



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
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OPNAVINST 1754.5  
N13  
20 Sep 06

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1754.5

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: FAMILY READINESS GROUPS (FRG)

Ref: (a) DOD 5500.7-R of Aug 93  
(b) 10 U.S.C.  
(c) OPNAVINST 5380.1  
(d) OPNAVINST 1750.1E  
(e) DOD Instruction 1015.10 of 3 Nov 05  
(f) Internal Revenue Service Publication 557,  
Section 501(c)(3)

Encl: (1) Definitions  
(2) Authorized Support for Family Readiness Groups  
(3) Resource List  
(4) Sample By-laws  
(5) Recommended Roles/Officer Functions  
(6) Rules and Regulations for Family Readiness Group  
Funds

1. Purpose. Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are command-sponsored organizations, which may operate on Department of Defense (DOD) installations, consistent with the provisions of references (a) through (f), and subject to the installation commander's approval and local guidance. FRGs are unit commander programs and are part of the Family Readiness Alliance (FRA). FRGs may plan, coordinate, and conduct social, informational, care-taking, and morale-building activities to enhance family readiness and enable the Total Navy Family Community, as defined in enclosure (1), to meet mission and military family lifestyle challenges. FRGs should interact with installation activities (e.g., Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC), Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR), Chapel and others) and military affiliated private organizations (e.g., the local Chief Petty Officers Association, Navy League Association, Wives Club of America, United Services Organization or others) as part of the FRA, to coordinate and assist with FRG associated activities for unit members and their families.

2. Discussion. Family readiness is the mutual reinforcement and support provided by the command to Sailors and their families. FRGs are a key component of family readiness, which is a vital component of mission readiness. FRG functions and activities are listed below.

- a. Family support including:
  - (1) Emphasis on activities during deployments,
  - (2) Mentoring of new family members, and
  - (3) Assistance in times of personal, unit, or area crises.
- b. Coordinating deployment farewells and homecomings.
- c. Assisting with command sponsor program to include:
  - (1) Welcoming new families, and
  - (2) Facilitating family member attendance at orientation sessions.
- d. Unit family networking to include:
  - (1) Unit family phone trees,
  - (2) Web sites,
  - (3) Newsletter content,
  - (4) Unit information and education briefs, and
  - (5) Other communications and activities that foster command, unit member, and family member relationships to enhance family readiness.
- e. Social events (for example, holiday and children's parties) and activities.

3. Applicability

- a. Membership

(1) FRGs may include command members, command member spouses, command member children, and other interested parties such as parents, other family members, and friends with the approval of the command member or commanding officer (CO).

(2) FRGs shall not unlawfully deny membership based on race, color, creed, sex, age, disability, national origin, or unlawfully discriminate against any individuals.

b. Status. FRG officers, advisors, and other designated family support volunteers are considered to be employees of the Federal Government for the specific purposes per references (b), section 1588, and (c) when providing voluntary services to FRGs.

#### 4. Responsibilities

a. The Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (N1) is responsible for promulgating the initial policy for FRGs.

b. Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) is responsible for:

(1) Promulgating and maintaining policy, and facilitating the establishment and operation of FRGs.

(2) Working with other Navy activities to identify and fund appropriate portals and website access for FRG Web sites which will meet communication needs of both local families and reservists, individual augmentees, and geographic bachelors who remain in their home areas.

c. Regional commanders will ensure that:

(1) FRGs are established by commands within their regions and provide logistical support to the fullest extent possible by installation commanders for meetings, fundraisers, and activities.

(2) FRGs follow the guidance of the appropriate Installation CO and that FRG leadership classes and sponsor training courses are available to FRG leaders and members.

d. Unit COs are responsible for establishment and guidance of command FRGs. Small commands having few family members may arrange with one or more other commands, a group command (e.g., **Carrier Strike Group**, **Destroyer Squadron**, etc.), or the installation command, to form a combined FRG. Such agreements

must be at the concurrence of all commands involved and should be specified in writing, including any agreed-upon provisions for support of the combined FRG as stipulated in enclosure (2).

5. Action

a. FRG Operations

(1) Installation and unit COs may require FRGS to have written by-laws. Enclosure (3) contains a list of resources that includes samples of by-laws and enclosure (4) is a by-laws sample.

