

STAR LOG.EM-029

BOARDING RULES



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STAR LOG.EM-029

BOARDING RULES

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~ Alexander Augunas

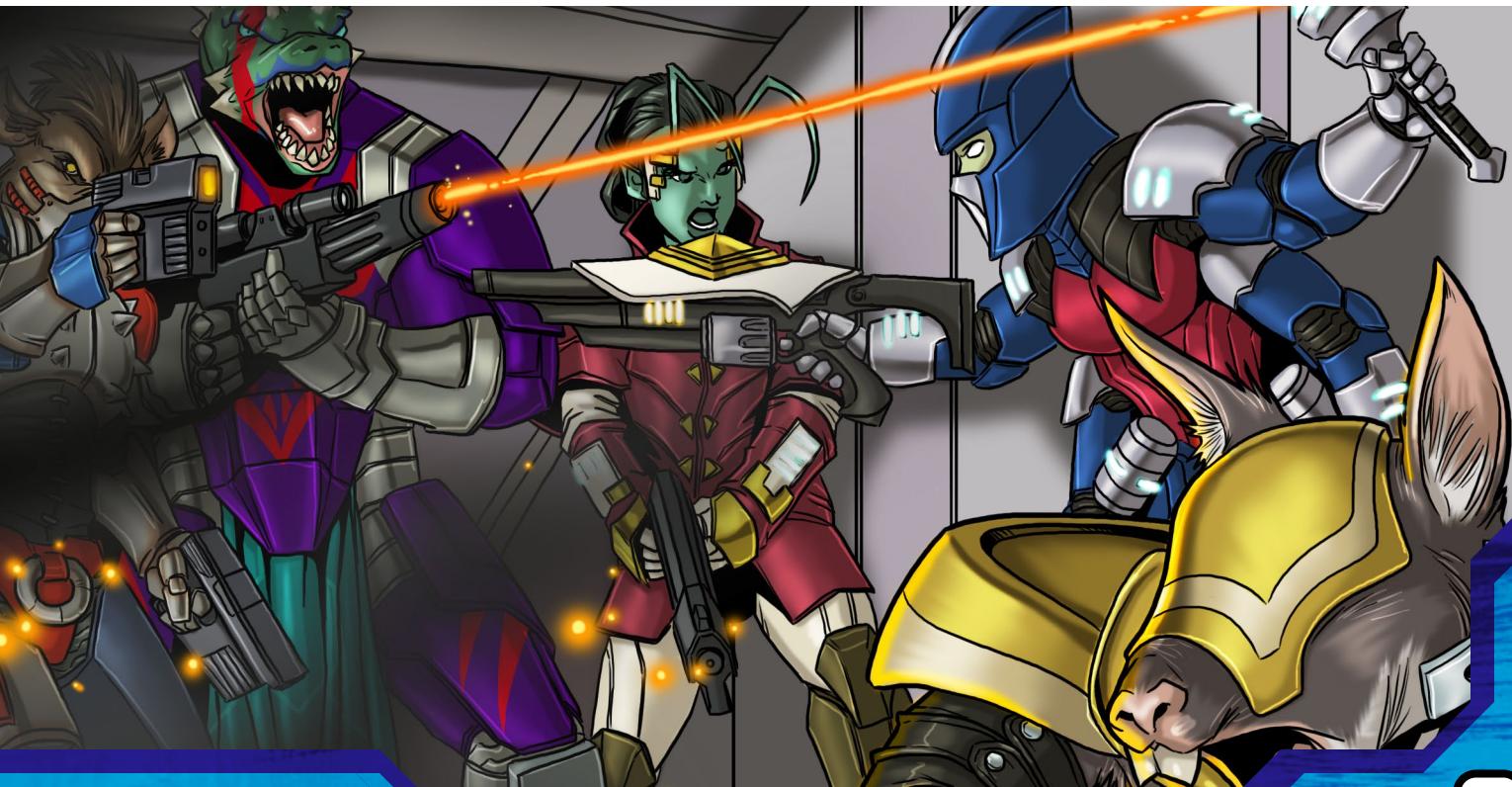
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QUERY: BOARDING RULES

