

South Dakota National Guard



Family Readiness Program

Commander

Lead Volunteer

Unit Family Readiness Representative

Handbook

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All other editions are obsolete.

State Family Readiness Office

1-800-658-3930

familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil

INTRODUCTION

This handbook contains guidance, forms and examples to assist Family Readiness Groups (FRG), commanders, and units in the development and maintenance of their Family Readiness Program within their unit.

For questions or assistance call a Family Readiness Support Assistant at 605-737-6089/737-6310 / 357-2970 or email familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil

This handbook and its forms can also be found online at <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then click on Family Readiness, then Family Readiness Groups. Also refer to Army Regulations 608-1, Appendix J and 600-20, paragraph 5-10; Forces Command 500-3-3, Task 2-I-21 and Operation Ready Materials.

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What is the Family Readiness Program?

It is the Commander's tool done in partnership with families to help maintain family readiness preparing them to withstand the rigors of separation and stresses of reunions and to support their continued participation in the National Guard.

Mission of the Family Readiness Program.

To promote healthy National Guard families to be self-reliant during both deployment and peacetime through education, outreach services, and partnerships by leveraging resources, training and constantly capitalizing on new capabilities, concepts and technological advances.

The purpose of the Family Readiness Program is to provide service and family members education and information giving them the resources to handle most situations independently. Family wellness is promoted through education on benefits and programs available to families.

What is the Family Readiness Group?

A Family Readiness Group (FRG) is an organization of service, family (to include children) and community members, significant others, volunteers, and civilian employers and co-workers belonging to a unit who together provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance and a network of communication among the FRG members, the chain of command and community resources.

The Family Readiness Group mission is: to assist commanders in maintaining readiness of service members, families and communities by promoting self-sufficiency, resiliency and stability during peace and war.

Based on the FRG mission statement, the FRG fills many important roles, including:

- Establish a communication network to get information to families quickly.
- Conduct outreach programs for families that have little knowledge about the military and its benefits.
- Offer a variety of activities that will inform and educate family members and provide the opportunity to build supportive relationships.
- Provide education to help families deal with deployment, separation and reunion.
- Offer support for spouses, significant others, parents, children, friends, and other loved ones.

The FRG is not:

- a babysitting service
- a taxi service
- a financial institution,
- a professional counseling agency, or
- another military organization
- surrogate parents
- duplicate services other organizations are already providing

The commander is responsible for establishing and supporting the Family Readiness Group, however the Group must be owned by its members. Ideally, family readiness is managed from the top through the commander's unit family readiness goals. Clearly, they can not meet those goals alone; they identify capable leadership and delegate clear responsibilities and the authority that goes with them to the family readiness volunteers. The FRG lead volunteer is a member of the commander's special staff.

Military Regulations – (regarding Family Programs)

Forces Command (FORSCOM) Regulation 500-3-3

2-I-21. TASK: Establish a Family Support Group (FSG).

STANDARD

Establish a FSG IAW AR 600-20.

Minimum procedures include:

- a. Appoint an officer or senior NCO as the unit Family Assistance Coordinator.
- b. Support preparation of a telephone tree for FSG members.
- c. Maintain communication between family support group leader and STARC/RSC Family Support Coordinator.
- d. Post location (and telephone number if available) of supporting Family Assistance Centers.
- e. Conduct annual briefings to family members IAW Annex C.

Army Regulation 608-1, Appendix (19Sep07)**J-2. Family Readiness Groups roles and functions.**

d. Certain FRG mission activities are essential and common to all FRGs. They include FRG member meetings, FRG staff and committee meetings, publication and distribution of FRG newsletters, maintenance of updated family rosters and family readiness information, establishment of FRG member telephone trees and email distribution lists, and scheduling educational briefings for FRG members. FRG activity level can vary depending on unit mission and on whether the unit is in pre or post deployment, deployed, or in a training/sustainment period at the home station.

Army Regulation 600-20 (18Mar2008)**5-10. The Total Army Family Program**

The Army places a high value on both military and personal preparedness. Commanders have an obligation to provide assistance to establish and maintain personal and family affairs readiness.

(b) Family Readiness is the mutual reinforcement provided to Soldiers, civilian employees, retirees (regardless of marital status), and their family members-both immediate and extended. Examples include Family Readiness Groups, newsletters, telephone trees, and other volunteer programs and activities.

Family Readiness Group Structure

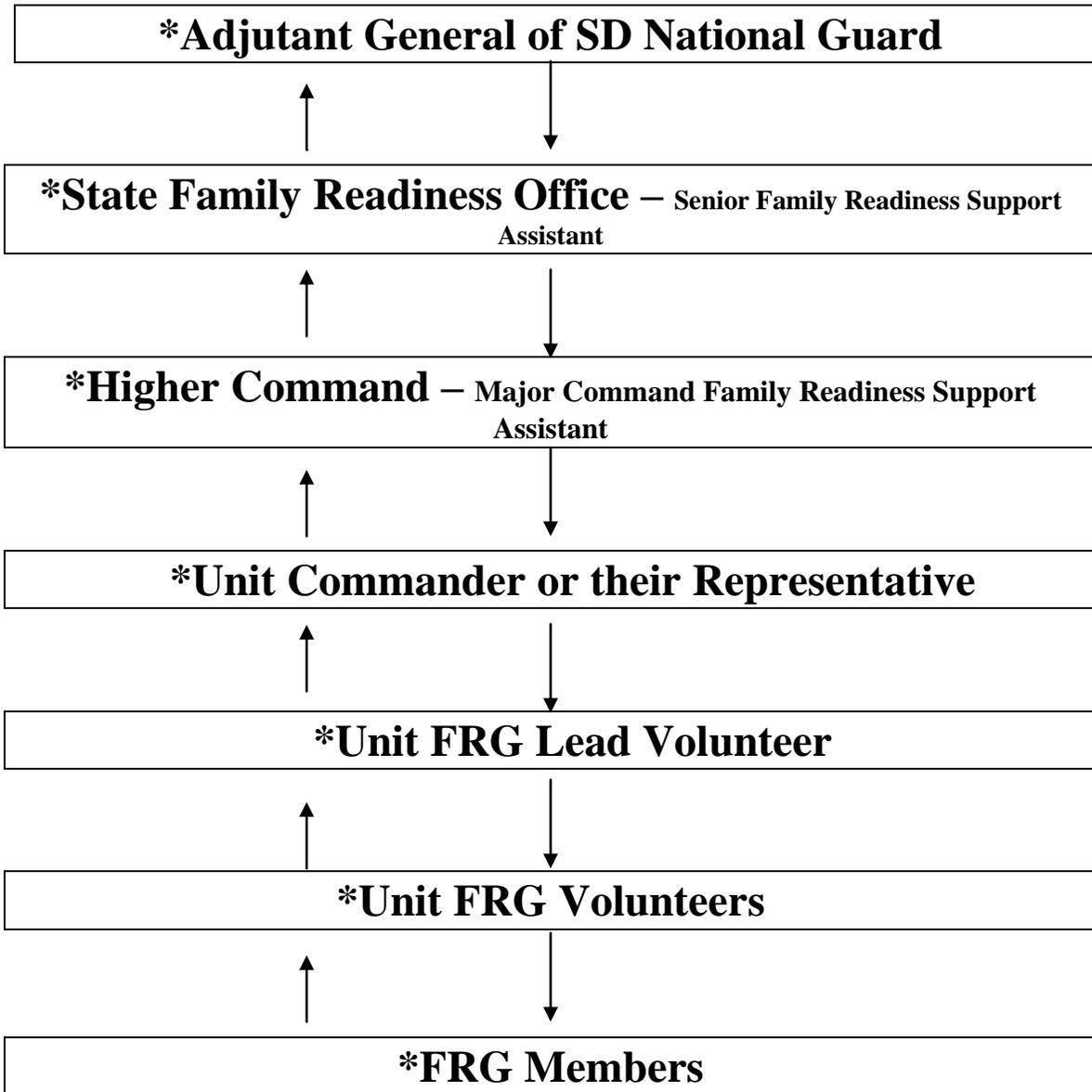
The Family Readiness Group is a formally recognized and approved (in writing by the commander similar to by-laws) volunteer group of unit family members, loved ones, employers, and community members supported by unit officers and enlisted personnel. The group provides information to and support for families and members of the unit, especially during periods of separation. A service member must be able to concentrate on the mission at hand.

There is no "ideal" way to set up an FRG. The best structure is one which is created to fit the unit, its mission and the unique make-up of its family members and their needs. Its organizational structure depends on local conditions such as the type of military organization, geographic proximity and unit size. The system should revolve around the natural leadership abilities of the volunteers. Spouses should NOT be pressed into service simply because of the service member's position. Rank should NOT be a factor in the role unit FRG volunteers play.

Unit-Level FRG Structure

There are two major support circles or chains associated with any FRG: the Chain of Command and the Chain of Concern. The Chain of Command consists of military leaders and senior staff members, while the Chain of Concern is comprised of volunteers who assist the Chain of Command in supporting the unit FRG membership and achieving unit readiness goals.

FAMILY READINESS CHAIN of CONCERN



Solve problems at the lowest level first

Your unit's FRG may look something like this.

Family Readiness Groups

FRG Lead Volunteer

(selected by commander or elected by or emerge from the Group- final approval always by commander)

FRG Co-Lead Volunteer

Treasurer/Alternate Treasurer

Secretary / Recorder

Some Possible Committees:

- * Events
- * Child Care
- * Newsletters
- * Education
- * Cards
- * New Family Sponsorship (Welcome Committee)
- * Refreshments
- * Youth Programs
- * Telephone Tree
- * Scrapbook
- * FRG Funds

All FRGs must be:

- Officially approved (recognized in writing – similar to by-laws) by the commander
- Require no mandatory participation
- Have no rank structure
- Not strictly social, but does have some social events and activities
- Provide information and support for families and service members
- Identify concerns and needs of families to commands
- Be open to serving all the services, not just the National Guard

What are Group Norms for your FRG?

- Participation is voluntary
- Every service and family member is automatically an FRG member
- Show mutual respect and courtesy
- Create a positive, friendly, informal environment with clear goals
- No rank or cliques in the FRG
- Uniforms are generally not worn at FRG events, but military courtesy among service members is always observed
- Everyone is included, every adult member has a vote
- Decision making is shared, when feasible
- Everyone helps with FRG projects
- Everyone benefits from membership
- Timely, accurate information flow
- No gossip

4 Essential activities that a FRG must do.

1. OUTREACH - Keep families informed, educate (phone calls, emails, letters, personal visits, training)
2. SPONSORSHIP - Reach out to new families
3. NEWSLETTER - 2 types of information - official and non-official
4. TELEPHONE TREE – like unit alert roster except for families

Selection of Family Readiness Leaders

The FRG leader may be selected by the commander or elected by the FRG membership, but final approval always rests with the commander. Either way it is critical to the success of the unit's family program for the Lead Volunteer and the Commander to form a partnership and work closely together. In turn, the FRG lead volunteer selects other volunteers or holds elections to fill key positions depending on the FRG.

Military members should not be FRG leaders.

The unit commander – and actually, any service member – should not fill the role of FRG lead volunteer. Though responsible for the FRG by regulation, the commander delegates the position to a capable volunteer because:

- service members deploy with the unit;
- volunteers need to train in FRG leadership positions;
- FRG members are volunteers, and they may relate better to a volunteer leader who is another family member rather than a military person;

In the selection of the Lead Volunteer the commander considers what is best for the unit, the service members, the families and the mission. The commander shares his/her family readiness goals and ensures that they are met or exceeded by helping volunteer leaders build and run an effective FRG.

The Pros and Cons of Having a Co-Leader

In these times of rapid, unpredictable and lengthy deployments, leading a FRG for an extended period of time can be overwhelming and a FRG leader can easily burn out. FRG leaders who have a co-leader to share the leadership and workload duties, often avoid burn-out and feel less stressed because they have another person to rely on and share ideas and concerns. It often helps alleviate worries about being overwhelmed and being the one totally responsible for the entire program. A Co-leader can assist in providing leadership of the FRG, oversee particular activities, help get individuals involved in FRG activities, or serve as an advisor or assistant, depending upon how the co-leadership role is defined.

On the downside, splitting leadership can have some drawbacks. Co-leaders must talk regularly to each other to avoid confusion and missed opportunities. They need to agree on what areas and projects each will supervise and make joint decisions on important issues. Most importantly, there should be only one who is assigned as the leader and the

other the co-leader to avoid confusion. The commander is too busy to contact or be contacted by several people and needs assurance that the FRG leadership is sharing the same goals and vision.

FRGs at work during Peacetime.

- Building Telephone Trees and email lists
- Getting to know families, building relationships
- Educating / informing families
- Preparing families for mobilization
- Encouraging families to do wills, etc
- Providing support
- Crisis referral to Family Assistance @ 1-800-658-3930

FRGs at work during Mobilization

- Link between deployed unit and families
 - Dissemination of correct and current information (Rumor Control)
 - (Command fed thro Lead Volunteer)
 - Unit's status or mission
- Refer families to organizations and resources
- Crisis referral @ 1-800-658-3930
- Provide support for families
- Facilitate deployment and redeployment (Homecoming) activities with the command

FAMILY READINESS POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

1. Position descriptions were written to provide guidance and direction.
2. Helps assist commander with their family program at their unit.
3. Helps volunteers understand their roles and expectations.
4. Each position is important and key to the success of the Family Readiness Program within your unit. It takes a “team effort” to make it work.
5. Remember, these are guides. Every unit is different and every Program will vary based on the unit’s needs.

**SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM
-COMMANDER'S GUIDELINES-
Revised: 7/2009**

I. **Introduction.** The following is provided as guidance to assist commanders in developing and sustaining a Family Readiness Program within their unit(s). For further guidance/direction refer to Operation Ready, the Family Readiness Handbook and the Treasurer's Handbook found on the website <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then the Family Readiness link or contact the State Family Readiness Office at 1-800-658-3930 // familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil.

II. **Major Duties and Responsibilities.**

A. **Requirements.**

1. Include Family Readiness activities and projects in yearly training plan.
2. Recruit a family member to serve as the lead volunteer for the unit's

Family

Readiness Group and appoint them.

3. Include the Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer as a part of your special staff by seeking their counsel and inviting them to attend staff meetings (at least annually).

4. Complete a sanction (agreement/by-laws) for the unit's Family Readiness Program with the help of the Family Readiness Group's Lead Volunteer.

5. Complete a Statement of Approval (Statement included in the FRG Sanction (Item #3 B), recognizing the Family Readiness Group and giving them permission to operate and function as part of your special staff.

6. Appoint a service member (on a memorandum). They will serve as your liaison with the Family Readiness Group and lead volunteer, as a Unit Family Readiness Representative.

7. Encourage the Lead Volunteer and Unit Family Readiness Representative to attend Family Readiness training to aid them in managing your unit's program.

8. Ensure the Family Readiness Group Telephone Tree is maintained.

9. If the Family Readiness Group has a Checking Account, ensure the following:

a. A treasurer and an alternate treasurer are appointed on a memorandum.

b. Funds do not exceed the \$10,000 annual income cap.

c. Checking account has 2 signers.

d. Checking account has an Employer Identification Number (EIN #) assigned by the IRS.

e. Annual Treasurer Reports (quarterly reports if unit is deployed) have been filed with the State Family Readiness Office & a copy filed in the unit's Family Readiness Binder.

f. Ensure FRG Standard Operating Procedure for FRG informal funds is included in the FRG sanction (Item #6 – see sanction template) - FRGs with an informal fund must have an organizing SOP.

g. Ensure donations are limited to \$1000 **per** donation and do not exceed the \$10,000 annual income cap.

h. Ensure SDNG Form 600-29 is completed for each donation.

