

Cessnas 2 Oshkosh 2026



This slide show is meant to be reviewed in a classroom setting along with instruction provided by an instructor well versed in formation flight techniques. This course material is copyrighted by Rodney Swanson and is to be used in training Cessnas 2 Oshkosh only.

It is not our intention to “re-invent the wheel”. There are numerous formation flight references on the market that will provide everything you need. We will be utilizing excerpts from some of those references to aid in standardization.

Nothing provided in this course of instruction is meant to contradict the tenets of basic airmanship or your aircraft operating handbook. Formation flight is a risky endeavor and should be afforded due diligence.

AGENDA

- Introduction
- Legalities
- Definitions
- Procedures
- Ramp Exercise
- Preflight Briefing
- Practice Flights
- After action review

Formation Flight Training -Introduction-

- Why are we doing this?
- Is it legal?
- Who is going to participate and are they sufficiently trained?

Why are we doing this?

- We are continuing the tradition of the Cessnas 2 Oshkosh mass arrival
- We want to arrive and park together at KOSH
- We welcome the challenge and reward of additional training

Is it Legal?

What are our requirements

Part 91.111

- You may not operate so close to another aircraft as to create a collision hazard.
- Can not conduct formation flight, except by arrangement with the PIC of each aircraft
- Not authorized when carrying passengers for hire

FAR 91.13

“The catch-all”

You may not operate your airplane in careless or reckless manner so as to endanger the life or property of another

Who is going to participate and are they sufficiently trained?

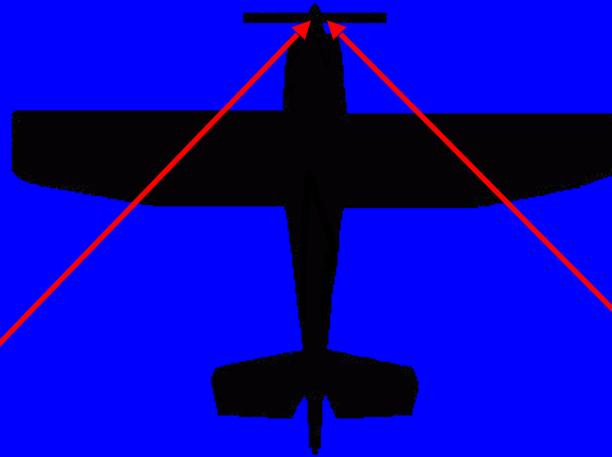
- Trained pilots with a **SAFETY FIRST** attitude
- Cessnas 2 Oshkosh participants that have dedicated themselves to the time and training required to conduct formation flight **SAFELY.**
- Members who have completed a formal course of instruction
- Members who attend the pre-formation briefing.

Definitions

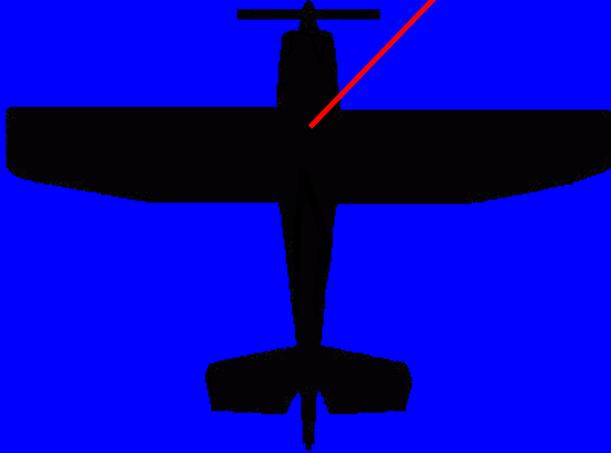
- For the purposes of Cessnas 2 Oshkosh, formation flight will be defined as flights of three in a delta [] formation not closer than four wingspan distance laterally with formation angle maintained at approximately 45°.
- Distance between elements will be $\approx 1500'$.

