

Want to move up from grunt? Get more involved? Maybe you're just tired of not knowing enough or having (to your mind) subpar leaders? Either way, fireteam leading is the easiest way to start the transition into leadership roles. However, a will to do more won't get you everywhere. It can be hard to take a role where your actions affect more than yourself. This guide should help alleviate that by giving you access to many people's experiences with FTLing over the past year and a half that we've been involved in Arma.

That said, most of this guide is going to be written by myself, and as such will probably reflect my style of FTLing more than the other styles. As I absolutely do not pretend to know anything and everything related to the FTL role, it's important to know that this guide is not gospel. It's up to you to combine your own knowledge and personality with the elements contained within in a manner that you think is best. With that disclaimer out of the way forwards we go!

Fireteam Leading

FTLing is by far the most active leadership role. While the CO and SL are often most involved with coming up with plans, tactics, and movement, the FTL's job is to translate those tactics into results. This means directing fire, spotting targets, and generally being the guy who gets things done. Generally (and I do mean generally, as this depends on the specific SL you're working with) you won't be expected to make your own movements. The SL will tell you where he wants you, which direction you should cover, or something of that nature. You will then direct each of your members to maximize your force (this could be helping the AR adjust his fire, giving sectors to each member of your team to cover, etc). Rinse and repeat.

Before we get into all of the FTL-specific info though, let's go over some basic leadership skills.

Getting People to Listen to You

In general, the louder you are the more people will follow. It's an unfortunate effect of the way people are programmed, but it also makes it easy to take advantage of. While commanding your team, make sure to use STVolume to put yourself on "Shout", and always used a raised voice (apologize to roommates/family members ahead of time).

The next step is to ensure you don't speak excessively. Keep your statements and orders concise and loud. When you get told to move, say "Team, we're moving NW, wedge formation". Do not say "Uh guys, we're going in, uh, this direction, I mean NW". Also important is the pause in between each statement. Don't say the above statement quickly. You want to say "Team", short breath, "we're moving NW, wedge". This gives people time to recognize that you're giving an order and to make sure they're ready to receive it, instead of catching the order halfway through.

Your movements should also have pauses. When you start moving in a direction, move at a walk and wait for your team to get into proper position before moving to a jog. If you say your order quickly then take off into the underbrush, don't be angry when your team doesn't follow you. Always make sure to give an order to stay put if you want to go somewhere alone.

The end result of these two things is that your team will become conditioned to:

1. Listen to your voice when it is raised and authoritative
2. Follow you when you move slowly in a direction

Eventually, they'll start doing these things automatically and you can start giving orders and moving faster. A new player can see this effect when playing with a team full of veterans. They'll pick up orders instantaneously and move on you, in correct formation, instantly. Your goal is to make sure everyone you lead gets to this point.

When you really need something done, use a specific name. Saying "someone cover southeast" is the surest way to have that direction not covered. Once someone's name is said, it becomes their responsibility alone so they'll follow that order. Remember this, as it's vitally important in high stress situations when people's heads shut down a bit.

A Note on Procedures

Everything following this will be procedures to use for various situations. This will include formations (yes, they're important), fighting techniques, how to maneuver, etc. All of these things should be drilled into your team's heads. Whenever someone does something not in line with what they should, remind them of the proper procedure. Yes, it's a bit heavy. You'll feel like a broken record. Slowly, however, your team will start doing these things automatically. Whenever you stop you'll get people calling out which direction they're watching. People will move with proper spacing and looking in the proper directions. I've found that most of our players like it when this happens. They want it to be more serious. That said, it's important to be open with your team. At the beginning of a game make sure to state that if they have problems with your leading style, say it immediately and you'll adjust. Always be respectful, never condescending. Be professional, not personal. So long as you don't insult when you speak, everything should be smooth sailing.

Universal Techniques

The first rule of combat is to always be looking in every direction. 4 people can cover 90 degrees each, a simple task that can be done whenever you stop or are moving. This is especially important in dense foliage or urban situations, when threats can appear from any direction at any time. The amount of people I've seen go down because they were looking in the same direction as the rest of their team is astounding.

Directions should always be made with a cardinal direction or bearing, depending on how specific it needs to be. Generally, movement should be called by cardinal direction and enemies by bearing. “We’re moving bearing 286” is too much info when you could say “West-northwest”, and “enemy man southeast” is too little. The exception is for when information gets put over the radio. That may need to be adjusted for brevity or more detail.

Finally, spacing should always be maintained. You should never lose more than a single person to one 40mm grenade. The easiest way is to ensure that people stay outside the closest STHUD circle. This will sometimes depend on your available communication methods. If you have no radios and rely on direct chat, you’ll have to tighten up your spacing until you can reliably talk to the people behind you.

Movement

Typically you’ll be moving according to your SL. Even if you get free reign to move where you want, you should stay close to your squad. Also, the SL orders are not usually specific. Feel free to move around 5-10m to better cover so long as you can still see what the SL intended for you to cover. Only update your SL on your position if you have to move far away from the ordered position to get good cover.

When given an order to move, you want to let your team know that you’re moving, which direction you’re moving, the target destination (you can sometimes combine these two), and which formation. An example would be (remember that a comma means a decent pause to let people open their ears more) “Team, we’re moving to the treeline northwest, wedge formation”. Walk in the designated direction to let your team form up, then move to the correct pace. You can skip the last step if things are urgent, like you see a tank approaching and need to move now. Team members are pretty good at following people sprinting away.

