

# STARSHIP COMBAT

Space combat is a terrifying experience. Massive batteries of macro-weaponry fling shells and munitions, torpedoes the size of hab-blocks streak through the void, and ships are consumed by fire or explode with the fury of a nova. If a void shield fails or armour plating buckles, thousands of lives can be snuffed out in an instant.

However, there will come times when a Rogue Trader has little choice but to run out his guns and prepare for battle. After all, they are not the only ones who desire the galaxy's wealth, and to take it for themselves, Rogue Traders must be prepared to fight for it.

## ROUNDS, TURNS, AND TIME—IN SPACE

Space combat in *Rogue Trader* is handled in a similar manner to normal combat. Space travel is normally handled in Narrative Time. Other situations, such as dodging a hurtling asteroid at the last moment, are best broken up by the GM into the standard Turns and Rounds. However, certain situations—particularly ship-to-ship combat—require a slight adjustment to the Structured Time approach (see page 234).

Space warfare is very different from the close-in, personal fighting of hand-to-hand combat and short ranged firefights. Great warships can spend days chasing down their opponents and hours manoeuvring into position for single devastating volleys from their broadsides. Therefore, the GM should break up space combat into Strategic Rounds and Strategic Turns. While these function mechanically in the same fashion as the Rounds and Turns of Structured Time, the interval of time they represent is longer.

A Strategic Round lasts for roughly thirty minutes, during which, each ship involved in the scene takes a Strategic Turn. Each Strategic Turn overlaps, so the actions of each ship occur almost simultaneously. However, in game terms, each ship acts in a sequence determined by the combat's Initiative Order (see below).

A Strategic Round is completed when every participant in the combat has completed their Strategic Turn.

## SPACE COMBAT OVERVIEW

When a Round of space combat begins, the GM and players follow certain steps to determine what happens. These steps are similar to those followed when regular combat begins, and the differences are specified below.

## Surprise

It is certainly possible for one ship to surprise another in combat. Since Strategic Rounds last a half hour, it is highly unlikely that even a surprised crew will be completely unable to react. However, the attacker may be able to land a few crippling blows as the defender's crew struggles to prepare their ship for combat. See the sidebar for the effects of surprise.

## Initiative

At the beginning of the combat, the captain of each ship rolls 1d10 and adds his ship's Detection bonus (the tens digit in its Detection characteristic). Bonuses that apply to a character's Initiative in Structured Time (regular combat) do not apply, otherwise Initiative in space combat works the same as regular combat (see page 236).

## Taking Turns

Starting with the ship with the highest Initiative roll, each ship takes a Strategic Turn, during which it will make a Movement and Shooting Action. Players may take Extended Actions as well.

## The End of the Round

Once every ship has taken its Strategic Turn, the Strategic Round ends. Continue to play successive Rounds until the GM determines the combat is over.

## ACTIONS

During each Strategic Round, each ship receives one Strategic Turn. Like regular combat, each ship can perform Actions during this turn. The Actions a ship performs fall into two categories: Manoeuvre Actions and Shooting Actions. Each ship must make one Manoeuvre Action and may make one Shooting Action during their turn. Each of these Actions must be performed by a separate Explorer. Any Explorers who did not perform either Action may perform an Extended Action (see page 215) instead.

Individual characters will take their turns during their ship's Strategic Turn. They do not roll for initiative separately. At the beginning of each ship's turn, the players (or the GM, if it is an NPC's ship) determine which Shooting Action, Manoeuvre Action, and Extended Actions the players will perform, and in which order. All Actions (and the order they are performed in) must be determined at the beginning of the starship's Turn.

Players may perform Actions in any order they choose, so an Extended Action may be performed before a Shooting or Manoeuvre Action in order to provide it with a bonus, or a ship may move before or after shooting.

Note: Actions often require a Combined Skill Test, such as a **Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test**. After all, even an ace pilot must rely to an extent on his equipment. To make these tests, add the ship's ability, such as Manoeuvrability, to the character's Skill, such as Pilot (Space Craft). Then perform the test using the combined value.



## REPRESENTING COMBAT CONCRETELY OR ABSTRACTLY

Space Combat in *Rogue Trader* is an abstract representation of warfare between spaceships. This was done to keep the game relatively simple—after all, this is not a game exclusively of ship-to-ship combat.

The rules are written so that players may use a standard 'grid' roleplaying tactical map while playing ship combats. This makes it easier for the players and GM to instantly understand the relative positions of all the combatants. Many blank tactical maps can even be written on in wet-erase pens, so that the GM can sketch out asteroid belts, planets, or other celestial phenomena. The simplest way to use a tactical map is to say that each square represents one Void Unit of distance. Tokens, or playing pieces, can be used to represent ships—simply indicate which edge of the token is the 'front,' and go from there.

Alternatively, players can do away with the tactical map and simply use a flat playing surface and a tape measure. One inch on the tape measure equals one Void Unit.

If the GM prefers, he can opt for a looser, 'narrative' system of combat. In this system, information like range is less important, as are the precise positions of the starships involved. For example, the GM might announce that there is a ship coming around a nearby moon to attack the Explorers' ship. The Explorers ask how far away the ship is, and GM replies that they are out of range, but if they make a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test** with enough successes, they can close the range enough to fire on their opponent. The players make the test, and the GM determines that they are close enough to fire on their foe without penalty.

## SURPRISE

Surprise affects the first Strategic Round in space combat. As in regular combat, the GM must ultimately determine which vessels are Surprised, based on the actions of the players and NPCs and the environment their ships are operating in. Here are some guidelines to take into account.

- **Hidden vessels:** The fury of a running plasma drive is almost impossible to hide in open space. However, a canny captain may use a convenient asteroid field, nebula, or even planet to mask his engine signatures. Alternatively, ships can go on Silent Running to lurk in the cold darkness of space while his opponents fly right to them. A proper Scrutiny+Detection Test with the ship's detection equipment may warn of the danger.
- **Ambush and treachery:** In some situations, a friend may turn to foe in an instant. Such situations are highly dangerous if the ambusher is in close formation with his target. He may not even have to manoeuvre to place his target squarely within his sights. Although it is up to the GM, a skilled scanner operator may detect the last-minute powering up of the weapons with a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny+Detection Test**.
- **Extenuating circumstances:** Ships' scanners and detection equipment are fickle devices, and easily fooled by powerful celestial phenomena such as solar flares, magnetic storms, and unpredictable gravity fluctuations. The interference may be powerful enough to mask the approach of attackers.

Using these guidelines (and any others he deems necessary), the GM determines at the beginning of combat if anyone is Surprised. Any attackers firing on Surprised ships gain a +20 bonus to attack rolls against them during the first Round of combat.

## MANOEUVRE ACTIONS

During space combat, opposing ships can be less than a hundred metres apart, or have many thousands of kilometres between them. The latter is far more likely—it is rare that a gunner on a ship can see his target with an unaided eye.

In space combat, the distance from one ship to another, or how far a ship moves in a Strategic Turn, is measured in void units (VUs). The distance represented by a single VU is deliberately abstract and left open to some interpretation due to space's vast size. However, a good guideline is a single VU equals roughly 10,000 kilometres. Since even a single VU represents a vast distance, it is possible for two ships to be within one VU of each other. At that range, space combat becomes truly brutal, with ramming attempts and even boarding actions.

Basic space combat begins with all ships involved at a distance from each other determined by the scenario and the GM. There may be other phenomena in the combat as well, a nearby planet,

perhaps, or even a vast asteroid field (see page 226).

When beginning combat, the GM and players should determine the direction each starship is facing. A starship's facing is the direction it will travel when moving directly forward.

When a starship takes its Manoeuvre Action, it chooses to move directly forward a number of VUs equal to its Speed value or half its Speed value. This is the default action of a starship—since starships are huge vessels with immense momentum, players do not have the option of simply not moving their ship. Once the starship has moved forward by its Speed value or half its Speed value, it may turn. Transports, raiders, frigates, and other ships of equivalent size (i.e., Hull Integrity and Available Space) can turn up to 90 degrees to the left or right (or port and starboard). Unless otherwise stated, all other ships may turn up to 45 degrees instead.

Either version of this Manoeuvre (moving at half or full Speed value) is considered the starship's default Manoeuvre, and does not require any



## NPC ACTIONS

It is entirely possible that the players will want to perform more actions than there are players in a group. In this case, the GM should remember that the players' characters command a ship with thousands of crewmembers. If the players want to have a crewmember perform any of the following Actions, they can. If they do so, the GM will roll to see if the Action is successful, counting the crewmember's appropriate characteristic (see Table 8-9 below).

However, the GM should be careful not to let the players delegate too many tasks to their NPCs. In general, the GM should only allow the NPCs aboard a vessel to perform three Actions per Strategic Round. Alternatively, the GM can allow the NPCs aboard a vessel to perform a number of Actions per Strategic Round equal to the tens column of the NPC crew's Skill rating. So, for example, a Competent crew could perform three Actions, while a Veteran crew could perform five. Either option is valid, and the GM should select one to use when setting up his game.