10. Encourage participation of service members in the Family Program.

11. Establish an atmosphere of care and concern for service members and their families.
12. Provide opportunities for service members and their families to network through unit functions, newsletters, and Family Readiness training.

B. Support.

1. Schedule conference time quarterly with the Unit Family Readiness Representative and lead volunteer.
2. Provide adequate space in the armory for Family Readiness Volunteers to store items and information.
3. Provide postage for mailings to families and service members as unit budget allows.
4. Provide administrative supplies for accomplishment of Family Readiness activities as resources allow.
5. Ensure availability of copier and computer for use by volunteers in accomplishment of Family Readiness activities when resources allow.

C. Maintain Information.

1. Ensure Lead Volunteer has the needed information to maintain the telephone tree for family members.
2. Ensure family preparedness through completion of personal affairs.
3. Anticipate and address the needs of unit service members and their families through command letters, pre-mobilization briefings, and distribution of Family Readiness information and materials.
4. Ensure the unit's Family Readiness Group sanction (by-laws) is updated as changes occur and proper distribution is made. Copies are maintained at the unit in the unit's Family Readiness binder and at the State Family Readiness Office.

III. Benefits.

- A. Ensures families' mobilization readiness.
- B. Improves retention rate of service members.
- C. Provides a clear understanding of families' needs and concerns.
- D. Provides knowledge that families' needs/concerns will be handled in service members absence conserving commander's time allowing more time for other issues.

IV. Chain of Concern. Unit Commander, Unit Family Readiness Representative, Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer, State Family Readiness Director

POSITION DESCRIPTION
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
UNIT FAMILY READINESS REPRESENTATIVE (UFRR)
-SERVICE MEMBER POSITION-
As of: 2/2011

I. Description. The Unit Family Readiness Representative is an additional duty position, appointed by the unit commander and will be accomplished in conjunction with other assigned duties. Primary responsibility will be to act as a liaison between the Family Readiness Group (FRG) volunteers and the unit commander.

For further guidance/support contact the State Family Readiness Office at 605-737-6089 or familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil.

II. Chain of Command/Concern. Accountable to the unit commander and State Family Readiness Director or their representatives. Serve as a Point Of Contact and work closely with the FRG Leaders and Volunteers.

III. Qualifications.

- A. Knowledge and understanding of the military structure and how it functions
- B. Believe in and support the Family Readiness Program
- C. Willing and able to take appropriate training for the position and update periodically
- D. Good communication and interpersonal skills
- E. Appointed on memorandum, register on joint services support website

IV. Major Responsibilities.

Act as a liaison between the Commander and the FRG Leader. Assist them to ensure the following tasks are completed and maintained:

1. Help ensure a family member is recruited to serve as the Family Readiness Group lead volunteer for the unit's FRG and is appointed on memorandum.
2. Help ensure a Family Readiness Plan (sanction) for the unit's FRG is completed and proper distribution is made.
3. Help ensure the Family Readiness Group Telephone Tree and Email Distribution Lists are maintained by providing changes of personnel and Family information to the FRG Lead Volunteer.
4. Assist FRG volunteers and the unit with the maintenance of the unit's Family Readiness Binder (unit Commander's purple binder) to ensure that it is complete and current for unit inspections.
5. If the FRG has a Checking Account, on the commander's behalf, help ensure the account is maintained according to guidance found in the Treasurer's Handbook.

UNIT FAMILY READINESS REPRESENTATIVE POSITION CONTINUED:

6. On the commander's behalf, help the FRG Lead Volunteer ensure fundraising and donation guidelines are followed.

7. Help maintain a unit Family sponsorship program for new Families in the unit by informing the FRG of new unit members.

8. Help ensure Resiliency training for Families is incorporated into the Yearly Training Schedule for the unit.

9. Assist the FRG volunteers in planning and coordinating briefings, events, and activities for unit members and their families.

10. Help integrate families into as many unit activities as possible.

11. Encourage unit and family member participation in FRG activities and training.

POSITION DESCRIPTION
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM
-FRG LEAD VOLUNTEER POSITION-
Revised: 2/2011

I. Description. The Family Readiness Group lead volunteer is a statutory volunteer serving in an official capacity in direct support of National Guard Family Programs and as a member of the unit commander's special staff. Collaborate and support the unit Commander in order to maintain a Family Readiness Program within the unit to help prepare Families for mobilization.

Serves as link between commander and Families; conveys Families needs and concerns.

For further guidance/support contact the State Family Readiness Office at 605-737-6089 or familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil.

II. Chain of Command/Concern. Accountable to the unit commander and State Family Readiness Director or their representatives.

III. Qualifications.

- A. Believe in and support the National Guard Family Readiness Program
- B. Enthusiastic and positive with good communication and interpersonal skills
- C. Good organizational and supervisory skills
- D. Willing and able to take appropriate training for the position and update periodically
- E. Complete volunteer application process

IV. Major Responsibilities.

Assist the commander, the Unit, and Family Readiness Group (FRG) volunteers to ensure the following tasks are completed and maintained:

1. In collaboration with the unit commander, ensure a Family Readiness Plan (sanction) for the unit's FRG is completed and proper distribution is made.
2. Ensure the Family Readiness Group Telephone Tree and Email Distribution Lists are maintained.
3. Recruit family and service member FRG volunteers, ensure they complete volunteer application process, and provide them guidance and support.
4. Assist with the maintenance of the unit's Family Readiness Binder (unit Commander's purple binder) to ensure that it is complete and current for unit inspections.
5. If the FRG has a Checking Account, ensure the account is maintained according to guidance found in the Treasurer's Handbook.
6. Help ensure fundraising and donation guidelines are followed.
7. Help maintain a unit Family sponsorship program for new Families in the unit.
8. Help ensure Resiliency training for Families is incorporated into the Yearly Training Schedule for the unit and coordinated.

FRG LEAD VOLUNTEER POSITION CONTINUED:

9. Assist the commander and unit personnel in coordinating and presenting periodic, informational briefings to Family and service members.
10. Represent Guard Families in meetings, workshops and conferences.
11. Ensure required volunteer and FRG paperwork is completed and proper distribution is made, e.g. treasurer reports, FRG sanction, duty appointments, copies of newsletters, and telephone tree to the State Family Readiness Office, ATTN: Family Readiness Support Assistant
12. Assist the unit and other volunteers in planning and coordinating activities for unit members and their families.
13. Assist the unit during the unit's annual Soldier Readiness Processing Exercise by helping service members complete the Service Member Family Information Form (SDNG 600-12-11R)

**POSITION DESCRIPTION
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM**

(Volunteer Position)

- TREASURER / ALTERNATE TREASURER POSITION -

Revised: 10/2009

I. **Introduction**. The treasurer and alternate treasurer are statutory volunteers serving in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program. They will maintain simple accounting records and receipts for Family Readiness Group funds in accordance with Army Regulation 600-20, Paragraph 4-21; Army Regulation 608-1, Appendix J, paragraph J-7; Air/ Army and National Guard Bureau Funding Guidance; the State Family Readiness Office; and the South Dakota National Guard Treasurer's Handbook.

All tasks are accomplished with the support of the commander, lead volunteer and State Family Readiness Office. Should you have any questions or concerns accomplishing your duties as treasurer, contact the State Family Readiness Office at 1-800-658-3930 or familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil

II. **Major Duties and Responsibilities**.

- A. Ensure the commander has completed the **Treasurer Appointment Memorandum**

appointing you as the treasurer and appointing an alternate treasurer. Ensure it is filed in the unit's Family Readiness binder and a copy sent to the State Family Program Office. Military personnel can not serve as treasurers or signatories on FRG accounts.

- B. **Sign Volunteer Agreement** (DD2793) and return to the State Family Program office.

- C. **Register on the joinservicesupport.org** website and record volunteer hours.

D. Prior to opening a FRG account, **file IRS form SS4** to receive an Employer Identification Number (EIN) (a tax ID number) to avoid use of personal Social Security Number. If SSN is used for reporting to the IRS, checking account may be perceived as personal income by the Internal Revenue Service.

E. **Open and maintain a non-interest bearing checking account** in a federally insured financial institution. When signing checks, a minimum of two volunteer signatures is required.

F. **Maintain simple accounting records** (Checkbook Register) showing all transactions, both in and out for FRG funds. Maintain receipts of how monies were disbursed.

G. **Ensure payment of sales tax** for items purchased by the Family Readiness Group as it is **not** a nonprofit organization and therefore is not in a tax-exempt status.

H. **Ensure the FRG informal fund account does not exceed \$10,000** income per year, and also its balance does not exceed \$10,000 at any time. Also ensure the account's use is limited to expenses consistent with the purpose and function of the FRG Informal Fund.

TREASURER / ALTERNATE TREASURER POSITION DESCRIPTION:

I. Help **ensure FRG only conducts internal fundraising** amongst their members (unit) and gains command approval prior to any fundraising. External fundraising is not authorized in accordance with National Guard Bureau and Department of the Army guidance.

J. Unit Commanders **may accept**/approve UNSOLICITED donations in conjunction with the State Family Programs Director to the FRG informal fund of \$1000 or less **per donation** from private organizations or individual donors. Donations count as FRG income and count against the FRG \$10,000 annual income cap. All donations must be “unconditional” as acknowledged by the SD Family Readiness Form 600-29 found in the appendix of the SDNG Treasurer’s handbook or available upon request from the State Family Readiness Office.

Help ensure this form is completed prior to donation acceptance and proper distribution is made. The form will be maintained by the treasurer in the Unit Family Readiness Binder (Tab 4) with a copy furnished to the State Family Readiness Office.

The FRG itself is NOT to solicit or give donations or gifts.

K. Help ensure **FRG funds do not augment other unit informal funds** such as the unit’s fund. The FRG funds can not be deposited or mixed with personal or unit funds.

L. Help ensure **FRG funds are not used to purchase items or services** which may be paid for using military (appropriated) funds or for items not related to family readiness such as service member farewell gifts.

M. **Help ensure FRG Standard Operating Procedure for FRG informal funds is accomplished** either by inclusion in the FRG sanction (Item #6) **or** as an independent document. (See appendix of this handbook for examples.) FRGs with an informal fund **must** have an organizing SOP that provides minimal information regarding FRG expenditures which need to be in accordance with the wishes of the majority of FRG members and all fundraisers must have Command approval before proceeding. It must be signed by the treasurer and alternate treasurer. It is filed in the unit’s Family Readiness Binder and a copy forwarded to the State Family Readiness Office.

N. **Provide a treasurer report to the commander and the State Family Program Office**. This report includes 3 items, which are: the Treasurer Report Memorandum, copy of all Bank Statements since the last report and a copy of the Checkbook Register showing all transactions since the last report. File a copy of the report in Tab 4 of the unit’s Family Readiness Binder.

Reports are also required from units that **have no checking accounts or no funds in their checking accounts** as well. Reports are due **annually** by September 30th, unless unit is deployed. If unit is **deployed**, reports are due **quarterly** (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec) to the State Family Program Office.

O. **Promote** the Family program within the Guard and community whenever possible.

P. **Attend training** to improve knowledge of Treasurer position updates.

TREASURER / ALTERNATE TREASURER POSITION DESCRIPTION:

III. **Chain of Command.** Unit commander, unit's Family Readiness lead volunteer, and State Family Readiness Director

IV. **Qualifications Sought.**

- A. Good mathematics skills and some record keeping knowledge
- B. Good personal character
- C. Displays attention to details

V. **Benefits.**

- A. Meeting other Family and Guard members
- B. Opportunities to attend Family program conferences and workshops and network with other family program volunteers state and nationwide
- C. Gain a clear understanding of the Family Program and National Guard thereby improving preparedness for mobilization
- D. Improve/increase bookkeeping skills for present or future job opportunities

VI. **Training.** Training will be accomplished as needed to ensure the proper maintenance and responsible management of the unit FRG informal fund account.

POSITION DESCRIPTION
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM
-PHONE TREE CHAIR PERSON-
(Volunteer Position)
Revised: 10/2009

I. **Introduction.** The phone tree chair person is usually, but is not required to be the Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer and is a statutory volunteer serving in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program. The following is provided as guidance to aid you in serving as the phone tree chair person for your unit's Family Readiness Group. The Family Readiness Group's Phone Tree is a system which enables callers to quickly and accurately disseminate information to Families thereby limiting rumors and undo stress. For further guidance/direction refer to the Family Readiness Phone Tree Handbook which can be found on the website <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then the Family Readiness link, then Family Readiness Groups or contact the State Family Readiness Office at 1-800-658-3930 // familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil .

II. **Major Responsibilities.**

- A. Signs a volunteer agreement (DD2793). Original is filed at the State Family Program Office and a copy at the unit.
- B. Registers on <https://www.jointservicessupport.org> to record volunteer hours.
- C. Prepares the unit telephone tree from the service member Family information forms (SDNG 600-12-11) completed by the service members.
- D. Files completed phone tree in the unit commander's Family Readiness binder and sends a copy to the State Family Readiness Office.
- E. Ensures each service member has one contact on the phone tree. Phone Tree is limited to one contact per service member in order to keep the phone tree manageable and to help ensure a timely dissemination of information.
- F. Recruits Phone Tree Key Callers. Provides key callers with a phone tree handbook. Each key caller is ideally (depending on unit size and the size of the unit) assigned 6 to 8 Families to call by geographic location to help minimize the cost of calling.
- G. Ensures phone tree key callers have calling cards provided by the State Family Readiness Office.
- H. Coordinates with unit and phone tree key callers to add new Families to the Phone Tree, remove those who leave the unit, and to update any changes found when making calls.
- I. Coordinates testing of the FRG phone tree at least biannually, more often during deployments. Records test date on phone tree filed in the unit's Family Readiness binder.
- J. Helps create the calling script (State Family Readiness Office can assist) used by the phone tree key callers to ensure accurate information is passed to Families.

(Script must be approved by the FRG Lead Volunteer if Telephone Tree Chairperson is someone other than the Lead Volunteer. The calling tree can only be activated by the unit commander, FRG lead volunteer or the State Family Readiness Office.)

PHONE TREE CHAIR PERSON POSITION DESCRIPTION Continued:

K. Fields calls from phone tree key callers with questions or reports of Families with concerns or needing assistance.

L. Keeps a log of calls received and calls made and their results.

M. Reports any problems, concerns or questions reported from phone tree key callers from Family members to the FRG Lead Volunteer who then reports them to the State Family Readiness Office, 1-800-658-3930.

N. Ensures necessary follow up is completed for those Families requesting information or requiring assistance.

O. Maintains confidentiality, discourages gossip, and dispels rumors.

III. Time Required.

Depending on how large the unit is the maintenance of the phone tree may take two to four hours per month during deployment and perhaps thirty minutes to one hour monthly during non deployment.

IV. **Chain of Command/Concern.** FRG Lead Volunteer, Commander, Rear Detachment and State Family Readiness Office

V. Qualification Sought.

- A. Good telephone / communication skills.
- B. Concern and empathy for others; calm under stress
- C. Positive attitude
- D. Maintains confidentiality and privacy
- E. Knowledge of the Family Readiness Program and the unit structure
- F. Believe in and supports the Family Readiness Program

VI. Recommended Training.

- A. Past experience
- B. Read FRG Telephone Tree Handbook
- C. Crisis Intervention

POSITION DESCRIPTION
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM
-PHONE TREE KEY CALLER-
(Volunteer Position)
Revised: 10/2009

I. **Introduction.** A phone tree key caller is a statutory volunteer serving in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program. The following is provided as guidance to aid you in serving as a phone tree caller for your unit's Family Readiness Group. The Family Readiness Group's Phone Tree is a system which enables callers to quickly and accurately disseminate information to Families thereby limiting rumors and undo stress. For further guidance/direction refer to the Family Readiness Phone Tree Handbook which can be found on the website <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then the Family Readiness link, then Family Readiness Groups or contact the State Family Readiness Office at 1-800-658-3930 // familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil.

