

## **Section A-1 Commander's Focus**

The contents of this Toolkit have been developed to assist you in your efforts to support family readiness. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is current and accurate. However, because statutory and regulatory changes may have occurred since the publication of this Toolkit, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs cannot assume responsibility for its continued accuracy. Before taking any significant action based on the contents of this Toolkit, you should contact a subject matter expert in your chain of command to secure the most current information.

**Pre-Deployment and  
Mobilization**

## **Commander's Focus**

### **Pre-Deployment & Mobilization**

Deployment is a major event in the lives of unit personnel and their family members. Communication and information are the most effective means of limiting the stress of deployment. As soon as possible, commanders should organize a pre-deployment briefing/meeting that includes unit and family members. As a commander, explain as openly as possible within the limits of operational security, the mission the unit is preparing to conduct, the location, how long they will be gone, how the service members can be contacted, and the extent of danger that may be involved. Invite and introduce key unit members such as the Rear Detachment Commander and the Family Readiness Program staff and volunteers. When a commander personally conducts the pre-deployment briefings, it sets the tone for family readiness and clearly demonstrates the commander's commitment to service and family members. Engage your audience. Ensure them that their concerns are also your concerns. Emphasize the link between mission readiness and proactive self-sufficient families.

The objectives of the Pre-deployment Briefing include:

- Introduce yourself and key staff members – this is especially important for family members who live some distance away and may have little direct contact with the unit.
- Provide family members the most up-to-date information on what's going on in the unit.
- Inform family members of the resources available to assist in resolving problems that may arise (unit Family Program staff, Red Cross, Family Service Center, Chaplains, finance and legal points of contact, and community resources).
- Inform family members of preventive actions that facilitate uninterrupted household functions while the service member is deployed (i.e. Power of Attorney, knowing location of bank accounts, ensuring that all family members have identification cards...).
- Provide a calendar and deployment timeline. Include notations of unit events prior to and during the deployment.
- Provide a list of names and telephone numbers of rear detachment personnel (it is even more effective to also introduce the rear detachment personnel at the briefing – it is often easier to identify with someone you have seen or met).
- Discuss security concerns.
- Include a question and answer period so that family members can address their concerns (one suggested format is to present the “Top Ten Most Frequently Asked Questions”).

Pre-deployment briefings can be as formal or informal as desired. Possible briefing formats are power point presentations and handouts. It is a good idea to have paper copies of the briefing,

## GUARD & RESERVE FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS TOOLKIT

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which family members may take home for future reference. They also may be useful to send as outreach to family members who were unable to attend the briefing, but who could benefit from the information.

Use this Toolkit to facilitate communication between the service member and family member. Make copies of the detailed checklists in the Service Member TAB for personal property and accounts. Inform the family members of the responsibilities of the service member to complete a family care plan, enroll in DEERS, and complete legal documents prior to deployment and mobilization.

Above all, encourage teamwork and the attitude that “we’re all in this together.” Nothing is more powerful than the pride, integrity, professionalism, and determination of a unit preparing for a mission. Capitalize on this and embrace the family members as part of that “team.” Encourage their participation in planning and carrying out a future unit function.

### Pre-deployment & Mobilization Checklist

Commanders have a daunting task leading a unit in all aspects of its mission. A checklist of important elements relating to deployment and family readiness is provided below:

1.	Family Support Plan (FSP)	
a.	Establish goals that promote member preparedness and family self-reliance during military separations.	
b.	Establish viable initiatives and timelines for accomplishing those goals.	
c.	Communicate these goals within the command to Family Readiness Program personnel, and as outreach to family members.	
2.	Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)	
a.	Ensure that all eligible family members are enrolled in DEERS and have a military identification (ID) card as appropriate.	
b.	Family members must be enrolled in DEERS to access military services and health care.	
c.	Many commercial businesses offer military discounts to military ID card holders.	
d.	Establish a system to review and update family member information a minimum of once a year.	
3.	Family Care Plan (FCP)	
a.	Ensure that family care plans are workable and on file for all service members who are required to have a plan.	
b.	Establish a checklist for the care plan. Provide the list to service members and supervisors throughout the command.	
c.	Test family care plans during mobilization exercises (MOBEXES) and annual training.	
d.	Recertify plans annually.	

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4.	Family Readiness Group (FRG) (discussed further in section A-2)	
a.	Establish a structure for a FRG	
b.	Ensure the establishment of a Chain of Concern and a Telephone Tree	
c.	Make a plan for outreach to family members. This is especially difficult within the Guard and Reserve components where families may live several states away from the unit.	