

U.S. Navy

# Family Readiness Groups

HANDBOOK

2011







# Family Readiness Groups Handbook

## Introduction

Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are an integral part of a support service network that bundles key support services such as ombudsmen, Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs), chaplains, school liaison officers, and child development centers at the command level. These services provide coordinated support to service members and their families.

The purpose of this book is to assist FRG leadership and provide information and ideas for establishing and maintaining successful groups. FRGs are private, yet closely affiliated organizations that operate under the provisions of OPNAVINST 1754.5B, *Family Readiness Groups*.



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# Family Readiness Group Background

## *FRG Defined*

The purpose of a Family Readiness Group is to 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. 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.

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Section 4. a.  
Nature of FRGs

## *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, particularly that of deployment. An FRG's purpose is to:

- 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.
- Welcome/mentor members who are new to the Navy lifestyle.
- Coordinate social events, such as holiday celebrations.

When families of deployed service members know their resources, have fun and can draw on the strength of new friends, coping skills are enhanced and deployment anxiety is reduced. A group that works well promotes a team effort and 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.

### ***Where did everyone go?***

When commands return from deployment, Family Readiness Groups 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.

# Leadership Roles

## Role of Family Readiness Group Officers

Elected officers at a minimum must consist of a president and a treasurer, but larger, more formalized groups may elect additional officers to lead the Family Readiness Group. These officers often assume their new roles with little or no experience or guidance. Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC) provide command and FRG leadership training.



Enclosure 1  
Sample By-laws

Each role can be established for optimum effectiveness. These roles can be stated in your by-laws. Following are some general guidelines and ideas on how each role might look.

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.

#### Duties:

- Know your current by-laws.
- 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.
- Delegate responsibility evenly throughout your group or among committee members.
- For more formal meetings, be familiar with and ready to apply basic parliamentary law and procedure (see *Robert's Rules of Order*).



### 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.



## 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 program coordinator. The vice president may also act as a greeter at each meeting.



### *Duties:*

- Chair the meeting in the president's absence.
- Secure guest speakers.
- Know your by-laws.
- Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Coordinate publicity.
- Perform other duties as assigned in your by-laws.
- 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 taking minutes at the meeting. 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.

### *Duties:*

- 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.
- Maintain file of incoming and outgoing correspondence.
- 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).
  - By-laws.
  - Attendance records.



### **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 spelling, title, rank and the appropriate mailing address for civilian or military guests.



## **Treasurer**

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



### *Duties:*

- 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 credit union.
- Do not hand out blank checks.
- Audit accounts at least annually by the FRG Executive Board or other designated reviewer.
- Require two signatures on checks to maintain “checks and balances.”



### **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.



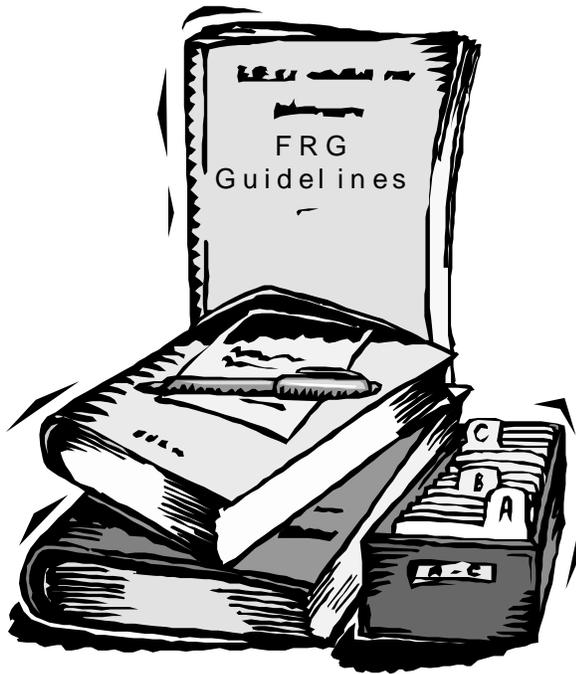
## Command Liaison

The commanding officer designates an official command liaison to the FRG to 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 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.

### *Duties:*

Duties can include but are not limited to:

- **Cheerleader:** Provide encouragement.
- **Liaison:** Provide command information, when appropriate, and knowledge of how FRGs work. Keep CO informed of FRG activities.
- **Resource:** Share knowledge.



Section 5. c. (3)  
Command Liaison



### Tips for Command Liaisons

Read minutes and current by-laws of the group to become familiar with the group's history.

Make the effort to get to know group officers.

Share your experiences with the group (the good ones as well as 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.



## Ombudsman

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Section 4. d.  
Relationship  
between  
Ombudsman  
and FRG

FRG board members and 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 shall not serve as an FRG officer. Additionally, the Ombudsman may participate in the FRG in a personal capacity, but not as the official 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. See the ombudsman program manual for further information.

### *Duties:*

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



### **Tips for Ombudsmen**

Work as closely as possible with your FRG officers.

Participate in group activities.

Keep informed of current information.

Get to know command spouses.

Attend FRG meetings consistently.

Communicate effectively and maintain open business relationship with the FRG.

Remember, you are all striving for the same goal — command support!