Definitions: Element

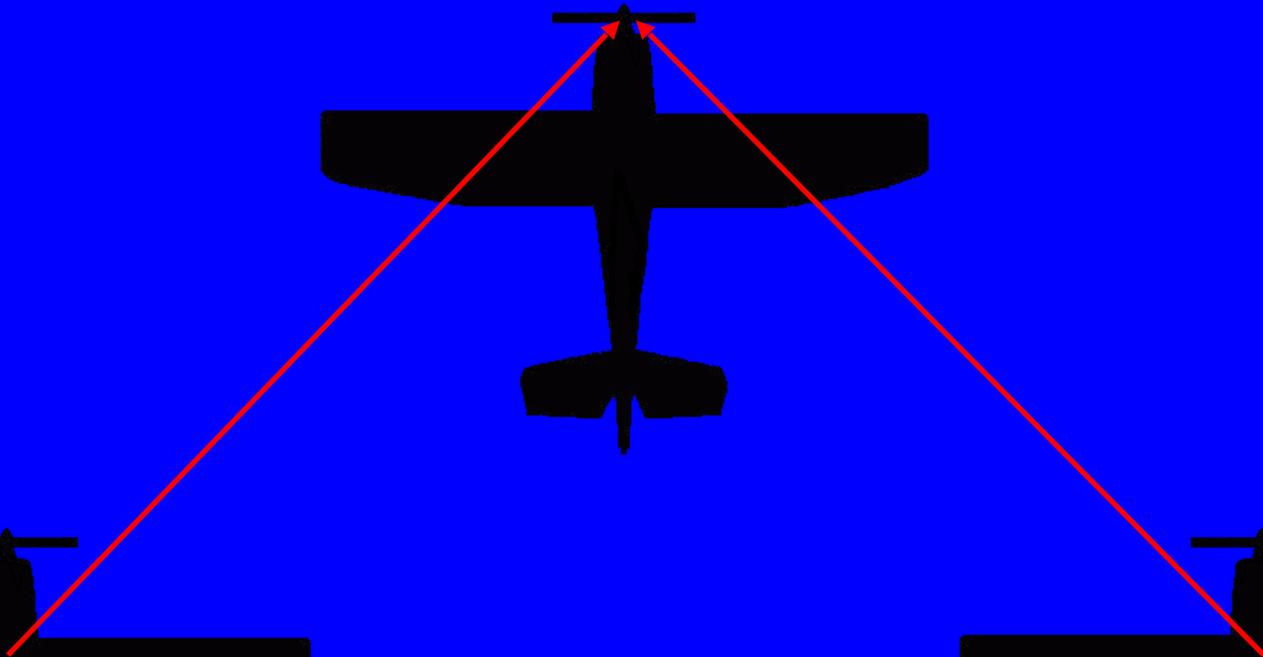
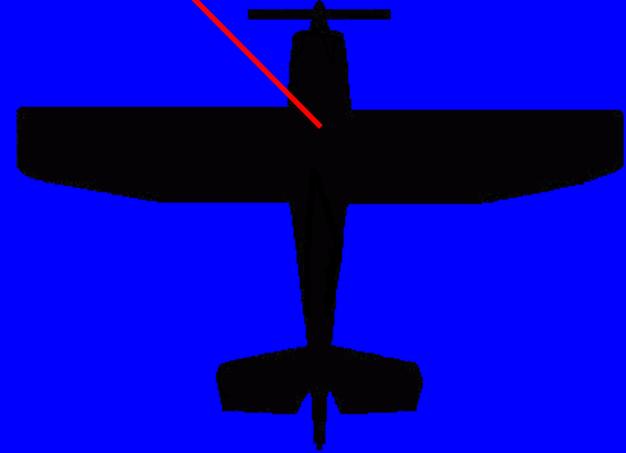
Lead