(2) At a minimum, FRGs shall provide to the unit CO a list with the names of the FRG officers, advisors, and chairman or committee heads with their associated roles and functions.

b. Roles and Functions

(1) Officers

(a) FRGs may have a formal group of officers consisting of President, Chairperson or Coordinator, Vice President or Vice Chairperson (or Co-coordinator who may also function as Program Coordinator), a Program Coordinator, Recording and/or Correspondence Secretary(ies), Treasurer, and Committee Chairpersons.

(b) FRGs may have a simplified, streamlined structure with a Chairperson, Program Coordinator, Secretary/Treasurer, and Committee Chairperson.

(c) Recommended officer functions are listed in enclosure (5).

(2) Advisor(s). The CO may appoint one or more volunteer advisors to the group; often, a spouse of a senior command member. The role of the advisor is to offer guidance and make recommendations. The advisor(s) may assist in the formation of the FRG and normally will be responsible for reviewing and approving phone tree or email network messages, flyers, newsletter and Web site content, fundraising signs, and any other FRG communications.

(3) Other designated family support volunteers. COs may appoint other designated family support volunteers within the group; often spouses of command members. These designated family support volunteers may serve on committees such as those listed in enclosure (5) or perform other FRG volunteer duties as approved by the CO for which the provisions and protections of references (b) and (c) would need to apply. Not all members need to have volunteer status, only a limited number need and should be granted this formal status. Procedures for granting volunteer status are described in enclosure (2) and detailed in reference (c).

c. Relationship with Other Command Roles/Functions

(1) Command Family Ombudsman. The ombudsman serves as the official liaison between the command and its families. The ombudsman may assist with the formation and facilitation of FRGs as noted in reference (d), but shall not serve as an officer of the FRG.

(2) Command Leadership Team. The CO, officer in charge (OIC), or director may select a volunteer member of the command leadership team as a command point of contact when command assistance or event coordination is required. Members of the command leadership team may include the Executive Officer (XO) (or executive director), Command Master Chief (CMC) or Chief of the Boat (COB), and any other applicable senior leadership positions.

(3) Communicating with group members. Command ombudsmen are responsible for establishing a rapid means for official communication between the command and families, usually a telephone tree. FRGs may establish a telephone and/or email tree or mailing list for internal communication among members. The Privacy Act of 1974 allows FRGs access to command social roster information for the purposes noted in Privacy Act Systems Notice NM05000-3. The FRG telephone, email tree, or mailing list, will be used to notify members of upcoming meetings and social events. FRG member data is for official use only and shall be used to facilitate communication within the unit FRG. Any external requests for FRG member data shall be brought to the immediate attention of the command.

d. Authorized Command Support for FRGs. Commands are authorized to provide the following types of support for FRGs, detailed guidance is provided in enclosure (2):

- (1) Acceptance of volunteer services,
- (2) Use of installation facilities,
- (3) Use of government equipment,
- (4) Use of command vehicles,
- (5) Inclusion of FRG content in command/ombudsman newsletters and linkage of FRG website to command website,
- (6) Use of postal services for official correspondence and mail,
- (7) Assistance with homecoming, and
- (8) Command-sponsored parties and functions.

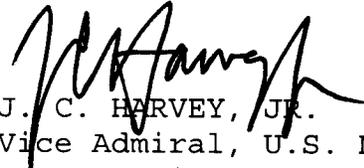
e. FRG Funds. FRGs are authorized to raise and maintain funds to support the activities of the FRG. Detailed guidance on authorized purposes and functions, use of funds, the responsibilities of the FRG treasurer, fund cap, audit requirements and procedures, and restrictions on fundraising are detailed in enclosure (6).

6. Dissolving the Group. FRGs will be more active during periods of deployment, homeport change, or crisis and may be relatively inactive at other times. However, there may be occasions when it is in the best interests of the FRG to disband. The FRG may be dissolved by vote of the members, or at the discretion of the CO. Reasons for disbanding an FRG may include, but are not limited to, when the group has outlived its purpose, membership has been so significantly reduced that it no longer represents the command, personal conflicts amongst members is having a negative impact on command morale, or the group is not following Navy or DOD regulations. Group funds shall be dispersed by expenditure on an activity for command family members, donated to a charitable organization such as Navy Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS), base military chapel(s), or similar activities whose purpose is support of Navy personnel and families.