Players should keep in mind their NPC crewmembers are rarely as skilled as they are. Also, GMs should use common sense when dealing with the delegation of tasks to NPCs, and are encouraged to require the Explorers to perform certain, more important, actions personally. The idea is to keep the players involved in a combat, and not have it come down to a series of NPC activities and dice rolls.

Table 8-9 can also be used to generate statistics for the crews of enemy or NPC vessels. Enemy vessels can perform a number of Extended Actions (or other actions such as firefighting) equal to the number of Actions other NPC vessels can perform.

Skill Tests to perform. However, a skilled pilot can use more advanced Manoeuvre Actions to modify this Manoeuvre. Each Manoeuvre modifies (but does not replace) the basic Manoeuvre action mentioned above, and only one Manoeuvre may be selected per Turn. Unless specified otherwise, a starship's turn may never be more than 90 degrees.

If a starship ever fails its Test while performing a Manoeuvre, it simply makes either version of its default Manoeuvre (it moves forward either half its Speed value or its full Speed value, then may turn).

### Adjust Bearing

This is used to decrease the distance a starship must move before it can turn. First, the ship decides if it is moving half its Speed value or its full Speed value. Then, the helmsman makes a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+**

**Manoeuvrability Test**. On a success, the starship may turn after moving one VU less than its Speed value.

For every degree of success, it may turn after moving one less VU. A starship must move at

least one VU before turning. Once the starship has turned, it must move the remaining distance so its complete movement is equal to its half or full Speed value.

### Adjust Speed

This is used to adjust the distance a starship is required to move. First, the ship decides if it is moving half its Speed value or its full Speed value. Then, the helmsman makes a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test**. On a success, he may increase or decrease the number of VUs his ship moves by one. For every degree of success, he may increase or decrease that number by an additional one. The starship may not move less than 0 VUs forward (the starship may come to a stop using its retro-thrusters, but cannot move in reverse). The starship may not move double or more its Speed value using this Manoeuvre (only Flank Speed allows that).

### Adjust Speed & Bearing

This is used when a starship wants to turn earlier while moving more slowly or quickly. First, the ship decides if it is moving half its Speed value or its full Speed value. Then, the helmsman makes a **Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test**. On a success, he may increase or decrease the number of VUs his ship moves by 1, and may turn after moving one VU less than its Speed Value (as above). Likewise, every degree of success awards the benefits of Adjust Speed and Adjust Bearing. However, the limitations of both Manoeuvre Actions apply.

### Come to New Heading

This is used to make radical course changes. The helmsman makes a **Difficult (-10) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test**. Success means the starship may turn when it has moved half its Speed value, then turn again when it has moved its full Speed value. The ship suffers -20 to any Ballistic Skill Tests to fire its weapons during this turn.

### Disengage

This gives the starship a chance to flee the battle by making a radical course change and shutting off its systems, attempting to hide amongst the vastness of the void. This Manoeuvre may not be performed if the starship is within 8 VUs of any enemy. The helmsman makes a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test** against an

TABLE 8-9: NPC CREW RATINGS

Crew Rating	Skills and Characteristics
Incompetent	20
Competent	30
Crack	40
Veteran	50
Elite	60



## RAMMING AND BOARDING ACTIONS

There are desperate times in the fury of space combat when a captain's only course of action is to use his own starship as a weapon. If a starship ends its Manoeuvre Action within one VU of an enemy vessel and its bow is facing said vessel, the starship may give up its Shooting Action this turn and ram the ship instead. The helmsman must make a **Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test**. If he succeeds, the ship crashes into its target, doing damage based on its hull size—1d5 for transports and raiders, 1d10 for frigates, 2d5 for light cruisers, and 2d10 for cruisers. The ship adds the die roll to its prow armour value for total damage inflicted. This damage ignores void shields. The ramming ship then takes damage equal to the defending ship's Armour plus 1d5 to their prow armour, also ignoring void shields.

However, sometimes, the best course of action is to crash into the enemy, send across parties of armsmen and ratings, and take their ship by storm. This is called a boarding action.

If a starship ends its Manoeuvre Action within 1 VU of its target, it may give up its shooting action to Board the target. The helmsman must make a **Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test**. If he succeeds, the two ships crash together and the boarding action begins. While two ships are involved in a boarding action, neither of them can take Manoeuvre or Shooting Actions (meaning the two ships remain stationary), although individual characters may still take Extended Actions. The ships are locked together, and the only way a ship can break free is by making a **Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test** at the beginning of its turn. If a ship attempts to break free and fails, however, it will suffer a -20 to the subsequent opposed Command Test (see below).

The two ships take their Strategic Turns simultaneously, dropping to last in the initiative order. During their turns, two characters, one from each ship (whoever is leading the ship's warriors), make an opposed Command Test. The ship with the larger Crew Population value will receive a +10 bonus to its character's Command Test for every full 10 points difference in Crew Population between the two ships. The ship with the higher remaining Hull Integrity provides a +10 bonus to its character's Command Test for every full 10 points difference in Crew Population between the two ships. Each ship's turret rating also provides a bonus (see page 220).

For each degree the winner wins by, he may choose to inflict one of the following options on his opponent. The loser may either suffer 1d5 Crew Population and 1d5 Morale damage (representing the crew cutting through the enemy), or 1 point of Hull Integrity damage (representing the crew setting charges and doing as much damage as possible). Damage to Hull Integrity will also result in damage to Crew Population and Morale as normal (see page 221).

The ship that has lost the opposed Command Test must then roll a d100 and compare it to their current Morale. If they roll an equal or lower number than their Morale, their crew continues to fight. During the next Strategic Turn, both ships will make opposed Command Tests again. If, however, the losing ship rolls higher than their current Morale, their crew routes and surrenders to their captors. If the ship is an NPC vessel, it surrenders. If it is the Explorers' vessel, the characters face a grim choice—surrender to their foes, or try and flee as best they can...

opposed **Challenging (+0) Detection+Scrutiny Test** from opponents within 20 VUs. Provided their number of successes is greater than the successes of each enemy ship, the ship leaves combat, and may not reenter it. Whether it succeeds or fails, the ship may not fire any weapons this turn.

Once a starship has successfully disengaged from combat, it may not reengage its opponents unless the GM specifically allows otherwise. Additionally, the Disengage Manoeuvre cannot be used to initiate a Stern Chase. This is because the disengaging ship is shutting down all non-essential systems, including its engines, scanners, and weapons, and doing its best to pretend it isn't there. It will remain that way for several hours or even days, before restarting its systems (hoping that everyone else has already left the area).

### Evasive Manoeuvres

This is used to help avoid enemy fire. The helmsman makes a **Difficult (-10) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability Test**. Success (and every subsequent degree of success) imposes a -10 penalty to all shooting directed against the starship until the beginning of its next Turn. The starship suffers the same penalty to its own shooting during this time.

## SHOOTING ACTIONS

After completing its Manoeuvre Action, a ship has the option of firing its weapons. Each Weapon Component may be fired once per Strategic Turn, and all Weapon Components must be fired at once, although they may be fired at different targets. A Weapon Component may only be fired at a target within its firing arc.

Firing weapons and resolving damage is covered later in this chapter (see page 218).

## EXTENDED ACTIONS

Extended Actions are only available to characters who have not taken part in Manoeuvre or Shooting Actions this turn. They represent characters doing other activities to aid the ship, such as making repairs, caring for the wounded, and even raiding enemy vessels.

**Note:** The modifiers listed for Skill Tests may be modified at the GM's discretion. Although each player may only perform one Extended Action per Strategic Turn, it may or may not take the entire 30 minutes, depending on the action.



## STERN CHASE

In some situations, a starship may prefer to flee from opponents, rather than stand and fight. Perhaps a smuggler wishes to run a naval blockade, or a privateer is chasing a valuable prize. Perhaps a ship simply wishes to flee combat, and her captain is doubtful of his chances of successfully disengaging under the enemy's guns. In such situations, players have the options of using the rules for a stern chase—a flight and pursuit between two ships that might last hours, or even days.

Stern chases may begin in combat, or outside it. If two ships are not in combat and one ship flees, the other ship may elect to pursue it, beginning a stern chase. If the ships are in combat, a ship may flee the combat if it ends its turn out of range of the guns of any enemy ships. If it does so, it must make a **Routine (+10) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test** (if it fails, it must remain in the combat and forfeit its next Strategic Turn). Then, all other participants in the combat have the options of pursuing the fleeing vessel. If they chose to do so, they leave the combat on their next Strategic Turn and the stern chase begins.

If the Explorers are the pursuers, the stern chase is treated in a similar manner to an Exploration Challenge (see page 263), where the various Explorers will use certain Skill Tests to accumulate a number of successes that must equal a predetermined total for the chase to succeed. The total required for success is based largely off the type of ship the Explorers are pursuing.

