

<p>Systems Alliance MANIFEST TRAIN</p> <p>06 April 2013</p> <p>Rules and Scenario</p>
--

The following are the rules for *Systems Alliance MANIFEST TRAIN*, a real-time, real-space roleplaying game sponsored by the MIT Assassins' Guild. You are responsible for knowing these rules. Many of them are nigh-impossible to enforce and rely upon the honor system. Do not cheat. Do not abuse loopholes. Play fair. Be your own harshest critic.

The **gamemasters (GMs)** run the game. If you have any problems or questions concerning the game, contact a GM. Rulings they make are final. They may violate the letter of the rules to preserve the spirit. The GMs promise to be as fair and reasonable as possible. Neither they nor these rules are perfect.

This game is intended to be fun. Getting into character, roleplaying, being dramatic, and playing competitively can all increase the fun of the game. Do not take the game too seriously. Even if you are losing, keep a good attitude. When the game is over, the real winners are the players with the best stories.

This is only a game. Everyone involved should act with courtesy, sportsmanship, patience, and taste. The GMs may expel anyone they believe to be violating the spirit of the rules or the game. Emotions may run high. If you think things are crossing the line from game to reality too much, or if you are just getting too stressed, calm down and maybe take a break. Stay in control. Use common sense. Always, play safely, then play to have fun.

This game is a work of fiction. Although it may refer to things in the real world, it does so only for the sake of the scenario. It does not represent the opinions of the GMs or the MIT Assassins' Guild.

"Mass Effect" and all related places, characters, art, and intellectual property are property of BioWare. Used without permission under the Fair Use clause.

These rules are modifications of those used in previous games. This game and all materials thereof are copyright 2013 by Cassie Huang, Mark Mascaro, Ash Turza, Jim Waldrop, Ceres Lee, and the MIT Assassins' Guild.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE MIT ASSASSINS' GUILD

SYSTEMS ALLIANCE CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT N1-542Z0001

Welcome to Systems Alliance Special Operative N1 Training. Due to your credentials and potential, you have been selected to take part in this training opportunity.

N-series operatives play a unique role in the Alliance military. They are sent where ships and infantry cannot go, and expected to complete otherwise impossible missions. This training is designed to prepare you for assignments into small, mixed-specialty fireteams.

Increased threats to the galaxy have forced the Alliance to not only expand the training facilities here on Pinnacle Station, but to use this as an opportunity to foster relations between the other races. As a cadet, you will have the unique opportunity to be observed and trained by some of the best specialists in the Systems Alliance and in the galaxy.

1 Basic Rules

Your character packet is a big manila envelope. It contains your role: who you are, what you're up to; everything about your part as a **player-character (PC)** in the game. Read all the contents. They include your **character sheet**, which describes who you are, your **bluesheet(s)**, which describes your team(s), your **greensheets**, which describe special rules and mechanics, your **ability list**, which lists all of your stats and combat abilities, your **memory packets**, which you should only open when you encounter their trigger, and any **items** you start with.

A **halt** pauses game action. To call one, say "game halt" in a clear and audible voice; other players around a corner should hear you, but you shouldn't scare some poor grad student. End a halt by saying "three, two, one, resume." Call a halt for one of only three reasons: because a rule instructs you to, for safety and similar out-of-game issues, or to pause game and fetch a GM (which you should avoid).

You may go **not-here** by putting a hand on your head, which is visible from a distance. Go not-here for one of only three reasons: because a rule instructs you to, to leave game, or to fetch a GM while in a halt (which you should avoid). When you are not-here, you cannot pass information or interact with game at all.

Zone of Control (ZoC) is a rough distance measurement. You are within ZoC of someone if your outstretched fingers can touch their outstretched fingers. Double-ZoC is twice this distance, triple-ZoC is three times, etc.

An **observer** is someone not playing the game who has agreed to watch. They generally wear an observer headband or an observer name-badge. They should stay out of the way; you can always ask an observer to leave. If a friend who is not playing wants to observe game, send them to the GMs.