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7. Form. DD 2793 (Feb 2002), Volunteer Agreement for Appropriated Fund Activities and Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentalities is available at

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/efoms/dd2793.pdf>.



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## DEFINITIONS

**Command Leadership Team** generally consists of the Commanding Officer (CO), Executive Officer (XO), and Command Master Chief (CMC) or Chief of the Boat (COB) (submarines). Shore commands may consist of a civilian director, executive director, deputy director or chief operating officer, combined with or without military leadership.

**Command Support Team** generally consists of the Command Leadership Team and includes the CO's spouse, XO's spouse, Ombudsman/Ombudsmen, and the CMC or COB's spouse (each command is distinct in its makeup and members may vary) and may also include the command chaplain(s).

**Family Readiness Alliance** is a network that bundles key support services such as Ombudsman, Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs), Chaplains, School Liaison Officers, Child Development Centers (CDCs), as well as Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) at the local installation level to provide coordinated services in support of servicemembers and their families.

**Official Information** relates to command and mission essential information that the commander believes families should have to be better informed. Official information relates to unit mission and readiness. It may contain general information on training schedules, upcoming deployments, unit points of contact, and family support information. Proposed text must be screened by the FRG Advisor to ensure that it does not violate security regulations or concerns. It could also include educational items designed to promote informed, self-reliant Sailors and families (i.e., information regarding the military community, how to budget, where to find medical care or legal assistance, how to prepare for emergencies). Additional examples of official information includes information about Sailors and families that promotes unit cohesion, helps strengthen morale and esprit de corps among Sailors, civilians and family members and may include accomplishments, marriage, birth or adoption announcements, receipt of awards and similar types of information. Dates, place, and times of FRG meetings or activities are also official information.

**Unofficial Information** is non-mission related information. Unofficial information subjects include FRG fundraisers,

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commercial ventures, advertisements including "for sale" items, birthdays, recipes, recaps of private non-FRG parties or activities, etc.

**Total Navy Family Community** includes all men and women of the United States Navy - active, reserve, civilian, contractors, and their family members.

**Command Roster** is the official roster listing all persons attached to the command and is for official use only.

**Command Social Roster** is a roster of information provided voluntarily by command members for the purpose of social activities. Social rosters may contain names and contact information for spouses, children, and parents of command members. It is privacy act protected information. FRG advisors, officers, and designated family support volunteers having a need for the information may have access to the command social roster.

**Privacy Act Protected Information** is any listing of personal information such as lists of names and/or contact information. Access to Privacy Act information is on a need to know basis and must be handled per Privacy Act procedures. Such information must be handled in such a way as to safeguard the information and should be disposed of by shredding. Lists of members should not be posted on the internet and care should be taken when using e-mail so that group lists of private e-mail addresses are not publicly accessible.

**AUTHORIZED SUPPORT FOR FAMILY READINESS GROUPS**

1. Acceptance of volunteer services. The command will authorize the officers, advisor(s), and other designated members as family support program volunteers for the command per reference (b). Acceptance, supervision, training, travel, any reimbursement of expenses, and recognition will be administered per DOD policy in reference (c). Enclosure (3) provides recommended training resources. Volunteers must be enrolled by the command using DD 2793, Volunteer Agreement for Appropriated Fund Activities and Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentalities.

2. Use of installation facilities. Regional and/or installation COs are authorized and may provide logistical support to FRGs. FRGs are authorized use of command or installation facilities at no cost for meetings and activities.

3. Use of government equipment. Commands may authorize FRG use of command equipment such as telephone, DSN access, computer, copier, CareLine and Web site access, and personnel assistance, provided such authorization can be provided without detriment to the accomplishment of the unit's mission.

4. Use of a command vehicle. Commands may authorize use of a command vehicle and/or driver in the performance of command-sponsored activities, if use of the vehicle can be provided without detriment to the accomplishment of the unit's mission.