Hello, and thank you for purchasing *STAR LOG.EM029: BOARDING RULES*! Being boarded by an enemy starship is one of the most terrifying things that can happen to a starship cruising the Xa-Osoro System, for many residents of the longer-lived species of the Radiant Imperium remember the anarchy that befell the system after the imperium's collapse. During those dark years, space pirates had free roam of the entire system, and slavers, thieves, and enigmatic entities from beyond the system alike would debilitate enemy ships and storm them, pillaging whatever they wanted from the crew and often taking countless people prisoner so they could be dragged off to vile black market slave auctions, disappearing from the public eye forever. Perhaps the most notable practice from this era was the widespread seizure of children from wrecked ships to be sold into slavery as collateral (see *STAR LOG.EM-003: COLLATERAL CHARACTERS* for more information).

Today, the Xa-Osoro System is significantly safer than it has been just decades ago thanks to the Radiant Imperium's allegiances with the system's corporations. While operating as a slaver or space pirate has become significantly harder with the reinforcement of anti-slavery and anti-pirating laws alongside renewed efforts to brand slavery especially as morally repulsive, morally repugnant corporations still pay handsomely for cheap labor and services, and there are plenty of gnoll slavers willing to sin grievously for credits.



BOARDING RULES

Boarding an enemy ship is a strategy used by militaries for time immemorial to sow chaos and pillage valuables. The following rules describe how characters board enemy starships for this aim.

DOCKING AND LANDING STARSHIPS

All starships have the capacity to dock or land, allowing its crew to disembark from the starship as needed. See the dock or land a starship task of the Piloting skill on this page for information about using that skill to disembark safely from your starship.

Docking a Starship (1d6 × 10 minutes): Docking a starship to a space station or another starship connects your starship's docking port to a corresponding docking port on the space station or starship that you're docking with.

Landing a Starship (1d6 × 10 minutes): Landing a starship on a solid surface, such as an asteroid or a planetoid, allows you to disembark from your starship at your leisure. Typically you'd use your starship's docking port to disembark once you've landed, but if your starship has a cargo hold with an external port you can also exit from there, though doing so breaks the expansion bay's air lock.

INVADING A STARSHIP

There are two methods for boarding an enemy space station or starship—breaching the enemy's hull or overriding their docking ports. Once you've succeeded at one of these tasks, you can send a boarding party onto the enemy starship.

BREACHING A STARSHIP'S HULL

Whenever your starship hits an enemy starship with a starship weapon and deals at least 1 Hull Point of damage, their starship's hull becomes breached until the end of the gunnery phase, after which the ship seals the breach to prevent loss of personal and atmosphere. If you hit the enemy starship with a weapon with the attach or board special property, the breach remains for as long as the weapon remains attached or imbedded into the enemy starship.

Alternatively, if you are adjacent to a starship or directly on its hull (such as by using magnetized boots that prevent you from falling off as the ship travels through space), you can use any weapons or explosives you possess to attempt to breach a starship. Doing so requires that you deal at least 10 points of damage to the starship with a single attack, treating the starship's Critical Threshold as its hardness for this purpose.

OVERRIDING A STARSHIP'S DOCKING PORTS

All starships possess an air locked docking port that allows the starship's crew to disembark from the vessel to another starship or a space station that they have docked with. You can use the Computers skill to override a starship's docking port, causing it to extend and allowing direct access to the starship for boarding. See the override a starship's docking port task or the override enemy docking port science officer action for more information.

NPC BOARDING PARTIES

Boarding parties allow you to form a team of combatants that wreck havoc on an enemy starship, dealing damage to the starship's Hull Points each round. To form a boarding party, you must construct a group of at least 4 NPC crew members whose total CR is equal to the ship's tier. Whenever you breach an enemy ship's hull or override an enemy ship's docking port during a starship combat, you can dispatch one boarding party into the enemy ship at the end of the gunnery phase. Each round at the start of the helm phase, the enemy ship takes 1d8 Hull Points of damage, plus an additional 1d8 damage for every 2 tiers your starship has. Dispatching additional teams into an enemy ship increases the damage done to the enemy ship each round by 1d8, up to a maximum of 1d8 per CR of your starship.