Use tact and common sense when dealing with **non-players (NPs)**. You are encouraged to spread the gospel of real-time, real-space roleplaying; however, many NPs prefer to sleep, study, or work undisturbed. If an NP comes across game action, call a halt, with "**NP halt!**" and politely let them through.

Safety: This is a game. Real violence is unacceptable. Game action should cause no real-world damage, either to people or property. If something dangerous is happening, call a halt. Stay in control, use common sense, and do not endanger yourself or others. You should not run or otherwise force your way into or through someone else's ZoC, and you should not make physical contact with another player without permission. Be extra careful around stairs; in a stairwell, don't try to run people down, don't crowd people, and avoid any risky acrobatics. Do not get into pushing or pulling matches over space or doors.

Items, Signs, and Tape Game items will all have item cards. They will have rules for use on the card. Items can not be stashed; you must carry them or leave them out in the open. Dead characters drop all items on the ground. **Expendable** items take up a hand. **Accessories** may grant special abilities; you may only equip one at a time, and it does not take up a hand. **Key items** are indestructible and can be kept in your pocket. Carrying a **body** takes two hands. Dragging a body takes one hand.

You must read and obey all game **signs** you come across. If there is **tape** on the floor, you cannot cross it unless you fulfill any requirements set by an accompanying sign. You may shoot across tape.

Headband and Armband Colors: Headbands are a visual representation of the armor, shield, and other properties of a unit; wear them visibly on your head. If you see a headband and don't know what it represents, ask. If you are wearing a headband, tell people what their characters see.

Enemy headbands will usually be a color combination of Blue, Yellow, and Red, depending on whether they have non-zero SP, AP, and HP respectively.

- **White:** Observer
- **Black:** N1 Cadet
- **Red:** Health only unit
- **Yellow:** Armor only unit
- **Blue:** Shields only unit
- **Purple:** Shielded, Health unit
- **Orange:** Armored, Health unit
- **Green:** Shielded, Armored unit
- **Brown:** Shielded, Armored, Health unit

Game Area: Portions of buildings 24, 34, 36, 38, and 32 are in game, as is 26-0. No other portion of 26 is in game. End-of-Game signs, wards, and other mechanics will limit where you can go.

2 Combat

Combat is real-time and mostly based upon player skill at firing and dodging physreps. Keep it safe. Hits to anywhere on the body count the same; don't aim for the head. If a projectile hits clothing or long hair such that it would not hit the body when passing through, it doesn't count. Hits to an item you hold count as hits on you, not the item. If there is a conflict over whether or not a projectile hit, the shooter calls the shot.

In the heat of combat, people may have trouble hearing incants or noticing hits. If you cannot understand an incant, make it clear by calling "**Miscast**." Miscast skills and spells are not used up. Responses such as "**Resist**," "**Dodge**," and "**Evade**" mean that an effect was recognized and negated.

Hit Points, Armor Points, Shield Points and Unconsciousness: Shield Points (SP) represent the strength of your shields. Shields soak damage before your armor and self do. Shields can be recharged over time when not being shot (see the section on **Cover**). Shields may only go above their starting value with abilities. When they recharge, they will return to their starting value. When you reach 0 SP, you will start taking damage to AP or HP. **Patrol darts do 3 points of damage per shot to SP.** Other uncalled projectiles do 1 point of damage per shot to SP.

Armor Points (AP) represent the strength of your armor. Armor soaks damage before your HP does. Armor can be repaired with **omni-gel**. Your AP value may not go above your armor's starting value. **Vortex discs do 3 points of damage per shot to AP.** Other uncalled projectiles do 1 point of damage per shot to AP.

Hit Points (HP) represent the amount of damage you can take or be healed. Your HP may not go below 0 or above its starting value. You are **unconscious and bleeding out** if you reach 0 HP. You may not move, talk, or take any game actions. You may play your body and remember anything you see or hear. If you are unconscious *outside of a training scenario* for 3 minutes, you will become **dead**.