5. Newsletters. FRGs are encouraged to contribute to existing command/ombudsmen newsletters that are officially authorized sources for command communication. Only official command communications may use postal services for distribution. FRG information may be incorporated or attached to the command/ombudsman newsletter if it meets the definition of official communication.

6. Web sites. FRGs may provide information to be posted on the command's official website or an FRG website may be linked to the command Web site if it contains official information. The FRG Web site 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 the DON does not endorse the outside website.

7. Correspondence, installation post offices, and official mail

(a) FRGs may use official mail for receipt or transmission, so long as it is for an official, mission-related purpose and approved by the CO or designee.

(b) Official mail cannot be used to support unofficial organization activities, FRG fundraisers, or commercial ventures. Official and unofficial information is defined in enclosure (1).

8. Homecoming. Homecoming is a command event that is organized and coordinated with FRG members and may include participation of MWR or other organizations. MWR nonappropriated funds (NAFs), unless otherwise prohibited, may be used to support this as a special event. FRG funds should supplement any command and MWR funding and may be used for expenses that are otherwise determined as prohibited from appropriated funds (APF) or NAF, (e.g., flowers for spouses, meals, or other items intended for personal use). The FRG Homecoming Committee Chairperson shall coordinate with the Unit Homecoming Coordinator and local MWR officials to determine what, if any, expenses can be covered by the command or MWR and what expenses will need to be covered by the FRG's funds.

9. Command-sponsored parties and functions. FRG committee chairperson(s) shall coordinate with the command point of contact to determine what expenses will be covered by the command and what expenses will need to be covered by the FRG's funds.

### RESOURCE LIST

1. Naval Services FamilyLine, Guidelines for Launching Clubs and Command Family Associations, Revised June 2005, available from Naval Services FamilyLine, 1-877-673-7773, or by email at nsfamline@aol.com.

2. Fleet and Family Support Program, Family Support Group Training and the Family Support Group How to Handbook are resources produced by the Fleet and Family Service Center (FFSC) of Hampton Roads, Virginia. These may be available through your local FFSC or by calling Hampton Roads FFSC at 1-800-FSC-LINE.

3. It is recommended that official volunteers are required to have training for the positions they will fill. FRG officers may attend Family Support Group Training which can be conducted by the local FFSC, using the materials noted above. FFSCs also offer Sponsor Training classes, which are recommended training for Welcome Committee members or any persons assisting with the Command Sponsor Program.

4. Training for FRG members on handling of Privacy Act Protected Information and Joint Ethics Regulations is also recommended. Privacy Act Training is available at <http://privacy.navy.mil/training/index.asp>. Orientation and annual ethics briefings are available online at [http://www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/defense\\_ethics/ethics\\_training/](http://www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/ethics_training/) or from the Regional or Installation Legal Service Office.

**SAMPLE BY-LAWS**

Although the by-laws may often seem cumbersome, actually, a very simple format, as illustrated below, will facilitate the continuity within the group. This sample can be changed to fit the group. For further reference refer to a copy of Robert's Rules of Orders, available at most libraries.

**Article I - Name**

The name of this group shall be the \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Readiness Group.

- a. The fiscal year of this group shall be from (month) to (month).
- b. This group is a command sponsored organization.

**Article II - Purpose**

The purpose of this group shall be to plan, coordinate, and conduct social, informational, care-taking, and morale-building activities to enhance family readiness and enable the Total Navy Family to meet mission and military family lifestyle challenges. (Add local purpose here) \_\_\_\_\_  
and/or to promote friendship and mutual support among the members.

**Article III - Membership and Dues**

Section 1. The membership shall (consist of or be limited to):

- a. Regular members: (list)
- b. Associate members: (list)
- c. Honorary (or advisory)

Section 2. Membership shall consist of interested spouses without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, or disability.

Section 3. Dues (if desired)

a. Dues of this group shall be \_\_\_\_\_ per (month) or (year).

b. Payment of dues shall (or shall not be a required condition of membership).

