

# DANGER ZONES



## PARADE ROUTE

A HEROIC SUPPLEMENT FOR **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS**

# DANGER ZONES: PARADE ROUTE

Disaster looms, and heroes must survive danger from more than just the villains they face! Buildings topple, traffic roars past, and security meant to protect a building just as readily serves whoever holds the key. The city is a landscape of deadly locales, urban hazards, and colorful characters who can all turn the tide of battle for—or against—an imperiled hero. *Danger Zones* transforms the background of your super-powered fights into a critical location, whose features contribute to the excitement.

The setting of any given adventure scene shouldn't be an interchangeable cardboard cutout. In superhero stories, where the action happens can be just as iconic as why or against whom. A battle in a chemical plant poses different dangers to the heroes and strategies for the villains that a brawl in a bank lobby or a slugfest in the local high school. But capturing the mood and bringing the dangers to life can feel daunting for a Gamemaster. *Danger Zones* provides you with all the tools you need, from maps to rules to statblocks, to help bring your scenes to life!

## HOW TO USE THIS PRODUCT

*Danger Zones* is a collection of urban locations, detailed and mapped out with information to help you bring them to life in your *Mutants & Masterminds* adventures! They might be the settings for creative fights, crime scenes to investigate, or strongholds that stealthy vigilantes must penetrate. Resourceful heroes may establish hideouts in unusual hiding places or in plain sight. Whatever your need, *Danger Zones* aims to take your *Mutants & Masterminds* scenes out of the generic streets and into exciting set piece action!

While the descriptions of each Danger Zone may include names pulled from the world of Earth-Prime, these locations and NPCs aren't necessarily native to Freedom City, Emerald City, or any other location. Adapt them to your world as you see fit.

Each Danger Zone includes the following elements:

- In-World Quote:** This section provides some color commentary from within the world of *Mutants & Masterminds* that you can use as an adventure hook or spin off your own ideas for how the logic of a superhero world influences mundane locations.
- Overview:** This section describes the Danger Zone and its general purpose in the city, and how it fits into a superheroic world and plotlines.
- Security:** This section describes how well a Danger Zone is typically protected and what opposition villains (or heroes) might face and what security measures—from cameras and alarms to armed guards—may protect a location.
- Structures:** Superhero battles inflict plenty of collateral damage, and this sidebar describes how to break many of the features found in the Danger Zone. Strong heroes can also wield some objects as impromptu weapons that inflict damage beyond their wielder's mass rank. Any bonus damage a weapon of opportunity provides is offset by an equal penalty to attack checks with the weapon.

- Special Rules:** This section describes how to use a Danger Zone's unique features in a fight or other encounter to help make the scene unique. It may point to existing rules that may be handy, but also introduces new optional rules for your to incorporate.
- Cast:** This section details the sort of characters who fill out a Danger Zone's cast on an average day. While most occupants of any Danger Zone are **Bystanders** (see *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*, page 268), this section details any exceptional minions that may oppose the heroes, come to their aid, or otherwise create conflict. Each cast section also includes at least one unique NPC with a more developed personality who can become a colorful ally or social antagonist for the heroes, depending on your game.
- Capers:** Each Danger Zone concludes with a few suggested adventures that take advantage of that location's unique mood and features.

## MAKING THE ZONE YOUR OWN

The zones outlined in this series cover many common urban fixtures—the corner coffee shop, the local high school, businesses and offices—and are presented as blank canvases. While a map and a few named characters are provided, you're free to use or discard them as you wish. Each locale needs a name and some personality to help it come alive. Consider who works or lives there, how the location attracts business, and what kind of décor might cover the walls. Fleshing out details can help one location stand out and can be a fun way to bring a hero's Complications into play. Be ready to let players add details as well, especially by spending a Hero Point to Edit the Scene. Pay attention to what details grab your players' interests and what NPCs they engage. Bring familiar elements back in the future can give your game a sense of consistency and help players feel more engaged, especially with characters or details they've helped describe.

Every *Danger Zone* reflects the ordinary equivalents we see in the real world rather than the extremes you might see in a comic book or superhero movie. You can keep them as-is for your own adventures to preserve a sense of familiarity for your players, but you're also free to adapt and change any location to accommodate for your world's unique quirks. A major bank in a world full of supervillains may employ security staff with minor powers or equip guards with powered armor, and the vault may be protected by advanced robots, magical wards, or psychic illusions. A fast food chain in a world full of magical creatures may have a "secret menu" full of unusual or even immoral food choices. Look at each entry as a starting point for your own ideas and mix in one or two unusual elements to make it more interesting to a team of superheroes.