## Program Coordinator

The program coordinator, often the vice president, is responsible for asking guest speakers to address your group. Here are seven steps to guide the program 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. See 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 Program Coordinators

Provide your name and contact information to the speaker.

Will your meeting facility support video or overhead equipment or microphones?

As a courtesy, schedule your speaker's presentation prior to conducting your business meeting.

Send a thank-you note to the speaker promptly after the meeting.

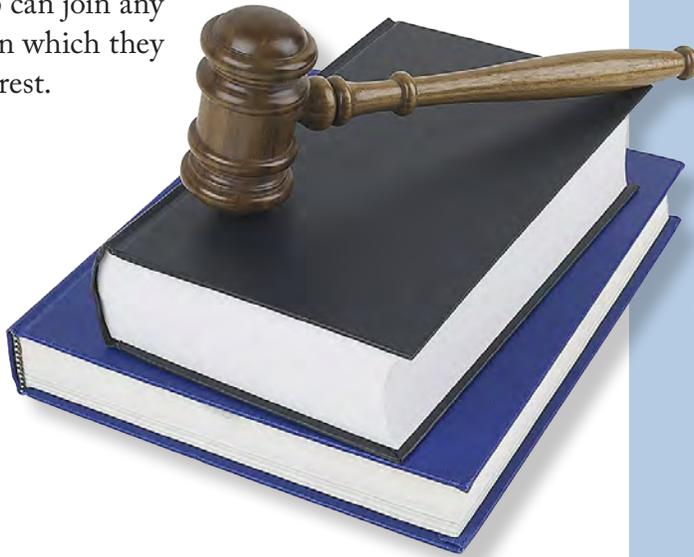


### Securing a Guest Speaker

Successful programs for Family Readiness Groups tend to be relatively short (30 to 45 minutes). Interactive programs are best. The program/presentation should be educational, informative and fun! It is not necessary to have a speaker at each meeting—members need time to enjoy one another's company. Develop a six-month or annual plan for inviting speakers to come to your group, and vary the topic areas.

## Chairperson and Committees

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. Your sense of humor will be your greatest asset—use it often! Successful chairs and committee members have these traits in common: They are dependable and can problem-solve, meet deadlines, communicate effectively and work for the benefit of the group.



### Tips for Chairpersons

Set initial meeting date for committee members.

Determine a timeline for 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 support group and leadership of progress.



## Standing Committees or Special Functions

These may include, but are not limited to:

- **Welcoming Committee** is 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** is 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 Web page, and otherwise handle communications and publicity.
- **Special Events Committee** will assist the program coordinator in planning special activities and events for the group that may include holiday parties, homecoming events and group picnics.
- **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 event.



### Tips for Committee Members

Ask yourself if you have the time to be on a committee.

Inform the chairperson of problems.

Keep in contact with the chairperson as needed.

Inform the chairperson if you are unable to fulfill your obligations.



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Section 4. g.  
Fundraising

# Command Family Readiness Group Checklist



## *Our Family Readiness Group*

- Has written by-laws that include: (OPNAVINST 1754.5B, enclosure 1)
  - Group's name.
  - Group's purpose.
  - Leadership structure.
  - Membership requirements.
- By-laws have been submitted to the current commanding officer for permission to use the command name. (OPNAVINST 1754.5B, 4. f.)
- Has an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and an FRG bank account.
- Has a copy of OPNAVINST 1754.5B.
- Knows and understands the rules of operational security (OPSEC).
- Has a social roster of interested members.
- Has at a minimum a president and treasurer, and an official command liaison.
- Periodically surveys membership to assure needs are being met.
- Advertises meetings and FRG-sponsored events.
- Uses appropriate communication tools to reach out to command families.
- 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 command ombudsman. (OPNAVINST 1754.5B, 4. d.)
- Delegates responsibilities to members.
- Has a budget or spending plan.
- Responsibly manages funds and audits as needed.
- Requests Installation Commanding Officer approval for any on-base fundraising events when the location is other than unit command spaces.
- Effectively plans events/activities.
- Appropriately recognizes group members.
- Has a plan to support members and other command families experiencing crisis.

# Effective Meetings

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

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



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Enclosure 1  
Sample by-laws

- 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.
- It is easier to set dates and times if everyone is encouraged to bring a calendar to the meetings.
- Set time limits on agenda items to be discussed. An agenda item that is discussed repeatedly is frustrating to your group.
- If many ideas will be discussed, assign a committee to take the ideas for action and research. Have the committee report 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.
- If voting on an important issue will cause the group to split, ask the group to compromise by attempting to reach a consensus or to agree to do more research. No one wins when half of the group is unhappy with a decision on an important issue.
- Report 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 Prior:**

- Meet with your commanding officer (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 personal contact information for FRG phone and e-mail 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 of command family members. (Appendix B)
- 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 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, e-mail addresses and phone numbers.
  - Introductions.
  - CO remarks.
  - Share survey results.
  - Discuss group goals.
  - Select leadership (may be temporary).
  - Select one or more individuals to draft/review by-laws.
  - Ask treasurer to set up an FRG bank account, if none exists.
  - Arrange time/location of next meeting.
  - Wrap up.
- Request to publicize meetings at quarters; use 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.