Chalk 2



Chalk 3



Definitions: Flight

Element Alpha

Not to scale



Element Bravo

Not to scale

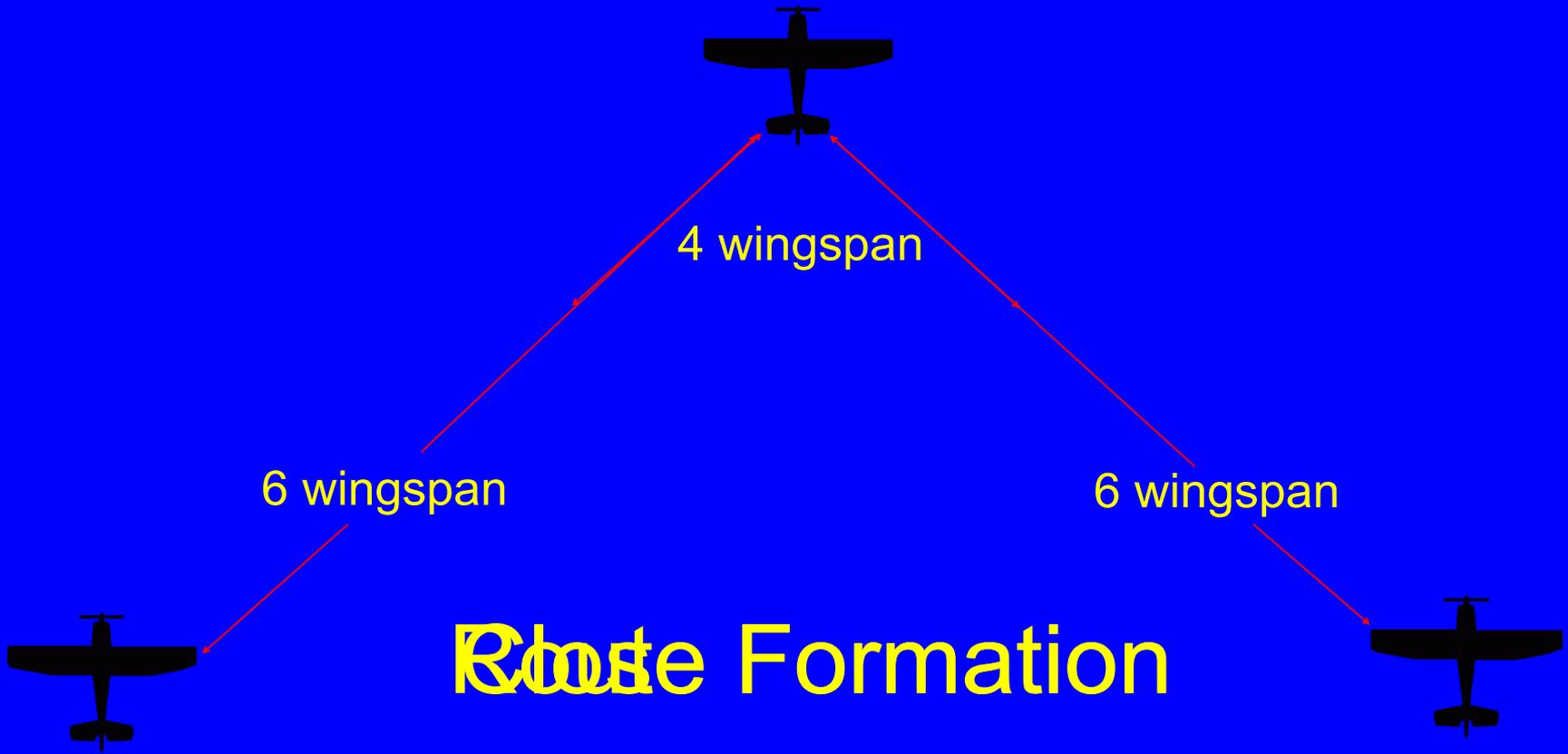


Definitions: Route Formation

- Position that is used for initial join-up
- Approximately 6 wingspan (2 more than our goal of 4 wingspan)
- Easier (less workload) to fly
- Allows for instrument scans, nav, setting up your cockpit

Definitions: Close Formation

- The ultimate “goal” position, 4 wingspan lateral separation
- Does not allow for instrument scan
- Higher workload and concentration
- Counter intuitively easier to maintain station-keeping



Route Formation

Procedures

-Safety-

- KISS
- If you lose sight of lead, separate!!
- If you separate more than 90° off heading, climb to 2300' MSL and proceed to the entry gate of the Fisk arrival. Fly the AirVenture NOTICE procedure.
- Fly your formation, stay with lead.
- Keep off the radio
- Minimize cockpit distractions, use your passengers

Procedures

-Safety-

- Brief the flight and fly the brief
- If you lose sight of lead, separate!!
- There will be no in-flight re-joins!!