II. **Major Responsibilities.**

- A. Signs a volunteer agreement (DD2793). Original is filed at the State Family Program office and a copy at the unit.
- B. Registers on <https://www.jointservicessupport.org> to record volunteer hours.
- C. Reads Phone Tree Handbook prior to making calls to unit Families.
- D. Secures calling card from the lead volunteer to cover calling expenses prior to calling Families.
- E. Calls Families on their assigned portion of the phone tree to pass important Information. Tries them more than once if there is no answer the first time up to 3 times. Does this by using a script provided by the FRG Phone Tree chairperson. Does this in a timely manner. If unable to complete calls, notifies Phone tree chairperson immediately so that another caller can complete the calls.
- F. Keeps a log of calls received and calls made and their results.
- G. Directs those Families who have questions or concerns to appropriate resources or to the State Family Assistance Center at 1-800-658-3930.
- H. Reports any problems, concerns or questions from Family members to the Phone Tree Chairperson/FRG Lead Volunteer.
- I. Checks with Phone Tree Chairperson to ensure necessary follow up is completed for those Families requesting information or requiring assistance.
- J. Maintains confidentiality, discourages gossip, and dispels rumors.
- K. Makes "We Care" calls as scheduled, determined by the Family Readiness Group. "We Care" Calls are normally made during deployments to check on Families.

PHONE TREE KEY CALLER POSITION DESCRIPTION Continued:

L. Makes updates to their portion of the phone tree when Families have changes and informs Phone Tree Chairperson/FRG Lead Volunteer of those changes.

M. Welcomes new Families assigned to their portion of the phone tree group.

III. Time Required.

Depending on the number of callers assigned to your portion of the phone tree group. Normally 30 minutes to 1 hour each time the phone tree is activated.

IV. **Chain of Command/Concern.** Phone Tree Chairperson, FRG Lead Volunteer, Unit Commander, State Family Readiness Office

V. Qualification Sought.

- A. Good telephone / communication skills.
- B. Concern and empathy for others; calm under stress
- C. Positive attitude
- D. Maintains confidentiality and privacy
- E. Knowledge of the Family Readiness Program and the unit structure
- F. Believe in and supports the Family Readiness Program

VI. Recommended Training.

- A. Past experience
- B. Read FRG Telephone Tree Handbook
- C. Crisis Intervention

POSITION DESCRIPTION
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM
-Newsletter Publisher-
(Volunteer Position)
Revised: 10/2009

I. **Introduction.** The newsletter publisher is a statutory volunteer serving in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program. The following is provided as guidance to aid you in creating the newsletter for your unit's Family Readiness Group. The Family Readiness Group's newsletter is an excellent way to communicate with the unit's families to provide them with current information about benefits, activities, programs and services available to them. For further guidance/direction view the Newsletter class which can be found on the website <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then the Family Readiness link, then Family Readiness Groups or contact the State Family Readiness Office at 1-800-658-3930 // familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil

II. **Major Responsibilities.**

- A. Signs Volunteer Agreement (DD2793). Original is filed at the State Family Program office and a copy at the unit.
- B. Registers on the <https://www.jointservicesupport.org> website and records volunteer hours.
- C. Views class on Family Readiness Group Newsletters online at <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil> to gain an understanding of the guidelines for publishing a newsletter regarding official and unofficial news and its funding and resources available.
- D. Designs a newsletter and gets input from the Family Readiness Group, Commander and Lead Volunteer. The State Family Readiness Office can also be a resource. (Newsletter examples are available from the Family Readiness Office.)
- E. Encourages other FRG members to contribute information and articles for publication.
- F. Provides copies of draft newsletters to Lead Volunteer and commander for editing and approval.
- G. After final editing and approval, reproduces newsletter.
- H. Assists FRG Lead Volunteer with mailing of newsletter to the FRG.
- I. Send copy of newsletter to the State Family Readiness Office and file a copy in the unit commander's Family Readiness binder.

III. **Time Required.**

Depending on the newsletter frequency as determined by the FRG (newsletter done monthly, quarterly, biannually), five to 10 hours.

IV. **Chain of Command/Concern.** FRG Lead Volunteer, Unit Commander, State Family Readiness Office

Newsletter Publisher Continued:

V. **Qualification Sought.**

- A. Editorial, spelling, grammar; ability to write articles
- B. Organizational skills
- C. Creative
- D. Maintains confidentiality and privacy
- E. Knowledge of the Family Readiness Program and the unit structure
- F. Believe in and supports the Family Readiness Program

VI. **Recommended Training.**

- A. Past experience
- B. View Newsletter Class online

POSITION DESCRIPTION
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM
-FRG Secretary-
(Volunteer Position)
Revised: 10/2009

I. **Introduction.** The FRG Secretary is a statutory volunteer serving in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program. The following is provided as guidance to aid you in serving as the secretary for your unit's Family Readiness Group. Examples of minutes can be found on the website <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then the Family Readiness link, then Family Readiness Groups or contact the State Family Readiness Office at 1-800-658-3930 // familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil

II. **Major Responsibilities.**

- A. Signs Volunteer Agreement (DD 2793). Original is filed at the State Family Program office and a copy at the unit.
- B. Registers on the jointservicesupport.org website and records volunteer hours.
- C. Records accurate minutes of meetings.
- D. Distributes information and correspondence to FRG Lead Volunteer and newsletter publisher.
- E. Maintains a FRG binder with copies of meeting minutes, agendas, sign-in sheets, evaluations and other pertinent FRG information as determined by the FRG.
- F. Maintains confidentiality and acts in a sensitive manner.

III. **Time Required.**

Depending on the frequency of meetings as determined by the FRG (monthly, quarterly, biannually), 1 to 3 hours each meeting.

IV. **Chain of Command/Concern.** FRG Lead Volunteer, Unit Commander, State Family Readiness Office

V. **Qualification Sought.**

- A. Ability to take accurate notes and keep records
- B. Organizational skills
- C. Maintains confidentiality and privacy
- D. Knowledge of the Family Readiness Program and the unit structure
- E. Believe in and supports the Family Readiness Program

VI. **Recommended Training.**

- A. Past experience
- B. Family Program Basic Volunteer Training

POSITION DESCRIPTION
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM
-FAMILY SPONSORSHIP REPRESENTATIVE-
(Volunteer Position)
Revised: 10/2009

I. **Introduction.** A Family Sponsorship Representative is a statutory volunteer serving in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program. The following is provided as guidance to aid you in being a representative for your unit's Family Readiness Group Family Sponsorship Program. The Family Sponsorship Program is reaching out to new families and welcoming them to the unit. It may be a phone call, letter, or visit. For more guidance refer to the Family Readiness Handbook which can be found on the website <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then the Family Readiness link, then Family Readiness Groups or contact the State Family Readiness Office at 1-800-658-3930 // familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil

II. **Major Responsibilities.**

- A. Signs Volunteer Agreement (DD2793). Original is filed at the State Family Program office and a copy at the unit.
- B. Registers on the jointservicessupport.org website and records volunteer hours.
- C. Coordinates with FRG Lead Volunteer or Unit Family Readiness Representative (military member, commander's representative) to get names and contact information for incoming Families, new to the unit.
- D. Prepares a welcome letter to new Family members with unit and Family Readiness Group information. Example of letter in Family Readiness Handbook. **OR:**
- E. Calls new Family members to welcome them to the unit and invite them to any upcoming FRG events and activities.
- F. Gathers information about the Family using intake form found in Family Readiness Handbook. If married, number and ages of children (if applicable) and special interests.
- G. Directs those families who have questions or concerns to appropriate resources or to the unit or State Family Assistance Center at 1-800-658-3930 depending on the question or need.
- H. Reports any problems, concerns or questions from Family members to the FRG Lead Volunteer.
- I. Checks to ensure necessary follow up is completed for those Families requesting information or requiring assistance.
- J. Documents Family Sponsorship in unit commander's Family Readiness Binder. (Family Sponsorship is verified during unit inspections). Documentation can be a list of new Families called, copies of letters mailed to new families, etc
- K. Maintains confidentiality, discourages gossip, and dispels rumors.

FAMILY SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE PERSON Continued:**III. Time Required.**

Depending on the number of new Family members assigned to your unit. Normally 30 minutes to 1 hour a month.

IV. **Chain of Command/Concern.** Unit Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer, Unit Commander, State Family Readiness Office

V. Qualification Sought.

- A. Good telephone / communication skills.
- B. Enthusiastic people person
- C. Positive attitude
- D. Maintains confidentiality and privacy
- E. Knowledge of the Family Readiness Program and the unit structure
- F. Believe in and supports the Family Readiness Program

VI. Recommended Training.

- A. Past experience
- B. Family Program Basic Volunteer Training

FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM COMMANDER'S BOOKLET TABLE OF CONTENTS

Each unit has a binder which is a place to warehouse information relating to the unit's Family Readiness. During unit inspections it will be reviewed helping to determine the state of Family Readiness within the unit. It is also known as the Commander's "purple" binder.

TAB 1 – Family Readiness Requirements

*Position Appointments

- FRG Lead Volunteer
- FRG Treasurer/Alternate Treasurer
- Family Readiness Unit Representative

* Copies of Volunteer Agreements for FRG Volunteers

TAB 2 – Family Readiness Plan (FRG Sanction)

TAB 3 – Family Readiness Group Telephone Tree

- FRG Telephone Tree
- Date of last testing of Phone Tree recorded
- Volunteer Services Confidentiality Statement for Phone Tree

Callers

TAB 4 - Family Readiness Group Funds

- Treasurer Reports (maintained for 5 years)
- Any SDNG Form 600-29s (FRG donation acceptance form)
- Any FRG account information
- FRG Funds Standard Operating Procedure

TAB 5 - Position Descriptions

*Commander, FRG Lead Volunteer, Unit Rep,
Treasurer, FRG Secretary, Phone Tree Chairperson, Phone Tree Key
Caller, Family Sponsorship, FRG Newsletter

TAB 6 – Regulations

- *Forces Command (FORSCOM) 500-3-3
- *AR 600-20
- *AR 608-1, Appendix J

TAB 7 – Family Care Plans

*How to access forms and information

TAB 8 – Family and Youth Activities

- *Record of unit's program, pictures, sign-in rosters, etc
- *Family Readiness Group Newsletters
- *Copies of unit training schedules showing Family Program events, training and activities

Family Readiness Plan (Sanction)

The Family Readiness Plan can satisfy 4 requirements, which are:

- a. the Family Readiness Group's operating plan
- b. Lead Volunteer Appointment
- c. Statement of approval for the operation of the FRG by the unit commander
- d. FRG informal fund Standard Operating Procedure

1. A Family Readiness Plan is a formal document done in collaboration between the commander and the lead volunteer (with input from the entire FRG).
2. The Plan states the FRG's purpose, defines its goals and establishes responsibilities (who does what).
3. A statement of approval by the unit commander for the FRG to function as a part of the unit is included.
4. It also identifies the family readiness group's lead volunteer.
5. It states activities and functions that support the purpose. Supporting goals are listed as well.
6. Provisions for evaluation of the FRG are included to ensure periodic reviews of the purposes and goals to meet the changing needs of the unit.
7. Also included is the FRG informal fund standard operating procedure.
8. **It is signed by the lead volunteer and unit commander and requires review and updating when the commander or lead volunteer changes.**
9. A copy is maintained in the unit Commander's Family Readiness (Purple) binder and a copy sent to the State Family Readiness Office.
10. **It is a critical task reviewed during unit inspections.**

(ENTER UNIT NAME)
FAMILY READINESS GROUP PLAN
(Enter Date of Plan)

1. PURPOSE. A broad statement outlining the purpose of your Family Readiness Group. It tells who you are and what you will do. For example, We are the families, friends and supporters of the (Enter Unit Designation and Name) who will provide information, education and support and create an environment of family togetherness by publishing newsletters, training our volunteers, holding family functions and events and keeping our families informed regarding unit news and military benefits.

2. GOALS. List the goals that your group will strive to achieve. Goals are more specific and support your purpose statement. For example, Keep families informed, provide training for families, assist the unit, provide opportunities for families to socialize, etc. Your goals can and should be revised as needed. They will change as your group changes.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. A general statement of the responsibilities of the military chain of command and commander. For example, As commander, I will provide guidance, support and resources required to sustain the unit's Family Program. I will also appoint a military POC to act in my behalf to assist the lead volunteer and Family Readiness Group. I will strive to establish an atmosphere of care and concern for service members and their families to encourage their participation in activities, trainings and events, thereby increasing their mobilization readiness and making them strong and healthy families.

B. Statement of Command approval of the FRG: This is to give command approval for the (Enter Unit Designation), Family Readiness Group to operate and function as part of my special staff in order to provide support to the service members and their families.

C. Duties of the Unit Family Readiness Representative (Military POC). The Unit Representative will serve as my liaison and act on my behalf in accordance with my guidance to provide assistance and support to the (Enter Unit Designation) Lead Volunteer and Family Readiness Group.

D. Appointment of Lead Volunteer for the Family Readiness Group. (Enter Lead Volunteer's Name) will serve as the Unit Lead Volunteer for the (Enter Unit Designation) Family Readiness Group. The lead volunteer will serve as part of my special staff and provide guidance and support to me and other Family Readiness Group (FRG) volunteers to help ensure the unit's FRG goals are achieved.

4. STRUCTURE/ORGANIZATION. This paragraph describes how your group will look. It can be shown on a separate page in the form of an organizational chart that shows structure and lines of responsibility, for example at the top would be the unit commander then the lead volunteer, etc. (See example.)

5. ACTIVITIES/FUNCTIONS. List in general terms the activities that the group will provide, for example, annual picnic, assist in annual soldier/airman readiness exercises, newsletters, maintain FRG telephone trees, develop family sponsorship program, etc. Allow for growth and change. This section, as any section of this guide, can and should change. Your group will have different needs at different times and your plans should be flexible and adaptable.

6. FRG INFORMAL FUNDS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE. “The (Enter Unit Designation) FRG’s informal fund’s purpose and function are to provide support, recognition, education and information to help prepare families for mobilization and their continued participation in the National Guard.”

“The FRG informal fund is for the benefit of its members only and is established exclusively for charitable purposes to provide support to service and family members as they live the military life. It is not a business and is not being run to generate any profits. FRG expenditures will be in accordance with the wishes of the majority of FRG members and all fund raisers must have Command approval before proceeding. Additionally it is not an instrumentality of the United States Government.”

If your FRG does not have an FRG informal fund or no funds in your account then so state. For example, “The Enter Unit’s Designation FRG does not have an informal fund. Or Enter Unit’s Designation FRG currently has no funds in their FRG informal fund.”

7. EVALUATION. A statement regarding when the commander, Unit Family Readiness Representative and the FRG Lead Volunteer meet to periodically (perhaps annually) look at the program to determine whether any changes need to be made, for example, in program goal priorities and activities.

