

Department of the Army  
Headquarters, U.S. Army Garrison  
462 Hamilton Road, Suite 120  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma 73503  
15 December 2009

\*Fort Sill Pamphlet 608-2

Personal Affairs  
**FAMILY READINESS GROUP HANDBOOK**

---

**Summary.** This pamphlet provides local procedures for the administration of Family Readiness Groups.

**Applicability.** This regulation is applicable to all Fort Sill organizations.

**Suggested Improvements.** The proponent of this regulation is the Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) Army Community Services (ACS). Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to DFMWR, ACS, 4700 Mow-Way Road Ste, 100, Fort Sill, OK. 73503.

**Distribution.** This regulation is distributed solely through the DHR, ASD Homepage at [http://sill-www.army.mil/dhr/Admin\\_Svcs\\_Division/index.html](http://sill-www.army.mil/dhr/Admin_Svcs_Division/index.html).

---

## Chapter 1 Introduction

**1-1. Purpose.** To assist commanders in establishing Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) that provide outreach assistance to military families during times of need, particularly during permanent changes of station (PCS), unit off-post training and mobilization.

**1-2. References.** Required and related publications and prescribed and referenced forms are listed in Appendix A.

**1-3. Explanation of Abbreviations and Terms.** Abbreviations and terms used in this regulation are explained in the glossary.

**1-4. Records Management.** Records created as a result of processes prescribed by this regulation must be identified, maintained, and disposed of in accordance with AR 25-400-2, the Army Records Information Management Systems (ARIMS) and DA Pam 25-403, Guide to Recordkeeping in the Army.

## Chapter 2 Responsibilities

**2-1. Battalion Commanders.** The Battalion Commander will--

- a. Identify his/her goals for the FRG.
- b. Establish benchmarks for charting the progress and development of the FRG.
- c. Inform staff of the subordinate unit and battalion about the purpose, function, and structure of the FRG.
- d. Seek volunteers to develop committees to address the goals and needs of the FRG as identified at the meetings.
- e. Provide assistance to committees developing unit chains of concern.
- f. Provide volunteers with job descriptions.
- g. Provide facility support.

The unit commander should--

Establish an atmosphere of care and concern for the families of unit soldiers.

Anticipate and address the needs of unit members and their families when temporary separation occurs. You can accomplish this through an orientation program, CI Notes, deployment briefings, support systems, and social functions.

Organize systems of mutual assistance and a network of communication to include an FRG, using the chain of command, the staff, and volunteers.

Actively sanction the FRG.

Provide unit information systems, facilities, and resources to the FRG.

Encourage family involvement in unit activities.

Officially appoint FRG members and provide training through unit installation resources.

**2-2. Battalion Representative and the FRG Council Member.** The Battalion Representative and the FRG Council Member will--

- a. Recruit potential leaders for FRG Steering Committee.
- b. Attend initial battery meetings, FRG, and steering committee meetings.
- c. Become the liaison between FRG and rear detachment.

- d. Write articles for monthly CI Notes.
- e. Approve CI Notes prior to reproduction.
- f. Present battalion news at FRG meetings.
- g. Request unit resources when needed.
- h. Be the spokesperson attending special meetings where information of FRG is required.
- i. Contact out-of-town wives when necessary.
- j. Send out periodic assessments to FRG members.
- k. be available and approachable by all members.

**2-3. Battery Representative.** The Battery Representative will--

- a. Obtain names, addresses, and phone numbers of all married personnel in battery from First Sergeant.
- b. Organize battery level FRG meetings.
- c. Select a battery reporter for CI Notes staff.
- d. Select two contact persons to represent battery at steering committee meetings who will make calls to other spouses in the battery.
- e. Select a battery hospitality person.
- f. Determine dates for monthly battery meetings.
- g. Organize battery spouses' phone chain to be used to distribute information.
- h. Notify hospitality person of people to be remembered with cards or special occasions.
- i. Arrange for refreshments at designated FRG meetings.
- j. Attend steering committee and FRG meetings.