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**Few Days Prior to Meeting:**

- Confirm meeting location.
- Confirm child care.
- Ask attendees to bring light refreshments.
- Call, text message, or e-mail 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.

**One Hour Prior to Meeting:**

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

**Thirty Minutes Prior:**

- 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.
- Welcome participants.
- Follow prepared agenda.

**Within a Week after the Meeting:**

- Draft meeting minutes.
- Establish FRG social roster, with contact information.
- Distribute minutes to all participants who provided an e-mail address. Include a nice note.
- Call anyone who did not provide an e-mail 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.
- Ask for the secretary's minutes 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.

# ICEBREAKERS

The saying goes, “It’s a small world.” The purpose of icebreakers is to give people the opportunity to get to know each other and find out what they have in common. Even if participants do know each other, it is still a great way to start meetings. It is an upbeat way for participants to relax and get to know all of 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?



## ICEBREAKER IDEAS

### *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 nametags. Have participants put their names and hobbies on the front of a nametag.

### *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 small 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. It is amazing how some people cannot 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.”

# Membership and Participation

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Membership

Family Readiness Group (FRG) members are comprised of family members, Sailors, and civilians associated with the command and its personnel.

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 C.

Group numbers may be low. Many spouses work and/or volunteer, and some may not choose to participate in the FRG. It is not the numbers that are 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, e-mail 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 e-mail 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.

Provide child care whenever possible. Contact local Navy

Child 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 of 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.

Consider meeting every other month or quarterly when the command is in port.

# Communicating with FRG Members

## *Operational 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 volunteering 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. Deployed, 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.ffsp.navy.mil/> and click on OPSEC 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 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 Family Readiness Group 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 and a written message to be relayed. Below is a sample message:

"Hello, Emily, this is \_\_\_\_\_. I am the FRG [position]. Is this a good time to call? Good. [If not, get a time to call back and thank her for her time.] I'm calling to say 'hello' and invite you to our upcoming FRG meeting at [time, date and location]. [Pause for Emily's response, if any.] We will be discussing our plans for \_\_\_\_\_ for the year. Also, I'm looking for a few more volunteers to help with our FRG events. By the way, do you have any thoughts or ideas about the FRG that you want to discuss at the meeting? [Listen for her answer.] OK, I'll write that down and make sure it's on the agenda. Well, thanks for talking with me, Emily. If you need to contact me about anything, my number is \_\_\_\_\_. Please feel free to call. I look forward to meeting you at the meeting. Goodbye."



## Phone and E-mail Tree Etiquette and Usage

Phone and e-mail “trees” are a great way for Family Readiness Groups 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, such that the message branches out to the whole group. It is an alternative system to a prerecorded Careline. Participation for both must be voluntary.

The command and ombudsmen cannot share official roster information with the FRG.

Advertise the phone and e-mail tree at command indoctrinations and have the CMC/COB give the FRG coordinator’s phone number and e-mail address to service members. Advertise these communication methods at your meetings and deployment briefs, so all spouses know they exist. Ask the ombudsman to advertise them in the newsletter. You may also ask the command to advertise in the ship’s newsletter.

OPNAVINST  
1754.5B  
Family  
Readiness  
Groups

Section 5. c. (2)  
Properly protect  
personal information

Phone and e-mail trees are used to notify group members of upcoming meetings and social events. Members of the FRG may not use phone or e-mail trees for their own financial benefit such as for sales or solicitations.

An FRG officer calls the phone/e-mail tree committee chairperson to activate the tree. The committee chairperson calls each volunteer who is a branch of the tree, who has been given a list of names. In turn, these volunteers call each group members on their list.

### Phone Tree Etiquette

- Write down the message from the committee leader and read it back for clarification.
- During the call, read the message as it was stated to you.
- Be friendly and brief.
- Do not give out unauthorized ship information.
- Do not repeat or encourage rumors.
- Encourage group members to participate.
- Refer group members to the ombudsman for assistance with problems or resources.
- Leave messages on machines, if necessary.
- Call back if a child takes the message for the parent.

### E-mail Etiquette

- Typing in uppercase normally signifies anger or yelling.
- As a courtesy to others on the e-mail list, blind carbon copy (BCC) all e-mail addressees to discourage others who might abuse the e-mail list with spam.
- Do not forward jokes.
- Be careful of “Reply to all”—such a reply goes to everyone previously e-mailed. Only reply to the intended recipient.
- If you do not feel comfortable writing it on a postcard, do not say it in an e-mail.
- Ask for permission from family members before forwarding e-mails to or from them.
- Do not ask the ombudsman for the command roster/e-mail list. That list is strictly for command use.
- Above all—remember OPSEC.

# Social Media Recommended Guidelines

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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 user name 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 operational security.

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].

## Newsletters

The ombudsman or the command may produce newsletters. To show that the Family Readiness Group 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/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.



### Resources for your Newsletters

Command

Housing welcome centers

Child development centers

Local and military newspapers

Public library

Family Deployment Guide

Internet

Fleet and Family Support Center



# Ten Tips for Effective Newsletters

## 1. FORMATS

### **Letter**

Letter style is the quickest and easiest to produce. Short paragraphs and the occasional use of emphasis type (boldface, italics) helps readers remain interested. The length is usually one to two pages.