Family Readiness Group Leader / Date Commander Signature / Date

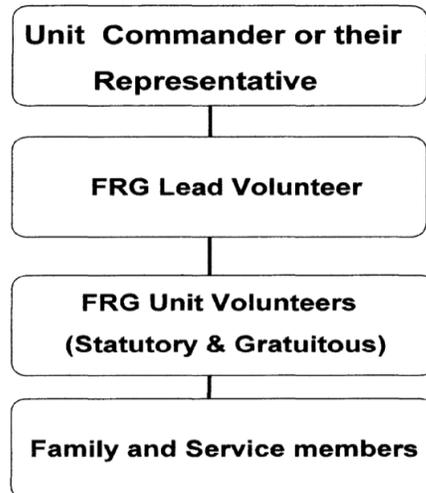
(Treasurer and alternate treasurer only need to be included (and sign) the FRG’s Family Readiness Plan if paragraph 6 is included.)

Family Readiness Group Treasurer / Date FRG Alternate Treasurer / Date

- DISTRIBUTION:
Unit Family Readiness Program File (Unit Commander’s Purple Binder)
State Family Readiness Office
Unit Family Readiness Representative
Unit’s Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer

Example of paragraph 4 . UNIT STRUCTURE / ORGANIZATION.

FRG Structure/Organizational Flowchart



SERVICE MEMBER FAMILY READINESS INFORMATION SDNG Form 600-12-11

This form is used to warehouse information regarding the service member and their family. The information will help the Family Programs Office, the Family Readiness Group and the unit to provide better care and assistance to military families especially during extended periods of deployment or separation due to State Active Duty or training.

One of the primary uses of the form is by the Family Readiness Group to develop the FRG telephone tree and family newsletters and email address lists in order to disseminate pertinent information to unit families. It also helps the Family Program Office to gather information to develop appropriate programs and services that will best assist and serve families.

- The information on the form is used to contact families:
 - FRG telephone tree
 - FRG mailing lists
 - Email rosters

- Asks about special family situations including financial and medical
- Requires alternate point of contact information

- Lists children and the schools they attend to allow information on programs and services to be disseminated to schools without identification of individual children

- Lists EVACUATION INFORMATION added after Hurricane Katrina for service members and their family
 - Used in times of a natural disaster such as tornados, flooding, hurricanes, other severe weather and state or national emergencies
 - Must answer the following questions
 - **Who** would I contact to let know that my family and I are OK?
 - **Who** would know where my family and I would go?
 - Answers can be primary/secondary points of contact, friend, co-worker or distant relative
 - Must include name of contact, city & state, phone number and relationship

- Has date prepared/reviewed to ensure the most current information is available
- Service Member's signature to verify their completion

When FRG volunteers assist the unit's service members in completion of the form, it helps to ensure its accuracy and establishes rapport with them.

It is CRITICAL that the information is:

- CORRECT
- COMPLETE
- CURRENT
- CONFIDENTIAL

During completion of the form, it is imperative to emphasize the importance of choosing points of contact (POC). Service members need to understand that the POCs they enter on the form will be placed on the FRG telephone tree, email list and other mailing lists. On the FRG telephone tree, service members are allowed one contact in order to disseminate the information quickly, however they may have several contacts on the newsletter and email lists.

Additionally the POCs entered on the form, may not actually be the people they want contacted during deployments, etc. Encourage them to carefully consider their POC selection.

When to update

- Anytime service member's information changes
- When a soldier joins a new unit
- During non-deploying unit's yearly Soldier Readiness Process (SRP)
- As unit deems necessary

Communication Process

Phone Trees

Timely and accurate information is imperative to keep families abreast of happenings within the unit in order to limit confusion and stress. Various types of calls are made to pass information to families depending on the situation. Calls are made through an organized system called the telephone tree.

Benefits of Phone Trees

This system enables callers to quickly and accurately disseminate information to families thereby limiting rumors and undo stress. Some other benefits of an effective FRG phone tree are: the tree enhances a sense of belonging and provides needed information, including news about upcoming FRG events and the unit's status. It also gives families a secure feeling that there is someone to talk to during family emergencies or someone that they can express their concerns to. A well run phone tree helps improve the quality of life and morale of the unit. Leaders – both military and volunteer – who know their service members and families develop a greater understanding of their needs and are better able to assist and support them. Moreover, when the service member witnesses a consistent level of support for their family, they are better able to focus on the mission.

Developing Your Telephone Tree

The telephone tree system is developed from service member family information sheets (SDNG Form 600-12-11). In order to minimize calling time when the phone tree is activated, each service member will have only one contact on the phone tree. However additional family members can be added to email and newsletter rosters. Additionally, each family is encouraged to develop their own personal phone tree so once an informational call is received they will have the numbers readily available to call and update their family members.

Phone trees can be built according to platoons/squads, divided up alphabetically or preferably established based on geographic location to minimize long distance calls. Also, if possible, limit 6 to 8 families per calling group depending on the unit's size.

It is imperative to get family's home, work and other alternate points of contact to include email addresses to ensure each family can be contacted. Also recommended, assignment of an alternate primary caller in the event the primary caller is not available when the tree is activated.

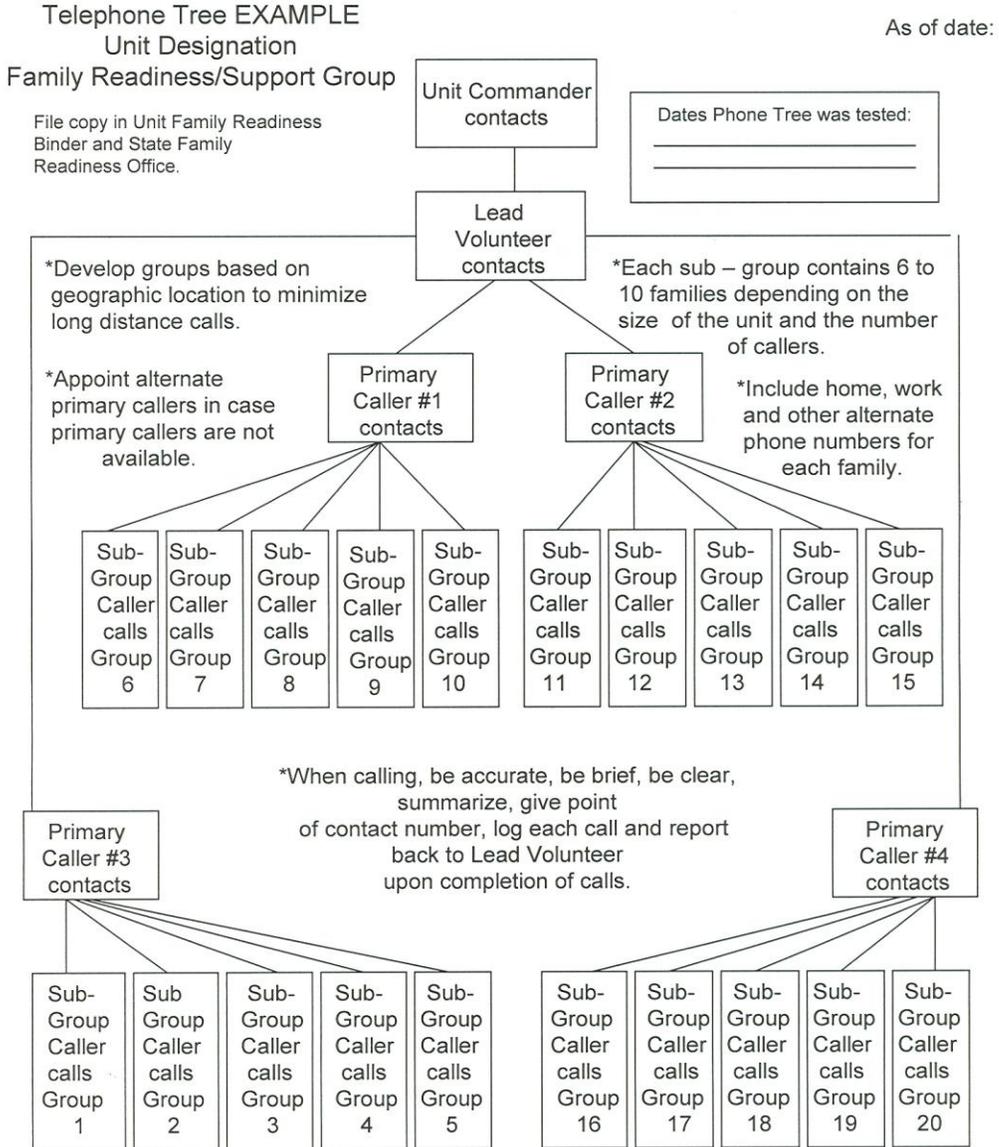
Calling is initiated by the unit commander or lead volunteer when important information needs to be dispensed in an emergency or a routine change of unit events. In the case of the death of a service member the FRG would never initiate the phone tree.

Additionally, an informal test of the telephone tree should be conducted periodically to ensure it is current; rehearsal provides confidence that the system works. To avoid personal cost, calling cards are available from the State Family Readiness Office. If personal phones are used, submission for reimbursement on SDNG Form 600-12-8R with a copy of the telephone bill with all calls made in support of Family Readiness highlighted is necessary.

Once telephone trees are completed, file a copy at the unit in the Commander's Purple Binder and send a copy to the State Family Programs Office.

The telephone tree is a critical task for Family Readiness Group's reviewed during unit inspections. Inspectors review the Phone tree to see if it has been developed, if it is current, and if it is periodically tested. After testing the phone tree, record test date on phone tree filed in the unit's Family Readiness binder under TAB 3.

The unit commander and Lead Volunteer have oversight responsibility for the telephone tree completion at the unit level.



1. Each sub – group caller reports back to the primary caller after reaching the families in their group.
2. Primary callers report back to lead volunteer.
3. Lead volunteer reports to commander that phone tree has completed contacts.

Ensure Privacy and Confidentiality of Family Member Information.

As a rule, to protect families' personal data from unauthorized use, only a few key FRG leaders should have a complete copy of the FRG membership roster or the phone tree. Sensitive information should be omitted, too; careful control of all copies of the rosters must be exercised at all times. All leaders must ensure that FRG rosters and phone trees are not given to any third party. Obsolete copies must be collected and destroyed and when a key caller or leader moves or leaves the job, copies must be turned in.

Types of Telephone Tree Calls.

The types of calls associated with the telephone tree system are:

- a. Phone Tree Calls
- b. We Care Calls
- c. Critical Incident Calls

We will define each type and discuss their differences in the following paragraphs.

Phone Tree Calls

Normally, phone tree calls are initiated by the unit commander or Lead Volunteer when information needs to be disseminated to families. This information can vary in nature, but usually when the phone tree is utilized time is a factor. Some examples of information would be a change in the unit's arrival time at home station or a change in meeting time for families for a unit family briefing.

Once the tree is initiated, the lead volunteer contacts the primary key callers for each pre-established group. Then the primary key callers contact the families in their group. Calling continues until all families are contacted. Upon completion of all calls the primary key callers notify the unit's lead volunteer who then follows up with the commander if he/she initiated the system.

Tips for Phone Tree Calls

1. Always immediately **identify yourself** and the unit FRG.
2. Ask if it is a **convenient time** to talk.
3. **Use a script.** Issued to each key caller by the lead volunteer via email. Ensures every Family receives the same information and keeps the caller focused.
4. **Be Brief.** (try to keep calls to 5 minutes) Remember you have information to quickly disseminate to your entire group.
5. **Be accurate.** Stick to the facts in the script, do not give your opinion and avoid “what if” questions.
6. **Be clear,** be positive, and listen.
7. **Summarize.** To recap information given in the script and to ensure it was understood.
8. **Ask** if they have any questions that pertain to the subject of the call.
9. **Give them a point of contact number (State Family Programs Office # 1-800-658-3930).** Should they have further questions or concerns.
10. **Keep a log of calls.** This ensures accurate follow up for Families called is given when reporting back to the lead volunteer/telephone tree chairperson after the completion of calls.
11. Never **gossip** or repeat rumors.
12. Do try more than once to call a Family if there is no answer the first time, 3 times is a good number before leaving a message on their answering machine. Report back to your primary caller that you were unable to reach the family or that you left a message.
13. **Ensure your calls are completed in a timely manner.** If you are unable to make your calls, make your primary caller aware of this so those families can be contacted.
14. **Ensure necessary follow up is completed.** To ensure any information or assistance that was requested by Families during calls was addressed.

We Care Calls

We Care Calls are normally made during periods of **mobilization, however they could be done periodically during non mobilization to build rapport with unit families and to test the phone tree.** They focus on the well-being of families identifying concerns or problems that may require outside resources or follow up. Further, they ensure that each family is reached and regular contact with the FRG is maintained.

The calls may last longer than 5 minutes and are more relaxed than Phone Tree Calls. They don't necessarily require a script, but one may be used if there are some specific questions or information

that the FRG wants to disseminate. Upon call completion, callers notify the Phone Tree Chairperson/Lead Volunteer to inform them of any problems or concerns that were identified.

We Care Calls are usually scheduled once a month (during mobilization) differing from Phone Tree Calls which are only initiated by the Commander, Lead Volunteer or State Family Programs Office whenever there is a need and are scripted.

Additionally, the telephone tree structure and callers can remain the same for each type of call (phone tree or We Care) or be changed as determined by the Family Readiness Group (FRG). If a different telephone tree structure or different callers are designated for each type of call, those phone trees should also be on file at the unit and State Family Programs Office.

Tips for We Care Calls

1. Always immediately **identify yourself** and the unit FRG.
2. Ask if it is a **convenient time** to talk.
3. **Use a Script.** If one is required to disseminate specific questions or information by the FRG. Issued by the Lead Volunteer via email.
4. **Make the family member feel comfortable.** Build a rapport.
5. **Listen, Listen, Listen.**
6. **Be positive, be clear.**
7. **Keep a log of calls.** This ensures accurate follow up for Families called is given when reporting back to the lead volunteer/telephone tree chairperson after the completion of calls.
8. **Have a list of resources available.** (If they have questions or concerns or need a referral, remember you are not a counselor)
9. **Give them a point of contact number (State Family Programs Office# 1-800-658-3930).** Should they have further questions or concerns.
10. **Summarize.** To recap information given (in script if used) and to ensure it was understood.
11. Never **gossip** or repeat rumors.
12. Do try more than once to call a Family if there is no answer the first time, 3 times is a good number before leaving a message on their answering machine. Report back to your primary caller that you were unable to reach them or that you left a message.
13. **Ensure your calls are completed in a timely manner.** If you are unable to make your calls, make your primary caller aware of this so those families can be contacted.
14. **Ensure necessary follow up is completed.** To ensure any information or assistance that was requested by Families during calls was addressed.

Critical Incident Calls

Critical Incident calls are **only** made in the event of a death(s) or injury(ies) of (a) service member(s). The State Family Programs Office will make the calls to unit Families once authorization has been received from the State Personnel Office (J1) upon verification that the immediate affected Family(ies) has(ve) been notified.

The State Family Programs Office requests that unit Families **do not** speak to the media during the first hours after an incident or until the information has been officially released. This is requested to ensure the Family's privacy and to respect their right to notify extended Family and friends to ensure they do not hear or read about the incident before being personally contacted.

Calls from the State Family Programs Office are only made to the affected unit's FRG members after Family(ies) of deceased/injured service member(s) have been notified.

Phone Tree Key Callers

Phone tree callers should be reliable, good listeners, possess a positive attitude and must understand how to maintain confidentiality. They also must provide accurate information and keep accurate records of calls.

The phone tree is designed for communication and support. You are not a social worker or a welfare agency so please do not feel badly if you don't know or don't have the answer. There are many resources and helping agencies available for referral that will be able to provide the needed assistance. **Confidentiality** plays an important part in your position as a phone tree caller. When a family member tells you something, it is your obligation to maintain their privacy; only sharing their information with the FRG Lead Volunteer or Family Assistance Staff to ensure their needs are met.