Example Formations, with sightlines people should be covering, are:

- [Wedge](#) - go-to formation, use it for every except when expecting imminent contact
- [Line](#) - use for imminent contact, like when you know you’re engaging an enemy force over this hill or once you get to the edge of a forest
- [File](#) - use only in tight spaces where a wedge is impractical to use or control, or if you’re really not expecting to take contact. Places where you’ll use a file include dense foliage or urban combat.

Those are the basic shapes that you can use either when moving independently or as a squad. However, squad formations are slightly different in how they combine and are used. The SL will usually designate a squad formation while moving together.

Squad formations are:

- [Column](#) - used when travelling and not expecting imminent contact (it allows the second team to move where it is needed most, either the left or right flank of the lead team)
- [Line](#) - used for imminent contact, such as advancing through a hostile forest or across fields
- [File](#) - Same as fireteam file. Tight spaces or casual jogging only.

Your next closest squadmate should only ever be on the edge or past the edge of your inner STHUD circle.

Bounding

Yes, it gets its own section.

Bounding is a “safe” way to advance using movement and overwatch teams. This is used in combat and scales from 2 people to the entire platoon (farther in real life, but we don’t do company ops). You can also use it when you need to advance safely and not taking fire, like on a town. Basically, any time you need to advance either when you’re taking fire or you think you should be taking fire, use bounding.

Receiving a bounding order is simple. Your SL will tell you where the end goal is, what type of bound, which team moves first, and once you’re ready, when to go. You’ll want to communicate this to your team. The procedure to bound is below (all calls are over the radio):

1. General procedure (move, set, etc)
 - a. First team calls “Moving” and heads to their target (some cover about 20m away, depending on how far you can get safely).
 - b. Once they arrive, they secure their position, ensure that the second team is safe to move, and then calls “Set”.
 - c. Second team calls “Moving” and runs up to their target cover
 - d. Second team arrives and performs the same actions as step 2, calling “Set”.
 - e. Repeat until you are at the final destination.
 - f. NOTE: The bound leader (usually SL, but can be FTL) always stays with the second team
2. Successive Bounding
 - a. First team moves up, second team moves to either the same position or a position equally as far.
 - b. First team then moves again, repeat
 - c. Is slower but safer
3. Alternate Bounding

- a. First team moves up, then second team moves to a position past first team, then first team moves past second team, etc
- b. Is faster

You'll notice that most of the calls are from one FTL to the other. The SL should stay hands-off during this process.

You can also set up bounds within your fireteam, with 2 2-man teams. The order is basically identical. Say who the teams are, "You and you are team 1, so-so and I are team 2", then give a destination, type, first team moving, and go signal.

This is a vital tool to keep advancing under fire. A common trap is to stay static and shoot instead of maneuvering. Proper usage of bounding allows you to advance on the enemy and destroy them faster and with a more efficient use of ammunition.

What to do in Combat

We've covered movement, now we get to the fun part. It's also where my style of FTLing will differ from others. I tend to micromanage more than others, and this is entirely up to preference. Find a balance that suits you best.

Once you are engaged in combat, it is your duty to maximize your effectiveness. This means directing fire to priority targets, adjusting your grenadier or automatic rifleman's aim (assuming the AAR is not doing this), and keeping tabs on the enemy. You still need to maintain security in direct combat, although the task should shift from your team members to yourself. I typically let my 3 men engage the forward enemy while keeping my own head on a swivel to watch the other 270 degrees.

Only when your team's needs are met and they are at maximum efficiency should you directly engage the enemy. Even then, fire a few short bursts or a 40mm grenade before checking your team and your surroundings again. You alone are responsible to avoid getting tunnel vision on your target.

Most importantly, always keep track of your team members. We can be bad at spotting casualties, and considering the limited time they have to live you need to be able to pull them back and start first aid quickly. While everybody on the team should be checking on their buddies, you're the last line of defense for catching casualties so be sure to keep your eye out.

The Radio

Yes, the radio. An incredibly useful tool when used correctly, but failure to take everything into consideration can really muddle the radio nets and make useful information hard to find.

Generally you'll have a 343 to talk to your squad leader, and your team will have to rely on direct chat. This will mostly cover sending messages up, regardless of which radio you technically have.

As FTL, you are the first filter of information to get into the radio net. Your team should be reporting anything they think has the slightest chance of being important, with you aggregating everything and deciding what needs to go up. These should be important things, like:

- Emergencies (need a medic, low on ammo, etc)
- Spotted enemies (especially vehicles)
- Your location if you're far away from the SL
- If a friendly unit is taking heavy casualties
- Requests to open fire
- Sitreps

There are others, and generally it'll be up to your discretion. All of these should contain details, like direction, quantity, and importance. One thing that requires a bit more info is the sitrep.

Your SL should be regularly asking you for a sitrep every couple of minutes or after an engagement. For these, you should answer with (in order):

- Your Location (should typically be a direction, not bearing)
- Casualties
- Wounds
- Ammunition stock
- Combat effectiveness

Example:

"One, SL, Sitrep"

"SL, One, we are to your southwest, one KIA, one wounded, plenty of 5.56 but need AT, can move but not attack"

Wrapping Up

That's about it for now. This may be updated as I get comments or think of new content, but it should remain a good reference. Future guides will be put up for SL and CO, and they'll focus mostly on those roles instead of general leadership.

Thanks for reading and I hope you enjoy any FTL roles you take!