Unless you know otherwise, you have a starting HP value of 1.

When you have been reduced to 0 HP, take off your headband. This is to distinguish between, for example:

- someone who is sitting down because they are unconscious (should have their headband off)
- someone who is crouching down to Take Cover from incoming fire (should have their headband on)

Damage is done first to SP, then AP, then HP.

When dead, go "Not Here" by placing your hand on top of your head with your headband visibly off and in your hand (ask a GM if you are confused about what we want here) and return to the location where you started the module in which you died. A GM will shortly arrive and explain what occurs.

Cover: Cover is very important. Taking cover will allow your shields and abilities to recharge. To take cover, you must duck behind an obstacle (walls, etc) and perform a 15-count. You may not take offensive action during this time (you may reload). If you are hit during this time, it interrupts the count and you must start over.

When successful, your abilities and SP recover to full. Your AP and HP do not.

Abilities: To keep things neat on your character cards, we've abbreviated a few things for some of your abilities.

Any skill with **RECHARGE** in the description will recharge after you Take Cover.

Any skill with **BIOTIC** in the description is a Biotic ability, and any skill with **TECH** in the description is a Tech ability. Some abilities interact in certain ways with Biotic or Tech abilities. Those abilities will explain themselves further.

Some items will require you to have a certain ability to use. Some items will grant you abilities. The abilities on items *can never be used to satisfy prerequisites on other items*. We refer to abilities on your stat card as "innate" abilities, and abilities on your items as "granted" abilities.

Medic Abilities / Armor Repair / Shield Recharge: There are multiple ways to heal another character in this game. Please read the text of your medic ability on your stat card or on the item granting you this ability *very carefully*.

Unless stated otherwise in the text of the ability, medic abilities have no required time delay other than that of the user communicating to the target how much HP has been restored.

Armor repair is handled exclusively through Tools, a type of item. Read the text of the ability carefully. As above, armor repair abilities have no required time delay other than that of the user communicating to the target how much AP has been restored.

(There exist innate abilities to use Tools that can implement Armor Repair to grant AP in a nonstandard manner. That still means that Armor Repair is handled exclusively through Tools! You still need a Tool that can repair AP to use these abilities! It simply means that the ability needs to be read very carefully, hopefully pre-game, and we encourage you to do this, as these are *innate* abilities.)

Shield recharge is handled either through Taking Cover, or through specific abilities. The **BIOTIC** incant **Barrier** and the **TECH** ability **Reroute Power** will recharge SP per the text on your stat card. When using these abilities, your SP is *reset* to the new value; it is not additive.

When you Take Cover, your SP is reset to the value on your armor. If the value of your armor's SP has been modified, any effect that does this will explicitly state that it modifies the value of your armor's SP.

Being healed from unconsciousness does not restore your AP or your SP. Even if someone says "I heal you to full" or something similarly vague:

- "Healing" only affects HP,
- Armor Repair affects AP,
- and Shield Recharge through Take Cover, **Barrier**, or **Reroute Power** affects SP.

Techie Abilities:

Default Damage: Nerf darts do **1 point of damage** as an uncalled projectile.

Vortex discs do **1 point of damage to SP and HP**, and **3 points of damage to AP**.

Patrol darts do **1 point of damage to AP and HP**, and **3 points of damage to SP**.

You can think of Patrol darts as a weak Overload-like ability, and Vortex discs as a weak Incinerate-like ability. They do not count as tech abilities, but they are very good at destroying shields and armor, respectively.

If an attack has an incant, the incant is the entirety of the effects. Incants may specify damage. For example, if someone shoots you with a dart gun and says "5 Damage," you take 5 damage instead of the default 1. For the purpose of shortening incants, however, some calls have a fixed damage rating, as listed below.

In general, most "X Damage" calls will be made by players or NPCs 'A wielding sniper rifles, and will be single NERF shots accompanied by a damage call.