- Transport, Cruiser: 3 Degrees of Success
- Light Cruiser, Frigate: 5 Degrees of Success
- Raider: 7 Degrees of Success
- If the pursued ship's Speed is greater than the pursuer ship's Speed: +2 Degrees of Success
- If the pursuer ship's Speed is greater than the pursued ship's Speed: -2 Degrees of Success
- If the pursuit takes place in asteroids, nebula, or other obscuring stellar environments: +1 Degree of Success

To obtain these, the Explorers may test the following Skills as if they were participating in an Exploration Challenge: Tech-Use, Pilot (Space Craft), Command, and Scrutiny (at the Game Master's discretion other Skills may apply, and the required successes may vary). As with Exploration Challenges, each Explorer may test each of these Skills once, with the default difficulty being Challenging. Success on a Skill Test will reduce the difficulty of subsequent Tests by one step. Degrees of success add an equal number of degrees of success towards successfully completing the stern chase. Conversely, failing a Skill Test makes subsequent Tests one degree more difficult, and each degree of failure removes one degree of success from the total.

If the Explorers manage to accumulate enough degrees of success to accomplish the stern chase, they bring their quarry to heel. The fleeing ship may surrender, or combat begins as the ship desperately tries to fight its pursuer (follow the rules for space combat). If they fail, their quarry escapes into the vastness of the void.

It is possible, of course, that the Explorers are the ones being pursued. In that case, the same rules are used (the Explorers must still accumulate a certain amount of successes to successfully escape from their pursuers), with several minor changes. The pursuing ship is now what sets the base number of successes, meaning the Explorers are still the ones attempting the Skill Tests. Also, if the Explorers (the ones being pursued) have a faster ship, they make the Challenge easier, and if they have a slower ship, they make the Challenge more difficult (reverse the penalties and benefits listed above). In addition, if the Explorers use celestial phenomena to their advantage, by fleeing through asteroids or nebulas, they make the Challenge one degree less difficult. If the Explorers succeed, they are the ones who escape into the vastness of space, and if they fail, they are the ones who must make the difficult choice to fight or surrender.

In either version of the stern chase, the time it takes to accomplish a stern chase roughly equals two hours per degree of success required to successfully accomplish it. This time will be spent whether or not the chase is successful.

Remember, a while a Stern Chase takes place, both ships are visible to each other, but out of range of each other's weapons.

### Active Augury

The character makes a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny+Detection Test** to scan the area surrounding the ship. If the scan is successful, the GM should reveal basic (and important) information about celestial bodies, phenomena, and ships within 20 VUs of the vessel. If there is a vessel on Silent Running within scan range, it is immediately detected. For every degree of success, the character can extend the range of his scan by five VUs.

### Aid the Machine Spirit

The character must make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to commune with the craft's machine spirit and aid it in its calculations. On a success, the character may add +5

to the ship's Manoeuvrability or Detection for the remainder of the turn. For every two additional degrees of success, the character may add an additional +5 to the same system.

### Disinformation

The character makes a **Difficult (-10) Deceive or Blather Test**. If he succeeds, he can increase the crew's Morale by 1d5 for every degree of success for the duration of the combat.

### Emergency Repairs

The character makes a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test** to direct and aid repair crews. If he succeeds, he repairs one unpowered, damaged, or depressurized Component. Repairs normally take 1d5 turns, however, this can be reduced by



TABLE 8-10: MANOEUVRE ACTIONS

Action	Test	Benefit
Adjust Bearing	Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability	Turn earlier than normal
Adjust Speed	Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability	Move faster or slower than normal
Adjust Speed & Bearing	Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability	Turn earlier than normal while moving faster or slower than normal
Come to New Heading	Difficult (-10) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability	Make two turns in one Round
Disengage	Opposed Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability	Escape combat
Evasive Manoeuvres	Difficult (-10) Pilot (Space Craft)+ Manoeuvrability	Inflicts penalties on enemy fire

one turn per degree of success, to a minimum of one turn. Emergency Repairs cannot fix destroyed Components.

### Flank Speed

The character must make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to nurse the ship's engines and push them to their limits. Success means the ship may move an additional VU this turn. Every degree of success allows an additional VU of movement. Failure by 2 or more degrees means the ship immediately suffers an Engines Crippled critical hit as the engines are strained too hard.

### Focused Augury

The character makes a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny+Detection Test** to scan a particular ship within extreme range of his vessel. A successful scan reveals a number of Components aboard the enemy ship.

- Basic Success: All Essential Components except Auger

#### Arrays and Void Shields

- One Degree of Success: All Weapon Components
- Two Degrees of Success: Auger Arrays, Void Shields, and any combat related Components
- Three Degrees of Success: All Components aboard the target ship

### Hail the Enemy

This action is unique as it can be performed by characters who have participated in Manoeuvre Actions or Shooting Actions during the turn. The character contacts one enemy ship using his ship's vox systems. He may use Interaction Skills to accomplish certain goals, such as the Intimidation Skill to convince an opponent to surrender. The exact details of how this works is left up to the GM (see page 293 for details on the use of Interaction Skills).

TABLE 8-11: EXTENDED ACTIONS

Action	Test	Benefit
Active Augury	Scrutiny + Detection	Scans the area
Aid the Machine Spirit	Tech-Use	Bonus to Detection or Manoeuvrability
Disinformation	Deceive or Blather	Raises Morale
Emergency Repairs	Tech-Use	Repair damaged, depressurised, or unpowered Components
Flank Speed	Tech-Use	Gain additional movement
Focused Augury	Scrutiny + Detection	Detailed scan of one target
Hail the Enemy	Interaction Skill	Communicates with another ship
Hit and Run	Pilot (Space Craft), Command	Board enemy ship, cause damage, and return
Hold Fast!	Willpower	Reduces Morale Damage
Jam Communications	Tech-Use	Stops target from sending vox signals
Lock on Target	Scrutiny + Detection	Bonus to Ballistic Skill Tests with one weapon component
Prepare to Repel Boarders!	Command	Bonus to Command Test vs. enemy boarding actions
Put Your Backs Into It!	Intimidate or Charm	Bonus to various actions
Triage	Medicae	Reduces Crew Population Damage



## SILENT RUNNING

A ship may attempt to avoid notice by going on silent running, shutting down non-essential systems and attempting to drift, unnoticed, past its opposition. When on silent running, a ship makes Manoeuvre Actions as normal, except the starship's Speed value is halved, and the difficulty of all related Skill Tests increases by one step. The default Manoeuvre Action requires a **Ordinary (+10) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test**. If the helmsman fails these tests, his ship performs the Manoeuvre as normal, but some power surge or engine flare betrays their presence, and any ships within sensor range become aware of them.

Enemy ships may detect a ship on silent running by using the Active Augury Extended Action (see below). Needless to say, if the ship fires any weapons, it is immediately detected as well.

## Hit and Run

This allows a character to raid an enemy ship, sabotage it, then retreat. The character makes a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft) Test**, attempting to reach one enemy ship within 5 VUs in a boarding craft, accompanied by a team of raiders. This test can be modified by the target vessel's Turret Rating (see page 220). If he fails the test, he is forced to return to his ship. If he fails by four or more degrees, his craft is shot down. The character either survives stranded in a crippled craft or is killed at the GM's discretion.

If he succeeds, he must make an opposed **Ordinary (+10) Command Test** against the commander of troops aboard the enemy ship. If he succeeds, roll 1d5 on the Critical Hit chart twice and select one result to apply to the enemy ship, plus 1 point of damage to Hull Integrity for every degree of success. If he fails, his force is forced to retreat back to his boarding craft, unsuccessful in causing mayhem.

## Hold Fast!

The character must have Air of Authority (or a similar Talent at the GM's discretion) and make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**. If he succeeds, he inspires the crew and reduces any damage to Morale by 1, plus 1 for every degree of success to a minimum of 1. Hold Fast! may only cancel out Morale damage suffered during the previous turn.

## Jam Communications

The character makes a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**, targeting a ship within long range of his vessel. If he succeeds, that ship is unable to use vox-transmitters or other technologies to communicate with other ships. Psychic communicators—such as an astropath—are unaffected.

## Lock on Target

The character makes a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny+Detection Test** to use the

ship's augers and calculate exact firing solutions on an enemy vessel. If successful, he adds a +5 bonus to the Ballistic Skill Test to fire one Weapon Component during this turn. Every two additional degrees of success add an additional +5 to the same Test.

## Prepare to Repel Borders!

This character must make a **Challenging (+0) Command Test** in order to organise and arm a portion of the crew. If he succeeds, he may add +10 to any opposed Command Test he performs against enemy borders during subsequent turns of combat, plus an additional +5 for every degree of success. Although the character is not required to make additional tests on subsequent turns, he will be occupied rallying the defenders for as long as he wants to maintain the bonus.

## Put Your Backs Into It!

The character makes a **Challenging (+0) Intimidate or Charm Test**. If he succeeds, he can choose to add +5 to a Ballistic Skill Test to fire a Weapon Component, an Emergency Repairs Action, or an attempt to put out a fire made during this turn. He may add an additional Ballistic Skill Test, Emergency Repairs Action, or firefighting attempt for every three degrees of success.