**Article IV - Slate of Officers**

a. The elected officers of this group shall be a \_\_\_\_\_ (President/Chairperson), a \_\_\_\_\_ (Vice President/Vice or Co-chairperson), a Secretary (can be split between Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary), and Treasurer. They shall govern and operate the group per these by-laws. The term of office shall be for \_\_\_\_\_ (1 year/6 months) and no officers may succeed themselves. All elected officers must be up-to-date, dues-paying (if required) members of this group.

b. The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of this group, the advisors (if any), the Chairman of all standing committees, and other members as the Executive Board may invite.

**Article V - Nomination and Election of Officers**

a. All officers shall be nominated by a committee headed by a Chairperson, appointed by the \_\_\_\_\_ (President/Chairperson), plus three to five members.

b. The slate should be presented to the commanding officer for approval and then to the Executive Board.

c. At the next regularly scheduled meeting, the slate should be presented to the group members to be voted on by secret ballot. All members present will be eligible to vote.

d. Nominations from the floor will not be allowed at the voting meeting since the ability to inform the commanding officer of new nominations will not be feasible.

e. The newly elected officers will assume their duties at an installation ceremony which will be arranged by the outgoing Executive Board.

**Article VI - Duties of Officers** (Use enclosure (5) for examples of officer duties.)

a. The \_\_\_\_\_ (President/Chairperson) shall preside at all regular meetings of the group and necessary to carry out the business of the group. The President shall be an ex officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.

b. The Vice President/Vice Chairperson or Coordinator shall assist the President and in their absence shall assume the duties of the President. (Often, the Vice President may be Secretary of the Nominating Committee, the Parliamentarian, or Chairman of Special Committees formed as needed.

c. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the group and the Executive Board. They shall have the minutes ready for duplication upon request by the next regularly scheduled meeting. They are the custodian of all the permanent records of the group. The Secretary shall handle all the correspondence of the group as directed by the President or Chairperson and the Executive Board.

d. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds pertaining to the calendar year in time for tax preparation (if applicable).

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

### **Article VII - Meetings**

a. The regular meetings of (Name of Group) shall be held at the \_\_\_\_\_ of every month at a place designated at the previous meetings and approved by the Executive Board.

b. Should a meeting have to be called prior to the regular meeting or a decision made, the President or two officers shall give their approval.

c. All members should be notified of general meetings.

### **Article VIII - Amending the By-laws**

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

### **Article IX - Termination**

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

### **Sample of Standing Rules**

The Standing Rules may be changed by a simple majority vote. Standing Rules should include any rules which the group feels will need to be changed or altered frequently. This will eliminate the need for rewriting these 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" sub account.

c. The number of meetings to be held each month.

**RECOMMENDED ROLES/OFFICER FUNCTIONS**

**Advisor.** An advisor makes recommendations, consults, and provides information and is typically the spouse of the CO, XO, CMC or COB or another representative by command appointment. The role of the advisor depends on the interest level of the individual spouse. Duties are defined by the individual and can include, but are not limited to:

- a. Mediator (assist in reconciling disputes).
- b. Cheerleader (provide encouragement).
- c. Liaison (provide command information, when appropriate, and knowledge of how FRGs work).
- d. Resource (share knowledge).
- e. Coach (tutor from the sidelines).

**Ombudsman.** FRG advisor(s), officers, and command ombudsmen are equally important in family support, but have separate and distinct responsibilities. Ombudsman's duties are established by command and reference (d) and require specific training for the position. Duties in regard to FRGs:

- a. May provide assistance in starting an FRG.
- b. Provide information, resources, and referrals.
- c. Communicate command information.
- d. Maintain confidentiality.
- e. Provide encouragement to and inspire camaraderie among command families.

**President/Chairperson/Coordinator.** The incumbent represents the command to the spouses and anyone they may come in contact with while in this role. Duties:

- a. Know the current by-laws/procedures.

- 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 advisors/sponsors.
- 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/Vice Chairperson/Co-Coordinator.** This position is probably the least defined. The incumbent traditionally performs the duties of the president/chairperson in their 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/procedures.
- d. Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- e. Coordinate publicity.
- f. Perform other duties as assigned in the group's by-laws/procedures.