### **Newspaper**

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 and special columns and has a specially prepared banner. The usual length is four to eight pages.

### **Combination**

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. Length is usually two to four pages.

## 2. 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.



***The VICTORY Voice***  
*A newsletter for USS VICTORY family members*  
SEPTEMBER 2010

## 3. 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.

## 4. 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.

## 5. 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.

## 6. FONT STYLES

Serif fonts are highly readable:

- Times New Roman.
- Garamond.
- Book Antiqua.

Sans serif fonts are perceived as modern, cosmopolitan, scientific and up-to-date but are read with less accuracy:

- 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.

## 7. WRITING TIPS

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

- Grab readers' attention. 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.

## 8. 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.
- Failing to put statements in a positive form.
- 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.

## 9. 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.

## 10. PROOFREADING

Proofreading is difficult work. Always ask someone else to proofread the newsletter. 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 all of the body copy, then the headlines, then all of the extra material such as page numbers.

Check for trouble spots when proofreading:

- |               |                   |               |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| ▪ Spelling    | ▪ Periods         | ▪ Apostrophes |
| ▪ Consistency | ▪ Capitalization  | ▪ Numbers     |
| ▪ Commas      | ▪ Quotation marks | ▪ Headings    |

# Recognize Me!

***There are many ways to recognize Family Readiness Group members. Here is a starter list:***

1. Say thank you.
2. Involve members in decisions that affect them.
3. Ask about members' families and show an interest in their outside lives.
4. Treat members with respect.
5. Offer more responsible roles.
6. Celebrate members' anniversaries with the organization.
7. Send a card of welcome to new members.
8. Introduce new members.
9. Have a small welcome-back party for a member who has been away for a while.
10. Bring a helium balloon to celebrate a member's birthday.
11. Bring chocolate.
12. Write a personal thank-you note.
13. Tell a member they did a good job.
14. Invite a new member to join you for coffee.
15. Invite a member to join you for lunch.
16. Host a potluck.
17. Ask for their opinions.
18. Greet members when you see them in town.
19. Show interest in others' personal interests.
20. Smile.
21. Brag about a member to the CO (in the member's presence).
22. Say something positive to each member.
23. Provide food at meetings.
24. Let members put their names on the products they produce.
25. Write them a letter of commendation (with copies to personnel file and other appropriate people).
26. Work with your local public affairs officer and get a local radio station to interview members.
27. Put them on important task forces or committees.
28. Post graphic displays, showing progress toward targets.
29. Have members present their ideas to the group.
30. Write articles about their performance for newsletters or newspapers.
31. Have members present a training session at a meeting.
32. Decorate a chair or chairs at FRG meetings for those celebrating birthdays during the month.
33. Ask the CO to write members a letter/e-mail of thanks.
34. Celebrate major accomplishments.
35. Have members represent the FRG at important meetings.
36. Cut out and share articles and cartoons that might be of interest.
37. Have an afternoon tea.
38. Have a barbecue or picnic.
39. Create a personalized thank-you magnet with the person's name and the name of your FRG. These do not need to be done professionally; simply laminate the message and attach a magnetic strip to the back.
40. Give a certificate of accomplishment or appreciation.
41. Use votive candles and wrap them up nicely with a note stating, "You light up the lives of many."

42. Create thank-you bookmarks with the member's name and a personalized message. Laminate the bookmark, and attach fancy yarn at the top.
43. Take a photo of members in action. Put in a matte frame imprinted with a thank-you message.
44. Iron a thank-you message onto a T-shirt.
45. Give a coffee mug with the organization's logo.
46. Recognize volunteers involved with fundraising by taking a small box of raisins, attaching a strip of magnetic tape to the back and attaching a small note saying, "Thanks for raisin' all those funds."
47. Create personalized e-cards.
48. Send a thank-you e-mail.
49. Give a command ball cap.
50. Give a command lapel pin.
51. Publish the member's picture in the base newspaper as an outstanding volunteer.
52. Put up a banner celebrating a major accomplishment.
53. Enlist them in training or mentoring new members.
54. Involve them in the annual planning process.
55. Ask them to recruit other members.
56. Let members know about the outcomes of their efforts.
57. Make up an FRG theme song.
58. If late in thanking a volunteer, put a mint on a note and say, "I mint to say thanks."
59. Bring flowers from your yard.
60. Bring vegetables from your garden.
61. Give them a roll of Life Savers candy and thank them for being a "life saver."
62. Create a "Way to go" box for members to thank each other. Read at meetings.
63. Make a slide or PowerPoint show of members at work. Show at command indoctrination.
64. Bring a cupcake with a candle to celebrate a member's birthday.
65. Wrap a few cinnamon buns with a note saying, "Thanks for working your buns off."
66. Give a cupcake with a note that says, "You take the cake."
67. Give a potpourri packet with a note saying, "You've given our project the sweet smell of success."
68. Give members a bag of mixed nuts with a note attached stating, "We would go 'nuts' without you."
69. Fill an heirloom box with artifacts from the organization's past, and include a note that says, "Thank you for being part of our history in the making."
70. Fill a wine glass with candy and attach a note saying, "A toast to a job well done!"
71. Take time to talk.
72. Give discount coupons.
73. Say "good night" or "goodbye" at the end of the meeting.
74. Nominate them for awards.
75. Treat them to a soda.
76. Send a "get well" card.
77. Give valentines.
78. Give a packet of flower or vegetable seeds to members "who have helped us grow."
79. Bring a token gift when you come back from vacation.
80. Recommend to prospective employers.
81. Print names of all members in your FRG newsletter.