Tips for Key Callers

DO

- be pleasant when you call
- be friendly and tactful in guiding callers to successful resolution of their own problems
- ensure, when necessary, follow up is completed

Tips for Key Callers

DO

- try more than once to call a Family if there is no answer the first time (try at least three times)
- maintain confidentiality and privacy
- refer

DO NOT

- take it personally if a caller is rude or obnoxious
- feel guilty if you are unable to help them, do your best, refer them
- go beyond your own limits in providing assistance
- gossip or repeat rumors

What Do You Need to Get Started As a Phone Key Tree Caller?

Here is a list:

- a list of assigned families and phone numbers for your branch of the phone tree,
- a calling card,
- an ample supply of message log forms and pen/pencil,
- a copy of the calling script (if using),
- resource numbers and information, State Family Assistance, 1-800-658-3930

Tips for Handling Calls Effectively

While listening, ask yourself these questions:

- What is the caller really saying? Keep in mind that the call is important to the caller.
- What basic needs does the caller have?
- What expectations does the caller have? Are they realistic?
- Who can help? As much as possible, refer the caller to resources that can be used by the caller to solve the problem.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

The goal of crisis intervention is to allow those involved to resolve the situation themselves giving them back some control because in a crisis we feel as if we have no control. If possible, you want to empower them to resolve their situation and give them the tools and resources to do so.

Some basic rules for crisis intervention follow:

1. LISTEN – let the people involved speak. Try to truly listen to them. Be sure you hear how they see the problem and what they expect from you. Verbalize what you hear and see happening descriptively not critically.

- a. You can help people by listening, offering suggestions only when the individual cannot think of alternatives.
- b. Do not give advice or assume responsibility for the person's problems or life.
- c. Let the person take the lead. Often, the individual needs and wants to talk the problem out.
- d. Work toward clarification of the situation.

2. VALIDATE – You may not think it is an emergency, but to them it is. We all want our feelings validated. “Yes, that does seem to be a problem.” Avoid being negative, “Why didn't you call two days ago?” People need reassurance, not scolding.

- a. Be empathetic and help them identify their feelings. Are they depressed, frustrated, angry? Encourage the person to talk on a feeling level?
- b. Try not to become absorbed with past reasons for present problems. Focus on what is happening now and what can be done to change it.

3. HONESTY – be honest. Do not promise anything you can not produce.

4. RESPECT – be respectful of others. Treat them, as you would want to be treated.

- a. Many times you may be the first person they talk to, so they may be upset. Everyone handles stress differently, some people get angry, some cry, etc. **Don't take it personally.**
- b. Sometimes just verbalizing the problem is enough.
- c. Or you just asking the right questions, for example, “Do you have anyone who lives nearby that could change that tire?” “Could you call them?”

5. REFER - You are not a social worker. Know when to refer them to another agency and where to refer them. Don't confuse them with multiple referrals. Ensure they know who will do what.

- a. Do not call others to help them without their permission.

6. FOLLOW-UP – Always, always follow-up. Check on the person and see if they have been able to resolve their problem or if they need further assistance.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY – Protect and honor people's privacy.

Optional Form

FRG Phone Tree Worksheet
 (worksheet to help you create your unit's FRG phone tree)
 Include alternate phone numbers (home, work, cell)

Group

Primary Caller

Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

Alternate Caller

Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

Group

Primary Caller

Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

Alternate Caller

Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

Contacts

1. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

2. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

3. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

4. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

5. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

6. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

1. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

2. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

3. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

4. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

5. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

6. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email address: _____

Your Personal Phone Tree Worksheet
Include alternate phone numbers (home, work, cell)

Because the purpose of the Family Readiness Group (FRG) phone tree is to quickly and accurately disseminate important information such as unit or FRG business, each service member has only one contact on the FRG phone tree in order to expedite calling when the tree is activated.

The service member's FRG phone tree contact is determined by the service member's designation upon their family information sheet. FRG members are unable to make changes to that sheet or the service member's designation except by the service member's request.

If you are your service member's designated point of contact on the FRG Phone Tree, please complete the below information and post by your telephone or on your refrigerator so when you receive a call you will be able to pass the information along to your other family members and friends.

Personal Contact Tree

1. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email: _____

2. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email: _____

3. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email: _____

4. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email: _____

5. Name: _____

Ph#s: _____

Ph#s: _____

Email: _____

Volunteer Services Confidentiality Statement Phone Tree Callers

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that in my volunteer role as a phone tree caller for the National Guard, I may have access to confidential and private information from the National Guard unit and families.

I agree that I shall not disclose any such confidential or private information maintained by the National Guard or obtained by me to any unauthorized person, and I will honor confidentiality and privacy of families.

I acknowledge and agree that disclosure by me of confidential or private information obtained by me in the course of my volunteer status could be cause for termination from my volunteer position.

Date

Volunteer Signature

Date

Lead Volunteer Signature

Kept on file in the unit's Family Readiness Binder under TAB 3 (Telephone Trees)

Examples of Calling Scripts

Calling scripts will be issued by the Lead Volunteer to each primary caller who in turn will issue them to each of the Phone Tree Key Callers within their group (via email).

Notes to callers (from the Phone Tree Chairperson/FRG lead volunteer) included with each script include the following points:

- a. Whether or not it is ok for callers to leave the information on answering machines.
- b. How many attempts to reach the family should be made prior to leaving a message.
- c. "Ensure to use the following script to ensure all families receive the same information."
- d. If you are unable to make your calls in the allotted timeframe because of circumstances that prevent you from doing so, please let your primary caller know so we can ensure, your families are called.

"Hello, this is state your name, with the state your unit's designation Family Readiness Group. We are calling to ensure you have the emergency contact information should you need to contact your service member in the event of an emergency or important issue which needs addressed immediately. The number is 1-800-658-3930.

We are also calling to test our unit's Family Readiness Group Phone Tree to ensure we have each Family's proper contact information and that our phone tree structure will function properly.

Do you have any questions?

Hello, this is _____ with the _____
 (state your name) (state your unit designation)

Family Readiness Group. Today we are calling to introduce ourselves and to test the FRG telephone tree to ensure it works and that your contact information is correct.

I have volunteered to be a caller for our phone tree and assigned to the portion of the tree your Family is on. I will normally be the person contacting you when our phone tree is activated.

Do you have any questions?

Phone Tree Key Caller Problem Resolution Form (Optional)

Name of person called:

Date of Contact : Time Contact Phone (Hm) (Wk)

Service Member Information – Name / Rank:

Nature of Emergency (include who, what, when, where, etc.):

What help do you need?

Referred To:

Follow-up required?

Phone Tree Key Caller Signature:

Date:

Family Readiness Treasurer Handbook

The treasurer and alternate treasurer are appointed by the commander and approved by the FRG. These positions are filled by volunteers and may not be a military member. The handbook contains information, guidance and forms that offer the best support possible for treasurers to successfully accomplish the tasks of the FRG treasurer and to ensure FRG funds are managed responsibly. This handbook will also serve as a guide to assist commanders as well. All forms and fundraising information are contained in the handbook.

Go to the SDNG website for the current Treasurer Handbook.

Follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>
2. Click on the Family Readiness Program link
3. Click on Family Readiness Groups
4. Click on FRG Treasurer Information

FAMILY READINESS GROUPS INFORMAL FUNDS OVERVIEW

As of: October 2009

The **mission** of the Family Readiness Group is to support, train and prepare families for mobilization and assist them with deployments. **FRGs are not established for the purpose of being a fundraising organization**, however Commanders may authorize Family Readiness Group members to establish an informal fund. The Commander appoints a FRG Treasurer and alternate treasurer to maintain the FRG account, but the ultimate responsibility for the account remains with the Commander.

The following conditions must be met in order to establish a FRG informal fund account. (In Accordance with Army Regulation 600-20, Paragraph 4-21, Air, Army and National Guard Bureau Funding Guidance, the State Family Readiness Office, and the SDNG Family Readiness Treasurer's Handbook):

a. **Account is limited to the annual income cap of \$10,000.** The FRG informal fund account may not exceed \$10,000 income annually, nor shall it exceed \$10,000 balance at any time. FRGs may not accept donations or fundraise until the informal fund balance drops below \$10,000. (Should the account exceed \$10,000, the Group could be considered a Private Organization such as the Red Cross and become subject to the same IRS regulatory requirements or tax liabilities.)

b. Ensure the **account's use is limited to expenses consistent with the purpose and function of the fund** (Ensure that funds are utilized for the purpose they are raised, for example, newsletters, homecomings, Christmas Party, volunteer recognition, etc. Further ensure that the funds are managed upholding military ethics and ideals.)

c. Commanders **complete a memorandum designating the treasurer and alternate treasurer.** File the memorandum in the unit's Family Readiness binder and a copy at the State Family Readiness Office. The treasurer and/or alternate treasurer are responsible for maintaining simple accounting records and receipts which document transactions of FRG funds. Military personnel can not serve as treasurers or signatories on FRG accounts.

d. The treasurer and alternate treasurer **must sign Volunteer Agreement** (DD2793) and return to the State Family Program Office. This form states they are a statutory volunteer serving in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program.

e. **Employer Identification number** (Tax ID number): Prior to opening a FRG account, file IRS Form SS4 to receive an Employer Identification Number (EIN #) which is a tax ID number to avoid use of personal Social Security Number when opening the account. If SSN is used for reporting to the IRS, account may be perceived as personal income by the Internal Revenue Service.

f. **Open a non-interest bearing account** in a federally insured financial institution. When signing checks, a minimum of two volunteer signatures is required.

g. **Ensure payment of sales tax** for items purchased by the Family Readiness Group, as it is **not** a nonprofit organization and therefore is not in a tax-exempt status.

h. Family Readiness Groups are **not** NON profit organizations; they can not offer donors IRS tax advantages.

i. FRG informal funds **can not augment other unit informal funds** such as the unit's "cup and flower" funds. FRG informal funds can not be deposited or mixed with personal or unit funds.

j. FRG informal funds **can not be used to purchase items or services which may be paid for using military (appropriated) funds** or for items not related to family readiness such as service member farewell gifts. Funds can not be given to a military unit to purchase additional supplies, equipment or to fund additional training.

k. **FRG Informal Fund Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**. FRGs with an informal fund **must have** an organizing SOP that provides the following information: the FRG name, a description of the FRG's purpose and function of the fund, and it **must include the following statement**, "The FRG informal fund is for the benefit of its members only. It is not a business and is not being run to generate any profits. FRG expenditures will be in accordance with the wishes of the majority of FRG members and all fund raisers must have Command approval before proceeding. It is not an instrumentality of the United States Government." This SOP is included in the FRG Sanction (Item #6) or may be completed as a separate document. It must be signed by the treasurer and alternate treasurer. It is filed in the unit's Family Readiness Binder and a copy forwarded to the State Family Readiness Office.

l. FRGs (**statutory volunteers**) may only conduct internal fundraising with command approval amongst their own members, in compliance with Army Regulation 600-29, Fundraising within the Department of the Army, paragraph 1-5, and DOD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation. These activities are done internally on a military installation such as an armory where fund raising participants are limited to unit military members and their families (by us, for us). They may not conduct external fundraising per National Guard Bureau and Department of the Army Guidance. (Note: Statutory volunteers are volunteers who have signed a volunteer agreement and serve in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program.)

m. Always ask the following **questions prior to fundraising**:

- Why do we need to raise the money?
- Will it benefit the entire FRG membership?
- Does it duplicate other resources within the community?
- Can we get it somewhere else?
- Is it an authorized fund raiser according to funding guidance?
- Has the commander approved it?

n. Most members of the FRG (**gratuitous volunteers**) can choose to belong to private organizations. As such they may wish to engage in fund raising. If they do however, they are considered private organizations separate from the unit and FRG. Unlike FRG statutory volunteers, they can raise as much money as they want, and carry any balance in their private account (which is completely separate from the FRG). Fundraising by gratuitous volunteers in their private capacity must be accomplished without implying endorsement by the National Guard or the FRG. For example, they should refer to themselves as "Friends of 802nd Combat Support", rather than the 802nd Family Readiness Group. (Note: Gratuitous volunteers are volunteers who have not signed a volunteer agreement and do not wish to serve in an official capacity within the FRG, but rather help the FRG sometimes to support meetings, events and activities.)

o. FRG **expenditures must benefit the entire FRG membership** in some way.

p. Unit Commanders **may accept**/approve UNSOLICITED donations in

conjunction with the State Family Programs Director to the FRG informal fund of \$1000 or less **per donation** from private organizations or individual donors. Donations count as FRG income and count against the FRG \$10,000 annual income cap. All donations must be “unconditional” as acknowledged by the SD Family Readiness Form 600-29 found in the appendix of the SDNG Treasurer’s handbook or available upon request from the State Family Readiness Office.

This form is completed prior to donation acceptance. The form will be maintained by the treasurer in the Unit Family Readiness Binder (Tab 4) with a copy furnished to the State Family Readiness Office. The FRG itself is NOT to solicit or give donations or gifts.

q. Provide a copy of the **Treasurer Report** to the commander and the State Family Program Office to keep them informed of the current status of the FRG account and to provide historical documentation for FRG account activity that can be presented for review. Original copies of all reports are filed in the Unit’s Family Readiness Binder and copies are also maintained at the State Family Program Office for 5 years.

Send reports to: South Dakota National Guard Family Program Office
2823 West Main Street, Bldg 509
Rapid City, SD 57702

The report includes 3 items which are:

1. Treasurer Report Memorandum
2. Copy of all Bank Statements since the last report
3. A copy of the Checkbook Register showing all transactions since the last report.

Reports are required from units that have no checking account or no funds in their checking account as well.

- r. This **report is due:** Deployed units: Quarterly (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec)
Non-deployed units: Annually (September 30)

s. Remember the FRG’s purpose and always evaluate whether there is a need to engage in fundraising activities. Additionally, remember all fundraising must be pre-approved by the unit commander. There are numerous resources available without fundraising. Contact the State Family Readiness Office at familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil or 1-800-658-3930 to explore your options and answer your questions.

Family Readiness Group Informal Fund (Checklist)

- √ Authorized by Commander
- √ Cannot exceed \$10,000 income per calendar year
- √ Must have a valid EIN Number (IRS tax ID number)
- √ Non-interest bearing account
- √ 2 signers; a treasurer and alternate treasurer (non military)
- √ Must have a FRG Informal Fund SOP
- √ Leadership (Controlled by statutory Volunteer(s))
- √ Limited to fundraising on the installation/armory (“by us – for us”)
- √ Subject to audit by the Commander and the State Family Readiness Office

(ENTER UNIT NAME)
FAMILY READINESS INFORMAL FUND
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

“The (Enter Unit Designation) FRG’s informal fund’s purpose and function are to provide support, recognition, education and information to help prepare families for mobilization and their continued participation in the National Guard.”

“The FRG informal fund is for the benefit of its members only and is established exclusively for charitable purposes to provide support to service and family members as they live the military life.

It is not a business and is not being run to generate any profits. FRG expenditures will be in accordance with the wishes of the majority of FRG members and all fund raisers must have Command approval before proceeding.

Additionally it is not an instrumentality of the United States Government.”

