UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
FORCE HEADQUARTERS GROUP
2000 OPELOUSAS AVENUE
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70114-1500

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APR 11 2015

GROUP POLICY LETTER 1-15

From: Commanding General
To: All Hands

Subj: CRISIS COMMUNICATION POLICY

Ref: (a) MCO 1754.9 (series)
(b) COOP Brief
(c) Force Order 3440.1

1. Purpose. Effective March 2015 and per reference (a), the Force Headquarters Group Unit, Personal, and Family Readiness Program (UPFRP) will disseminate any and all information to the Marines, Sailors, and their dependents in the event of a crisis. Examples of a crisis or perceived crisis for the UPFRP purpose include building closure due to a water leak, inclement weather, active shooter, or a family within the unit being killed in a vehicle accident.

2. Situation. The Greater New Orleans area is in a hurricane zone, and evacuations are occasionally ordered. Only the Commander of Marine Forces Reserve (CMFR) has the authority to mandate an official hurricane evacuation of Marine Forces Reserve (MFR) personnel. MFR utilizes the Evacuation Personnel Accountability System (ePAS) as the primary communication tool to send emergency messages via text message, automated phone message, and e-mail to Marines, Sailors, and dependents. It is critical to acknowledge receipt of any emergency message for accountability purposes. ePAS is exclusive to the Marine Corps Support Facility (MARCORSPTFAC) building in New Orleans, and is not a Force Headquarters Group (FHG) specific tool.

3. Execution

a. Information disseminated will not interfere with or precede the Marine Corps policy for casualty notification. The Family Readiness Officer (FRO) has no role in the casualty notification process. Therefore, any unsolicited communication from the FRO that is deemed necessary by the command shall be passed through the Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO).

b. In the event of a hurricane evacuation, MFR will use ePAS to disseminate building wide emergency communication messages. In conjunction with ePAS, FHG section leaders will communicate with Marines, Sailors and dependents through personal telephone calls and/or text messages. E-mail, eMarine, and Facebook may be utilized if electricity and internet access are available. However, electricity and internet are usually unreliable during destructive weather. In the event of an extended hurricane evacuation, FHG will execute the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) detailed in reference (b).

c. If an emergency is not a destructive weather related event, communication may be delivered via ePAS, phone calls, text messages, e-mail, or eMarine. The FRO should proactively seek guidance from me or my

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designated representative before sending any communication during or following a crisis situation.

4. Administration and Logistics. Upon arrival to FHG during the check-in process, the G-1 will establish each ePAS account. It is the service member's responsibility to add all pertinent information to their account to include all dependents and elements of their household. Periodic testing of the ePAS system will occur prior to the designated hurricane season and throughout the year. Statistics will show if end users, to include dependents, are answering the test.

5. Command and Signal. This policy applies to all Active Duty, Active Reserve, and Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) Marines and Sailors attached to this command, and family members identified on the UPFRP Authorization Form.

6. The point of contact for the Force Headquarters Group UPFRP is Erica Avedikian, FHG Family Readiness Officer, at 504-697-8495 or erica.avedikian@usmc.mil.

H. G. PRATT