# Supporting an FRG

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 Department of the Navy. Receipt of all gifts should be in accordance with FRG by-laws.

**Fundraisers.** Unit commanding officer (CO) must approve FRG fundraising events held within command spaces. 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:

- The use of installation facilities at no charge.
- Use of government equipment (e.g. tables, chairs, and PA system.)

- Provide 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, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (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.

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### Setting Up an FRG Fund Account

1. Treasurer applies for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from IRS.
2. Treasurer applies for a state sales tax exception (if applicable).
3. Select a bank.
4. Decide authorized users.
5. Prepare authorization letter for bank.
6. Open the account.

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# Fundraising

Family Readiness Groups are self-sustaining and, from time to time, will need to raise money to support their activities. On-base fundraisers must be approved by the Installation or unit Commanding Officer, depending on 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 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 1754.5B.

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 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.

## *Non-profit Status.*

FRGs can qualify for non-profit organization status with the IRS and State tax authorities under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. The advantage to such status is that when purchasing goods and services, the FRG may be exempt from paying retail sales and use taxes.

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

An EIN can be obtained on-line at <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=97860,00.html>.

Once the EIN is obtained, the FRG may want to write a letter to the State Comptroller's Office, requesting an exemption from paying State sales taxes for taxable goods and services purchased by the FRG.

After obtaining non-profit status, an FRG needs to submit a Form 990-N e-postcard with the IRS by May 15th each year. This is a simple electronic form that can be completed on-line, and is designed specifically for small non-profit organizations (those that have annual receipts of less than \$50,000). For more information on filing the e-postcard, see <http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=169250,00.html>.

## 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. Do not duplicate or sell T-shirts that are sold in the ship’s store. FRGs cannot be in competition with 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.

#### 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:

- Sub/pizza sale on board (get command permission)
- Key chains
- Mouse pads
- Silent auctions
- Holiday ornaments
- Throw blankets
- Lunch bags (sandwich, chips and soda sold on board with CO’s permission)
- Sweatshirts
- Drinking cups/glasses/tumblers



### *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



If on-base, within command spaces, does the CO approve of this 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 can’t 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 won’t 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 fundraiser being successful? (For example, a bake sale during inspection, rain on the day of a car wash, other groups doing the same fundraiser at nearby location.)



# Prepare a Plan Checklist

## 1. WHO?

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

## 2. 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?

## 3. 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.

## 4. HOW? (Define tasks and schedules for key committees.)

- 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/e-mail 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.

## 5. 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?



*\*Consult with Pass and ID regarding base access procedures for non-ID Card holders.*

# Family Readiness Group Activities

Building a unified Family Readiness Group 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 planner for elaborate functions is in Appendix D.

- Invite guest speakers to your group.
- Learn a craft or a new recipe.
- Meet socially at the movies, for coffee 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. Go for one night or form a team on a league.
- Be a tourist and see the local sights.
- Auto maintenance. Learn simple car-maintenance tips from the base hobby shop or other trained mechanics.
- House/home maintenance. Find handy maintenance tips to share at meetings.
- Come as you are. Call everyone over for an impromptu get-together.
- Have a fun evening with good food.
- Hold an auction. 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. Morale, Welfare and Recreation (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.
- My 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.
- Salad night. 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 command-wide. 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 deployed command.
- Videotape 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.

This is just to get you started. With a little imagination from you and your group, the list will grow.

# Children's Activities

Having parties and social events can be a great way to bring military children together for friendship and a sense of belonging.

## *Children's Sunday Sundae Parties*

Have each family bring their favorite toppings. Let the club furnish the ice cream, if funds allow. Creativity soars, as there is "something about ice cream. ..."

## *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*

Having many adults makes watching the children at the beach a little easier.

## *Meet at the Pool*

Use on-base pools. Bring the kids or have a parents' day out.

## *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*

Do not reserve this idea just for Halloween.

## *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 in the middle of each white star tape a small headshot of each child.

## *Life-Size Hug*

Trace the outline of the child from the waist up, have the child color it in, and mail it to the deployed parent. When the parent feels lonely, they can pull out the hug from their child.



### **A good no-bake craft dough recipe:**

- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup salt
- 2 tsp cream of tartar
- 1 cup water
- 2 tbsp oil
- ½ tsp food coloring

1. Combine flour, salt and cream of tartar.
2. Gradually stir in water, oil and food coloring.
3. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until a ball forms (about five minutes).
4. Remove from heat and knead until smooth.
5. Store dough in airtight containers until ready for use.
6. Allow creation to air dry overnight.

# 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:

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## *Make Valentines*

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### *Spring Fling*

- 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.
- Cordon 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.