Procedures

Pre-Taxi

- Have all pre-flight duties to include run-up, fuel sample, etc. complete prior to formation brief at KUNU. Be completely ready to fly.
- Radios will be setup as: primary com is Air-to-Air frequency typically 122.75 alternates are 122.925 and 123.45
- Second com will be ATC

Procedures

Pre-Taxi

- Element Leads will have appropriate navigation methods set up. Routes will be briefed
- Wingmen will have backup nav set to take over lead as necessary
- Everyone needs to reduce in-plane distractions to the bare minimum
- Only flight Lead & Tail have squawk, all others squawk stand-by.

Procedures

Taxi

- Ensure all members of your element are ready to taxi
- Element Lead will taxi out, closely followed by chalks #2 and #3
- Flight Lead will call to taxi to the runway (No delay between elements)
- Position on the runway ready for takeoff

Procedures

Takeoff

- All aircraft will utilize navigation lights and landing lights in flight (if able).
- Closely sequenced takeoff. No more than 5 seconds between aircraft of the same element
- Elements will be sequenced by their takeoff times by Cessna Shooter.
- Lead ensures smooth application of power

Procedures

Takeoff

- Lead climbs out at the briefed speed.
- Lead maintains NO MORE than 500 fpm climb rate
- Lead shall maintain briefed speed
- Climb rate is secondary
- Chalks 2 & 3 can use a 20kts overtake until within 270' (\approx 8 spans) then slow

Enroute

Everything about the Cessnas 2 Oshkosh flight is predicated on the speed of the elements. We cannot overstate the importance of attaining and properly maintaining your briefed airspeed. If given a choice between climb rate and airspeed, always choose airspeed. This will ensure the required level of safety for the entire flight.

Procedures Enroute

- Lead maintains briefed speed
- Chalks 2 & 3 approach their “route” position \approx 6 span on the correct angle
- Once established *slowly* move in to your close formation \approx 4 span
- Keep wings level with Lead. Move laterally with pedal
- **NEVER BANK INTO LEAD. IF YOU LOSE SIGHT OF LEAD, SEPARATE!**

Procedures Enroute

- After closing on element Lead, maintain fore and aft position with throttle, lateral position with rudder and vertical position with elevator
- At any one time, all 4 controls may need to be manipulated to maintain position.
- It is important to eliminate motion relative to Lead as soon as it is sensed.

Procedures Enroute

- Vertical position will be “stacked down” approximately 10'. (Hold your index finger parallel to the horizon. One finger width between lead and the horizon). Do not climb above Lead!

Safety Tip

- All motion relative to Lead must be eliminated as soon as you can sense it. This will minimize the “accordion effect”
- Climbing above Lead, also known as “stacking up”, may cause you to lose sight of Lead in the background. If you lose sight of Lead, Separate!!
- Keep Lead at your same level or slightly above

Procedures Enroute

- For aircraft with Constant Speed props, leave the RPM at a setting that will allow you to apply power rapidly without damage to your engine. Stay in the “green”.
- Smooth control movements are a must!
- Flying wing, you will likely be putting in control movement then immediately taking it back out. You will never stop trying to maintain position

Procedures

Enroute

- Never take your eyes off Lead. If you look down, Lead will not be where it was.
Guaranteed!
- Don't stare at Lead. Maintain eye movement. This will allow you to better determine relative motion
- Turns will need to be anticipated. If you are inside the turn, you will need to reduce power immediately.