**2-4. FRG Contact Person.** The FRG contact person will—

- a. Call families on a regular basis to inquire if they need assistance, to let them know they are being thought of and cared for, and to assure them the FRG system is working.

- b. Inform co-chairperson of problems.
- c. Attend battery, steering committee, and FRG meetings.
- d. Help to combat rumors (between phone calls).

**2-5. FRG Co-Chairperson.** The FRG Co-Chairperson will--

- a. Attend initial battery meetings.
- b. Plan agendas for FRG and steering committee meetings.
- c. Coordinate with guest speakers for FRG meetings.
- d. Preside at FRG and steering committee meetings.
- e. Furnish steering committee with telephone notification roster.
- f. Submit battalion-level news for CI Notes.
- g. Act as problem solver for steering committee and contact persons.
- h. Communicate with sponsor regarding policy (establishing/changing).

**2-6. Editor At Battalion/Battery Levels. The editor will--**

- a. Hold staff meetings monthly to collect news and discuss upcoming CI Notes.
- b. Write battalion-level news.
- c. Direct layout of published material along with associate editor.
- d. Assemble CI Notes.
- e. Give CI Notes to sponsor prior to printing.
- f. Deliver original copy to agency for printing.
- g. Attend steering committee and FRG meetings.

**2-7. Membership Coordinator at Battalion or Battery Level.** The Membership Coordinators will--

- a. Keep up-to-date addresses on 3x5 cards and/or computerized with back-up, for each spouse in the group.

- b. Notify sponsor and co-chairperson of changes of addresses.
- c. Address CI Notes and returns to rear detachment for mailing.
- d. Attend FRG and steering committee meetings.

**2-8. Treasurer at Battalion or Battery Level.** The treasurer will--

- a. Keep an accurate record of money.
- b. Perform regular and change of custodian audits.
- c. Attend steering committee and FRG meetings.
- d. Provide childcare coordinator with funds for baby-sitters.

**2-9. Battery Reporter.** Battery Reporter will--

- a. Attend battery, editorial staff, and FRG meetings.
- b. Writes battery news for CI Notes.
- c. Assists editor in putting together CI Notes for typing, etc.

**Chapter 3**  
**Purpose and Function**

**3-1. Purpose.**

a. FRGs consists of soldiers and their families. All members work together to reduce the stress of separation, moving, illnesses, accidents, and other stress producing situations that affect family members. In order to be successful, the FRG requires the recognition and support of the unit commander. Members are active in many capacities. They are facilitators, advisors, contact persons, editorial staff or may perform a variety of other jobs. Some members participate in the planning and execution of the FRG activities. This increases the cohesion of the FRG to the unit. The FRG Command information Notes (CI Notes) reduce social isolation by providing a very important link among family members who seldom come on post. Rank is not a significant factor in the role members play in the group. The system revolves around the natural leadership abilities of the individuals who make up the group.

b. Command approval, emphasis, and assistance are critical to the development of an effective FRG. The successful FRG will facilitate and complement the accomplishment of the unit's mission. Family readiness must be an ongoing process. Increasing morale and improving the quality of life of soldiers and their family members must be the goal of every commanding officer. The commander must ensure family

members receive support and are able to adequately care for themselves should the unit or spouse deploy away from home for an extended period of time. Commanders who balance unit leadership with care and concern for unit families enhance their effectiveness as leaders. The most difficult aspect of improving unit readiness through improved family readiness is getting family members involved.

c. Commanders incur an obligation to care for the families as well as the soldiers in their units. When the commander fosters an atmosphere of care and concern for the families, the desire to help others naturally evolves. Volunteers come forth, programs are planned, and assistance is provided to those in need. The FRG is then a point effort to organize, coordinate, and support this community spirit. The FRG is able to complement the efforts of the commander to provide for the families through the chain of command.

