitting a Form 990-N (e-Postcard) to the IRS by May 15 of each year. This electronic form can be completed online and is designed specifically for small nonprofit organizations (those that have annual receipts of less than \$50,000). Annual Electronic Filing Requirement for Small Exempt Organizations - Form 990-N (e-Postcard): <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement-for-small-exempt-organizations-form-990-n-e-postcard>

Due to the 2015 change in IRS Tax Law, some FRGs are now receiving revocation of their tax exempt status. Please familiarize yourself with the Tax-Exempt Status for your Organization:

<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf>

If your FRG has been notified that their status has been revoked, there is a process for reinstatement. Information can be found at <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/automatic-revocation-of-exemption>

Contributions to civic leagues or other section 501(c)(4) organizations generally are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. They may be deductible as trade or business expenses, if ordinary and necessary in the conduct of the taxpayer's business. Also, the organization may be required to disclose that contributions are not deductible when it solicits contributions. <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/donations-to-section-501c4-organizations>

If you have questions or are having issues filling out the on line forms, please contact the IRS Tax-Exempt Government Entities office Customer Account Services: (877) 829-5500.

The easiest way to get your EIN is to apply online. As soon as your application is completed and validated, you will be issued an EIN. There is no charge for this service (beware of Internet scams).

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers>

The elected board member must apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS using Form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number, which can be downloaded from the IRS website at: <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs>.

**If you have questions regarding the online application or to check the status of the group's EIN:**  
1-800-829-4933.

# Appendix L — Sample Treasurer's Report

## Family Readiness Group of Bestshipever

Date: 1 January

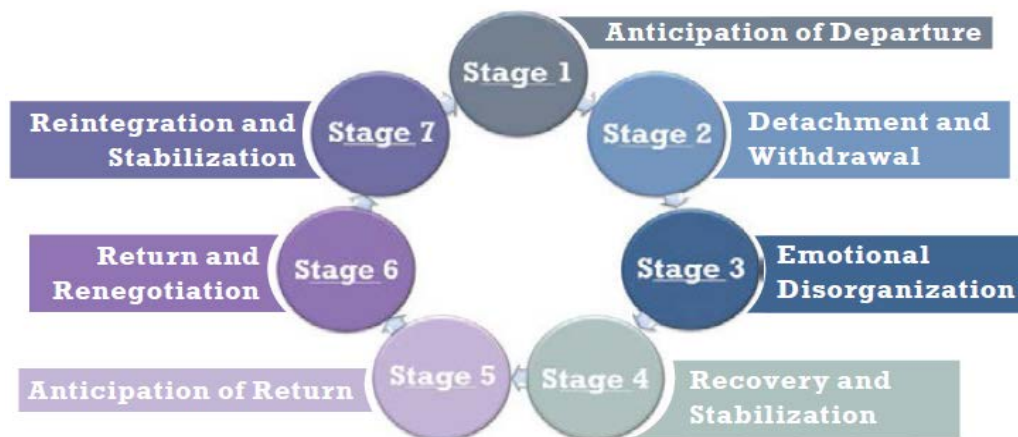
CASH ON HAND \$2,750.01

	Actual Monthly	Actual YTD	Budget	Variance
<b>INCOME</b>				
<b>1. Donations from Parents</b>	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
<b>2. Fundraising Projects</b>				
Fun Run	50.00	1,700.00	1,500.00	200.00
Mug Fundraiser	100.00	456.14	600.00	(143.86)
Merchandise Sales	200.00	300.00	300.00	0.00
Bake Sale	200.00	300.00	300.00	0.00
Recycling Drive	200.00	300.00	300.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$1,750.00</b>	<b>\$4,056.14</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,056.14</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<b>1. Administration Supplies</b>				
Printing	25.00	155.00	200.00	45.00
Mailing Permit/Postage	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00
<b>2. Meeting Expenses Child Care</b>	15.00	700.00	750.00	50.00
Food Items	10.00	170.00	200.00	30.00
Cleaning Supplies	0.00	445.00	500.00	55.00
<b>3. Committees</b>	40.00	310.00	400.00	90.00
Homecoming				
Social	20.00	205.00	300.00	95.00
Volunteer Recognition	20.00	276.18	300.00	23.82
Single Sailors	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
<b>4. Projects</b>	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
Holiday Party				
Parent Involvement	0.00	251.63	300.00	48.37
Spouse Night Out	0.00	356.00	300.00	(56.00)
Morale-building Program	0.00	275.00	300.00	25.00
Giving Fund	0.00	179.00	190.00	11.00
	0.00	185.00	200.00	15.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$130.00</b>	<b>\$3,607.81</b>	<b>\$4,140.00</b>	<b>\$532.19</b>
<b>BALANCE ON HAND</b>	<u><b>\$4,203.34</b></u>			

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_, Treasurer

# Appendix M — The Emotional Cycle of Deployment

The “cycle” of a deployment is generally divided into seven distinct emotional stages. FRGs may see an influx of participation during Stage 1 and a decrease during Stages 6 and 7. Please keep this in mind when planning your group’s activities.



## Stage 1: Anticipation of Departure

Before deploying, Sailors may be working extra hours to prepare for departure. The time apart, added to the stress of longer working hours, can result in tension at home.

## Stage 2: Detachment and Withdrawal

This second stage usually takes place during the last week before deployment. This is a period of heightened anxiety and conflicting emotions.

## Stage 3: Emotional Disorganization

During this stage, family members must adjust to the changes at home. They create new routines as they assume new responsibilities.

## Stage 4: Recovery and Stabilization

The recovery and stabilization phase occurs when spouses settle into their new routines and realize that they can manage the family affairs. For spouses, a strong support network can reduce their stress level and increase their resiliency.

## Stage 5: Anticipation of Return

The anticipation of homecoming may be tinged with anxiety as spouses consider their changing roles when their Sailor returns home. Open communication about expectations for homecoming can help alleviate these concerns.

## Stage 6: Return and Renegotiation

After the initial excitement of homecoming has passed, there is a period of adjustment to new roles and routines. Tension and arguments may increase as everyone redefines their roles and responsibilities. Communication is essential to successful reintegration.

## Stage 7: Reintegration and Stabilization

During this final stage of the Emotional Cycle of Deployment, life will normalize. It may take a few months, but everyone will adjust to the changes. Communication is the key to successfully dealing with these challenges.

**TIP:** Remember that these emotions are normal. Be sure to take the time to talk with your loved ones about the emotions.