**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 head 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 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. Write up minutes of meetings.
- b. Keep attendance records of participants (optional).
- c. Maintain membership list.
- d. Compose correspondence.
- e. Maintain 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 and command.
- c. Provide complete financial report after an audit.

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- d. Reconcile bank statements monthly.
- e. Submit receipts within 30 days of purchase.
- f. Deposit money within 7 days of receipt.
- g. Check with command for information regarding tax-exempt status and setting up a checking account. Seek out 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.
- i. Submit records annually for audit to the commanding officer or designated reviewer.

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

a. **Welcome Committee** is a committee comprised of volunteers (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.

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, be "Web master" 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, group picnics, and similar events.

d. **Fundraising Committee** will plan and arrange for fundraisers for the group, researching the applicable local regulations, obtaining necessary permissions, and arranging and managing logistics for the events.

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**\*Note:** Information for this enclosure was excerpted from the "Family Support Group How-to Handbook," prepared and available from:

Family Support Group Coordinator  
Fleet and Family Support Center  
7928 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 102  
Norfolk, VA 23505-1219  
[www.ffschorva.navy.mil](http://www.ffschorva.navy.mil)

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**RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR  
FAMILY READINESS GROUP FUNDS**

1. Authorized Purposes and Functions. FRG funds may be authorized to support legitimate FRG activities. Legitimate purposes and activities for FRG funding include, but are not limited to, classes and workshops, Sailor and family welcoming activities for newcomers, holiday parties, command or FRG parties or outings, volunteer recognition, and supplemental deployment, and homecoming activities.

a. Use of Funds. Use of funds is limited to expenses consistent with the purpose and function of the fund to support the goals and missions of the FRG.

(1) FRG fundraisers shall be used as stated in the fundraiser event. The event's purpose should be in writing and approved by the CO, or representative, prior to the event taking place.

(2) FRG informal funds should be maintained for specific planned purposes and all acquired funds should be earmarked accordingly in the FRG fund ledger. Funds should only be collected for a specific goal, event, or activity. For example, if an FRG is planning a Holiday Ball, the FRG must be able to state the planned use of the funds, i.e., total cost is \$3,000 (dinner \$2,000, hall rental \$250, and band \$750). Any disbursements that are made should be for those purposes and should be for the benefit of the FRG members as a whole.

(3) FRG funds should not augment other unit command informal funds such as "sunshine funds" (used to provide cards, flowers for illness or deaths, birthday cakes, or other mementos for command members) or provide traditional military gifts, such as Sailor farewell gifts, which are not related to family readiness. FRG funds are to benefit the entire FRG organization.

(4) FRGs should not fund events that are the command's responsibility to conduct and fund.

(5) The use of FRG funds should not duplicate what other organizations or agencies already provide. This includes establishment of a loan fund or emergency food locker. Such

requirements should be fulfilled by Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, American Red Cross, and other organizations.

(6) The FRG should ensure that general sub-accounts, such as "general morale," are carefully monitored to insure that the entire FRG membership has an opportunity to benefit. A sub-account could cover modest expenditures such as unit packets for newcomers, new baby welcome gifts, and FRG officers (volunteers) farewell gifts. While these expenditures might not directly benefit each and every member, they affect the morale of the organization.

b. FRG Treasurer. The CO should sign a letter designating the FRG treasurer and an alternate. The treasurer or alternate are responsible for fund custody, accounting, and documentation and are volunteers covered by reference (e).

(1) The FRG Treasurer and alternate are liable for any personal loss or misuse of funds under their control. The treasurer should not allow misuse of FRG funds by others.

(2) The FRG treasurer or alternate may establish a bank account under the FRG's name (never an individual's name). The FRG officers authorize opening of the account and prepare a letter naming the person(s) authorized to sign checks drawn on the account. Two signatures should be required on checks and for cash withdrawals.

(3) The treasurer should provide quarterly reports to the FRG advisor and president and/or FRG members consistent with the unit FRG's by-laws and/or policies. Fund audits are recommended upon change of command, upon change of treasurer, and whenever there is a suspicion of irregularity. FRG books may be maintained like a personal check register. FRG quarterly reports should summarize the fund's financial status to include current balance, total amount earned, and how funds were spent.

c. Fund Cap. Although there is no fund cap for informal funds maintained, it is recommended that FRG funds be capped at \$5,000 average balance per year, to avoid Federal income tax liability. Should FRG funds exceed this cap, a plan should be instituted to reduce those funds to appropriate levels to insure that the average FRG fund value remains below \$5,000 per year. All fundraising should cease until the FRG funds are reduced.

