

Section A-2 Family Readiness Groups (FRG)

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.

Family Readiness Groups (FRG)

Newsletters and Outreach

Outreach to families is inextricably linked to family readiness. The more connected that families feel to the unit, the more understanding and approving they will be during times of separation and training. An informed family will be a supportive family. As your unit continues to focus on its critical missions, you must not forget your single most important resource – your members and their families.

For some families, a FRG newsletter may be the only means of communication. Due to a busy family and work schedule, some spouses may never be able to attend FRG meetings or unit sponsored family activities. Guard and Reserve families also live varied distances from the unit. In order to maintain communications with family members, the FRG should publish a newsletter each quarter as a matter of routine. During deployments, consideration should be given to instituting a monthly publication schedule.

Unit newsletters are the commander's best vehicle for speaking directly to family members and should include a column from the commander informing service members and family members of important issues. This is an excellent method for the commander to demonstrate concern for families and set the tone for family involvement. It is also an effective means for increasing family member participation in key programs devoted to family readiness. The newsletter can also include specific unit activities, training cycles, and items of interest.

Newsletters may be official or unofficial. The status dictates the funding for mailing and distribution. Official newsletters generally include:

- Unit heading and title.
- The terms, "Official Information" will be listed under the return address.
- The signature or signature block of the commander under his/her column to authenticate the official capacity of the newsletter.
- Information related to unit mission and combat readiness, including family readiness.
- Notification of field exercises, deployments and redeployments.
- Information that is educational and designed to promote informed self-reliant families. This could include financial management topics, parenting topics, and general information about community resources.
- Information about training programs such as Family Team Building, Army Family Team Building, Ombudsman, and Family Advocacy.
- Information on activities for members and families that promote unit cohesion and promote esprit de corps such as Family Days, Organization Days, and reunion activities. It can

include activities sponsoring “Bring a Boss to Work Day” to educate civilian employers about the unit and mission.

Newsletters are a great way to encourage unit involvement and family member participation. Ask for articles, provide a deadline, and include important topics like welcoming new service members and families, promotions, and retirements. Topics can vary widely and may include:

- Drill schedule
- Benefits & entitlements
- Mobilization checklist
- Information on TRICARE
- Common acronyms
- Photographs and articles about FRG events
- Recognition of volunteers

Make your newsletters a reasonable length and interesting. Use graphics to make your newsletter more attractive. Digital cameras allow you to include photos without additional cost. Periodically, ask your unit members and family members about the newsletter. Find out what they would like to see in future issues. Find out what informational needs family members have and use the newsletter to meet those needs. Never forget your audience or your purpose in publishing the newsletter. Your goal must be to reach out to those individuals and families that it may be otherwise difficult to communicate with and to provide them the information they need to promote family readiness and a sense of community with the unit family.