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FM CNO WASHINGTON DC  
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PASS TO OFFICE CODES:

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MSGID/GENADMIN/CNO WASHINGTON DC/N00/JAN// SUBJ/COMMAND OMBUDSMAN AND FAMILY READINESS GROUP EMERGENCY READINESS AND RESPONSE// REF/A/DOC/OPNAV/02SEP14// REF/B/DOC/CNIC/01JUL16// REF/C/DOC/OPNAV/31MAR11// NARR/REF A IS OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1750.1G CH-2 NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM. REF B IS 2016 NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM MANUAL. REF C IS OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1754.5B ON FAMILY READINESS GROUPS.// POC/MAST, CARRIE/CIV/OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM COORDINATOR/ EMAIL: CARRIE.MAST1(AT)NAVY.MIL/TEL: (202)433-4701//

RMKS/1. The purpose of this NAVADMIN is to highlight the importance of the Command Ombudsman Program and Family Readiness Groups (FRG) in facilitating communications in support of our Navy families and to identify key commander responsibilities in order to make the most effective use of these valuable resources. Command Ombudsman and Family Readiness Groups, when trained and effectively implemented, bolster command readiness and resiliency during routine operations and in times of crisis. This was a critical lesson learned during the response to tragedies involving the USS FITZGERALD and USS JOHN S. MCCAIN in 2017.

## 2. Enabling your Ombudsman.

a. Commanders enable their Ombudsmen by fulfilling all the requirements set forth in references (a) and (b), including ensuring their ombudsmen are trained and ready to serve Navy families. Commanders will communicate with their ombudsmen regarding command, installation, and region emergency response plans and ensure ombudsmen understand their role during a crisis or disaster. Per reference (b), commanders must ensure ombudsmen understand the role of the Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) and how the two programs work together to support affected families. For example, it is not appropriate for an ombudsman to accompany a CACO on the official notification visit or to contact the family about the casualty before CACO notification. However, after the CACO notifies the family, an ombudsman may offer support to the family through information and referrals.

b. Ombudsmen must be able to effectively communicate with command families to provide support, especially during times of crisis. As such, per reference (a), commanders will release command rosters listing current and inbound personnel and families to their ombudsmen. Consent of the individuals listed is not required when the ombudsman is performing official duties. Commanders are also required to register their ombudsmen in the Ombudsman Program Registry. Subject to Navy policy guidance, both appropriated and non-appropriated funds are authorized to support the Ombudsman Program. Communication equipment is an authorized expense, and commanders may approve cell phones based on need and funding availability.

c. Advanced training is required for all ombudsmen and should be conducted at the installation through Ombudsman assemblies and/or in coordination with the Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC). Topics include emergency preparedness and disaster response. Each region will ensure appropriate roles for ombudsmen are included in region and installation plans for disaster preparedness and when Emergency Family Assistance Centers are activated.

d. The Fleet and Family Support Program provides a variety of services to support and enhance the Ombudsman Program's effectiveness.

FFSC staff members are assigned as Ombudsman Coordinators and provide training, serve as a source of information and referral, and help prepare ombudsmen to participate in crisis response.

3. Family Readiness Groups: Per reference (c), FRGs, although considered separate from the Ombudsman program, also serve as an integral part of the support network for Service Members and families. This network also includes ombudsmen, FFSC, chaplains, and other installation support services. To facilitate communication, Commanders will designate an officer, senior enlisted member, or civilian employee of the command as the official FRG command liaison. The command liaison will ensure FRG leadership understands their roles during crises or disasters.

4. Ethics Reminder: If approached with inquiries regarding gifts or donations, ombudsmen and/or FRG representatives should refer those inquiries to the appropriate command Ethics Counselor.

5. Summary and Way Forward: Commanders must ensure all requirements per references (a) through (c) are fulfilled and make every effort to encourage and bolster participation in these programs. Based on recent lessons learned, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) is currently reviewing and updating program policies, curriculum, webpages, and the Commanders' Guide. Please provide CNIC any recommendations you assess that will enhance these valuable programs. Additional information about the Ombudsman Program is available at [www.ombudsmanregistry.cnic.navy.mil](http://www.ombudsmanregistry.cnic.navy.mil) and [www.ffsp.navy.mil](http://www.ffsp.navy.mil).

6. Released by Vice Admiral K. M. Donegan, Director, Navy Staff.

Please ensure widest dissemination of this NAVADMIN. Regards, Ed Roscoe, CNIC HQ, Ombudsman Registry Administrator, [ed.roscoe.ctr@navy.mil](mailto:ed.roscoe.ctr@navy.mil), 704 857-0637

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