d. The military family is unique. It experiences frequent periods of stress, expensive moves, loss of friends, new surroundings, and separation due to mission requirements. Units must be sensitive to the special needs of the family and assist when possible. An FRG can establish lines of communication and provide assistance to ease these burdens. It is extremely difficult to identify families with problems, especially off-post. Caring, knowledgeable people reaching out to families can be very helpful in solving problems. FRGs also gives soldiers the comfort of knowing their families have someone to depend on in their absence. This increases unit readiness and combat effectiveness.

e. The FRG begins with the unit commander. The chain of command, staff, and rear detachment commander are the links to the family. Volunteers, when available, complement the commander's efforts and enable the program to be expanded beyond their basic needs. All soldiers and their families are members of the FRG.

**3-2. Function.** The basic purpose of an FRG is to provide a channel of communication for information from the command to the families, and for the expression of needs from the families to the commander. This is done through CI Notes mailed directly to the families, pre-deployment briefings, and communication through the chain of command. A telephone tree facilitates communication and enables the families to request assistance. Other tasks are accomplished based upon the needs and desire of the Commander, unit, and families. They may include welcoming new families, supporting new mothers, providing comfort during bereavement, social functions, and open houses. In general, the FRG does what is necessary to prevent isolation and to provide assistance in times of need. Thus the goals of an FRG are--

a. To become an essential part of a military unit's family support system, which includes an information network, unit activity day, unit family briefing(s), and CI Notes from within the same battalion/battery organization?

b. To reduce isolation among family members, especially in the junior enlisted ranks.

- c. To enable the members to provide each other with close personal support (mutual support).
- d. To assist members in obtaining important information and resources with ease.
- e. To facilitate and establish a real sense of community among soldiers and their family members.
- f. To enhance the military family member's feelings of belonging, self-reliance, and self-esteem.

## **Chapter 4**

### **FRG Levels**

**4-1. FRG Levels.** In general, the FRG is organized into levels - the battalion, battery, and contact levels. The individual unit members should decide whether the meetings and CI Notes are managed at the battalion or the battery level. The chain of concern operates most effectively when it is coordinated at the battery level. At the contact level, friendship and mutual support are more readily established.

#### **4-2. Battalion Level.**

a. At this level, the participants are the battalion level FRG representatives. They organize into a central management circle and perform such functions as--

- (1) Planning, activating, and coordinating overall FRG support.
- (2) Supporting FRG representatives at the battery level.
- (3) Addressing family member concerns appropriate to the battalion level.
- (4) Forming military links at the battalion level.
- (5) Transferring pertinent information to battery representatives.

b. The battalion level FRG representatives serve as the interface between unit family members and battalion level military representatives. They gather information and manage the FRG activities. Determine internally the frequency of meetings.

c. Battalions may form committees to address specific FRG responsibilities or tasks. You may form a committee to publish and distribute the FRG CI Notes or to provide coordination and support to company representatives.

d. As a minimum, a battalion level representative should meet with all principal small unit representatives at least once each month. The purpose of which is to provide

support, ensure the continuation of activities, and to provide ample opportunity for the exchange of family member information and concerns.

**4-3. Battery Level.** At this level, the participants are the contact people and the battery level FRG representatives who organize themselves into a battery level management circle. One or two family member volunteers are designated by the group to become the principal battery level FRG representatives. The battery level management circle usually meets once a month and just before any battalion level FRG meeting. This battery level management circle is responsible to the FRG for—

- a. Ensuring the operation of the battery level FRG communication support network.
- b. Coordinating its activities with the battalion level FRG.
- c. Forming a line with the battery level military unit.
- d. Initiating supportive actions appropriate at this level.
- e. Referring family member concerns and activities to the battalion level representatives.