(1) FRGs are not required to register with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a non-profit organization by maintaining an average fund balance of less than \$5,000 per year. If an FRG desires to maintain an average balance higher than the recommended cap, they may be required to register as a non-profit 501(c) organization with the IRS and abide by all IRS procedures regulating non-profit organizations found in reference (f). Consult with the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) or Regional Legal Service (RLS) provider if considering becoming a non-profit organization.

(2) The requirements of Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) may require a fund cap for some Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) FRGs. COs and fund custodians in overseas locations should consult their SJA or RLS provider to ensure they comply with the SOFA and any local policy or rules regarding informal funds.

d. Audit. Account records should be reviewed at least annually and at change of command by a command member appointed by the CO who shall certify the accounts to the CO. Receipts for expenditures and authorization documentation as well as copies of the quarterly reports and bank statements must be provided to the auditing official.

2. Family Readiness Group Fundraising. The FRG mission is to provide activities and support that enhance the flow of information, morale, and esprit de corps within the unit. The FRG is not established for the purpose of being a fundraising organization. Nonetheless, FRGs may conduct limited fundraising to meet the needs of the organization within their own membership. FRG fundraisers should be conducted for specific planned purposes and all acquired funds should be earmarked accordingly in the FRG fund ledger. Use of government vehicles, official postage, and reimbursement of volunteer expenses with APFs are not authorized for FRG fundraising.

a. Approval. FRGs may only raise funds to support activities approved by the CO. It is recommended that the local SJA or RLS provider review FRG fundraising issues for the command.

b. Endorsement. FRG members may only raise funds in their private capacity. Due to the close relationships between FRGs

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and DOD organizations, it can become difficult for an outside observer to distinguish between the FRG and the Navy unit with which they are affiliated. Thus, it is very important for FRGs to prevent the impression that they are acting on behalf of, or with the endorsement of, the Navy command. In order to avoid this perception, FRG members (and participating servicemembers who are off-duty) should do the following:

(1) FRG members should clearly state they do not represent the Navy or the command, but rather that they are members of "USS Eversail's Family Readiness Group."

(2) FRGs should never use Navy or command letterhead, symbol, motto, or documents officially signed by members of the chain of command. FRG members should prepare written correspondence on FRG letterhead. The FRG letterhead may not include the phrase "Department of the Navy" or "Department of Defense" and may not use the official DOD emblem. FRGs shall use a prominent disclaimer on all print and electronic media distributed to members clarifying that the FRG is not a part of Department of the Navy (DON) or the command (e.g., "USS Eversail's Family Readiness Group is an organization of family members and friends and does not officially represent the Department of the Navy or the USS Eversail.").

(3) Off-duty personnel who are assisting with FRG activities may not wear their uniforms under any circumstance while fundraising for the FRG. Sailors should also refrain from using their titles and ranks.

c. Location Rules. The location where fundraising is conducted is critical to determining which rules apply. All fundraising must comply with reference (a) and require the approval of the CO and installation ethics advisor.

(1) Fundraising within Navy offices and workplaces. Generally, no fundraising should take place at Navy offices and workplaces. Limited fundraising may be permitted when the fundraising is conducted within the command.

(2) Fundraising on base. Any organization, including FRGs, may request permission from the regional or installation CO to engage in limited fundraising on base. Installation CO's may provide the same limited logistical support they provide any

other organization requesting permission to raise funds on base. Sailors are not allowed to wear military uniforms when fundraising on base and cannot be compelled to participate in FRG fundraising activities.

(3) Fundraising off base. The Navy may not officially support or endorse FRG fundraising off base. All Federal employees, including military personnel and family members must be careful to avoid implying that the Navy officially endorses FRG off base fundraisers. Sailors may not wear military uniforms and are prohibited from using their command, rank, or duty position when fundraising.