## Triage

The character makes a **Difficult (-10) Medicae Test**. If he succeeds, he reduces any damage to Crew Population by 1, plus 1 for every degree of success to a minimum of 1. Triage may only cancel Crew Population damage suffered during the previous Turn.

# WEAPONS AND SHOOTING

Starship weapons in the 41st millennium are as varied as the ships that carry them. Lasers, plasma projectors, macrocannons, rocket launchers, terra-watt beam weapons, and more esoteric weaponry such as grav-culverins and gamma emitters, all can be found in a starship's broadside. In game terms, the weapons found in Rogue Trader can be divided into two distinct classes; macrobatteries and lances.

Macrobatteries form the main armament of most ships, filling the broadsides of vessels with rank upon rank of gigantic weapons. Each requires a crew of dozens, if not hundreds, to operate. Whether they fling kilo-tonne warheads across the void or roast their targets with high-intensity energy, macrobatteries fire in volley. Their salvos are designed to blanket the space around a target, hopefully catching it in a maelstrom of destruction and overwhelm their defences by the sheer number of shots.

Lances are rare and potent weapons that fire incredibly high-powered beams of energy capable of burning through the hull of a warship, or cutting a smaller vessel in half. Unlike macrobatteries, lances are often mounted on gigantic turrets where multiple energy projectors focus to create a single, titanic beam.



DIAGRAM 8-1

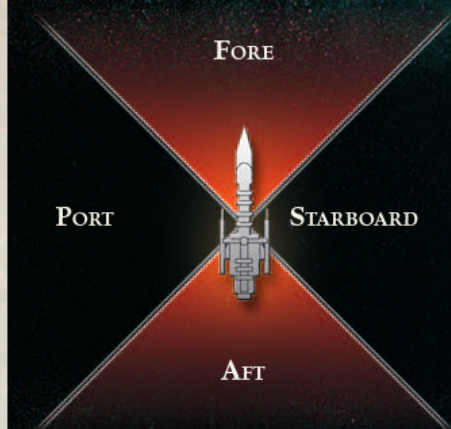


DIAGRAM 8-2

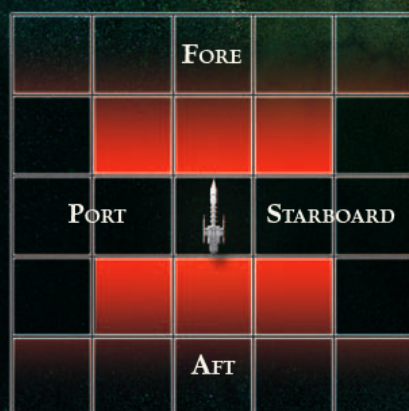


DIAGRAM 8-3



In **ROGUE TRADER**, the weapons on starships are Supplemental Components. Each Weapon Component does not necessarily consist of one weapon—a single macrobattery, for example, can have dozens of individual macrocannons arrayed in broadside. Instead of these weapons being treated separately, they are grouped together into a single Weapon Component and treated as a single weapon that can score multiple hits when fired. Although most Weapon Components are classified as macrobatteries or lances, this simply means they follow the same general rules. Specific weapons may have different rules and unique abilities.

In **ROGUE TRADER**, each Weapon Component has the following statistics:

- **Strength:** This is the maximum number of hits a macrobattery can land on an enemy ship.
- **Damage:** This is the Damage each hit deals.
- **Crit Rating:** This is the number of successes the shot must have to score a critical hit on the target.
- **Firing Arc:** This determines which direction a starship weapon may be fired in.
- **Range:** This is the range of the weapon. Starship weapons may be fired at targets no farther away than twice the weapon's range.

When firing a Weapon Component, the character directing the fire makes a Ballistic Skill Test, adding in any appropriate modifiers. Characters may direct the fire of more than one Weapon Component (either macro-batteries or lances). This means that one character may direct all of a ship's weapons fire, although different Weapon Components may be fired by

different characters if the party chooses. A ship's weapons may be directed against multiple targets. The gunner (or gunners) may select targets for their macrobatteries in turn, unless they are combining the fire of several macrobatteries into a single salvo (see page 220).

Whether or not a Weapon Component may be fired at a target is determined by its firing arc: front (fore), port (left), starboard (right), and rear (aft). Firing arcs extend in a 90 degree arc from the centre of the vessel. For a visual representation of firing arcs, see **Diagram 8-1**, above. If the combat is being fought on a grid-map, you can use **Diagram 8-2** and **8-3** instead (depending on which way the ship is facing). If there is any question between whether a target is in a ship's fore or aft arcs or in its side arcs (such as if you use the example from **Diagram 8-1** on a grid-map), the target is considered to be in the side arc. What arcs a weapon may fire in are determined by the location the Weapon Component occupies on a starship: Dorsal, Prow, Port, Starboard, or Keel.

Dorsal Weapon Components are mounted on the starship's spine or up most decks. They have a wide firing arc, but less weapons can be installed in the relatively limited space. Dorsal weapons may fire to the fore, port, and starboard.

Prow Weapon Components are packed into the starship's forward spaces, and are often weapons that must run along much of the length of the hull. Prow weapons on transports, raiders, and frigates may fire to the fore. Prow weapons on light cruisers, cruisers, or larger vessels may fire to the fore, port, and starboard.

Port and Starboard Weapon Components are installed in broadsides along the left and right sides of the starship, respectively. Port weapons can fire to the port firing arc, Starboard weapons to the starboard firing arc.

Keel Weapon Components are often on long masts or fins below the starship's belly, and are rare on Imperial vessels. Keel weapons may fire in any direction.

The range of the shot can affect its accuracy. When firing at a target further away than the range of the weapon (up to the maximum of

#### WHAT ABOUT TORPEDOES?

There are many other types of weapons in the 41st millennium, torpedoes, fighter craft, heavy bombers, and strange and terrible xenos weaponry. Listing these myriad weapons is far beyond the scope of this book—though many will appear in later supplements.



## TURRETS

The hull of a starship is often covered with short-range, rapid-firing weapons. These could be rapid-cycling multi-lasers, quad-barrelled auto-cannon, or even vulcan megabolters. All are collectively referred to as turrets and are designed to shoot down torpedoes and assault craft, as well as help defend the ship in the event of a boarding action.

If a starship has defence turrets, it has a turret rating. The turret rating does not correspond to the actual number of turrets—a starship with scores of defence turrets might only have a turret rating of 1. For each point of a starship's turret rating, the ship imposes a –10 penalty on the piloting tests of any Hit and Run Attacks directed against it. Additionally, each point of a starship's turret rating adds +10 to its side's Command Test during a boarding action.

## DESTROYING SHIPS

Most of the Critical Hit results will not destroy a ship outright. Rather, they will instead damage it in some way. This is indicative of the nature of space combat in *Rogue Trader*—ships are rarely completely destroyed, and often even badly damaged hulks can be dragged back to port for salvage and refit.

However, a GM should never feel constrained by the Critical Hit chart when dealing with an NPC vessel. If he prefers a simpler space combat, he can modify the Critical Hit Chart in the following manner. When the starship is reduced to zero Hull Integrity, the Critical Hit Chart changes so the 1–9 results are the enemy vessel drifting away as a shattered, completely worthless hulk, and the 10–12 results are the ship violently exploding. If a 10–12 critical result is rolled, treat the ship as if it suffered a Catastrophic Overload. This means an NPC vessel will suffer the effects of Critical Hits as normal while its Hull Integrity is above zero. Once it hits zero, any Critical Hit—whether from doing damage past Hull Integrity or from a Weapon Component's Crit Rating—will destroy the vessel. Of course, this modification means the players will have no enemy ship to board and explore...

twice the range), the shot suffers a –10 penalty to the Ballistic Skill Test. However, when firing at a target at half the range, the shot gains a +10 bonus to the Ballistic Skill Test.

When firing a macrobattery, a successful roll scores one hit, plus an additional hit for each degree of success, to a maximum of the macrobattery's strength. Essentially, a more accurate hit means the character was able to land more shots on the enemy ship. After the ship calculates the amount of hits it has scored, apply the effects of the defender's void shields (see "Damage and Defences" below). Once the final number of hits has been determined, roll the weapon's indicated Damage once for each hit, adding the totals together. The final total is the amount of damage dealt to the target.

If a ship fires multiple macrobatteries at a single target, before rolling to hit and the determining the damage total for each macrobattery, the character directing the firing has the option of adding the totals together and applying the new, larger total to the target ship once, rather than applying each damage result separately. This represents a ship combining its weapon fire into a single, devastating salvo. If he chooses to do this, however, he can only inflict a maximum of one Critical Hit (see below).

Lances operate in a similar fashion, but with several distinct differences. When firing a lance, a character makes a Ballistic Skill Test with any appropriate modifiers. A successful roll scores one hit, plus one additional hit for every three degrees of success.