(2) The battery representative is part of the structure that creates the support network. Responsibilities, which are inherent to the position, include—

- a. Communicating with each person at least once each month. The purpose of these calls is to support the contact people and ensure contact within support networks provide opportunities for the transmission of information and family concerns.
- b. Assisting contact people in addressing family member concerns and referring appropriate family member concerns to the battalion level FRG.

**4-4. Contact Level.** Individual family members are organized into support circles of six to ten family members with one volunteer acting as the contact person in each group. Support circles should not attempt to follow the military spouse's rank structure. Establish support circles to meet organizational operations.

a. At this level, the contact person is responsible to the FRG for maintaining at least a minimum level of contact with the other family members in the support circle. Minimum basic contact is defined as one call or visit to each of the support circle family members at least once each month. This process effectively reduces social isolation. It also reassures family members there is a support, communication, and information system at their disposal.

b. The contact person is responsible to the FRG for distributing family member information to the support circle members. The contact person is also responsible for

identifying family member concerns from within a support circle. During a crisis situation, a contact person can combat rumors, provide information, and reduce stress.

c. The structure of the FRG is tailored to meet the needs of the individual unit, its mission, and the general needs of its family members. An FRG organizational chart is offered as a guideline in Appendix D.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Components of the FRG.**

**5-1. FRG Representatives.** The FRG representatives play important roles in the establishment and continuation of the FRG. They include the chain of command, staff, rear detachment commander, and volunteer members. Operating at both battalion and battery levels, FRG representatives are the vital interface for the communications support network.

**5-2. Communication Support Network.** A communication support network is the single most important component of a basic FRG. It enables regular outreach to all family members, reduces isolation, and creates a sense of community support. It also affords family members the opportunity to identify, address, and resolve issues important to the FRG and its family members.

**5-3. The Military Unit.** The military unit with its formal organizational system and facilities, helps to manage and enhance the functioning of a communication support network. The network is simple and can be operated by contact people. A contact person forms a communication support circle which links from six to ten other family members. Family members then have a central reference figure. Information flows to and from the contact person (see Appendix C).

**5-4. Links.** An FRG would be hard pressed to operate without adequate links to its associated military unit. They are the “formal” relationship between the families and the units. Unit commanders, information systems, facilities, and assistance resources are examples of unit links, which are vital to an FRG.

a. Unit commander link. The link with associated commanders is easily the most important military one. Without a commander’s active support, an FRG would not exist. FRG legitimacy flows primarily from his support. The commander must approve the activities of the FRG and be accessible when needed. The link may be a rear detachment commander or volunteer family member.

b. Link to unit information systems. Military units are important sources of information for FRGs. The converse is also true. It is important that FRG representatives and unit representatives (soldiers, 1SGs, COs, XOs, adjutants, and Chaplains) develop appropriate working relationships in order to establish an efficient information exchange system.

c. Link to unit facilities. For the new FRG, access to a meeting place within the unit is the most important facility link. Chapels, dining facilities, and unit day rooms have proven to be the most accessible meeting places within the unit. Access to reproduction capabilities for official CI Notes can greatly assist communications, organization, and support within FRGs.

## **Chapter 6**

### **FRG Communication**

**6-1. FRG Chain of Concern.** A battery level chain of concern is the primary means of FRG support. At the battery level, a contact person, responsible for contacting no more than six to ten family members, is used to relay pertinent information. This chain of concern is the FRG telephone network, and the unit roster is its basis. Volunteers are recruited to contact no more than ten family members each. More than ten calls will overtax the volunteer and the time required to make these calls would be prohibitive. The FRG coordinator and the nature of the unit's mission will determine the frequency of calls. The Privacy Act of 1970 requires individual consent when releasing Privacy Act data to third parties. Third parties are classified as any persons that are not a member of the Department of Defense. They must have sign a contract as with active duty soldiers and civilian working for the Department of Defense. To be able to provide Privacy Act information (i.e., home addresses, home telephone numbers, etc.) to FRG coordinators and FRGs the commander must have received authorization from each soldier. Commanders can accomplish this at the same time they prepare a social roster by also informing the Soldier their home address, home telephone number, and possibly their home electronic mail address will be made available to FRGs.

