Missing contact groups on Android phone

The problem

After an upgrade, I find all my existing groups in Google Contacts on the Internet, but they have completely disappeared from my phone and will not replicate to my phone no matter what I try.

I believe many have experienced the same. Therefore, I am sharing my solution to the problem.

My solution

At least this worked for me. I have a Sony XPeria Z2 with Android 5.1.1 (Lollipop). I hope it works for you, too.

Take as an example a group called «MyFriends», found in Google Contacts but not on my phone. The group has say 23 members.

1. On my phone I open contacts, choose Groups» and create a new group «MyFriendsNew».
   Take care: The groups *must* be created as a «Google-group» - not a «Local group».
   Note too that this group *must* be created on the phone – I could not get new groups created in Google Contacts to replicate to the phone.
2. After a while, the new group «MyFriendsNew» appears in Google Contacts.
3. I open the existing group «MyFriends», tick all group members (one operation) and add them to new group «MyFriendsNew» (again one operation). All members in "MyFriends" are now also members of "MyFriendsNew".
4. After some time, the new group "MyFriendsNew" created on my phone is populated with all 23 contacts.
5. I delete the group "MyFriends" in Google Contacts. Note that some groups e.g. "Colleagues" are standard and cannot be deleted. I simply remove all contacts from such groups and they disappear.
6. I rename the group "MyFriendsNew" to "MyFriends" either in Google Contacts or on my phone – the change is replicated both ways.

To sum up: I make a new group on the phone, copy all members of the old group to the new and delete the old group. The new group can then be renamed.

Having done the same for all my groups, I am back to where I was before the upgrade. If you wonder – as I do – why I should have to do this myself, you will have to ask Google. (Many have tried but there appears to be no answer.)

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