Unlike macrobatteries, the damage from each lance hit is never combined. Each damage total is resolved against the target's defences separately. However, when resolving a lance hit against the target, ignore the target's armour (see "Damage and Defences," below), but not void shields. Lances deal damage

directly to Hull Integrity.

When firing a weapon, if the character rolls a number of successes equal to the weapon's Crit Rating, the shot has caused a Critical Hit. If the shot does not do any damage to Hull Integrity, inflict

1 automatic point of damage. Then roll 1d5 on the Critical Hit chart and apply the result to the target.

If the damage of two or more macrobatteries is combined into a single salvo, those macrobatteries can only inflict a maximum of one Critical Hit. Even if all of the macrobatteries cause Critical Hits on their Ballistic Skill Tests, only one Critical Hit is applied to the target vessel.

Unless multiple macrobatteries are being combined in a salvo, each Weapon Component should be resolved against the target separately, not simultaneously. (This is important due to the manner in which void shields work.)

Righteous Fury does not apply to shipboard weapons.

## DAMAGE AND DEFENCES

There are two principle defences for starships in the 41st millennium, void shields and armour.

Void Shields create an invisible energy barrier around a starship. Miracles of lost technology, these barriers serve two purposes. First, they brush aside swaths of dust and detritus adrift in the void that would otherwise scar, befoul, and even destroy a starship (though they offer little protection against especially large objects like asteroids). Their second purpose is to absorb the terrific energies of incoming fire. If it absorbs too much energy too quickly, however, the void shield collapses, and must bleed off the accumulated energy before it can be raised again.

Armour can take many forms, but is often layers of adamantine and ceramite many metres thick, covering the outer hull of the vessel.

Void shields function by absorbing incoming hits before they can be resolved against their target. Whenever a ship chooses to fire on another ship during its turn, the target ship's void shields (assuming it has any!) will cancel a number of incoming hits equal to the strength of the shields. In other words, if a ship has one void shield, after an attacker determines the total number of



hits going against the ship, that number of hits is reduced by one. It does not matter if the hits are from lances or macrobatteries.

However, void shields can be overloaded. Once they have reduced their strength in hits, they overload and shut down. Any remaining hits in that salvo will hit the target, and any further shots fired against the target by the attacking ship will also hit the target unimpeded by void shields.

If the attacker combines the damage of multiple macrobatteries against the defending ship, the attacker chooses which hits are discarded by the void shields. This represents the attacker timing his salvos to overwhelm the enemy's shields with his lighter weaponry.

It is important to note that void shields reduce hits from all ships firing on them. If one attacker fires on a ship, the ship's void shields reduce the hits as usual. Even if they overload and another attacker fires on the ship in the same Strategic Round, the void shields will be restored in time to protect against that attacker's fire as well.

Once void shields have been taken into account, and the damage for the remaining hits is rolled and added together, it is compared to the target's Armour. The Armour value is subtracted from the damage total. If the result is zero or less, the target's Armour has successfully protected the vessel. If the result is more than zero, the target loses that many points of Hull Integrity.

Hull Integrity can be considered similar to a ship's Wounds. It is a measure of how tough the vessel is, and how much damage it can take before being blown open. For every point of Hull Integrity a ship loses, it loses 1 Crew Population and 1 Morale as well.

## EXAMPLE

*The Sabre has closed in on an enemy raider, and is preparing to fire. The Sabre's gunner directs the fire of the ship's macrobattery and lance against the raider.*

*The gunner's Ballistic Skill is 48, and the ship is at Close Range, giving a further +10. He fires the Sabre's macrobattery first, and rolls a 29. He has hit successfully with two degrees of success, meaning a total of three hits. The raider's void shields absorb the first hit, but the other two strike home. The gunner rolls 2d10, and gets a 16, beating the raider's Armour value of 15 by one. The raider then takes one point of damage to its Hull Integrity.*

*The gunner then fires the lance, making a Ballistic Skill test against the total of 58. He rolls an 11. Not only is this a hit, but it also four degrees of success, enough to meet the lance's Crit Rating. A mighty blow! The unfortunate raider's void shields are already down from the macrobattery, and the lance strikes home unimpeded. The gunner rolls 1d10+4 (the lance's Damage) and gets a 9. Because the raider's armour is ignored due to the nature of lance weapons, the raider will take 9 points of damage to its Hull Integrity. If that wasn't bad enough, the gunner rolls 1d5 for the Critical Hit and gets a 5, lighting the poor raider on fire!*

## CRIPPLED SHIPS

When a ship reaches 0 Hull Integrity, it becomes **Crippled**. Apply a -10 penalty to its Manoeuvrability and Detection, and reduce its Speed to half. In addition, reduce the strength of all weapon Components by half (round up). A ship will

## A QUESTION OF SCALE

Players may notice that the shipboard weapons roll similar amounts of damage dice as their handheld weapons, and may be tempted to lean out their ship's airlock with their trusty lasgun.

Obviously, ship-to-ship combat is measured on a completely different scale than any other form of fighting even if the dice are the same. Handheld or vehicle-mounted weapons are unable to harm a starship, and the trusty lasgun wouldn't even scratch the paint of an enemy vessel.

Conversely, if a player or vehicle were ever hit by a starship's main weapons, the results would be as horrifying as they would be fatal. Most starship weapons are not precise enough to target something as small as a person, but if it happens, that unfortunate is instantly destroyed.

remain Crippled (and continue to suffer these effects) until it has regained at least 1 Hull Integrity.

When a Crippled ship takes damage past its Armour, it takes a Critical Hit. Compare the value of the damage that exceeded the Armour to the Critical Hit chart. The ship suffers this Critical Hit result.

## CRITICAL HITS

Oftentimes, an especially lucky or well placed blow will do more than boil off armour or consign some unlucky pressmen to the void. Shells and beams may tear deep into a starship's gut, ripping out her insides, crippling her systems, and leaving her bleeding air.

The following is the Critical Hit chart for ships, and should be used when a weapon's attack roll has met its Crit Rating, or when a crippled ship takes damage. Some Critical Hits require an attacker to know about Components on the target ship. The attacker can know what Components their target has in one of two ways. The first is through using Active Augury to scan the enemy vessel. The second is that if the enemy vessel uses a Component to attack or otherwise effect the attacker, the attacker obviously knows of its existence and can target it with a Critical Hit.

## FIRE, DEPRESSURISATION, AND OTHER HAZARDS

*"The flames licked across the bulkhead, moving like skin-dancers in the null-gee. Emperor save me, it was the most beautiful thing I ever saw. Then they reached us, and the screaming began..."*

—Pressman Tizak, survivor of the *Gilded Lady*

Quite a number of things can go wrong on a starship. Crippling blows from enemy guns can depressurize compartments, failing generators can plunge cabins into darkness, and a