If you've been boarded and you're the captain, you can use the apprehend boarder captain action to reduce or end the damage done by the boarders.

PC BOARDING PARTIES

If the PCs choose to form a boarding party, they must construct a group consisting of every PC participating in the starship combat. The PCs cannot act in a starship role while acting in a boarding party, meaning they must typically rely on NPC crew members to fulfill these roles while doing so. However, the PCs can still take minor crew actions provided they're still on their starship.

If the PCs manage to successfully board an enemy starship during a starship combat, they transition into standard combat with 6-second rounds instead of starship rounds. The GM should provide the PCs with combat encounters while on the enemy starship with a CR that is between the ranges of the starship's tier - 1 and the starship's tier + 3, culminating with the PCs storming the enemy starship's bridge. Whether or not the starship combat continues while the PCs are aboard the enemy ship is up to the GM—the enemy crew might divert all hands to dealing with the invaders, effectively ending the starship combat, or combat might continue with the PCs acting in 6-second rounds for 1 to 10 minutes between starship rounds.

NEW PILOTING TASK

You know how to drive vehicles, pilot starships, and navigate. A character can use the Piloting skill to accomplish the following skill tasks in addition to those described in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*.

DOCK OR LAND A STARSHIP

When piloting a starship, you can attempt a Piloting check to dock your starship with a space station or starship, or to land your starship on solid ground. Successfully docking or landing requires a successful DC 10 Piloting check if you attempt to do so manually. If you fail, your starship takes Hull Point damage equal to its Critical Threshold, as does any starship you were attempting to dock with. You can't dock with a space

TABLE 1: STARSHIP WEAPONS

Light Weapons	Range	Speed (in Hexes)	Damage	PCU	Cost (in BP)	Special Properties
Direct-Fire Weapons						
Adamantine boring drill	Melee	—	6d4	15	10	Attach
Adamantine claw	Melee	—	3d4	10	5	Attach
Tracking Weapons						
Insertion pod	Long	10	2d6	12	4	Board (1, escape pod)
Heavy Weapons						
Tracking Weapons						
Intrusion pod	Long	10	5d8	15	10	Board (2, life boat)
Capital Weapons						
Direct-Fire Weapons						
Gravity vortex	Medium	—	2d4 × 10	15	10	Tractor beam, vortex
Tracking Weapons						
Invasion pod	Long	—	2d6 × 10	15	6	Board (4, life boat)

station or starship that doesn't want you to dock with them (but see the override docking port Computers task below).

If enemies or environmental conditions pose a significant threat to your starship, the Piloting DC to dock or land a starship increases to $15 + 1\text{-}1/2 \times$ the starship's tier. Depending on the condition, additional penalties may modify this DC as determined by the GM, imposing as much as a -5 penalty to your Piloting checks. In addition, if you fail the Piloting check to dock or land your starship by 5 or more in such conditions, the amount of damage your starship takes is doubled if you fail by 5 or more, tripled if you fail by 10 or more, and so on.

Starships with a computer possess an autopilot that allows them to dock or land themselves in nonhazardous conditions. With autopilot enabled, you gain a +10 circumstance bonus to Piloting checks to dock or land a starship if the Piloting DC is 10 or lower.

NEW COMPUTERS TASK

You know how to hack computers to get them to do what you want. A character can use the Computers skill to accomplish the following skill tasks in addition to those described in the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*.

OVERRIDE A STARSHIP'S DOCKING PORT

You can force a starship to extend its docking port, allowing you access to that ship or forcing it to connect to your starship's docking port. You must be within 60 feet to attempt this task. If you are aboard a starship, you can attempt this task if the enemy starship is occupying a hex that is adjacent to 1 hex occupied by your starship. Successfully overriding a starship's docking port takes 1 minute and requires a Computers check with a DC equal to $15 + 1\text{-}1/2 \times$ the starship's tier. If you succeed, the starship's docking port extends to the ground or your starship's docking port (your choice). You retain access to the docking port's functions for 24 hours, and you can prevent other creatures from gaining access to the docking point unless they succeed on a Computers checks with a DC equal to 1 + your Computers check result.