Procedures Enroute

- If you are on the outside of the turn, you will need to increase power immediately
- Maintain your position relative to Lead!
- Enroute turns should be planned not to exceed 20° angle of bank.

Procedures

Descent

- **After** flying over the new waypoint **C20FIN** each element **Lead** will start the turn to final at a bank angle of 20°.
- At the completion of the turn each element will be 4NM from the threshold and lined up with Rwy 36, beginning a shallow descent.
- This descent will be approximately 400 fpm for the 90KIAS section and 500 fpm for the 110KIAS section.

Approach/Arrival

- Wingmen need to reduce power immediately upon initiation of descent to avoid overrun of Lead
- Expect a gear and flaps call at 3 miles DME KOSH. This call will be initiated by element leads.
- You should have C20FIN, OSH36 and KOSH in your GPS as the last three waypoints

Procedures Arrival

- Lead will plan for a mid-field touchdown (yellow dot, 3400' remaining) or further on the RIGHT SIDE of Rwy 36L while keeping speed slightly faster than normal
- Chalk 2 will touchdown in position with Lead on the LEFT SIDE of Rwy 36L
- Chalk 3 will touchdown as far as safely possible down Rwy 36R

Procedures Arrival

- After touchdown all aircraft will maintain their “lane” and continue to the end of the runway.
- All aircraft will expeditiously taxi to the end of the runway knowing that aircraft are touching down behind them

Procedures Arrival

- Follow the ground guides to parking
- Welcome to AirVenture 2026!
- A comprehensive after-action brief will be conducted at the Cessna BaseCamp tent later that evening.
- Bring your notes, comments, and thick skin

Go Arounds

- Apply full power, turn away from the airport, prior to a point abeam the tower, climb to cruise altitude plus 300' (2,300') and proceed to Checkpoint #3
- Wait for last element to pass and immediately fall into trail
- You will now be “Cessna Tail” for ATC purposes

Contingency Plans

- If Lead breaks on the ground, chalk 2 will take over Lead position and take over Lead call-sign
- If chalk 2 breaks, chalk 3 will maintain his position in element and keep call-sign
- A one aircraft element is permissible. The surviving chalk would take Lead call-sign and fly single-ship
- **BOTTOM LINE!** Call-sign equals position in element

Contingency Plans (con't)

- A tug will be standing by at KUNU to assist in moving disabled aircraft off the taxiway or runway
- If an aircraft makes an “off airport” landing, following aircraft will advise ATC and continue the arrival.
- No participating aircraft will provide Search and Rescue!

2026 Training Addendum

- The spacing between elements of the same speed will remain 1,500'. The safety factor of our formation is still maintained by an increase in visual cues presented by the preceding element.
- 2026 will also resume 2 speed groups. The speeds will be 90 and 110 KIAS. You will be briefed on speed groups at your clinic.

2026 Training Addendum

- This year's training should focus on takeoff and especially landing in position.
- Minimize the amount of time boring holes in the sky. Transiting to a suitable airport should allow enroute formation practice.
- If needed, launch flights of two to maximize landing practice.

DELETIONS

- Movement to trail is now eliminated. We will land in position with Chalk 3 going to Rwy 36R.
- Movement to the “cold side” of the runway is now eliminated.

2026 Training Addendum

- We will repeat the route procedures from the last three years, not the same route, but the same procedure. Ensure that you practice “fly over” waypoint procedures. This is tracking to the waypoint, waiting until your “to-from” flag flips then performing a standard rate turn to the next waypoint. Every element lead will need to do this exactly

2026 Training Addendum

- KOSH tower prefers us to land Rwy 36, which is 8,000'. Practice landing mid-field at your home airfield while carrying some airspeed. This is a lot harder to accomplish than you may think. Practice!
- Review this presentation to the point that we won't need to re-teach it again during the brief.

2026 Training Addendum

- If you have any questions about the flight or the procedures, email me at: jason.f.sskelton@gmail.com and put “Cessnas2Oshkosh” in the subject line
- See you at Juneau!!