

# Movement Formation (FM 3-90-Tactics)

Question: What are the 7 movement formations?

Answer: Column, Line, Wedge, Echelon (left or right), Vee, Diamond, Box

Question: What FM covers movement formations?

Answer: FM 3-90 Chapter 2

Question: What are the 3 movement techniques?

Answer: Traveling, Traveling Overwatch, Bounding Overwatch

Question: What is Traveling?

Answer: Traveling is a movement technique used when speed is necessary and contact with enemy forces is **not likely**. All elements of the unit move simultaneously.

Question: What is Traveling Overwatch?

Answer: Traveling overwatch is a movement technique used when contact with enemy forces is **possible**. The trailing element moves at variable speeds and may pause for short periods to overwatch the lead element.

Question: What is Bounding Overwatch?

Answer: Bounding overwatch is a movement technique used when contact with enemy forces is **expected**. The unit moves by bounds. One element always halts in position to overwatch another element while it moves. The overwatching element positions to support the moving unit by fire or maneuver.

Question: What are the 5 forms of maneuver?

Answer: Frontal attack, Penetration, Envelopment, Turning movement, Infiltration

Question: What is a Frontal Attack?

Answer: A frontal attack is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to destroy a weaker enemy force or fix a larger enemy force in place over a broad front.

Question: What is a Penetration?

Answer: A penetration is a form of maneuver in which a force attacks on a narrow front.

Question: What is Envelopment?

Answer: Envelopment is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force avoids an enemy's principal defense by attacking along an assailable flank.

Question: What is a Turning Movement?

Answer: A turning movement is a form of maneuver in which the attacking force seeks to avoid the enemy's principal defensive positions by attacking to the rear of their current positions forcing them to move or divert forces to meet the threat.

Question: What is Infiltration?

Answer: An infiltration is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces.

**Column Formation:** The column formation is a movement formation with elements arranged one behind another.

Pros:

- Provides the best formation to move large forces quickly, especially with limited routes and limited visibility
- Makes enemy contact with a small part of the total force while facilitating control and allowing the unit to quickly mass forces.
- Provides a base for easy transition to other formations.
- Works in restricted terrain

Cons:

- Units can only immediately apply the majority of the column's firepower on the column's flanks.
- The length of the column affects movement and terrain management.
- Possibly inadvertently bypassing enemy units or positions and exposing the unit's flanks.
- Running head-on into an enemy deployed perpendicular to the column's direction of movement.

**Line Formation:** A line formation is a movement formation in which elements move abreast of each other.

Pros:

- Facilitates speed and shock in closing with an enemy force.
- Allows the coverage of wide frontages.
- Facilitates the occupation of attack by fire or support by fire positions.

Cons:

- Provides less flexibility of maneuver than other formations since it does not distribute units in depth.
- Linear deployment allows a unit deployed on line to bring only limited firepower to bear on either flank.
- Provides limited or no reserve.

- Limits overwatch forces.
- Limits control of a unit using a line formation in restricted terrain or under conditions of limited visibility.

**Wedge Formation:** The wedge formation is a movement formation with one lead element and the trail elements are paired off abreast of each other on the flanks.

**Pros:**

- Provides maximum firepower forward and allows units to use a large portion of their firepower on the flanks.
- Allows rapid crossing of open terrain when enemy contact is not expected.
- Facilitates control.
- Allows for rapid changes in the direction of movement.
- Facilitates the rapid change to other movement formations.

**Cons:**

- Requires sufficient maneuver space or multiple routes for dispersion laterally and in depth.
- Lacks ease of control in restricted terrain or poor visibility.

**Echelon Formation:** An echelon formation is a movement formation with elements arranged on an angle to the left or to the right of the direction of attack (echelon left, echelon right).

**Pros:**

- Facilitates control in open terrain.
- Allows the concentration of the unit's firepower forward and to the flank in the direction of the echelon.
- Allows forces not in contact to maneuver against known enemy forces because all elements will not simultaneously make contact.

**Cons:**

- Difficult to maintain control over the unit in restricted terrain.
- Lacks security or firepower on the opposite side of the echelon.

**Vee Formation:** A vee formation is a movement formation with two elements abreast and one or more elements trailing.

**Pros:**

- Provides maximum firepower forward and good firepower to the flanks, but the firepower on the flanks is less than that provided by the wedge.

- Facilitates a continued maneuver after making contact and a rapid transition to the assault.
- Allows a unit to change quickly to a line, wedge, or column formation.

**Cons:**

- Reorientation in the direction of movement, such as a 90-degree turn, are more difficult than using the wedge.
- Control is difficult in restricted terrain and under limited-visibility conditions.
- Lead element masks fires of the trail element.
- Requires sufficient maneuver space for dispersion laterally and in depth.

**Diamond Formation:** A diamond formation is a movement formation with one element leading, one element positioned on each flank, and the remaining elements to the rear.

**Pros:**

- Allowing units to maneuver to either flank immediately, regardless of which subordinate element makes enemy contact.
- Facilitates making enemy contact with the smallest possible force yet provides all around security.
- Provides firepower to the front and flanks.
- Changes easily and quickly to another formation.
- Facilitates speed of movement while remaining easy to control.
- Provides an uncommitted force for use as a reserve.

**Cons:**

- Requires sufficient maneuver space or multiple routes for dispersion laterally and in depth.
- Requires four subordinate maneuver elements.

**Box Formation:** The box formation is a movement formation with elements arranged in a box or square, or two elements up and two elements back.

**Pros:**

- Allows a unit to change quickly and easily to any other formation.
- Facilitates rapid movement yet still provides all around security.
- Provides firepower to the front and flanks.
- Maintains control more easily than a line formation

**Cons:**

- The requirement for sufficient maneuver space or multiple routes for dispersion.

- At battalion and company echelons, the possibility exists of enemy units massing on one element at a time as the presence of other friendly forces can mask other element's direct fires.