(4) Local ordinances. FRGs should check with the local city, county, or State government in advance for any permit fees, health ordinances, liability insurance requirements, tax liabilities, and other requirements necessary to conduct fundraising off base.

d. Advertising. Fundraising conducted by the FRG must not be advertised as a command event. Example:

NO: USS Eversail Bake Sale

YES: Bake Sale for USS Eversail Family Readiness Group

The fundraising event, and any communications including flyers, posters, or signs, must also include a disclaimer that the event is not sponsored or endorsed by DOD, Navy, or the command.

e. Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), Navy Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS), Navy Exchange (NEX), and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR). FRG fundraising activities may not conflict with the CFC and NMCRS campaigns. FRG fundraising activities must not compete with NEX or MWR.

f. Fundraising Incentives and Prohibitions. FRGs will not hold military leave or pass auctions or sell tickets for fundraising that allow Sailors to wear civilian clothes on duty or be absent from physical training. COs are prohibited from offering military benefits (i.e., passes, training holidays, or authorized wear of civilian clothes during the duty day) to Sailors involved in fundraising as an incentive or reward for their participation or donation to the fundraiser.

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g. Voluntary Participation and Donation. All donations and participation in fundraising activities must be on a voluntary basis.

3. Solicitations and Donations. FRG members must be careful to avoid implying that the Navy officially endorses their solicitation of local businesses to support their fundraising. Disclaimers, such as that noted in paragraph 2b(2) and 2(d) apply.

a. Acceptance of Gifts. The local SJA or RLS provider should provide guidance to the commander when an FRG is offered unsolicited donations.

b. Recognition for Donors and Gifts. FRGs may recognize businesses for their contributions and donations by letter or in the newsletter. However, neither the FRG nor the CO may endorse the business, or encourage command members to patronize a particular business. Thank you letters are encouraged and should be on FRG letterhead (not command) and signed by the FRG leader (not the CO).

(1) Businesses donating prizes or goods cannot receive any special privileges, concessions, or military or command endorsement by virtue of their contribution. Example: a Certificate of Appreciation from the CO to a local business would be a prohibited endorsement.

(2) FRGs may recognize donors for gifts and donations so long as the recognition is not required as part of a negotiated agreement with the donor (see prohibition against commercial sponsorship in paragraph 3c). Recognition should be kept low key and may be given at FRG meetings or events.

c. Other Rules

(1) All communication and coordination with local businesses for fundraising events must be by FRG leaders/members. FRG members who are Sailors must not discuss fundraising with businesses while on duty, in uniform, nor identify themselves by command position or rank.

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(2) The FRG must not imply that donations are tax deductible. Businesses may be encouraged to speak with their tax adviser regarding business tax deductions.

(3) FRGs should avoid seeking or accepting private donations that exceed their approved needs or fund cap. FRGs are not organized to cope with the complex tax ramifications and stringent accountability requirements that can result from handling large donations. FRGs who are offered large donations should consider referring the prospective donor to government or private organizations such as NMCRS, American Red Cross (ARC), United Service Organization (USO), local tax qualified charities, foundations, fraternal or service organizations, or to the installation CO to make a gift to the Navy or MWR programs.

d. Solicitations

(1) Door-to-door solicitation is prohibited on base.

(2) DOD employees will not solicit donations for FRG fundraising from their subordinates, defined as those who are junior in grade, rank or position, or to the family members of such personnel.

e. Commercial Sponsorship. FRGs may not enter into commercial sponsorship agreements with local businesses. Commercial sponsorship is an agreed upon arrangement under which a sponsor provides assistance, funding, goods, equipment, or services in exchange for public recognition or other promotional opportunities on the base. Per reference (e), commercial sponsorship is only authorized for official MWR programs and events.

**SYNOPSIS OF CHOPS  
OPNAVINST 1754.5**

CNIC – Delete all reference to CNIC (N2). Added Family Readiness Alliance (FRA) to paragraph 1. Paragraph 4c(2) added appropriate Installation Commanding Officer. Included definition of Family Readiness Alliance in enclosure (1).

MCPON – CONCUR, NO CHANGES

PERS-00J – CONCUR, MINOR GRAMMATICAL CHANGES.