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## *Celebrate the Fourth of July*

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### *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.
- Do your own beanbag toss.
- Goodie bags stuffed with \$1 items.
- Trick or treat at the mall. Less mess, less organization. For smaller groups this may sound too easy to be true, but it is fun. Select a meeting place and time in advance.

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## *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 dough on the previous page. 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 re-energize the skills developed in the first half of deployment to get through the second half. Start planning for the halfway celebration and for 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 “meals 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.

## Who?

Again, it is up to your group. Some include mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers. Most include only the spouse or significant other of the deployed service member.

## 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. Car-pooling 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. Family Readiness Groups 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.

## *Final Fling*

Final Fling occurs about 10 days before homecoming and is a significant event on board the ship. Homecoming at last! 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 do a reception the night before the command returns.

## *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 crew families to meet each other 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 or to release other important information to help them have a great homecoming day.

## *Flags and Buttons*

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

## *USO*

Check your local United Service Organization (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 tape recordings. The host command will 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 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.
- Before picking up a paintbrush, design the banner entirely on graph paper. 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.
- When satisfied with the design, find 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.
- After a suitable drying time (usually two days in sunny, 70-degree weather), 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 to the ship. 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. Some are elaborate cutouts in the shape of the command mascot; some are as 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 three feet but no more than five 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 hangar. Designs can be added with craft paints, letter cutouts or markers.



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## 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.

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## Leis

There are many different 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 from businesses advertising in the Yellow Pages under 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, since 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.

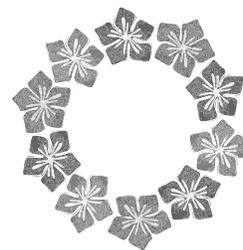
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## New Parents

Be sure to have a special area sectioned off for the new additions to the command's family. Generally, the command permits new parents off the ship first.

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### *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 on mailing to the ship instead of working with host command, mail 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

- If an FRG asks DJs or radio stations to come aboard the military installation, they must have permission from PAO (public affairs officer). Coordinate this with the host command's point of contact.
- The Navy does not allow vendors to sell their wares on the pier, tarmac or aircraft hangars.
- Have a backup plan in case it rains or the command comes in a day early or a day late.
- Too many activities may cause children to be overwhelmed.
- Is the ship bringing back tigers? Tigers are children, siblings and parents of service members. Commands will not allow spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends on Tiger Cruises.
- 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, since they lead to slips and falls on ladders or the brow.



# 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 Family Readiness Group 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.
- 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.

## *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://www.navyfamily.navy.mil/>>.

NFAAS is a survey tool to assess disaster-related needs. The system allows families to assess 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.

## *Operation Prepare*

Operation Prepare is a Navy-wide program that emphasizes disaster preparedness. FRGs can help with disaster preparedness by being informed and by offering educational activities on Operation Prepare to command families. Commander, Navy Installations Command's Operation Prepare program suggests three steps to help families prepare and cope with a disaster.

### Three Keys to Preparedness

#### 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 various disaster types (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. **Make 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.

# 72-Hour Preparedness 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 six basic supplies you should stock for your home in case of an emergency: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items for medical conditions. Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container.

My Preparedness Kit Contains	Yes	No
Water		
Food		
Medications and special items		
Tools and supplies		
Sanitation		
Clothing and bedding		
Emergency car kit		
Important family documents		
First aid kit		

### **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 (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).

### **Food**

Store at least a three-day supply of nonperishable food. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of the following foods:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned soups
- Instant coffee, tea bags
- Dry pasta
- Canned juices
- Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
- High-energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

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## **First-aid Kit**

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

- (20) adhesive bandages, various sizes
  - (1) 5" x 9" sterile dressing
  - (1) conforming roller gauze bandage
  - (2) triangular bandages
  - (2) 3" x 3" sterile gauze pads
  - (2) 4" x 4" sterile gauze pads
  - (1) roll 3" cohesive bandage
  - (2) germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer
  - (6) antiseptic wipes
  - (2) pair large medical grade non-latex gloves
  - Adhesive tape, 2" 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
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- 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)
-

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## **Sanitation**

- 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 (based on the ages of family members)**

- Games (cards) and books
  - Portable music device
- 

## **Important Family Documents**

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container

- Will, 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)
- 

## **FAMILY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN 5 STEPS**

1. **DISCUSS** the disasters most likely to happen in your area and their effect on your family's safety. Hazards could include house fires, severe winter weather and storms, earthquakes, flooding, hurricanes and tropical storms, and hazardous materials threats.
2. **TRAIN** all family members. Take first-aid classes. Learn to use a fire extinguisher and how to shut off utilities. Do not take the chance that the only person who knows first aid or how to turn off the natural gas will be at home when needed.
3. **ASSEMBLE** your disaster supplies into a personal 72-hour emergency preparedness kit. This would include food, water, clothing and medications to last you at least 72 hours. You need enough supplies for each family member.
4. **IDENTIFY** in-state and out-of-state emergency contact names and numbers and provide copies to each family member. Post a copy near your phone and put copies in your 72-hour disaster supplies kit. When local phone service is out, family members can use their out-of-state-contact to relay messages.
5. **MAINTAIN** your readiness. Review your disaster preparedness plan with your family at least once a year. Identify what new training, equipment or supplies you may need. Conduct fire evacuations and earthquake "drop, cover and hold" drills