 Family Readiness Group Leader / Date

 Commander Signature / Date

 Family Readiness Group Treasurer / Date

 FRG Alternate Treasurer / Date

DISTRIBUTION:

- Unit Family Readiness Program File (Unit Commander’s Purple Binder)
- State Family Readiness Office
- Unit Family Readiness Representative
- Unit’s Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer

File in Tab 4 of unit’s Family Readiness Binder

Volunteer Categories.

a. **Statutory volunteers** are those volunteers who serve in an official capacity and seek credit for their volunteer hours in direct support of the National Guard Family Program. Statutory volunteers must have a job description outlining the qualifications for the volunteer position, the role and responsibilities, a supervisor, must receive required training and the estimated number of hours required per month.

(1) These positions, at a minimum, include the Family Readiness Group (FRG) Lead Volunteer, Secretary, Treasurer, State Family Program Advisory Council Members and Child and Youth Coordinator.

(2) Can be reimbursed for incidental expenses in accordance with National Guard Bureau Family Program Funding Guidance.

(3) May be placed on an Invitational Travel Orders when they are acting in a capacity that is related directly to, or in conjunction with, their position description.

(4) Are considered to be employees of the government only when acting within the scope of the services accepted. As such they can be entitled to damages or losses for loss of property, personal injury, or death.

b. **Gratuitous volunteers** are volunteers who offer to help support meetings, events, and activities without expectation of compensation and who do not wish to serve in an official capacity. Gratuitous volunteers are not covered by Title 10 United States Code, subsection 1588 and are not afforded the benefits of statutory volunteers. Gratuitous volunteers do not require a formal job description. Some examples of gratuitous volunteers are:

(1) A person who volunteers to set up, tear down, or clean a room in support of a Family Program function or event.

(2) A person who helps with a welcome home ceremony.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENTS

It is important to ensure volunteers have signed the volunteer agreement (DD2793) which then recognizes them as statutory volunteers serving in an official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Readiness Program. They sign in blocks 9a and 11a and then forward the form to the State Family Programs Office for the Director's signature.

The agreement also needs to be signed by the State Family Readiness Director and on file in the State Family Readiness office with a copy maintained at the unit.

It states that they donate their time and services to FRG projects and activities. It ensures that with regard to incidents which might occur during the performance of approved volunteer services that they would be covered under tort claims and workman's compensation for purposes of reimbursement under title 10, US Code 1588.

Additionally, signing the agreement places volunteers on the state Family Readiness Office mailing list, ensuring they receive current family readiness information.

The form is available online at <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then click on family readiness, then family readiness groups.

Example of Volunteer Agreement – DD2793

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT FOR			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROPRIATED FUND ACTIVITIES		<input type="checkbox"/> NONAPPROPRIATED FUND INSTRUMENTALITIES	
PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION			
1. TYPED NAME OF VOLUNTEER <i>(Last, First, Middle Initial)</i>		2. YEAR OF BIRTH	
3. INSTALLATION ARMORY		4. ORGANIZATION/UNIT WHERE SERVICE OCCURS	
5. PROGRAM WHERE SERVICE OCCURS FAMILY PROGRAMS		6. ANTICIPATED DAYS OF WEEK	7. ANTICIPATED HOURS
8. DESCRIPTION OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES Key Caller for Unit's Family Readiness Group Telephone Tree			
PART II - VOLUNTEER IN APPROPRIATED FUND ACTIVITIES			
9. CERTIFICATION I expressly agree that my services are being provided as a volunteer and that I will not be an employee of the United States Government or any instrumentality thereof, except for certain purposes relating to compensation for injuries occurring during the performance of approved volunteer services, tort claims, the Privacy Act, criminal conflicts of interest, and defense of certain suits arising out of legal malpractice. I expressly agree that I am neither entitled to nor expect any present or future salary, wages, or other benefits for these voluntary services. I agree to be bound by the laws and regulations applicable to voluntary service providers and agree to participate in any training required by the installation or unit in order for me to perform the voluntary services that I am offering. I agree to follow all rules and procedures of the installation or unit that apply to the voluntary services I will be providing.			
a. SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER		b. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)	
10.a. TYPED NAME OF ACCEPTING OFFICIAL <i>(Last, First, Middle Initial)</i> State Family Program Director	b. SIGNATURE	c. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)	
PART III - VOLUNTEER IN NONAPPROPRIATED FUND INSTRUMENTALITIES			
11. CERTIFICATION I expressly agree that my services are being provided as a volunteer and that I will not be an employee of the United States Government or any instrumentality thereof, except for certain purposes relating to compensation for injuries occurring during the performance of approved volunteer services and liability for tort claims as specified in 10 U.S.C. Section 1588(d)(2). I expressly agree that I am neither entitled to nor expect any present or future salary, wages, or other benefits for these voluntary services. I agree to be bound by the laws and regulations applicable to voluntary service providers, and agree to participate in any training required by the installation or unit in order for me to perform the voluntary services that I am offering. I agree to follow all rules and procedures of the installation or unit that apply to the voluntary services that I am offering.			
a. SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER		b. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)	
12.a. TYPED NAME OF ACCEPTING OFFICIAL <i>(Last, First, Middle Initial)</i> State Family Program Director	b. SIGNATURE	c. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)	
PART IV - TO BE COMPLETED AT END OF VOLUNTEER'S SERVICE BY VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR			
13. AMOUNT OF VOLUNTEER TIME DONATED		14. SIGNATURE	15. TERMINATION DATE (YYYYMMDD)
a. YEARS <i>(2,087 hours=1 year)</i>	b. WEEKS		
16.a. TYPED NAME OF SUPERVISOR <i>(Last, First, Middle Initial)</i>		b. SIGNATURE	c. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)

SPONSORSHIP

When new service members join the unit, by regulation, they are formally sponsored by another member of the unit—someone who helps the new service member get to the first drill, meet other service members, educates about benefits, and the unit’s mission, etc. But the family is often overlooked. Members of the unit and the Family Readiness Group can help sponsor new families. This is very similar to the Welcome Wagon program you may be familiar with in your civilian community. Your sponsorship program need not be elaborate. It may be a phone call, letter, or visit. Through whatever means, express a warm welcome. This is a simple way to involve new families and encourage their participation. It is also an excellent way to recruit new volunteers for the Family Readiness Group and increase retention and ensure mobilizations and other periods of separation go more smoothly.

**EXAMPLE WELCOME LETTER FROM COMMANDER
TO NEW FAMILIES**

(unit letterhead)
(date)

Name of family member
Street address
City, state, zip code

Dear (enter name of family member):

Your (spouse/son/daughter/significant other) who recently joined the South Dakota National Guard is a member of my command. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you into the South Dakota National Guard family and to provide you with information about the unit.

(Customize this paragraph to explain the unit's mission and history).

Your (spouse/son/daughter/significant other's) military career provides many opportunities for individual growth and advancement as well as several challenges. These challenges of military life can prove trying for both the service member and the family. In order to help you understand the military, our unit has a Family Program which provides the opportunity for you to meet other military families, learn about military benefits, provides assistance as needed and keeps you informed about the unit.

Families are very important to this unit. Your support and encouragement are critical to the success of the unit's mission and your service member's career in the military. Perhaps you would like to volunteer with the unit's Program, learning and working with other families within the unit to educate and inform the unit's families.

The lead volunteer for the unit's Family Readiness Group (FRG) is (enter name and phone number). I have also appointed , (enter name and phone number) as my military Family Program Representative. Also, do not hesitate to contact myself at the unit either by phone or email (enter # and email address). Once again welcome to the (enter the unit's name). You and your family are extremely important to us.

Sincerely,

(Commander's Signature Block)

**EXAMPLE WELCOME LETTER FROM THE FAMILY READINESS GROUP
TO NEW FAMILIES**

(unit letterhead)
(date)

Name of family member
Street address
City, state, zip code

Dear (enter name of family member):

Your (spouse/son/daughter/significant other), (enter name) recently joined the South Dakota National Guard. On behalf of the (enter unit's designation) Family Readiness Group (FRG), I would like to personally welcome you to the unit. In order to help you understand the military, our unit has a Family Program which provides the opportunity for you to meet other military families, learn about military benefits, provides assistance as needed and keeps you informed about the unit.

I would also like to invite you to participate in unit events and activities so that you can meet other families and the unit personnel. This will also give you an opportunity to learn about what your service member does in the unit. Additionally, I would like to invite you (if you would like) to volunteer with the unit's Program, learning and working with other families within the unit to educate and inform all of the unit's families.

Your service member has indicated you as their primary point of contact for the Family Readiness Group, therefore you will be placed on the FRG calling and mailing list ensuring that you are kept informed about benefits and any unit activities and exercises.

The lead volunteer for the unit's Family Readiness Group (FRG) is (enter name and phone number). My name is (enter your name), I am serving as the FRG Sponsorship Committee Chairman. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to call or email me (enter # and email address). Once again welcome to the (enter the unit's name) Family Readiness Group, I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

(Enter Name)
(Sponsorship Committee Chairperson)

Sources of Support and Assistance

1. Family Readiness Group (FRG). The FRG is organized to educate, inform and provide support for a unit's family members. It is affiliated with a specific military unit. The Lead Volunteer is appointed by the unit commander and the Group is the primary source of information for families. The Group is operational at all times but may be more active during periods such as annual training, overseas training and deployments. Some of the functions include but are not limited to: readiness group meetings, publishing newsletters, development of a telephone tree, information on community resources, coordinating family activities with the commander, etc. The overall success of the FRG depends on the involvement of family member volunteers. The FRG also serves as an important source of inspiration and support helping to increase Guard families' self-reliance and well-being.

2. Family Assistance (FA). The purpose of Family Assistance is to furnish: information, assistance, guidance, and to make referrals for families of service members in the event of mobilization, deployment, reunions, non deployment or at times in response to a major disaster. The six essential services the FAC provides are: ID cards and enrollment in DEERS (Defense Eligibility Enrollment System), Tri-care, Financial, Legal, Information and Referral, and Crisis Intervention and Referral.

The Rapid City Center may be reached by calling 1-800-658-3930 or 605-737-6079 or visiting Building 509 on Camp Rapid. The Brookings Center can be reached by calling 1-866-597-0017 or 605-696-5416. After normal business hours, callers will be given a number to call in the event of an emergency. During mobilization, families may also contact the Rear Detachment Personnel supporting their unit and they will forward the issue to the Family Assistance Coordinator for action. The FA Coordinator or staff member will follow up with the family and rear detachment personnel.

3. State Family Readiness Director. Has oversight responsibility for all family readiness activities within the state. Primary functions include funding, training and family emergencies. Items for which funding support can be provided include: per diem for training, support materials such as stamps, envelopes and telephone tree calling cards. Items not covered are funding for refreshments at FRG meetings or ceremonies and child care. Child care can be covered if family members are in an official training status. Responsible agency for Basic, Advanced, Lead Volunteer Training, Youth Camp and the State workshop. After Red Cross, additional point of contact for emergencies.

4. Department of Defense Yellow Ribbon Program. The overall goal of the Yellow Ribbon Program is to assist in preparation of Soldiers and families for mobilization, sustain families during mobilization and reintegrate Soldiers with their families, communities, and employers after returning home from their deployment. By coordinating Deployment Cycle Support events, the Yellow Ribbon Programs provides information on current benefits and resources available to help overcome the challenges of deployment and reintegration.

5. Youth Program. The Youth Program is designed to support the social, emotional and academic needs of the South Dakota youth before, during and after deployments. This is done through a variety of programs and activities used to teach them about leadership and character and to build their confidence. The Youth Program also gives them a chance to network with other military youth across the state. Through these different events and programs the youth build a sense of pride & patriotism while gaining a better understanding about the National Guard and themselves.

6. Trauma Crisis Intervention. The Trauma Crisis Intervention NCO is here to actively support South Dakota National Guard Service members and their families with Crisis Intervention Education and referral and to vigorously support the families of Soldiers and Airmen who are deployed in service to their country or state and are in need due to tragic circumstances.

7. Unit Commanders. Family Readiness Programs are a command responsibility. The commander is responsible for appointing a Lead Volunteer, a military (unit) representative and during mobilization Rear Detachment Personnel. They coordinate with the Lead Volunteer as needed to plan unit family functions such as Family Days, Christmas parties, Annual Training and deployment support. During periods of alert notification, it is critical that coordination be made with the Lead Volunteer regarding all issues relating to families. Some of those issues may be: briefings for families, child care, refreshments, ceremonies, and drill letter information. Responsible for completion of Family Care Plans.

8. Rear Detachment Personnel. During mobilization, commanders will appoint Rear Detachment Personnel. The Rear Detachment Personnel will remain at the unit; reserve component personnel will return in Title 10 status to their home station from the mobilization station. They will help to oversee administrative operations of their unit and maintain unit and installation property. Rear Detachment Personnel assure continuity of operations so that the unit can accomplish its mission. Provides assistance and support to the unit Family Readiness Group. They will forward family issues to Family Assistance.

Resources Available

State Family Readiness Office:

- Non appropriated Funds / Appropriated Funds
- Paper, Envelopes, Stamps
- Educational/Motivational Booklets, Coloring Books
- Advice, Support, Knowledge of Program and Military System

Nonappropriated Funds:

- Funds are for reimbursement only for volunteers, and cannot be paid in advance.
- Volunteers request funding approval from the State Family Readiness Office PRIOR to spending their own money.
- Payment is made to volunteers only, it cannot be made to military members.
- Food - Can not cover

Family Readiness Office Oversight responsibility for:

- Emergencies
- Family Assistance
- Funding
- Training for Volunteers
- Training Exercises at unit (SRP)
- Briefings for families and service members
- Reviews Family Care Plans

Unit Commanders are responsible for:

- Unit families
- Appointment of Lead Volunteer & Military Unit Family Readiness Representative
- Family Readiness Plan (sanction), Memorandum of Approval and Telephone Tree completion
- Provide resources such as space in armory, postage, copying, paper, use of computer if feasible to Family Readiness Groups
- Accomplishment of Family Care Plans

Lead Volunteer Oversight responsibility for:

- Family Readiness Plan (Sanction) Completion
- Telephone Tree Completion
- Guiding the Group to meet their goals
- Unit families' needs and concerns are met

These forms are for use by FRG volunteers for reimbursement when spending their own money. The Family Readiness Program cannot reimburse military members.

For a copy of the actual form go to <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil> and click on the Family Program link, then FRGs, then forms

FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM FORMS LIST

SDNG Form 27-5 RE	YOUTH VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT
SDNG FORM 360-1R	SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD LIABILITY RELEASE
SDNG FORM 360-2R	SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD PARENTAL CONSENT FORM
DD 2793	ADULT VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT
SDNG FORM 600-12-2R	REQUEST FOR INVITATIONAL TRAVEL ORDERS
SDNG FORM 600-12-3R	FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER MESSAGE FORM
SDNG FORM 600-12-4R	REIMBURSEMENT FOR: CHILD CARE COST FOR VOLUNTEERS IN SUPPORT OF FAMILY PROGRAMS
SDNG FORM 600-12-5R	FAMILY PROGRAM BABY-SITTING REGISTER
SDNG FORM 600-12-6R	REIMBURSEMENT FOR: NEWSLETTERS, PRINTING AND MAILING COST FOR VOLUNTEERS IN SUPPORT OF FAMILY PROGRAMS
SDNG FORM 600-12-8R	REIMBURSEMENT FOR: TELEPHONE COST FOR VOLUNTEERS IN SUPPORT OF FAMILY PROGRAMS
SDNG FORM 600-12-9R	REIMBURSEMENT FOR: INCIDENTAL EXPENITURES FOR VOLUNTEERS, IN SUPPORT OF FAMILY PROGRAM

SDNG FORM 600-12-10R	REQUEST FOR WELLNESS EVENT
SDNG FORM 600-12-11	SERVICE MEMBER'S FAMILY MEMBER INFORMATION FORM
SDNG FORM 600-12-12R	FAMILY PROGRAM VOLUNTEER TIME/RECORD FORM
SDNG FORM 600-12-13R	FAMILY PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL NOMINATION FORM
SDNG FORM 600-20R	SPECIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY OVER DEPENDENTS
SDNG FORM 600-20-1R	SPECIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY OVER DEPENDENTS (TWO MILITARY PARENT FAMILY)
SDNG FORM 600-21R	CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY
SDNG FORM 600-29	DONATION ACCEPTANCE FORM FOR FRGs

SDNG EMERGENCY PROCESSING

The following information is for emergency processing from home. The Red Cross is a tool to notify your Service Member of emergencies, life threatening illnesses or injuries, surgeries, a death in the family, etc. Red Cross can also be used to notify your Service Member of happy events, such as the birth of a child.