**6-2. Calling Lists.** Calling lists are divided in the following manner:

a. Geographical/housing areas. This method facilitates neighborhood meetings, car pools, etc.

b. Soldier's rank. Advantages are that an existing roster prepared by rank structures can be utilized so enlisted spouses preferring to speak with other enlisted family members may do so.

c. By shop or assignment area. This structure builds on relationships already existing between soldiers who work closely together.

d. Callers need guidance from the FRG coordinator concerning their jobs and the limits of their responsibilities. The caller's mission is to promote unit readiness by providing information to all unit family members. Information sharing reduces the feeling of isolation and creates a cohesive network. This network is also used to disseminate information to the families and to address family member concerns. Some problems, such as spouse abuse and child neglect, are not handled by the FRG representatives but, referred to the appropriate agency. FRG callers should not be expected to deal with serious personal problems of this magnitude.

## **Chapter 7 Training**

### **7-1. Training.**

a. To increase the effectiveness of a FRG, regular training should be available to FRG member's at all three levels (battalion, battery, and contact). Agencies available to conduct FRG training at Fort Sill are listed in Appendix F. FRG volunteers are often placed in the position of being the first contact point for family members who are in crisis situations. They are also often in the best position to evaluate how a family is coping or going to cope with separation. When practical, they should arrange for early intervention to prevent a crisis situation from developing. In order to perform this role effectively, adequate training is a necessity. We have provided at Appendix E a listing of job descriptions/duties of different members of the FRG for your use. Examples of training that help FRG volunteers effectively perform their functions include—

- (1) Effective communication.
- (2) Problem solving.
- (3) Crisis referral.
- (4) Community resources.
- (5) Key unit personnel.
- (6) Principles of information and referral.
- (7) Family advocacy.
- (8) Coping with stress.
- (9) Conflict referral.
- (10) Management/leadership skills.

b. At Fort Sill, the support agencies listed in Appendix F will conduct training, as requested by FRG representatives.

c. A new resource available for education, Army Family Team Building (AFTB). AFTB is described as training for a way of life that prepares all members in America's Army to function at one's highest level, in any situation, with minimal outside support. The purpose of AFTB is to improve personal and family preparedness. The training consists of three separate levels depending upon associated time with the Army.

d. Additional measures that will increase an FRG's cohesion include the following authorized unit support activities.

e. FRGs are authorized printing assistance to include, but not limited to, the reproduction of the CI Notes. The installation printing plant provides units with printing capability.

f. FRGs are authorized mailing assistance through the use of G-5 postal permits. Third Class Bulk rates are used when mailing 200 or more like pieces or all the pieces weight 50 pounds or more. First Class mail is required for lots of less than 200 pieces.

g. FRGs are authorized administrative support to include the use of typewriter, office supplies, copying equipment, day rooms, dining facilities, and other facilities as needed.

h. Official unit rosters must be available to FRGs to generate and maintain an accurate and current chain of concern.

i. Dining facility assistance. Family members of soldiers in grades of E-1 through E-4 are authorized to eat in the unit dining facility provided the function is designated an FRG activity as approved by each major subordinate command (MSC). Family members will pay applicable food costs. Guidelines are available from each MSC.

j. Government transportation. FRGs are authorized the use of government transportation, subject to the guidelines of DOD Directive 1330.2, but must have the approval of the transportation officer. Approval is based on budgetary restrictions. (See Appendix G).

## **Appendix A References**

### **Section I Required Publications**

#### **AR 25-30**

The Army Integrated Publishing and Printing Program.