You can also use the entries here as written, but file off the serial numbers to create dozens of new locations for your adventures. You can use the rules and map for the city park to represent an Earth preserve in an alien zoo or a nature-oriented pocket dimension, or lift rules elements and statblocks from the aquarium to flesh out the dangers of an undersea lab.

## GENERAL URBAN FEATURES

Most city sites include at least a few consistent features that superheroes might destroy, hurl, or otherwise interact with. The listed Mass and Toughness ranks on the table below give you some idea of how easily a structure can be thrown or how readily it might be destroyed if someone uses it for cover. Some objects can be wielded and melee weapons as well, increasing a character's damage by the listed rank; these improvised weapons suffer damage equal to what they inflict. Some objects can be held to provide cover or partial cover. Positioning such as object requires a Move action each round to maintain, and the cover bonus is lost if a character is Stunned.

A feature that can be ripped free breaks away from a larger structure if it fails a Toughness resistance check by the specified Degrees of Failure, or is ripped away by a Strength check against its Toughness rank+10 that achieves that many Degree of Success.

Fixture	Mass Rank	Toughness Rank	Notes
Cafe furniture	0	5	Light metal and/or plastic tables and chairs.
Crane	10	9	Urban tower crane with a 60-foot boom.
Door, Exterior	2	8	Heavy metal door. Pick (Technology DC 20) to open. Rip free with two Degrees. Can provide cover.
Door, Interior	1	5	Heavy wood or hollow metal doors. Pick (Technology DC 15) to open. Rip free with one Degree. Can provide cover.
Fire escape	6	7	Two Degrees tears it loose from the building.
Fire hydrant	4	8	Two Degrees tears it loose, releasing a geyser of water and creating a wet environment in a 15-foot radius.
Mailbox	3	7	Free-standing street-corner mailbox.
Manhole cover	1	7	Aerodynamic enough to throw it like a discus. Can provide partial cover.
Parked car	7	8	Just taking into account the vehicle's mass and material as an object.
Parking meter	1	8	Rip free with two Degrees. Damage +1.
Pavement	7	7	Per roughly 5-foot cube in size. Two degrees of damage renders it rough terrain (ground movement Hindered).
Security Camera	-4	2	Rip free with one Degree. Hack (Technology DC 20+) to view or spoof the feed.
Steel beam	4	9	Rip free with two Degrees of Damage. Damage +2.
Streetlamp	4	7	Typically 30-ft. tall aluminum or light steel poles. Rip free with one Degree.
Statue, bronze	6	8	Average 6-foot tall humanoid statue.
Statue, stone	4	7	Average 6-foot tall humanoid statue.
Traffic sign	0	5	Typically 6-ft. in length. Rip free with one Degree. Damage +1.
Umbrella, table	0	2	Large enough to provide partial concealment, full if a character ducks down behind it. Toughness applies to the 5-foot pole.
Utility pole	6	6	45-foot concrete or wood pole. Rip free with two Degrees.
Vendor cart	3	6	Equivalent of a small food-vendor cart. Adjust mass rank upwards for larger ones.
Wall, Interior	—	6	Cheap cinderblock walls.
Wall, Exterior	—	8	Reinforced cinderblock or brick walls.

# THE PARADE ROUTE

“... AND, AS HAS BEEN TRADITION FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS NOW, HERE COMES THE FREEDOM LEAGUE’S FLOAT IN THE PARADE AND, I HAVE TO SAY, JOANNE, THEY HAVE REALLY TAKEN THE TERM ‘FLOAT’ TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL FOR THE NEW LADY LIBERTY’S FIRST FREEDOM CITY PRIDE! IS THAT SOME KIND OF ANTI-GRAVITY MAKING IT DO THAT? AMAZING!”

“THAT’S RIGHT, STEVEN, I UNDERSTAND THAT DAEDALUS DESIGNED THE WHOLE THING AND JOHNNY ROCKET BUILT IT IN NO TIME. THERE THEY ARE NOW, BACKING UP THE NEWEST LEAGUE MEMBER AS SHE GREETES THE CROWD. JUST LISTEN TO THOSE CHEERS!”