Packet Flurries: We have introduced¹ a mechanic in this game called a **packet flurry**. A packet flurry is a set of 3 packets thrown from the same hand, one after another, without transferring packets from another hand. A GM will demonstrate this mechanic for you.

Each packet from a flurry counts as its own projectile. If you are hit with multiple packets from the same flurry, you take multiple copies of the same effect. This can make flurries of damage-incant packets very destructive.

Incants: Do not fake incants. Do not call incants for skills without using them for real. Speak clearly at a reasonable speed. Your weapon must be out and visible during the entire incant.

- **Damage**, as in "4 Damage," does the stated amount of damage.
- **Overload** does **5 damage to shields only**. If you have no SP, call "No Effect". This is a **tech** effect.
- **Incinerate** does **5 damage to armor only**. If you are currently protected by shields, or you have no AP, call "No Effect". This is a **tech** effect.
- **Freeze** locks a target in place. When hit, the target may not move their feet for 10 seconds. This is a **tech** effect.

¹Nothing is new under the sun. We are simply codifying this as a mechanic to allow some cool abilities.

- **Grenade** does **3 damage**. This is a **tech** effect.
- **Shockwave** does **3 damage**. This is a **biotic** effect.
- **Barrier** sets current SP value to a user-specific number. To use this ability, you **must** call out the incant; it is an obvious effect. Different users may recharge different amounts of SP by using Barrier. This is a **biotic** effect.
- **Shield Recharge** sets current SP value to a user-specific number. To use this ability, you **must** call out the incant; it is an obvious effect. Different users may recharge different amounts of SP by using Shield Recharge. This is a **tech** effect.
- **Stasis** paralyzes a target. When hit, the target may not move and is immobilized for 10 seconds (cannot move, can take no actions, should make a best effort to maintain the pose and position they were in when hit). This is a **biotic** effect.
- **Throw** forcefully repels a target. When hit, target must **turn around and walk forward** for 5 long steps or until they hit a wall. If the target hits a wall from a Throw, the target takes **1 damage**. This is a **biotic** effect. *Note: If you're shooting someone who has been Thrown, you are probably shooting them in the back. They may ask for clarification as to how much damage they have taken once they've done processing the Throw.*

NOTE: Any enemy with multiple headbands (any color plus black) is too large or powerful to **Throw**.

- **Deathstrike** can only be used on a helpless target. This incant is on an *interruptable* 3-count. If the target of this ability is unconscious and bleeding out, they are dead if the count completes. This ability will be delivered *by touch* through a NERF boffer sword. Any unit with this ability will carry such a physrep.
- **Bestow ABILITY through VECTOR:** A Bestow ability allows one player to grant another player a use of a skill. *ABILITY* will be another incant keyword, such as "Incinerate" or "Barrier". *VECTOR* will be a keyword representing an attack method or a piece of equipment.

If an offensive *VECTOR* is stated, that attack method must be used to deliver the effect; the recipient of a "Bestow Grenade through Weapon" can fire a "Grenade" shot, but cannot instead choose to throw a "Grenade" spell packet.

If an equipment *VECTOR* is stated, the recipient must have an item of the appropriate type equipped; you may not receive a **Bestow ABILITY through Tool** if you are not currently equipping a Tool. The player granting the ability may have additional constraints (such as being unable to use the **Bestow ABILITY through Tool** ability unless the targeted player is using a particular subclass of Tool).

A recipient of Bestow effects can only have one Bestow active on them at a time for any given *VECTOR*.

Currently supported values for *VECTOR* are:

- **weapon** (offensive)
- **packet** (offensive)
- **armor** (equipment)
- **tool** (equipment)

An ability that has been **Bestowed** is considered a "granted" ability and cannot be used to satisfy any kind of prerequisite.

Projectiles and Damage Order of Operations: We know this may be a little confusing. Now that you've read through all the things that can damage you, we believe this is a somewhat simpler explanation that will allow you to keep track of it.