NEW CAPTAIN ACTION

As a captain, you make decisions that the rest of the crew acts upon and issue those decisions as orders, depending on your ranks in the Diplomacy or Intimidate skills or your character level. These actions can be taken during any phase.

APPREHEND BOARDER (ANY PHASE)

You can issue orders that allow your crew to apprehend or subdue enemy boarders. Whenever your starship is boarded, you can reduce the amount of Hull Point damage that your starship takes each round by 1d8 by succeeding on a Diplomacy check (DC $10 + 1\text{-}1/2 \times$ the enemy starship's tier). For every 5 higher than the result of your Diplomacy check is than this DC, you reduce the amount of Hull Point damage that your starship takes by an additional 1d8 (minimum 0). Alternatively, you can grant this same bonus by succeeding at a Intimidate check with the same DC.

NEW SCIENCE OFFICER ACTION

As a science officer, you can take the following actions during a starship combat, depending on your ranks in the Computers skill. These actions can be taken only during the helm phase.

OVERRIDE ENEMY DOCKING PORT (HELM PHASE, PUSH)

You can override an enemy starship's docking protocols, forcing the starship to deploy its docking port and connect it with your starship's docking port. This functions identically to using the Computers skill to override a starship's docking port, except it requires a science officer action instead of a full action.

NEW STARSHIP WEAPONS

The starship weapons detailed on Table 1: Starship Weapons are intended for close quarters skirmishing between starships, or to enable the crew of one starship to invade another vessel. If a weapon possesses a range or special property that is not defined within the *STARFINDER CORE RULEBOOK*, that range or special property is defined below.

RANGE

Some starship weapons have the following new range.

MELEE

A melee ship weapon has a range of 1 hex; it can only be used to attack ships that are both adjacent to the starship and within the same quadrant (front, port, starboard, or aft) as the weapon. You can use a melee weapon to attack an enemy starship that is in your starship's space, such as when an enemy starship moves through your starship's space.

SPECIAL PROPERTIES

Some starship weapons have the following new special properties.

ATTACH

A weapon with this special property attaches the attacking ship directly to the defending ship if it deals Hull Point damage, breaching the enemy ship's hull and causing the attacking starship to become tethered to the defending ship (if performing a flyby attack, the attacking ship must end its movement in an adjacent hex to benefit from the attached effect). The defending starship can still move and takes no other negative effects, but when the defending ship moves, the attacking starship moves with it and remains adjacent in the same relevant position. A pilot on the defending ship can shake off the attacking ship by succeeding at a Piloting check (DC 15 + 1-1/2 × the starship's tier). Succeeding at this check negates the attached effect, so the attacking ship does not move with the defending ship when it moves. Failure causes the defending ship to take Hull Point damage equal to the attack weapon's damage, ignoring any shields the defending ship has, in addition to the attacking ship still moving when the defending ship moves. The attached effect continues until the end of the following helm phase.

If the attacking starship has any boarding parties, one automatically deploys from the attacking ship to the defending ship when the attacking ship attaches to the defending ship.

BOARD

A weapon with this special property contains basic life support to transport the indicated number of Small or Medium crew members for boarding. If it deals Hull Point damage, the pod imbeds itself into the ship, breaches the enemy starship's hull, and ejects its occupants into one of the external ship's external chambers. If the weapon doesn't deal Hull Point damage, it functions thereafter as a life boat or escape pod (as indicated).

An attached pod can be removed by a ship arm (see *Star Log.EM-024: Expansion Bays*) of the target ship during the gunnery phase after the occupants have been ejected into the target ship (but potentially before they have initiated normal combat). The compromised chamber might lose atmosphere at the GM's decision.

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