STEVEN & JOANNE PARKER,  
AM FREEDOM

Who doesn’t love a parade? Music, dance, vendors, and plenty of colorful floats and spectacular balloons, all surrounded by community galvanized toward a common cause or celebration. But any event that brings out throngs of people lining the streets for a major event or holiday is bound to attract trouble. So it’s going to be up the heroes to help save the day when that happens, all the while protecting a whole lot of people who may be in danger. Of course, if they do really well, maybe the city will throw them a parade—and then it will be time to do it all over again!

A parade route is a temporary locations, something ordinary streets and parks are transformed into thanks to a holiday or celebration, but have a special feeling and unique elements that can make them a fun setting for a superhero adventure.

## SECURITY

Most large public parades turn out some police presence, with officers stationed every few blocks along the parade route, with additional officers to direct traffic at high-traffic areas like corners and turns. Of course, the sheer crowd size of a parade can make it difficult to spot signs of trouble, and parades involving a lot of costuming or the like provide plenty of opportunities for n’er-do-wells to slip past the police in disguise until they choose to reveal themselves.

Some parades, particularly those held by minority groups, may shun police presence in light of systemic violence and instead rely on volunteer security staff (use the **Security Guard**), vigilante groups, or local superheroes for safety. Protests may likewise be wary of the police and rely on volunteers to help organize additional protection or fill the crowd with civilian journalists broadcasting events live to news organizations and social media (use the **Reporter** archetype from the *Deluxe Gamemaster’s Guide*).

## SPECIAL RULES

A parade route is a kind of temporary “location” that’s meant for staging some kind of fracas or danger during the event, focusing on the urban environment, the large crowds of people, and the parade paraphernalia all around. If a conflict involving a parade somehow turns into a vehicular chase or the like, see the **Freeway** section for expanded rules involving chases and action taking place on top of moving vehicles.

Parades, by their nature, are surreal and temporary, and bring unlikely groups into close proximity.

## CROWD SCENES

A parade route during an event is likely to be thronged with people. Even a small, local parade can have thousands present, while huge, important parades in major cities can draw hundreds of thousands of people! Of course, this crowd is spread out all along the parade route, but it is still a substantial number of people for heroes to concern themselves with, especially when trouble happens.

## CROWD CONTROL

Using interaction skills on a parade-sized crowd first requires some means of being heard and understood (see **Interaction Skills** in **Chapter 4** of the *Deluxe Hero’s Handbook*) and it requires asking the crowd to all do or feel the same general thing. To affect more than the people immediately within earshot, the character typically needs something to raise them above the crowd (like a platform or movement effect) and something to extend the reach of their voice, such as a Communication effect or a voice-amplifying Feature. These are also particularly relevant for Sense-Dependent power effects, requiring subjects to see or hear the user, for example.

## FEATURES

The following represent typical Toughness ratings for different things in or around the parade route, along with the Technology skill DCs to overcome locks and other security devices associated with them. Also take a look at the Urban Fixtures section for a number of common city items found along a route

Fixture	Mass Rank	Toughness Rank	Notes
Road Surface	—	6	Asphalt and concrete
Metal Crowd Barrier	2	7	Damage +1
Parade Float	6–9	10	Converted flatbed truck or tractor, Speed 1
Helium Parade Balloon	4	1	Rubber or polyurethane airbags, Strength 4, Enhanced Strength 42 (Limited to lifting)

If a large crowd turns hostile, there is the potential for violence. If the heroes are dealing with a hostile crowd, they typically need to succeed at an interaction challenge to calm things down:

### CALM THE CROWD

**Time:** 1 minute

**Checks:** Usually interaction skills like Persuasion, although sometimes the heroes might use Deception or Intimidation (which can potentially backfire). The DC of the checks is usually 12, modified by the crowd's attitude.

**Success:** The heroes need 5 Degrees of Success to calm the crowd down to at least unfavorable and keep the peace.

**Consequences:** If the heroes fail two checks, the crowd becomes a violent mob (see **Mobs**, following) but they can still be calmed with another successful check. If the heroes fail four checks, there's no calming the mob and the heroes need to find another means to resolve the situation.