TABLE 8-12: CRITICAL HITS

Roll	Result
1	<b>Holed:</b> A lucky hit has wrenched open the ship's hull, exposing it to space. The attacker selects one Component (only choosing ones he knows of) that is not the bridge or plasma/warp drives. Emergency bulkheads slam into place to seal off the compartments, but this Component is depressurized.
2	<b>Internal Damage:</b> The force of the hit ruptures bulkheads and smashes machinery. The attacker selects one Component (only choosing ones he knows of) that is not the bridge or plasma/warp drives. This Component is damaged.
3	<b>Sensors damaged:</b> The ship's auspex arrays have been knocked out, leaving the vessel blind. Until the damage is repaired, all shooting tests suffer a -30 to hit, and all sensory tests to detect anything beyond the ship's immediate engagement range automatically fail. Additionally, as the arrays are located outside the hull, any repairs must be attempted in the void.
4	<b>Thrusters damaged:</b> The ship's manoeuvring thrusters are smashed, venting randomly and leaking fuel. Roll 1d10. On a 1-7, the ship can still manoeuvre, albeit slowly. Reduce the ship's Manoeuvrability bonus by -20. On an 8-10, the thrusters are completely damaged. The ship cannot turn. This damage can be repaired.
5	<b>Fire!</b> Alarms scream through the hull as hungry flames roar through passageways and compartments. The blaze must be contained before it devours the entire ship! The attacker selects one Component (only choosing ones he knows of) that is not the bridge or plasma/warp drive—this Component is now on fire. The fire follows all the rules for shipboard fires.
6	<b>Engines Crippled:</b> Something pierces the immense drive tubes in the ship's stern, bleeding plasma into the void and leaving the vessel drifting in space. Roll 1d10. on a 1-7, the plasma drives are still usable, though heavily damaged. Reduce the ship's Speed by half. On an 8-10, the drives are completely wrecked. Reduce the ship's Speed to 1. This damage can be repaired.
7	<b>Surly Techsprites:</b> Something has jarred and shocked the ship's machine spirits, awakening their anger. Massive electrical surges knock out systems across the ship. Roll 1d10 for every Component. On a 4 or higher, the Component now counts as unpowered. Each Component must be repaired individually before it can receive power again. Morale takes 1d5 damage from the spooky atmosphere.
8	<b>Decapitation:</b> A lucky hit strikes the ship's bridge, sending shrapnel scything across the compartment and opening it to space! All crewmembers on the bridge must make a Dodge reaction or be hit by shrapnel doing 2d10 Explosive damage. If the damage result is 12 or higher, the bridge Component is also depressurized. If the damage result is 16 or higher, the Component is damaged.
9-10	<b>Hull Breach:</b> The hull of the ship is ripped asunder by tremendous force, opening compartments to the void and doing massive structural damage. The attacker selects 1d5 Components (only choosing ones he knows of, and not including the bridge). Roll a d10 for each; on a 1-7 the Component is damaged and depressurized. On an 8-10 the Component is destroyed, and all crew inside are killed. Instead of rolling for Crew Population and Morale damage separately, the ship reduces both of its current values by half.
11	<b>Catastrophic Damage:</b> A succession of powerful blows and explosions rip through the ship, causing horrendous damage. Roll 1d10. On a 1-7, the ship is hulked. On a 8-9, the ship's plasma drive explodes. On a 10, the ship's warp drive explodes instead (if the ship does not have a warp drive, it suffers a plasma drive explosion).
Space Hulk	Catastrophic damage leaves the ship a drifting, smouldering wreck. Uncontrolled fires burn in some compartments, others are open to space, and the rest are choked with the dead and dying. Roll 1d10 for each Component. On a 1-2, it is miraculously untouched, but is unpowered. On a 3-7, it is depressurized and damaged. On a 9-10, it is completely destroyed, and all crew inside are killed. Reduce Crew Population to 1d10.
Plasma Drive Explosion	The starship's plasma drive explodes in a single, cataclysmic explosion. All starships within 1d10 VUs of the stricken craft must make a <b>Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test</b> or be struck by the flaming debris of the destroyed vessel. Treat this as 1d5 macrobattery hits doing 1d10+4 damage each, that void shields and armour will protect against normally.
Warp Drive Explosion	The starship's warp drive overloads and explodes, rending a seething hole in space, a maelstrom into the realm of chaos. Any starship within 2d10 VUs of the stricken craft must make a <b>Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test</b> or be struck by the chaos-storm, taking the equivalent of one lance strike doing 1d10 damage that void shields will not protect against. Additionally, every starship within 1d5 VUs of the stricken vessel must make a second <b>Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test</b> , or be sucked into the rift. What happens next is up to the GM, but should be suitably horrible. Mass possessions and manifesting daemons are the norm, while the crew frantically tries to activate the Geller Field. The survival of those onboard the ship should by no means be guaranteed.

careless galley-steward can light entire decks ablaze. These problems have an adverse effect on the ship as well as unfortunate characters caught in them.

A ship's Component is either intact, unpowered, damaged, or destroyed. Intact

Components are fully functional, damaged Component are non-functional but can be repaired, and destroyed Components are nightmare mazes of twisted metal, raging infernos, and the bodies of the crew that once occupied them. Needless to say, a damaged Component cannot be used and





will not provide any bonuses to the ship until it is repaired. A destroyed Component cannot be repaired, only replaced at a forge world or stardock.

Unpowered Components have no gravity, no lights (besides emergency stablights), and any powered hatches and the like will not operate. A damaged Component is unpowered, but also contains other hazards, such as shorting electrical lines, ruptured bulkheads, and leaking pipes and air-lines. These can also create noxious vapors and, combined with failing air-purifiers, mean that character in the Component without a breathing aid such as a gas mask will suffer from suffocation (see page 261). Other environmental effects may exist in a damaged Component as well.

Destroyed Components are extremely hazardous, with nothing more than twisted, jagged metal shards, live electrical lines, no air, or raging fires. In game terms, the Component is considered to no longer exist, though the GM is free to invent a suitably nightmarish environment for any character who must enter the space the Component used to occupy.

Components may also have hazards present on them that may be mildly inconvenient, or are a danger to any characters exposed to them and possibly the entire ship.

## DEPRESSURISATION

If a Component is depressurised, the air violently vents over a number of Rounds (the GM should determine a time depending on how big the hole—was it a micro-meteor or a lance strike?). Any characters attempting to exit the Component treat it as Difficult Terrain as they battle high winds within the compartment. Once all air has vented, all characters inside the Component suffer the effects of vacuum (see page 261). It is assumed airtight hatches will keep depressurisation confined to a single Component.

Depressurisation deals 1d10 damage to Crew Population, and 1d5 damage to Crew Morale, but does not make the Component Damaged (although a depressurised Component may be damaged for other reasons, and vice-versa). The Component may even be used, provided the crewmembers wear void-suits.

Depressurisation may be repaired by patching the hull, although the effects of vacuum on little details like the plumbing may linger for quite a while.

## FIRE

If a Component catches fire, it immediately deals 1d5 damage to Crew Population and 1d10 damage to Crew Morale (few things are as horrifying as a shipboard fire) and spreads through the entire Component (the GM should determine how long this takes, but it should be within 30 minutes or one Strategic Turn). Anyone occupying the Component is exposed to fire and suffers all of the appropriate adverse effects (see page 260). If the fire is not brought under control in one Strategic Turn, it consumes the Component (it now counts as damaged), and moves on. The GM selects a new Component, and treats it as catching fire (including the Crew Population and Morale damage). The GM should randomly select the new Component from among what he determines are a set of logical options—it is more likely a fire would spread from the plasma drives to the warp engines than to the prow weaponry.

To put out a fire, a character must organise a firefighting team of crew and make a **Difficult (–10) Command Test**. This counts as an Extended Action and therefore may only be attempted once per Strategic Turn. However, multiple characters may organise firefighting teams and attempt to put the fire out, and only one needs succeed. Alternatively, the ship's captain can choose to vent the burning compartments into the void. If he does so, the fire is immediately extinguished. However, the burning Component now counts as depressurised. Instead of the normal damage to Crew Population and Morale, the ship suffers only 1d5 Crew Population damage (most of the Crew already fled the Component) but 2d10 Morale damage (nobody likes seeing their comrades vented into the void deliberately).

Needless to say, if every Component is consumed by fire, the ship is reduced to a burned-out hulk and counts as destroyed.



TABLE 8-13: CREW POPULATION

Crew Population	Threshold/Effect
80	The ship increases all travel times by 1d5 days.
60	All Tests involving Boarding Actions, repulsing Hit and Run attacks, fighting fires, and making Emergency Repairs suffer a -5 penalty.
50	The ship suffers a -10 penalty to its Manoeuvrability.
40	The ship loses any bonus to Achievement Points it would normally receive for its Components.
20	In combat, the ship counts as Crippled. If the ship actually becomes Crippled, it may only take a Strategic Turn on every other Strategic Round.
10	The ship may not perform Boarding Actions or Hit and Run attacks. Anyone attempting to repulse a Boarding Action or Hit and Run attack, fight fires, or make Emergency Repairs suffers a -20 to his Test.
0	The ship becomes an empty tomb, populated only by the dead. If any still live within its bowels, their only hope is to escape the vessel before they slowly suffocate or freeze. The ship cannot operate again without at least some crew to run it.

## ZERO GRAVITY

Few forces are more essential to the everyday lives of humanity, yet gravity is something most take for granted. Those aboard starships do not have that luxury. Humanity developed the grav-plate during the mystical Dark Age of Technology, allowing them to simulate the effects of gravity in the chambers and passageways of their starships. However, these systems are fickle. Poor maintenance or battle damage can shut grav-plates off at inopportune times, leaving crewmembers stranded and drifting in mid-air. Additionally, if someone is forced to exit a ship and step into the blackness of the void, he will leave the effects of the grav-plates behind. It is imperative that every able-bodied void-man knows how to handle himself in such situations.

Zero gravity is considered Difficult Terrain, meaning that the movement of characters is halved while in it, and if they attempt to charge or run, they must succeed with a **Hard (-20) Agility Test** or drift out of control (treat as falling prone). Certain factors may mitigate this—a Void Born character, for example, does not treat zero gravity as Difficult Terrain and therefore ignores the above penalties. Additionally, a character beginning a movement action in zero gravity must be adjacent to a floor, wall, ceiling, or other secure object, so he has something to push off from.

## CREW POPULATION AND MORALE

*"Regulation 284.7: Mutiny. Any and all crew and officers found to be involved in the plotting of treason, sedition, or wilful disobedience of their superiors shall be jettisoned from the ship's airlock."*

—Imperial Navy Code of Conduct: Calixis Sector edition

The health and well-being of a starship's crew is measured in two ways—its Crew Population and its Morale. Crew Population measures how many people are aboard a starship, indicated by a percentage of 100. Therefore, if a Crew Population was 98, that means 98 percent of the ship's original crew complement is still alive. All ships' Crew Populations begin at 100, though they may be modified by situations or the ship's Components.