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

<[https://www.cnmc.navy.mil/cnmc\\_hq\\_site/whatwedo/emergencymanagement/operationpreparedness](https://www.cnmc.navy.mil/cnmc_hq_site/whatwedo/emergencymanagement/operationpreparedness)>  
Operation Prepare

<<http://www.fema.gov>>  
(Federal Emergency Management Agency)

<<http://www.ready.gov>>  
(Ready America)

**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. The guide has been revised, updated and enhanced in August 2004 to provide the public with the most current and up-to-date disaster preparedness information available. *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).
- While useful as a read-through or reference guide, the guide can also be used as a study manual, with credit awarded for successful completion with a 75 percent score on a final exam. Questions about the exam should be directed to the FEMA Independent Study Program by calling 1-800-238-3358 or by going to [www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/is](http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/is).



# Operation Prepare Resources

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>Services Provided</b>
<b>American Red Cross</b>	<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.
<b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</b>	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>	1-800-232-4636	Disseminates information on diseases, biological agents and possible pandemics.
<b>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)</b>	<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.
<b>Fleet &amp; Family Support Center</b>	<a href="http://www.ffsp.navy.mil">www.ffsp.navy.mil</a>		Offers a variety of resources in emergency situations and can become the coordination point for Navy crisis response.
<b>Military HomeFront</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryhomefront.com">www.militaryhomefront.com</a>		The DoD site for official Military Community and Family Policy program information, policy and guidance designed to help Service members and their families.
<b>Military OneSource</b>	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.com">www.militaryonesource.com</a>	1-800-342-9647	Provides information and makes referrals on emotional support, personal finances, child care, life skills and more.
<b>Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System</b>	<a href="https://www.navyfamily.navy.mil">https://www.navyfamily.navy.mil</a>	Emergency Call 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.
<b>Petfinder.com</b>	<a href="http://www.petfinder.com">www.petfinder.com</a>		Lists animal welfare locations and pet emergency preparedness information.
<b>Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society</b>	<a href="http://www.nmcrcs.org">www.nmcrcs.org</a>	1-703-696-4904	Provides financial and other assistance to naval-service-eligible family members in times of need.
<b>Sittercity</b>	<a href="http://www.sittercity.com">www.sittercity.com</a>		Memberships are funded by the DoD. Sittercity helps you find local sitters and military-subsidized child care providers. (Also assists with finding pet sitters).
<b>The Salvation Army</b>	<a href="http://www.salvationarmyusa.org">www.salvationarmyusa.org</a>	Check Local Listings	Provides services that include immediate emergency assistance and long-term assistance.
<b>TRICARE</b>	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil">www.tricare.mil</a>	1-877-874-2273	Notify TRICARE within 24 hours of emergency care to ensure proper authorization and continued care if needed.

# Family Readiness Groups *Do's* and *Don'ts*

## **Do**

1. Plan, coordinate and conduct social events and informational activities designed to promote and improve family readiness.
2. Elect at a minimum a President and Treasurer.
3. Interact with installation activities (FFSC, MWR and Chaplains, etc) to coordinate support and avoid duplication of services.
4. Establish by-laws for review of CO. Make available to members.
5. Establish agenda and identify objectives for each meeting.
6. Open membership to all family members, Sailors and civilians associated with the command and its personnel.
7. Coordinate with the command liaison on matters of mutual interest to both the Command and the FRG.
8. Request CO 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.
9. Attend FRG training at FFSCs.
10. Disestablish the FRG when a vote of its members determines that disestablishment is in the best interest of the FRG.

## **Don't**

1. Solicit or accept gifts on behalf of the Command or Department of the Navy.
2. Confuse FRG and Ombudsman roles and responsibilities.
3. Fundraise in command spaces without the approval of the commanding officer.
4. Host a fundraising event on the base without approval from the installation commanding officer (when the location is other than unit command spaces).
5. Allow Ombudsman to hold an FRG office.
6. Imply that the Navy officially endorses fundraising events that occur off-base.
7. Request CO endorsement of an FRG fundraiser to benefit a charity of the FRG's choosing.
8. Use command name without approval of the commanding officer.
9. Use seals, logos or insignia of command on any FRG letterhead, correspondence, titles, or in association with programming.
10. Release personal information, obtained in the course of official volunteer duties, absent proper consent of the individual(s) concerned.

# Family Readiness Groups FAQs

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

*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. Who can be an FRG member?