### PROTESTS

The difference between a parade and a protest march is largely one of focus, so far as the various crowd guidelines go. Protest marches generally have no vehicles, floats, or the like, and fewer spectators, although there will often be some, along with supporters who gather to cheer-on marchers but do not themselves march. There also tends to be a greater chance of counter-protestors at a protest, and more concern that the police are not there to protect the protesters so much as intimidate them—even more so when the protest is about the police. A protest crowd's attitude towards the heroes depends greatly on their cause and what the heroes represent to them. A group of heroes representing the establishment or who have a reputation for working closely with the police might be seen as a danger by civil rights protest, for example, and is likely to meet an Unfavorable or even Hostile crowd. On the other hand, heroes known to be strongly aligned with the protest's cause (or the local community) may find the crowd Favorable or even Helpful to them.

### Mobs

When a crowd turns into a violent mob, any potential target within 30 feet of the mob, or within the crowd itself, may be attacked. Treat the mob as a single opponent, capable of attacking as many targets as are in range, while also moving at Speed rank 0 through the area. Unless members of the mob have unusual abilities or weapons, assume an attack bonus of +5 and a damage bonus of +2, with the mob capable of making a power attack that shifts things to a +3 attack bonus and +4 damage bonus.

Direct attacks on the mob have limited effect, since they only take out a few individuals at most. Instead, a character attacking the mob can roll an Intimidation check, opposed by the mob's average Will defense +5. If the character wins, the portion of the mob affected by their interaction breaks and most likely flees (possibly even stampedes; see the following).

For more aggressive or armed mobs, consider using the **Mass Combat Rules** from **Chapter 7** of the *Deluxe Game-master's Guide*.

### STAMPEDES

In other cases, circumstances may turn a large crowd into a panicked stampede as people rush away from a source of danger, often shoving, trampling, or otherwise harming others in the process. A character in the area of a stampede must roll a DC 12 Strength resistance check each round or be knocked prone. Anyone who starts their turn prone within a stampeding crowd takes Damage 2. The prone character needs a successful DC 12 Athletics or Acrobatics check to perform the Stand action.

### RESCUES

In a mob or stampede situation, heroes may focus on trying to safeguard as many people as they can, rather than attacking or trying to influence the crowd (especially if they have exhausted the latter option due to a failure on **Crowd Control**, previously). In this instance, a hero can essentially take an Aid action on their turn, making a suitable check against DC 12 using whatever ability or effect



they are applying to help. If they succeed, they prevent some harm: blocking an attack, deflecting debris, pulling someone out of harm's way, and so forth. If they fail the check, however, they must resist Damage 2 as they put themselves in harm's way. Characters who engage in rescues during this type of situation should generally earn a Hero point for doing so.

## PARADE BALLOONS AND FLOATS

Mentioned under Structures, many parades feature floats, which are usually large flatbed vehicles with elaborate displays built-up on them, and some may feature large (30- to 60-foot) helium balloons in the shape of various characters or mascots, perhaps even versions of the heroes!

A parade balloon requires a substantial team of 25–100 handlers to manage the ropes and lines used to carry it, although a Strength rank of 7 or more is sufficient for a single character to hold one down. An out-of-control balloon has an effective Strength rank of 4 for shoving and knocking into things, and can be a floating platform for a conflict, possibly one slowly rising higher and higher! Characters standing on parade balloon are Hindered and need a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check to move with-

out falling prone. Two or more Degrees of Failure and they slide off and fall!

A float vehicle is typically at -1 Speed due to the bulk it is carrying, normally not an issue since parade floats move slower than the vehicle's even reduced Speed. For action happening on, in, or around a vehicle, see the **Highways** section of *Danger Zones* for additional rules and options.

## CAST

A parade is a perfect opportunity to bring everyone out for the day. A hero team's entire supporting cast could be either standing on a float alongside them or in the crowd along the route, either cheering them on, or with the heroes in their non-costumed identities.

You can potentially use any of the characters in the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* or the **Danger Zones** series to round-out the people at a parade, either in the crowd or part of a marching group or float associated with the place they are normally found. Businesses, organizations, and institutions often sponsor parade groups, and characters might join in.

Unless there's a reason to decide otherwise, assume most people in the crowd at a parade fit the **Bystander** traits from **Chapter 9** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*.

Some parades and protests may attract armed and aggressive counter protesters (use the **Tough** and **Militant** archetypes from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*).