You are *HIGHLY encouraged to contact your Family Assistance Staff* so we may aid you to complete the critical step of notifying the American Red Cross. This procedure will ensure emergency information is delivered in a timely fashion and to the appropriate Command. Please understand that emergency leave notifications do not guarantee that your Service Member will return home. It is HIGHLY recommended that you not inform your Service Member of emergency information over the phone or by email.

The Red Cross will verify and validate the information provided (i.e. through contact with a physician, funeral home, etc.) and will then contact your Service Members' Chain of Command. The Chain of Command will notify the Service Member and determine if he/she can return home on emergency leave. This notification procedure helps the Chain of Command establish proper support networks for your impacted Service Member as well.

The Service Member will NOT be notified until the emergency is independently confirmed. Your Family Assistance Center remains prepared to provide your family both assistance and support during such events. Per confidentiality laws, the Red Cross needs your permission to release information in order to collaborate with the Family Assistance Center. Following these simple procedures provides you and your Service Member the most complete assistance in such emergencies.

South Dakota Family Assistance

1-800-658-3930

Emergency Information to Have on Hand and Share with your Family

- **Soldier's Name/Rank:**
- **Social Security Number:**
- **Date of Birth:**
- **Unit Name/Current Address:**
- **Validation Source/Contact Information. Provide them permission to speak with the Red Cross.**

- **Call the Family Assistance Center 1-800-658-3930**

South Dakota American Red Cross Service to
Armed Forces Units

Black Hills Chapter
605-342-4010 or 1-800-951-5600

Bennett	Lawrence
Butte	Meade
Corson	Mellette
Custer	Pennington
Dewey	Perkins
Fall River	Shannon
Haakon	Todd
Harding	Tripp
Jackson	Ziebach
Jones	

**All other South Dakota
Communities and Counties should
contact:**

1-877-868-3254

SOUTH DAKOTA FAMILY READINESS NEWSLETTER GUIDELINES

1. Providing your newsletter contains 70% of family readiness group information, the State Family Program Office can provide the following supplies for your newsletter. To request, please call or email the Family Program Office, 1-800-658-3930.
 - a. Paper – various colors
 - b. Envelopes
 - c. Postage (stamps)
 - d. Can cover printing costs – Submit expenses on SDNG 600-12-6R (Reimburse for newsletter expenses) include receipts and copy of newsletter

2. In order to utilize Appropriated Funds (from your unit) the Newsletter must contain Official information and be approved by the Commander (80% official 20% unofficial)

Official – relates to command and mission essential information, educate about benefits, programs & services

Unofficial – relates to unit families, births, deaths, etc.

Official FRG Newsletters (paid with appropriated funds) May contain:
--

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notices from FRG and Commander • Information on special events such as meetings • Unit history, training schedule, chain of command • Birth announcements, birthdays, marriages, new soldiers • Government websites • Must be approved and signed by the Commander |
|---|

Cannot Contain:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising for private or commercial business • Financial reports or \$ amounts (e.g. FRG fund reports) • Political notices • Casualty or injury report • Professional sports scores |
|---|

3. To utilize Family Readiness Group Funds information must comply with Army standards.

- Not restricted in content (can have ads, financial reports, etc)
- Produced and paid for with FRG funds
- Reviewed and approved by the Commander

However, information is always in good taste, no mission-critical information, and it must be sensitive to safety and security

4. The following is considered Family Readiness Group information:
 - a. Military Benefits
 - (1). TriCare
 - (2). Dental

 - b. Lead Volunteer Family Readiness Group Contacts
 - (1). Names, phone numbers, email addresses

 - c. Family Program Workshops
 - (1). State
 - (2). National

 - d. Youth Camp Information

 - e. Family Program Training Dates
 - (1). Basic, Advanced, and Lead Volunteer

 - f. Family Readiness/Support Group – Other Information
 - (1). Unit, Battery, Squadron Information
 - (2). Births, Weddings, Promotions, Awards, etc
 - (3). Drill Dates
 - (4). Kids Page
 - (5). Annual Training Review
 - (6). Deployed Units Newsletter Information from Commander

FRG Meetings

The purpose of FRG meetings is to provide a place for families that are going through the same thing to gather, provide training, up-to-date information, activities for children/youth, and emotional support.

Example of FRG Meeting Agenda

- Welcome / Introductions
- Old Business / updates, changes
- New Business
- Questions / Answers
- Social
- Kids
- Possible activities

Use the “**NEATER**” Method – a formula for success to aid you in planning your meeting.

- N** Nature of the meeting
- E** Expectations
- A** Agenda
- T** Time (backwards planning)
- ER** Extra Resources

Some tips for meeting success:

- Smile - Relax
- Speak clearly
- Stay on schedule
- Maintain control
- Use brainstorming
- Record votes
- Encourage participation - delegate
- Evaluations
- Thank yous
- Provide accurate, timely information
- Build in social time
- If you don't know the answer, find out
- Arrange for childcare (if needed)

Things to Consider when Doing a Presentation or Briefing

- What is my purpose (topic)?
 - Who is my audience?
 - What is there level of knowledge about topic?
 - How much time do I have?
 - What do I want to happen when I am done?
 - What resources do I need?
 - Check equipment before presentation.
 - **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**
 - **END ON TIME**
-
- **Visual Aids help to:**
 - Organize thoughts
 - Increase understanding
 - Save time (picture is worth 1000 words)
 - Arouse interest, reinforce, emphasize
 - Simplify complex ideas

The following regulations / military publications – Forces Command (**FORSCOM**) **500-3-3**, **task 2-I-21**; **Army Regulation** (AR) **600-20**, **paragraph 5-10**; **Army Regulation 608-1**, **Appendix J** and **Operation Ready** require that a Family Readiness Group must be established within units.

FAMILY READINESS REQUIREMENTS

The following are required items and will be checked during unit inspections to help determine if the unit has a viable family readiness program:

Item	Who is Responsible for Completing
<u>Critical Task</u> Family Readiness Plan (Sanction) (Requirements included in Plan) 1. Statement of Approval for FRG 2. Appointment of Lead Volunteer 3. FRG informal funds Standard Operating Procedure	Commander and Lead Volunteer
Appointment of Unit Family Program Representative - <u>Critical Task</u>	Unit / Commander
Appointment of Volunteer Treasurer & Alternate Treasurer	Unit / Commander
Telephone Tree - <u>Critical Task</u>	Lead Volunteer / FRG
Pre-Mobilization Briefings Annually	Unit / Commander
File of Family Readiness Activities & Help maintain Cmdr’s Purple Binder	Lead Volunteer / FRG
Family Care Plans	Unit / Commander

Unit Inspection Checklist

**Units undergo inspections annually to ensure they have a viable Family Program.
This checklist is also available on the SD National Guard intranet.**

TRAINING AND EVALUATION OUTLINE		FUNCTIONAL AREA	FORM REVISION DATE	REVIEW DATE	
J1 OIP Checklist		Family Support	24-Oct-10		
PROPONENT		TELEPHONE	UNIT EVALUATED		DATE
J1, SD JFHQ, DCSPER		737-6710/6711			
Inspector:		POINTS		*Requires a "GO" on critical items.	
Unit Representative:		Value	Earned	REMARKS	
Standards: (Family Readiness Group) (Items 1-9 are for all units regardless of level of command. Items 10, 11, and 12 are for MACOMs only).					
1. The unit has established a Family Readiness Group (FRG) as evidenced by a completed Sanction (current and on file in unit Commander's Purple Book and State Family Readiness Office (SFRO)).		30		CRITICAL TASK	
2. Commander has appointed a non-military FRG Lead Volunteer on memorandum (current and on file in unit Commander's Purple Book & SFRO).		30		CRITICAL TASK	
3 Lead Volunteer has attended training for their position in the FRG?		20			
4. Unit FRG maintains a written family telephone tree containing <u>family</u> POC & telephone numbers & <u>family</u> email addresses (current & on file in unit Commander's Purple Book & SFRO)?		20		CRITICAL TASK	
5. The Unit Family Readiness Group has tested the written telephone tree (note last date tested).		10			
6. Has the Commander documented Family Day Activities or training?		10			
7. There is a Family Sponsorship Program in place that includes inviting families of new accessions to a FRG meeting or event (can be component of service member sponsorship program).		10			
8. Is there documentation that families have been contacted?		10			
9. The Commander and FRG Lead Volunteer have completed a yearly FRG Meeting Schedule and Agenda utilizing the ARFORGEN based template as provided from the State Family Program Family Readiness Assistant. The meeting schedule includes activities for spouses, family of single service members, and youth utilizing Military Family Life Consultant Library of Presentations.		40		CRITICAL TASK	
10. The MACOM insures 80% of all Detachment, Company, or Battery subunits have a Sanctioned Family Readiness Group as evidenced by their own OIP checklist. This data agrees with records maintained by the Family Readiness Section.		30		CRITICAL TASK	
11. The MACOM has a written plan for all remaining units to attain a Sanctioned FRG in a timely manner. The MACOM provides followup to ensure success of the plan utilizing OIP followup or another similar tool.		20			
12. The MACOM Commander has signed a roster detailing which subunit Lead Volunteers have attended training for their respective positions and comments showing when those without training expect to be able to attend. The roster also details which units have an established FRG telephone tree and date of last testing. The roster also lists which units have a Family Sponsorship Program in place. The roster also details the four points below from the FRG Checking Account Standard. The roster also details the 7 points listed below from the Unit Family Readiness Operations Standards. These items may be shown in the MACOM OIP checklist as an acceptable substitute.		30			
(Note:260 pts possible for Bn/higher -180 pts possible for Co/Det) TOTAL:		260 or 180	0		
Standards: (Family Readiness Group Checking Account) OPTIONAL (Items 1-5 apply to all units regardless of level of command)					
(The FRG Checking Account is optional for the unit. However, if an account exists, then these standards must be observed) Unit must have all GOs in this areas to have a viable checking account.					
1. If Checking Account exists, the FRG Treasurer and alternate treasurer <u>have</u> been appointed on a memorandum.		GO or NO GO			

2. Checking Acct is identified at the financial institution by an Employer Identification Number instead of personal SSN.	GO or NO GO		
3. Two signatures are required on Checking Account & when signing all checks.	GO or NO GO		
4. Has the treasurer's report been filed with the Commander and the SFRO? Annually by 30Sep unless deployed than quarterly.	GO or NO GO		
5. Balance of account as prescribed by regulation/guidance of \$10,000	GO or NO GO		All measurements must be GO

Standards: (Unit Family Readiness Operations) (Items 1-6 apply to all units regardless of level of command)

1. Commander has appointed a <u>military</u> Unit Family Readiness Representative on memorandum (current & on file in unit Commander's Purple Book and SFRO)	30		CRITICAL TASK
2. Unit Family Readiness Representative has attended training for their position in the FRG?	20		
3. Has the Commander conducted and documented the required Annual Pre-Mobilization Briefing to families? (trng.schedules/sign-in rosters)	20		
4. Has the Commander documented Youth activities or training?	10		
5. The unit has posted location and telephone contact numbers for the supporting Family Assistance Centers and the unit Family Readiness Group's Lead Volunteer. (unit bulletin board)	10		
6. Has the Commander completed the necessary Family Care Plans?	10		
TOTAL:	100	0	

OVERALL FRG SECTION & UNIT FR OPERATIONS SECTION TOTAL:	360	0	Divide earned score by overall score
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INSPECTED AREA	POINTS				RATING (circle one):	
	POSSIBLE	AWARDED	% of Score	Area Rating		
Family Readiness Group	260	0	0%		T	Commendable (85-100% of possible points)
Family Readiness Group Checking Account	Go/No Go		N/A			
Unit Family Readiness Operations	100	0	0%			
					P	Practice (70% to 84% of possible points)
					U	Untrained (less than 70% of possible points)
					TOTAL SCORE ACHIEVED	
					0%	

Note: Regardless of the total point value assigned to any sub area of inspection, failure of a CRITICAL TASK shall result in that particular sub area being rated a "U". Any CRITICAL TASK receiving less than 70% of its respective points shall be considered failure.

Position Appointments

- 1. Completed by the unit, however those volunteers in key positions can assist the unit by helping to ensure the completion of position appointments.**
- 2. Position appointments are an inspectible item and reviewed during unit inspections. Appointment of the FRG Lead Volunteer and Unit Representative are considered critical tasks.**
- 3. Once complete, file in the Unit Commander's Family Readiness (Purple) Binder and forward a copy to the State Family Readiness Office.**

Appointments are as follows:

1. Unit Family Readiness Representative

- Act as the commander's representative, liaison between the Family Readiness Volunteers and the Unit Commander.

2. Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer

- Provide guidance and support for commanders and Family Readiness volunteers to help sustain the unit's Family Readiness Program.

3. Family Readiness Group Treasurer / Alternate Treasurer

- Develop and maintain simple recording procedures for funds generated by the Unit Family Readiness Group.
- Only needed if FRG has checking account

The following position appointment memorandums once completed should be filed in the Unit Commander's (Purple) Binder and copies sent to the State Family Program Office.

- USE YOUR UNIT'S LETTERHEAD -

Example Memorandum of Appointment for Lead Volunteer

SDXX-XXX

(DATE)

MEMORANDUM FOR (Enter Lead Volunteer's Name) .

SUBJECT: Appointment of (Enter Unit Designation), Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer

1. This is to confirm your appointment as Lead Volunteer for (Enter Unit Designation), SDNG Family Readiness Group beginning (Enter Date).
2. Your activities as Lead Volunteer will be in compliance with Operation Ready and the Family Readiness Handbook which will be provided to you by the State Family Readiness Director or can be found online on the website <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>, then the Family Readiness link.
3. Your point of contact is (Enter Unit Family Readiness Representative and or Commander's Name and Phone Numbers).

UNIT COMMANDER
Signature Block

DISTRIBUTION:

Unit Family Readiness Program File (Unit Commander's Purple Binder)
State Family Readiness Office
Unit Family Readiness Representative
Unit's Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer

- USE YOUR UNIT'S LETTERHEAD -

Example Memorandum of
Appointment for Unit Family Readiness Representative

SD-XXXXXXX

(DATE)

MEMORANDUM FOR Enter Unit Designation Family Readiness Group

SUBJECT: Appointment of Unit Family Readiness Representative

1. This is to appoint Enter Service Member's Name, who will serve as my Unit Family Readiness Representative to provide assistance to the Enter Unit Designation Family Readiness Group.
2. Enter Service Member's Name will serve as my liaison and act on my behalf in accordance with my guidance to provide assistance and support to the Enter Unit Designation Lead Volunteer and Family Readiness Group.