#### **AR 25-51**

Official Mail and Distribution Management

#### **AR-30-1**

The Army Food Service Program

#### **AR 58-1**

Management, Acquisition and Use of Administrative Use Motor Vehicles

#### **AR 340-21**

The Army Privacy Program

#### **AR 608-1**

Army Community Service Program

#### **DA Pam 608-47**

A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups

### **TRADOC Army Family Action Plan**

#### **USAFACFS Pamphlet 608-1**

Fort Sill Army Family Action Plan

#### **AR 600-8**

Military Personnel Management

#### **AR 600-8-11**

Reassignment

#### **AR 600-8-101**

Personnel Processing

### **Section II Related Publications**

This section contains no entries.

**Section III**  
**Prescribed Forms**

**FS Form 667**  
Family Deployment Checklist

**FS Form 679**  
Home Safety Checklist

**FS Form 684**  
Red Cross Notification

**FS Form 685**  
Notification of Departure from the Area

**FS Form 687**  
Family Readiness Information Form

**FS Form 694**  
Emergency Information Form

**FS Form 696**  
Pre-deployment Checklist

**FS Form 706**  
Family Readiness Group Telephone Tree

**FS Form 708**  
Record of Personal Affairs

**FS Form 709**  
Car Maintenance

**Section IV**  
**Referenced Forms**

**DA Form 2028**  
Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms

## **Glossary**

### **Section I Abbreviations**

**1SG**

First Sergeant

**ACS**

Army Community Service

**AFTB**

Army Family Team Building

**CI**

Command Information

**CO**

Commanding Officer

**FRG**

Family Readiness Group

**MSC**

Major Subordinate Command

**NCO**

Non Commissioned Officer

**PCS**

Permanent Change of Station

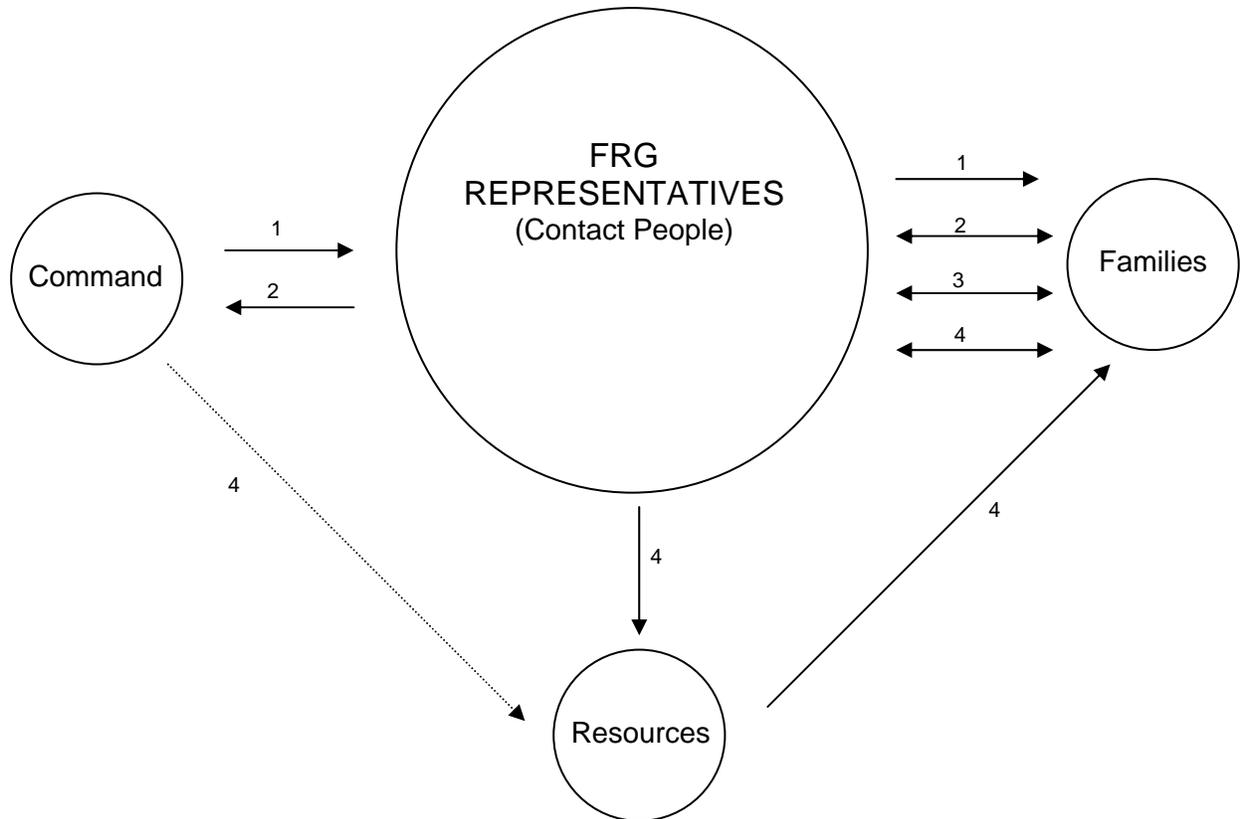
**XO**

Executive Officer

## Appendix B BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPT

**I. PURPOSE/MISSION.** To assist commanders in establishing Family Member Readiness Groups (FRGs) that provide outreach and assistance to military families, particularly during unit off-post training and mobilization.

