C 2.1 Formation Briefing Outline.

Most CJAA formation flights are for training purposes (which do not require the resources or urgency of a military operation). Many CJAA members are former military pilots and tend to emulate the briefing style used there for years and hundreds of missions. The military formation flight briefing may not be the best fit for typical CJAA formation flights. The following general steps are tailored to the typical CJAA training mission. The elements outlined are applicable to all types of formation flight briefings.

Preamble

Briefings should be exactly as the word implies: BRIEF!   In-depth instruction or teaching should be avoided when possible during a flight brief. It is best done before or after flight briefings in a classroom or academic setting with ample time available for discussion and questions. The flight briefing is a streamlined method to disseminate necessary information to team members.

The flight leader lays out the plan to achieve mission objectives using procedures that are well understood by all flight members. The flight lead is the key to success for a safe formation flight and all members should support him by exercising strict flight discipline during the briefing, flight, and debrief unless safety is an issue. Standard FAST procedures should be used to the maximum extent possible to avoid confusion and minimize briefing time.

Pre-coordinate before the Brief.

Before the brief, speak with each flight member to find out their objectives, availability, capabilities, currency and aircraft status. This is especially important if there are dissimilar aircraft involved. Know about, and adjust for any special items each flight member may possess: hot seats, smoke, G-limit, runway requirements, radios, instruments, etc. Arrange for supporting logistics to be in-place: ground handling, working area, time, fuel, and weather. Set a briefing time and location, develop a plan for the flight, write up the brief, then prepare the area as needed. Delegate simple tasks to flight members to reduce work load on the flight lead. For example, ask one of the other pilots to gather weather, NOTAMs and TFRs.

Step 1: Set clear objectives.

These should be stated in general simple terms, not too complicated. Keep objectives simple, definable, and achievable based on flight members skill level, proficiency, and aircraft capabilities.

Step 2: Disseminate hard data.

Go over the formation card information very thoroughly. Key information should be written down somewhere for access in flight as needed: crew and aircraft line-up, deputy lead, registration #'s, frequencies, working area location and parameters, Bingo fuel, hard deck, weather, etc. Remind everyone that time synchronization is via GPS time, which should be readily available to all.

Step 3: Talk through flight maneuvers.

This portion should take the longest time. Avoid the tendency to jump around, keep a simple chronological flow. Identify all planned maneuvers with the associated execution keys. Successful formation flights are

predictable with no surprises. There should be little to no teaching during the brief, leave that to the IP's within the flight. Do communicate performance expectations, set parameters as needed, identify technique verses procedure, and emphasize dissimilar aircraft characteristics.

Step 4: Cover some contingencies.

You cannot cover them all, so do not waste valuable time. Simply say "FAST standard" procedures, or quiz a flight members for answers that show understanding. Contingencies should cover a sampling of abnormal issues such as: poor weather, aborts, drop outs, alternate missions, IFE's, chase expectations, breakout procedures, and special items like NOTAMS, local procedures, bailout considerations.

Step 5: Wrap up.

Poll the lowest experienced flight member to the highest for additions, questions, or clarifications. Set a debrief location and time. When everything is complete, update and set a reasonable start time.