1. **Called "X Damage" shots, and Shockwave/Grenade:** Any projectile fired with an incant of "X Damage". The entirety of the effect is the stated damage. The type of projectile does not matter. This kind of damage goes through the boundaries between SP, AP, and HP; if you have 2 SP, 2 AP, and 1 HP, and you get hit with a "5 Damage" dart, you fall unconscious, because you are now at 0 HP (and 0 SP and 0 AP). **Shockwave** and **Grenade** function, at the moment, identically to a "3 Damage" projectile; the damage goes through the boundaries between SP/AP/HP.
2. **Called shots/packets with other incants:** Any projectile fired with a non-damage incant, or any spell packet thrown with an incant. The entirety of the effect is the stated incant. **Overload** and **Incinerate** **DO NOT** penetrate the boundaries between SP/AP/HP. Example: If you have 0 SP, 1 AP, and 3 HP, and you are hit with an **Incinerate**, you lose your remaining 1 AP and are still up at 3 HP. If you are then immediately hit with another **Incinerate**, you would call "No Effect", as you would no longer have AP to be Incinerated.
3. **Uncalled Vortex discs and uncalled patrol darts:** These projectiles do additional damage to AP (vortex discs) and SP (patrol darts). The damage from these projectiles **DOES NOT** penetrate the boundaries between SP/AP/HP.
 - **Example 1:** If you have 1 SP, 1 AP, and 1 HP, and you are hit with a Patrol dart, you are still up at 1 AP and 1 HP.
 - **Example 2:** If you have 1 SP, 4 AP, and 1 HP, it will take 4 Vortex ring shots to knock you unconscious, and those rings will do, in order, 1 SP damage, 3 AP damage, 1 AP damage (because that's all you have left), and 1 HP damage.
4. **Uncalled Nerf darts:** These do one point of damage.

At the moment, there is no need to remember which incants are Biotic and which are Tech if you are only going to be on the receiving end.

3 Classes

The Systems Alliance fields six distinct class specializations:

- **Adept:** Biotic specialist. Use biotics to bend space-time via mass effect fields to their will. They'll use their biotic talents to cause damage, disable enemies, and protect themselves. Lack the ability to use heavier armors.
- **Soldier:** Combat specialist. Trained in the use of heavier armor types and all weapons they can get their hands on.² The soldier's solution to most problems is sinking more bullets into the other guy.
- **Engineer:** Tech specialist. Use tech to disable, cripple, and debuff their enemies, thus controlling the battlefield. They operate at a distance, lacking the protection of heavier armors or other abilities.
- **Sentinel:** Biotic/Tech. Combine tech and biotics in interesting ways, but lack the deep training of a pure adept or engineer. Some use their skills to debuff and damage their foes, others choose protection and disabling abilities. Generally use armors on the lighter side of the scale.
- **Vanguard:** Biotic/Combat. Frontline combat specialist who combines the firepower of a soldier and the biotics of an adept. Vanguard are usually seen as a high-risk, high-reward type combatant. Typically equipped with a medium armor.
- **Infiltrator:** Tech/Combat. Backline combat specialist who combines a soldier's firepower with an engineer's tech abilities. They use tech skills to disable, debuff, or otherwise cripple a target and weapon skills to put them down. Typically equipped with a medium armor.

Successful N-class fireteams generally have a mix of specialties.

4 Items

Consumables:

- **Medi-gel:** Wonderous medical technology that will save your life. Will restore 1 HP when used. People with **Medic** training can make one tube of this stuff restore all your HP.³
- **Omni-gel:** Usually this stuff is used by your omni-tools to make small parts for repairs. Some enterprising soul figured out that this property lets it blow through locks and encrypted hardware. Tougher locks and hacks will require more doses.
- **Ammo mods:** You might find one-use ammo mods that will apply an effect to your current ammo. These will allow you to shoot an incant-effect through your gun. For example, a pack of Cryo Ammo will allow one use of the "Freeze" ability.

²If it has a trigger, you bet they know how to use it.

³Seriously, these people should become your new best friends.