UNIT COMMANDER
Signature Block

DISTRIBUTION:

Unit Family Readiness Program File (Unit Commander's Purple Binder)
State Family Readiness Office
Unit Family Readiness Representative
Unit's Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer

- USE YOUR UNIT'S LETTERHEAD -

Example Appointment for Unit Family Readiness Group Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer

SD-XXXXXXXX

(DATE)

MEMORANDUM FOR (Enter Volunteers' Names for Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer)

SUBJECT: Appointment of (Enter Unit Designation) Family Readiness Group Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer

1. This is to confirm (Enter Volunteer's Name), is appointed as treasurer of the (Enter Unit Designation), SDNG Family Readiness Group, beginning (Enter Date).

2. Additionally, (Enter Volunteer's Name), is appointed as alternate treasurer of the SDNG (Enter Unit Designation), SDNG Family Readiness Group, beginning (Enter Date).

2. Your activities as treasurer must be in compliance with Army Regulation 600-20 paragraph 4-21 and the State Family Readiness Treasurer's Handbook, a copy of which is attached. Your point of contact is (Enter Unit Family Readiness Representative and or Commander's Name and Phone Numbers).

UNIT COMMANDER
Signature block

DISTRIBUTION:

- Unit Family Readiness Program File (Unit Commander's Purple Binder)
- State Family Readiness Office
- Unit Family Readiness Representative
- Unit's Family Readiness Group Lead Volunteer

General Information and Requirements for a Family Care Plan.

General. A Family Care Plan is a working plan by which soldiers provide for the care of their family members regarding financial, medical and legal matters when military duties prevent them from personally doing so. This plan will be implemented during any period of military duty such as: annual training, regularly scheduled unit training assemblies, mobilizations and deployments or other types of active duty. The plan will show that the guardian and escort agreed to provide care and have been briefed on their responsibilities and provided all necessary legal authority and the means to do so. Not having a viable Family Care Plan when required makes a service member a non-mobilization asset.

For obvious reasons, all married soldiers who have family members should consider completing a Family Care Plan even though not specifically required to do so by Army Regulation.

Command responsibility.

- a. Ensure service members are screened annually (utilizing FCP annual questionnaire) to determine who currently requires a plan.
- b. The Unit Commander is the sole approving authority for the prepared Family Care Plan (DA Form 5305-R). This responsibility will not be delegated. However, the commander may designate an authorized representative to conduct FCP counseling using DA Form 5304-R and to initial and sign the counseling form in the commander's behave.
- c. The Unit Commander must ensure all the required documents are in order and test the validity and durability of the Family Care Plan, to include contacting the designated guardian(s) prior to the approval or recertification of the Family Care Plan. All Family Care Plans are required to be recertified annually as a minimum by initialing and dating the DA Form 5305-R. This is done during the anniversary of the soldier's birth month, after any change of circumstance requiring a change in the FCP, upon command change, or whenever the soldier is mobilized, deployed or processed for pre-deployment. Commanders should ensure that all information is still current and all documents are still up-to-date and legally valid.

Commanders, regardless of a service member's grade, will conduct Family Care Plan Counseling and require a Family Care Plan when any of the following apply:

- a. A pregnant soldier who -
 - (1) Has no spouse; is divorced, widowed, or separated; or is residing without her spouse.
 - (2) Is married to another service member of an Active or Reserve component of any service (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines or Coast Guard).

b. A soldier who has no spouse; is divorced, widowed, or separated, or is residing apart from his or her spouse; who has joint or full legal and physical custody of one or more family members under the age of 19 or who has adult family member(s) incapable of self-care regardless of age.

c. A soldier who is divorced (not married) and who has liberal or extended visitation rights by court decree which would allow family members to be solely in the soldier's care in excess of 30 days.

d. A soldier categorized as half of a dual-military couple of any service that has joint or full legal custody of one or more family members under age 19 or who has adult family member(s) incapable of self-care regardless of age.

e. A soldier whose spouse is incapable of self-care or is otherwise physically, mentally or emotionally disabled so as to require special care or assistance.

f. The commander, based upon personal knowledge of the soldier, may require a Family Care Plan for the protection of his/her family member(s).

Required Documentation for a complete Family Care Plan.

The DA 5304-R FCP Counseling Checklist is used for counseling soldiers who require a FCP. It will be held in the unit suspense files pending completion of DA 5305-R and returned to the soldier when no longer needed for suspense action.

The completed FCP (per AR 600-20 guidance) will consist of as a minimum, the DA 5305-R and accompanying documentation: Power of Attorneys, Certificates of Acceptance, DD Form 1172, DD Form 2258 and letters of instruction.

The FCP will be completed and approved within 60 days from the date of the initial counseling for Reserve Component soldiers.

Following is a list of documents for the FCP:

- a. DA Form 5304-R FCP Counseling Checklist
- b. DA Form 5305-R Family Care Plan
- c. SDNG Form 600-20R – Special Power of Attorney Over Dependents
- d. SDNG Form 600-20-1R – Special Power of Attorney Over Dependents (Dual Svc)
- e. SDNG Form 600-20-1R – Certificate Of Acceptance of Responsibility
- f. DD Form 1172 – Application for ID card
- g. DD Form 2558 – Authorization to start, stop or change an allotment for Active Duty or other adequate financial information
- h. LOI – Letter of instruction for Sponsors and Escorts

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

If you are contacted by the media to provide information about you and/or your Guard member, the South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office (SDNG PAO) strongly encourages your participation and interaction. Your story and that of our Guard members is an amazing one of service and sacrifice that must be told. If you do not participate, someone else will tell it for you.

Before replying to the media representative, there are some things to consider as we all want to ensure the safety and privacy of your family, your Guard member and others. A great deal of information regarding your Guard member is releasable and considered public information. Very little information is withheld from the public unless it jeopardizes the safety of an individual or group, invades an individual's privacy or compromises the military mission assigned to our members.

The SDNG Public Affairs Office recommends the following topics be released and discussed during an interview. The most important thing to remember during an interview is that **EVERYTHING IS ON THE RECORD.**

1. The most important topics to discuss during an interview are YOUR feelings and experiences. It would be inappropriate to speculate or provide an opinion on what others may think or may have experienced. If you feel sad or angry about an issue it is perfectly acceptable to express these feelings as these are valid and real. However, keep in mind that **EVERYTHING IS ON THE RECORD.** Once you put information out there, you can not take it back.
2. Name, rank, and unit and hometown of YOUR military member is releasable. It would be inappropriate to provide this information of other military members. You can refer the media to the SDNG Public Affairs Office for information on others within the unit.
3. The general mission of YOUR military member and his or her unit is releasable. An example would be, "My husband is a squad leader in Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, and he and his unit are providing convoy security for various units and organizations in Iraq."
4. Current location of YOUR military member and his or her unit is releasable. An example would be, "My mom is currently at Fort Benning, Ga., for mobilization training and will be stationed at Forward Operating Base Duke when she arrives in Iraq."

The SDNG Public Affairs Office recommends the following topics NOT be released to the media.

1. The home address, phone number, or e-mail of any member or family member of our organization should not be released to anyone.
2. The overseas military mailing address of our Guard members should not be released to the media. Caution should be used when providing this information to friends and family.
3. Specific travel movement dates and times of our military members while overseas is not releasable to anyone. Generalities like “early January” or “early next month” are acceptable.
4. Any personal correspondence from your military member in the form of letters and e-mails should not be released to the media. Typically, personal correspondence is meant only for the recipients and should not be passed to a media representative.
5. Any information that could jeopardize the safety, privacy, or military mission of our members should not be released to anyone. If you have any questions, concerns or reservations about what is appropriate for release, please contact the SDNG Public Affairs Office.

The National Guard’s Public Affairs Office is on the job providing information to the media concerning deployments. Should you have questions, the office number is 605-737-6721.

Tips for interviews with the media and guidance for sharing of information with the general public:

- EVERYTHING IS ON THE RECORD!
- Always be courteous to the media.
- Always tell the truth.
- Never say “No comment.” You can always say, “I don’t know” or “I don’t feel comfortable providing you information regarding this issue, but what I would like to tell you is...” or “It would be inappropriate for me to comment on that, but what I would like to tell you is...”
- Set ground rules – location of interview, length of interview, topics to be discussed, topics you are not willing to discuss, etc. Remember, the media can ask any question they like but YOU are responsible for what you say.
- Know that you do not have to give an interview. You can always refer media to the SDNG Public Affairs Office to help find someone else to interview.
- Know that it is okay to say you don’t know, don’t feel comfortable providing specific information, or that a question is inappropriate.
- Do not speculate.
- Avoid answering “What if?” questions.
- Stay in your lane. Only discuss information that pertains to you and your military member. You are the subject matter expert on your experiences and feelings. Let others speak for themselves.
- Remember that all discussions with reporters will be on the record, even if they tell you it’s “off the record”, it is still “on the record.”

Operational Security (OPSEC)

Operational Security, which is also known as OPSEC, is not a new practice in the military; it is a common-sense practice that guides the military members, their spouses and children, their extended family and their friends. OPSEC is the ability to deny information that is essential to carrying out any military operation from being accessed or learned by anyone who may attempt to use that information against our military. These bits and pieces that get put out there can be assembled in ways for those who pose a threat to get a better picture of what is going on, and this can be dangerous to our military. Learning to practice OPSEC has become everyone's responsibility; so learn how to protect sensitive information correctly.

Step 1: Who should practice OPSEC. Military members, their spouses, their children, their parents and extended family members and friends should learn to not give out information in venues that can be easily accessed by just about anyone. They have a responsibility to protect the information they have access to from falling into the wrong hands.

Step 2: Understand what information is considered sensitive and even critical to the military. Information about the exact location of soldiers, troop movement (deployments, returns) and dates, times and timeframes should never be disclosed. Information about weapon systems, training and numbers are also sensitive pieces of information. Missions, exercises and changes in duty hours at specific bases are also to be considered sensitive information that can be put together to give a better picture of what may be taking place or soon to be taking place.

Step 3: Know that just because it appeared on the news does not make it okay to talk about it. Military-run sites are highly monitored; they know who frequents the sites, but OPSEC must still be practiced regardless of where the information appears.

Step 4: Keep sensitive information out of websites, journal posts, message boards and any other online forum and venue. We are taught not to put out too much information about ourselves on the Internet because of the personal dangers this can present, so why would anyone think it was okay to put down specific information regarding times, dates, time frames, locations and more that would allow people they do not know to view the information and do whatever they wanted with it? That could put our troops in danger.

Step 5: Stop using decorative tickers on websites and in online venues. Many family members of deployed military have taken to using countdown tickers that give out specific information as to when the troop will return or a time frame, which breeches OPSEC.

Step 6: Refrain from sending sensitive information via emails and instant messages. We are well aware that emails and instant messages are not secure venues and information sent can wind up in the wrong hands.

Step 7: Never advertise specific information about a soldier. This would include not putting out information regarding the soldier's name, rank and unit. In photos, learn to black out the soldiers name tape and rank.

Step 8: Do not discuss sensitive information out in public venues. Think about it, you and a friend are on line at the supermarket and talking about a son's upcoming deployment and the person standing behind you overhears. You just put sensitive information out there which can potentially compromise a mission and create danger for our troops. Learn to think before you speak and refrain from sensitive information conversations in public.

Family Readiness Needs You!

The South Dakota National Guard Family Readiness Program helps provide the tools for our families to be prepared for mobilization or the day to day challenges that being a military family brings.

If you are interested in helping to create ready and resilient families or just want more information, please complete the following information:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

NAME OF YOUR SERVICE MEMBER: _____

UNIT YOUR SERVICE MEMBER BELONGS TO: _____

___ I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL ___ OR EMAIL

I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH: (Please check all that apply)

___ WITH MY UNIT'S FAMILY READINESS GROUP

___ TELEPHONE TREE CALLER

___ NEWSLETTER

___ TREASURER

___ YOUTH ACTIVITIES

___ SPECIAL PROJECTS

___ FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

___ OTHER

Other areas that would interest you

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:

Adapt for use with your unit's FRG

Where to Begin as a Volunteer?

- **Meet the commander**
- Meet the Lead Volunteer
- **HELP:**
 - Establish a telephone tree
 - Complete Service Member Family Readiness Information Forms, SDNG Form 600-12-11
 - Be a Phone Tree Caller
 - Plan and organize a Family event/activity
 - Complete and sign a volunteer agreement

Record your Volunteer Hours

- **Register on joinservicesupport.org website**
 - Create user name and password
- **Go to *Activity Tracking***
 - Enter your volunteer hours
- **If you do not have a computer**
 - **Record hours on SDNG 600-12-12R (volunteer time record)**

Keep it Simple

- **Don't do it alone**
- **Have more than one leader**
- **Make your program fit your unit's needs**
- **Don't compare your program to other units - be realistic**
- **Ask for help**
- **Take this information back to your unit and share it with your Group members**
- **Take care of yourself**

Where to Begin as a FRG Lead Volunteer?

If you are servicing as lead volunteer for the unit's Family Readiness Group, follow the list above, but additionally you will have oversight for: FRG Family Readiness Plan (sanction) completion, telephone tree completion, email distribution list, newsletter publication, guiding the group to meet their goals, conveying unit families' needs and concerns to the commander.

One of the first things you will want to do is meet the commander to discuss his/her expectations of you and for the unit's program. Together, you will want to review the FRG Family Readiness Plan and collaborate on your own goals for the FRG. At this time, also, establish how you and the commander will communicate on a regular basis by email, telephone, quarterly meetings, etc.

The next thing you will want to do is meet the unit full-time staff since they will be able to assist you and provide you the necessary information, etc to be successful. You will also want to meet the FRG volunteers and continue to recruit new ones.

Key things to focus on will be meeting the commander, full-time staff, and other volunteers, completion of the FRG Family Readiness Plan completion, telephone tree, email distribution list, and building your volunteer corps to increase service and family member involvement to help ensure unit families are mobilization ready.

Where to Begin as a Unit Family Program Representative?

- Ask the commander their expectations
- Meet your unit's lead volunteer
- Help to ensure the lead volunteer has service member information to complete and maintain the FRG telephone tree, email and newsletter rosters
- Update the lead volunteer with unit news so they are aware
- Register on joinservicessupport.org

What do I Need to Help with?

- Family Readiness Group Family Readiness Plan
- Appointment of Unit Family Program Representative (Military Member)
- Appointment of Lead Volunteer
- Appointment of Volunteer Treasurer
- FRG Phone Tree and email list
- Pre-Mobilization Briefings Annually
- Family Care Plans

Where to Begin as a Unit Commander?
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As unit commander, One of the first things you will want to do is meet the FRG lead volunteer (or select one if your FRG currently does not have one) to discuss your expectations for the unit's program. Together, you will want to review the FRG Family Readiness Plan (sanction) and collaborate on your own goals for your unit's FRG. At this time, also, establish how you and the lead volunteer will communicate on a regular basis by email, telephone, quarterly meetings, or all three.

Additionally, ensure to place your FRG lead volunteer on your units email distribution list to ensure they are receiving your unit newsletter to increase their awareness of events and activities taking place within the unit.

Key things to focus on will be to ensure your unit has a Family Readiness Group and that you provide an environment where families feel comfortable coming to the unit to be involved in training events and unit activities to help prepare them mobilization.

For inspections, you will need to focus on completion of the FRG Family Readiness Plan (sanction), telephone tree and duty appointments for your FRG lead volunteer, unit family readiness representative and FRG Treasurer (if your FRG has a checking account).

Contact the Family Programs Office at 605-737-6089 or 196th MEB units - 605-357-2970 or 109th RSG units -605-737-6310 or familyprogram@sd.ngb.army.mil for training and assistance to help you create a successful Program within your unit.

End of Handbook