### ANIMATED PARADE BALLOON

PL 6 • MRP • 38 POINTS

STR 8 STA — AGL 0 DEX —2 FGT 4 INT — AWE 0 PRE —

**Powers:** Flight 1 (4 MPH; Innate; Permanent), Growth 8 (Innate), Immunity to Fortitude Effects, Insubstantial 1 (Innate; Permanent).

**Offense:** Init +0, Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 8)

**Defense:** Dodge 1, Parry 3, Fortitude —, Toughness 8, Will —.

**Totals:** Abilities -26 + Powers 56 + Advantages 0 + Skills 0 (0 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 38

Whether brought to life by mad science or the arcane arts, parade balloons are a favorite minion-at-hand for any supervillain attacking a parade.

### SECURITY GUARD

PL 3 • MRP • 24 POINTS

STR 1 STA 3 AGL 0 DEX 1 FGT 1 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 0

**Equipment:** Club, Flashlight, Handcuffs, Taser (Ranged Affliction 5; Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated).

**Advantages:** Equipment 3.

**Skills:** Insight 2 (+3), Perception 4 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+3).

**Offense:** Init +0, Club +1 (Close, Damage 3), Taser +1 (Ranged, Affliction 5), Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 1).

**Defense:** Dodge 1, Parry 3, Fortitude 3, Toughness 3, Will 1.

**Totals:** Abilities 14 + Powers 0 + Advantages 3 + Skills 4 (8 ranks) + Defenses 3 = 24

Many civilian businesses rely on so-called “rent-a-cops,” private security forces armed with no or minimal weaponry who mostly deter crime with their physical presence. Well-trained and disciplined security guards may use the statistics for police officers, bodyguards, or soldiers instead.

## CAPERS

Parade route adventures sometimes have to do with the particular event. They’re ideal for holiday-themed villains like Doc Holiday from *Freedom City*, who could menace a whole series of parades! Adventures involving a parade route might include:

**Happy Heroes Day!** The Mayor has declared a parade and special day in honor of the heroes! The whole city is expected to turn out, culminating in a ceremony where the Mayor will award the heroes the key to the city as a token of gratitude. Of course, such accolades are sure to rile up

the heroes’ enemies, many of whom will be furious their foes are being celebrated. Other villains may just see it as an opportunity: With the heroes and most of the city’s police concentrated in one place, they should be able to go about their business undisturbed, especially if that business concerns, say, breaking into the heroes’ headquarters to steal something while they’re out.

**Marching to the Beat:** Who isn’t stirred by the beat of a marching band? That’s especially true when the band has been taken over by a villain like the Maestro from *Rogue’s Gallery*, using them to transmit his own particular brand of hypnotic music to the entire crowd of people able to hear it! The band leaves spectators of the parade mind-controlled thralls in their wake, putting Maestro as the “conductor” of an enormous crowd. The sinister symphonist might simply be out to rain on a rival’s parade, like the annual “Let Freedom Ring!” classical concert on Independence Day, or seizing control of a large portion of the city’s populace could be just the start of a larger scheme, particularly if Maestro himself is nowhere to be seen at the parade. What is he doing while the heroes are otherwise occupied?

**Patriot Games:** A parade on a patriotic national holiday (like Independence Day in the United States) or similar events, can become a target of villains opposed to the nation or the notion of patriotism, especially if patriotic heroes are present. Similarly, heroes present at a parade for a national holiday might be targeted by ultra-nationalist would-be “heroes” who believe the characters are unworthy of representing their proud nation. This can lead to a super-battle in the midst of the parade route, and the real heroes can prove themselves by helping to protect and safeguard the crowd from their foes, while also looking for opportunities to contain them and put an end to the fight.

**Showing Pride:** It’s Pride Month and the annual LGBTQ Pride Parade is one of the city’s largest events. LGBTQ heroes may be asked to serve as Grand Marshalls or special guests or may choose to march in the parade to show their own pride or support. Other heroes might be asked to help provide security for the event along with a show of support, especially if there are any signs of trouble. The Pride parade is a prime opportunity for prejudiced villains like Knightfire or Guillotine to stage a public attack, or even for an anti-LGBTQ group to suddenly gain access to super-weapons or powers from an unknown benefactor like Mr. Infamy. Of course, a Pride Parade adventure is also a prime roleplaying opportunity for personal character stories, or even just a chance for LGBTQ heroes to shine and get some well-deserved accolades.

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