Morale is also measured on a 1 to 100 scale, starting at 100 and dropping as the starship encounters situations that test its crew's loyalty and commitment. With both Morale and Crew Population, higher values are better.

As both values drop, they affect their starship adversely, as depicted in the following charts. The charts list a threshold number and the effect when the value drops below that

TABLE 8-14: MORALE

Morale Number	Effect
100	Normal operations.
80	All Command Tests involving the ship or its crew suffer a -5.
60	All Ballistic Skill Tests made to fire the ship's weapons suffer a -5.
50	All Command Tests involving the ship or its crew suffer an additional -10 (-15 total).
40	The ship suffers a -10 penalty to Manoeuvrability. All Ballistic Skill Tests made to fire the ship's weapons suffer an additional -5 (-10 total).
20	The ship may no longer perform Boarding Actions or Hit and Run attacks (too few of the crew can be trusted to follow orders or wield weapons). The ship may still attempt to resist Boarding Actions as normal. Whenever the ship reaches a port, lose 1d5 Crew Population to deserters.
10	All Command Tests involving the ship or its crew suffer an additional -15 (-30 total). The ship also suffers an additional -10 penalty to Speed, Manoeuvrability, and Detection.
0	The ship's crew rises up like a single, enraged organism, killing anybody in authority they can catch. Unless every single crewmember is put to the sword, they will take control of the ship and elect new officers from amongst their ranks.



number.

The effects of Crew Population loss and Morale are unavoidable, but the effects are reversible if the Crew Population or Morale are later brought above the threshold. All effects are cumulative, even Crew Population and Morale effects. The effects of Crew Population loss represent the ship becoming harder to operate as there are fewer hands to crew it, while the effects of Morale loss represent the crew actively malingering or doing other activities to hamper the ship's operations.

In addition, whenever Morale drops below 70, 40, and 10, the Captain must make a Command Test. If he fails, some portion of his crew rebels against his rule and a mutiny begins.

**Note:** If the ship is in combat when Morale drops below a threshold, wait until after the combat ends to test for a mutiny. If it drops below multiple thresholds during a single combat, only test once.

To represent the mutiny, the GM should choose one NPC crewmember to lead the mutiny (or invent basic stats for a general crewmember). The mutiny can be fought or suppressed through opposed Command, Charm, or Intimidation Tests, chosen by the players. One character (who does not have to be the captain) should be chosen to suppress the mutiny and make the selected opposed Skill Test.

- If the characters chose to use Command, they are leading armymen to suppress riots, posting guards at critical spaces, and generally waging war against the mutineers directly. If the characters win the opposed Skill Test, the ship suffers 1d5 Crew Population damage and 1d5 Morale damage, but the mutiny ends.
- If the characters use Charm, they are meeting with the mutiny's ringleaders, addressing their demands, and trying to placate them. If the characters win the opposed Skill Test, the ship suffers 1d10 Morale damage (the characters are viewed by the crew as weak), but the mutiny ends.
- If the characters use Intimidate, they are threatening to open crew quarters into space, shooting ringleaders, holding hostages, and generally showing the crew the dire consequences of their actions. If the characters win the opposed Skill Test, the ship suffers 1 Crew Population damage and 1d10 Morale damage (the crew fears and mistrusts their ruthless commanders), but the mutiny ends.



## ADVENTURING ABOARD SHIP

Most of the rules provided in this chapter treat the actions performed aboard a ship in abstract terms. For example, a boarding action or hit and run attack is resolved with a few Command Tests, as are mutinies. Repairing a damaged Component requires a single Tech-Use Test. This is done because the characters are leading whole cohorts of their crew to accomplish actions, and because to break it down into individual actions would greatly slow down the game.

If the GM wants to, however, he can expand on these, turning them into adventures in their own right. Perhaps the players have encountered a heavy cruiser, and have no conceivable way of destroying it. Instead of throwing themselves at the mercy of their foes, they hatch a daring plan to board the opposing ship in a shuttle, haul an ordinator shell from one of their macrocannons to the ship's warp engines, and attempt to destroy it from the inside.

If the GM chooses to do this, however, he should have a clear-cut goal defined, and the characters should understand how to accomplish it. It is also be a good idea to refrain from trying to have the characters fight large-scale battles, or have the players slog through the entire crew of an enemy ship (which, remember, numbers in the thousands). To suppress a mutiny, for example, the players could sneak through the ship's lower bilge decks and assassinate the mutineer leader, or fight their way to the life sustainer controls and vent the rebelling compartments into space. Perhaps they could even establish communications with the mutineers and strike a deal with them, though such capitulation should stick in the craw of any true captain...

If the mutineers win any of these tests, another opposed Skill Test is performed. If the mutineers win again, the cycle continues. If, however, the mutineers ever win one of these tests by three or more degrees of success, the mutiny succeeds. The characters lose control of their ship, and will likely be forced to flee quickly lest they be killed by their former crew.





## EXAMPLE

*The Measured Response has just come through a hard fight, losing a substantial amount of crew—and even more Morale. After the fight ends, the ship's Morale is at 65. Since Morale has dropped below 80, all characters aboard will suffer –5 to any Command Tests. Additionally, the captain must make a Command Test to check for mutiny. He rolls against his Command Skill of 60 (taking into account the –5 penalty for his low Morale) and gets an 87. A mutiny has broken out aboard the ship! In the subsequent struggle to regain control, the captain will suffer –5 on any opposed Command Tests.*

## REPLENISHING MORALE AND CREW POPULATION

Restoring a ship's Morale is often surprisingly simple. The low-decks dregs that make up the majority of a starship crew are an easily satisfied lot, often content with life's simple pleasures—or the promise of Thrones in their pocket.

If the starship is currently involved in attempting to complete an Endeavour, the captain can bribe the crew with gelt (or the promise of gelt). At any point during a shipboard journey, the ship's captain—or another authority figure—can attempt to restore Morale by losing 50 Achievement Points (from those going towards his current Endeavour) and making a **Routine (+20) Charm Test**. Success means he has quieted the crew's concerns (or distracted them with their greed). Frigates, transports, and raiders regain 1d10 Morale, while light cruisers and cruisers (being larger) regain 1d5. The captain may do this as many times as he wishes, however the difficulty of the test should increase by one degree each time he does. After all, Thrones are only so good when you have no place to spend them.

A captain or another authority figure can also make a **Difficult (–10) Charm or Intimidate Test** to rally the crew, regaining 2 Morale for every degree of success. This will only work once per game session, however.

Of course, the best way to restore a crew's Morale is to put into port. If a starship reaches a habitable planet with no traces of civilisation, the ship can spend three weeks at orbital anchor, replenishing supplies and allowing the crew to travel to the surface. This will restore a ship's Morale to maximum. If the planet (or asteroid settlement) is inhabited by a human civilisation, this process will only take two weeks. If the captain is willing to spend some gelt, (making a **Routine (+20) Acquisition Test** to represent money distributed and reimbursements for damage caused to local drinking dens and brothels), he can restore his ship's Morale in a single week, and completely restock his supplies as well.

Restoring Crew Population can only occur at a planet inhabited by humans. The captain can make an Acquisition Test to restore his Crew Population to maximum, hiring on new crew members from among the locals. The availability of the crew should be considered Common (+20), though this can depend on the world. A hive world may have a large enough population that crew are considered Abundant (+50), while an isolated outpost may put a premium on manpower (Scarce or even

Rare). The GM can choose to add bonuses or penalties due to the scale and quality (craftsmanship) of the crew being hired as well. Failure, of course, means the Explorers must look elsewhere for their crew. See page 271 for more information.

However, if he prefers, he can send teams of press-gangs into the planet's less savoury locales (be they slave camps, slums, or the underhive) to 'recruit' new crew members. If he does this, a character who is skilled in subterfuge and has contacts with the criminal underworld must make arrangements if the press-gangs are to be successful. The details are up to the GM, but at the very least a Common Lore (Underworld) Test will be required to find the right contacts, and a Barter Test must be made to secure the deal. Failure could mean that other criminal elements take violent exception to the rogue trader's plans, the local magistratum might step in to arrest all of the characters, or the planet's general population might violently rise up against the Rogue Trader and his party. The benefits, of course, are paying a few press-gang crews will not cut into a Rogue Trader's finances.

A third option is to strike a deal with planetary authorities that will allow the rogue trader to empty their prisons to serve as his crew. If he does this, he restores his Crew Population without cost. However, he immediately loses 1d10+10 points of Morale—which cannot be restored while he remains at this planet.

No attempts to restore a starship's Crew Population or Morale can increase these values above the starship's maximum Crew Population or Morale values. Any Acquisition Tests made to restore Crew Population or Morale do not count against the number of Acquisitions an Explorer may make in a game session.

## SPACE TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Outside of combat, space travel should be treated abstractly. The distances between a planet and one of its moons can be farther than a man in a land-crawler can drive in a year—the distance between two planets (or two stars) can be orders of magnitude further. An Imperial starship can generally travel the distance between a planet such as Holy Terra and its moon in little more than an hour, while that same starship could take two weeks to travel between the same planet and its star. In general, it shouldn't take much longer than that to get from one location in a star system to another; however, faster starships should take less time, while mass conveyors and other bulk transports may take far longer. In the end, travel times should be left up to the GM.