### II. HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS.

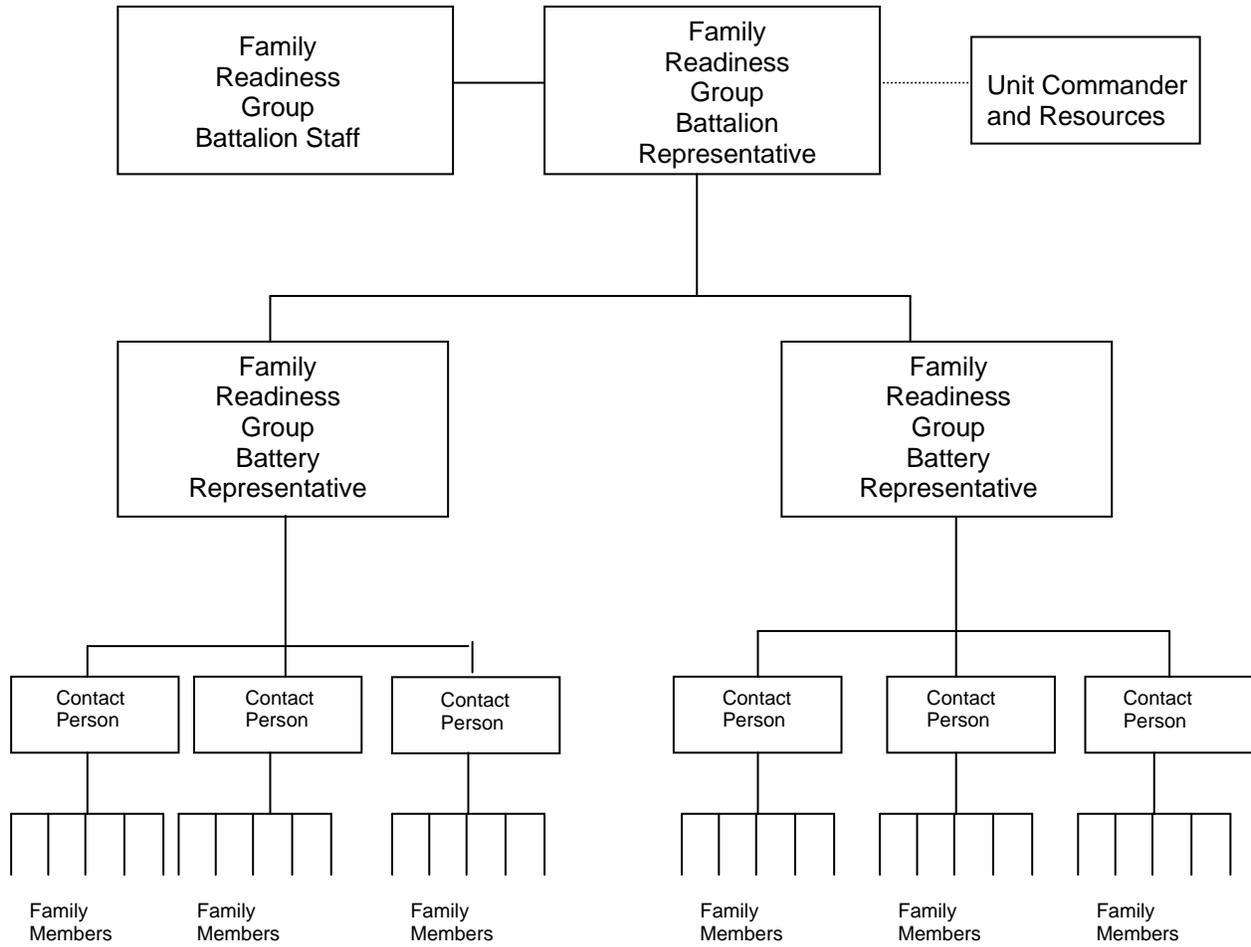


1. Communication: CO to families
2. Communication: Families to CO
3. Helper/Problem Assistance
4. Information and Referral

### III. SUCCESS FACTORS

- ❖ Local regulation
- ❖ Unit commander linkage
- ❖ Appointed FRG representatives
- ❖ Communication support network
- ❖ Incorporated into installation's mobilization family assistance plan
- ❖ Family member "ownership" of FRG

### Appendix C ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AN FRG



**Appendix D  
SUPPORT AGENCIES AVAILABLE TO CONDUCT  
FAMILY READINESS GROUP TRAINING**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>POC/Tel</b>
American Red Cross	Counseling Referral Emergency Leave Emergency Financial Assistance	458-2132 (RACH)
Army Community Service	General Overview Army Family Action Plan / Army Family Team Building Mobilization/Deployment Family Advocacy Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Domestic Violence New Parent Support Program Exceptional Family Member Program Relocation Workshop Financial Management AER Overview Family Member Employment Volunteer Corps	442-4916 442-2039/2382 442-2152/0662/0670 442-6801 442-5018 442-0648 442-3393 442-2360/3095 442-2976 442-2976 442-4681/4359 442-4682
Child & Youth Services	Tincher Child Development Center Family Child Care Youth Services	442-2320 442-3488 442-6745/5324
Business Operations	Clubs, Golf, Bowling	
Army Substance Abuse Program	Substance Abuse	442-2691
Legal Assistance	Wills Power of Attorney Landlord/Tenant/Taxes Consumer Laws	442-5058-5059
Directorate of Public Safety and Law Enforcement	Protect the Child Rape Prevention McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog Crime/Robbery Prevention	442-3145
Post Chaplain	Family Life Center Overview	442-5003

**Appendix E**  
**GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION REQUEST**

FRGs may request the use of government transportation to observe unit training or other official unit functions; however, the following guidelines must be adhered to.

1. Activity is within the Fort Sill training area.
2. Unit provides qualified driver for vehicles smaller than buses and/or pays for drivers of buses.
3. Fort Sill Form 833 (Request for Motor Transportation) is submitted to the Installation Transportation Officer in advance of activity.
4. Point of contact is Transportation Officer, Bldg 2258, telephone 442-2403/2468.
5. Approval is based on budgetary restrictions.

IMWE-SIL-MWA



RAYMOND P. LACEY  
COL, FA  
Garrison Commander

JAMES A. MILLER  
Director of Human  
Resources