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

3. What is the role of the Ombudsman?

*Ombudsman may collaborate with the FRG on behalf of the command, but the office-holder cannot serve as an FRG officer. An ombudsman may participate in the FRG in a personal capacity, but not as the official Ombudsman.*

4. Is there training for FRG leadership?

*Yes. Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC) offer Family Readiness Group Leadership Training. Command leadership, their spouses and FRG leadership are encouraged to attend.*

5. Do FRGs need by-laws?

*Yes. In order to receive approval to operate onboard the installation or the unit, or to use the command name, an FRG must submit its by-laws to the installation or unit CO for review and approval. By-laws provide structure and guidance, and clearly define leadership roles and responsibilities. The by-laws are then adopted by the group's members to govern and regulate affairs.*

6. Can FRGs accept or solicit gifts?

*An FRG is free to accept solicited and unsolicited gifts offered in accordance with its by-laws. 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.*

7. Does everyone in the FRG have to complete the Volunteer Agreement Form?

*No. Only FRG members who wish to become official volunteers must complete the Volunteer Agreement Form DD2793. The Commanding Officer may choose to accept some members as official volunteers to assist with family support programs. CO will then provide official volunteers with a clear, written description of duties, scope of responsibilities assigned and appropriate training; and the CO will supervise performance of those duties. When performing these official volunteer functions, the individual works for the command and not the FRG.*

8. Will FRG members be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses?

*Unit COs may only authorize reimbursement of qualifying expenses for designated official volunteers.*

9. What is the purpose of the command representative/speaker?

*Commanding officers may provide a command representative to speak at FRG events regarding the deployment schedule, command events, or any topic of interest.*

10. 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.*

11. 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.*

# Resources

**Department of the Navy Issuances**  
<http://doni.daps.dla.mil/default.aspx>

**To download a copy of the Joint Ethics Regulation (JER), go to**  
[http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense\\_ethics/ethics\\_regulation](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/ethics_regulation).

**Official Navy volunteers complete a Form DD2793 (May 2009), Volunteer Agreement for Appropriated Fund Activities and Non-appropriated Fund Instrumentalities, available at**  
<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2793.pdf>



# Appendix A — Standing Rules

## 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 by-laws each time a minor change is desired. Such rules might be:

- 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.

## RECOMMENDED ROLES/OFFICER FUNCTIONS

**President.** This person represents the FRG to anyone he or she may come in contact with while in this role. Duties:

- a. Know the current by-laws.
- 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.
- f. Establish a working relationship with the command liaison.
- g. Recognize committee volunteers.
- h. Delegate responsibility evenly throughout the group or among committee members.
- i. Is familiar with basic parliamentary law and procedure (*Robert’s Rules of Order*) for more formal meetings.

**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 program 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 by-laws.
- d. Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- e. Coordinate publicity.
- f. Perform other duties as assigned in the group’s by-laws.



Section 4. b.  
FRG roles

**Program coordinator.** The program 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. Duties:

- 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).

**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. Duties:

- 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.

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

- a. Maintain records of all funds.
- b. Provide a statement of finances as often as required by 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.
- h. Require two signatures on checks to maintain "checks and balances" and do not hand out blank checks.

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

**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.

**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 Web page and otherwise handle communications and publicity for the group.
- c. Special Events Committee will assist the program 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, re-searching the applicable local regulations, obtaining necessary permissions, and arranging and managing logistics for the events.

# Appendix B — FRG 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 (phone number) \_\_\_\_\_.

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

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

I only want to receive e-mails on upcoming meetings. My e-mail 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:

TRICARE

Stress management

Fleet & Family Support Center

Homecoming brief

Deployment issues

Drug and alcohol abuse

Parenting

Family advocacy programs

Navy Child and Youth Programs

Personal safety

MWR

Nutrition/exercise

Cooking classes

Time management

Car/home maintenance

Personal beauty tips/fashion

Tips on budgeting

Other, please list: \_\_\_\_\_.

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 the command master chief?  Yes  No

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Indicate at least two characteristics or skills you possess:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to bake treats.           | <input type="checkbox"/> I am a terrific writer.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to talk on the telephone. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have typing/computer skills.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am friendly and outgoing.      | <input type="checkbox"/> I have access to a computer.              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have fundraising experience.   | <input type="checkbox"/> I could sell ice cream during a blizzard. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a good organizer.           | <input type="checkbox"/> I have experience writing newsletters.    |
| <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: _____                 |

6. Check activities you most want 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            |  |

7. How involved can you to be in this group? Check all that apply:

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

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

---

---

9. Would you come to an FRG activity if the command was not deployed?

- Yes     No

10. Is transportation to and from meetings a problem?

- Yes       No

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

11. Is babysitting a problem?

- Yes       No

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

12. How often would you like to meet?

- Once a month  
 Every other month  
 Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Which is best for you?

- Weekend day  
 Weekend night  
 Weeknight

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

# Appendix C — 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 by-laws.		
Decide child care issues.		
Select a meeting day and time.		
Establish publicity methods.		
Establish the structure of the group (formal officers/committee chairpersons).		
Develop a budget.		
Establish a plan for fundraising.		
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 D — Event Planning

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

<b>EVENT:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>TIME:</b>
LOCATION:	PURPOSE:	
PUBLICITY:		

COST OF EVENT:					
Food	\$	Drinks	\$	Facility	\$
Prizes	\$	Music	\$	Entertainment	\$
Child care	\$	Other	\$	Other	\$
Other	\$	Other	\$	<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$</b>

FACILITY/LOCATION:		
Room/hall/park/restaurant	1st choice	
	2nd choice	
Space needed to accommodate group		
Equipment needed (chairs/tables/cooking facilities, etc.)		

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:	
Chairperson of the committee	
Committee members	

COMMITTEE MEMBER TASKS:	
Item	Committee member responsible
Publicity	
Cost	
Facility	