Enemy vessels are only one hazard a starship may encounter in its travels. Asteroid fields, gravity tides, ice rings, and nebula are all potential threats to be avoided—or in some cases, exploited.

### Asteroid Field

The shattered remains of planets or the leftover debris from stellar nurseries, asteroid fields are vast expanses of drifting rock. A successful **Routine (+10) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test** is required to navigate an



asteroid field. Success means the ship passes through the asteroid field unharmed, but for every degree of failure errant chunks of space rock strike the ship, doing 1d5+1 damage. The damage is cumulative, so if there are four degrees of failure, the ship will take 4d5+4 damage, ignoring void shields. Any Tests using a ship's auger arrays within an asteroid field are made one step more difficult.

## Gravity Tides

Though planet-dwellers consider gravity a universal constant, experienced voidsmen know that it can be a harsh and fickle force. In systems with multiple stars or large gas giants, gravity can behave strangely—sometimes in seeming defiance to the laws of physics. The most feared phenomena are the gravitational rip-tides found near gas giants during the conjunction of their larger moons, or at the midpoints of binary star-systems. Most avoid them, but a skilled—or insane—helmsman may try and use the flux to his advantage.

It takes a **Hard (-20) Scrutiny+Detection Test** to spot a gravitational rip-tide on the ship's auger arrays, and a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test** to avoid one. If a helmsman chooses, however, he can pilot his ship into the tide's gravity well while making a **Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test**. Success means the helmsman has built up enough speed for his vessel to "shoot the rapids"—using the speed generated by the tide's pull to shoot out the other side at tremendous velocity. For every degree of success, the GM should subtract a day from the travel time to the starship's destination. If the helmsman fails the test—or the starship fails to spot and avoid the tide—the ship takes 1d5 damage to its Hull Integrity ignoring armour or void shields, and must make a **Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test** to break free. If it fails it takes another 1d5 damage and must make another test. This continues until the ship escapes or is destroyed.

## Ice Rings

The rings of gas giants are especially dangerous for ships, as they combine the aspects of an asteroid field and a nebula. To navigate them, a ship must make a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test** and a **Challenging (+0) Navigation (Stellar)+Detection Test**. Failing the first test by two or more degrees means the ship has blundered upon a particularly large chunk of ice—it takes 3d10 damage ignoring void shields. Failing the second test means the ship is delayed by a day. Any Tests using a ship's auger arrays within an ice ring are made two steps more difficult.

## Nebulae

A nebula is a vast, dense cloud of gas and dust drifting in space. A successful **Difficult (-10) Navigation (Stellar)+Detection Test** is required to pass through a nebula on a proper course. Success means the ship makes its way through the nebula quickly, but failure means the ship is delayed. For every degree of failure, the ship must spend an extra day getting to its destination. In addition, the maximum

weapon range for ships in a nebula is limited by the nebula's density (roll 3d10 at the start of battle, this is the furthest that all ship's sensors and weapons will operate). A ship making a Silent Running Manoeuvre gains +30 to its Manoeuvre Tests. Any Tests using a ship's auger arrays within nebula are made three steps more difficult.

# THE DEEP VOID RUN

*"We set out from Footfall the day after the Sanguinala, well stored and stocked for a long run spinward to Lucien's Breath. Then the warp-storms blew up and left us lost, blind, and adrift in an unnamed nebula. We ate our stores, the cargo, and were down to boot leather when ol' Three-Eye spotted the Astronomicon's glow. Good thing too, 'cause my mate Grax was starting to look mighty tasty!"*

—Gunner's Mate Paytor Zoln of the trader-transport Reliant

Though the Imperium of Man claims that vast swaths of the galaxy are subservient to the Golden Throne of Terra, it would be more accurate to describe mankind's dominion as tiny islands adrift in an enormous ocean. The space between stars is so huge that any claim of control is laughable, and so the majority of the Imperium remains safe, huddled around the fires of their stars.

However, it is through these uncharted depths that mankind's ships must travel. Even with the help of warp drives—and the immaterium is a fickle ally at best—travel between star systems can take as long as months, or even years. Beyond the bounds of the Imperium, where the fires of civilisation are even farther apart, the journeys could even take decades.

Generally, a starship stocks at least six month's food and supplies in its lockers—although some vessels may cram an extra month's supplies on board if they anticipate a long journey. These stores can be stretched to last longer, although at a cost to the crew. As rations dwindle, fresh water grows scarce, and even the very air becomes thick and stale, sickness spreads easily and the tempers of the crew flare.

The consequences of long journeys are varying, and the GM is encouraged to invent hardships appropriate to the situation. Generally, for each month spent beyond the six month limit, the ship loses 2 Morale, and should suffer a misfortune such as the ones listed below:

**Shipboard Sickness:** The stale air and water ensure the easy spread of disease. A successful *Medicae* Test (difficulty at the GM's discretion) can contain sickness; otherwise the ship will suffer 1d5 damage to Crew Population and Morale as it runs its course.

**Scurvy:** Scarce food makes for poor nutrition. Little can be done about the lack of proper nutrients, and the loss of some of the weaker and sicker members of the crew will do 1d5 damage to Crew Population.

**Weary Machine Spirit:** Long voyages strain the systems of a starship, sometimes



to the breaking point. Without a full shipyard, repairs are often temporary. The GM should select a Component. For every month the ship spends at space without visiting a shipyard or civilised planet for proper repairs, a character must make a Tech-Use Test or the Component becomes damaged. These tests should become progressively harder.

**Starvation:** Few things are as worrying as a starship's food stores running low, both because of the threat of starvation and because it is likely to make the crew desperate and rebellious. Starvation is not something that should happen unless a ship has been at space for longer than a year or had its food stores drastically reduced for some reason. Once it begins, however, the ship will suffer 1 damage to Crew Population and 2 to Morale every day it does not find a habitable planet or other means to refill its food stores.

Of course, the threat of mutiny is also present when crews are confined within iron bulkheads without the warm sun or fresh air for months or years on end. This is represented by the Morale loss a ship suffers, but the GM should feel free to expand on this, inventing mutinous low-decks plots or even treacherous mid-rank officers scheming to take the starship away from the characters.

## EXTENDED REPAIRS

To survive amongst the deep void, starships must be largely self-sufficient. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of repairs and maintenance. Any true void-faring vessel has bunkers full of fuel and storage holds with additional supplies and ship components, from delicate cogitator circuitry to massive adamantine plates to weld over hull breaches. Though the supplies are seldom enough to completely repair a starship (especially if it has just come through a truly nasty engagement), they are enough to let the crew patch up the worst of their ship's injuries.

To perform extended repairs, a starship should locate a suitable anchorage, perhaps high orbit around a gas giant in a deserted star system or nestled against a large asteroid to avoid detection. It's crew will then spend several weeks on the repairs, determined beforehand by the ship's captain. For each week at repairs, the member of the crew directing them must make a Tech-Use Test, tallying the degrees of failure and success. If the degrees of failure outnumber the degrees of success at the end of the specified time period, the repairs have failed. If the reverse is true, however, the repairs succeed, and the ship regains 1d5 points of Hull Integrity. This cannot take the ship's Hull Integrity above its maximum. In addition, a successful repair attempt restores all damaged, depressurised, and unpowered Components to full working order. Destroyed Components must be repurchased and replaced.

For a more thorough repair job, the starship will need to find an inhabited planet or space station —preferably a world with a reasonably advanced level of civilisation (cavemen or feudal peasants will not be much help in repairing a starship). Once a suitable world has been located, the crew can pay to have their starship repaired. If any Hull Integrity is repaired, any damaged, depressurised, and unpowered Components are restored to working order as well.

## STELLAR PHENOMENA IN COMBAT

Although a GM can simply use the rules as presented above to represent stellar phenomena in combat, a simpler way to do it is to simply increase the difficulty of all Manoeuvre Tests by one step (and making the helmsman perform a **Routine (+10) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test** whenever his starship makes the default Manoeuvre Action). Failure imposes the penalties already listed for each phenomena, meaning that a simple ship duel in an asteroid field can suddenly become even more dangerous for those involved.

For every full five points of Hull Integrity restored, the Explorers must make an Acquisition Test at a -10 penalty (this takes into account the rarity and quantity of materials and supplies). These tests are made sequentially – once one is failed, the the Explorers have temporarily exhausted their available funds and must either wait 1d5 weeks until more money is available or seek repairs elsewhere (preferably where there is a better deal). Any Acquisition Tests made to repair Hull Integrity do not count against the number of Acquisitions an Explorer may make in a game session.

For every point in Hull Integrity restored, the ship must spend one day being repaired. New Components (whether to upgrade existing Components or replace destroyed Components) are purchased as normal, and require 1d5 additional days to install per Component.

