

# STARSECTOR

# THE MANUAL

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## The World of Starsector

*The Domain of Man is no more. Their countless fleets and innumerable armies have been shattered and lost. The comforts of their civilization are a distant memory. Cut off from the Star Gate network and scattered in isolated pockets throughout the galaxy, humanity is trying to recover from the great Collapse.*

The story of Starsector concerns a sector mostly untouched by the calamity that spelled doom for the Domain. For over 200 cycles humanity has been losing its grip on civilization and struggling desperately to hang on to what is left.

It is a time of frequent conflict, rampant piracy, and unsteady allegiances; a time of great profit for the few traders able to ply the old trading routes; a time of great danger and greater opportunity. What will you discover in the ongoing development of the world of Starsector?



## About this manual

This manual's main function is not to teach you how to play Starsector. You could learn that in here, but would you not rather play the tutorials and experience all the great features first hand? Instead, this manual wants to accompany you during your experience. It aims to help you to quickly look up something that is unclear and deepen your understanding of the underlying mechanics of Starsector. And last but not least, I hope that you have some fun reading around in this manual.

*I am a hint! You will find me throughout this manual and I will provide you with useful tips and additional info! Also, I like exclamation marks!*

Remember that you can pause the game at any time and hit alt + tab (or its equivalent in your OS) to switch to this manual. To navigate the manual you can use the search function with strg+F or look in the detailed table of contents (entries work as links).

Greetings. I am a fragment of lore. Although much has been lost in the 200 cycles since the great calamity, I will try my best to tell you about what lies behind the technicalities of Starsector. If you care for history, legends and explanations you should read me, young one.

All input instructions in the manual assume an unmodified standard layout.

This manual does *not* contain detailed lists of content like ship types and weapons. You can find those in the game's internal codex.

This manual is fan work. All information is written in the best of knowledge and belief, but the possibility of mistakes and inaccuracies cannot be eliminated. All images and lore are copyright of Fractal Softworks.

**Beige marked text** indicates that the part of the game it refers to does not yet exist or might undergo major changes in the (near) future.

**Purple marked text** indicates an unfinished subject. This manual is work in progress.

For further help, tips or questions read the FAQ or visit the Fractal Softworks Forum at <http://fractalsoftworks.com/forum>

### Getting started



Starsector is a complex game. If you are new to it the diversity of content may seem a bit overwhelming. But don't worry if you don't quite grasp something at the beginning, most features and interfaces in Starsector are designed to be quite intuitive and you can pick them up while playing. There are two major aspects to Starsector: The Combat and the surrounding Campaign. If you started with the tutorials and want to expand on that, some of the first Missions might be right for you. All you need to know for them is combat, covered in Part I of this manual. If you want to jump directly into the campaign you might want to read around in Part II first, although combat won't be long in coming there either.

Whichever path, I wish you a lot of fun playing the game!

*Under "setting" there is an option that makes the player ship take only 50% damage. Once you feel you mastered the controls, deactivate it for extra challenge!*

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## Part I: Combat in Starsector

Starsector is, at its heart, a game of tactical space combat. Regardless of what else you do in the game, you will spend a lot of time fighting other ships or commanding your fleet to do so. Therefore the first half of this manual will cover everything you will have to know about combat in Starsector, starting with the basics of movement and ending with the control of a whole fleet.

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## Basics

### Piloting

Use standard WASD controls to move the ship. W is for acceleration. A and D turn the ship. S will slow the ship and then accelerate backwards. C will bring the ship to a stop. The ships have inertia and generally follow Newtonian mechanics, with the exception that every ship has a top speed.

### Strafing

In Starsector there are two ways to move sideways.

Hold Q or E to strafe sideways in a straight line. This is useful for dodging incoming fire, especially torpedoes.

Hold shift and A or D to make your ship strafe while facing the mouse cursor. This is useful to circle around an enemy without turning away from it.

Small ships like frigates and destroyers strafe very quickly. Capital ships can barely strafe at all.

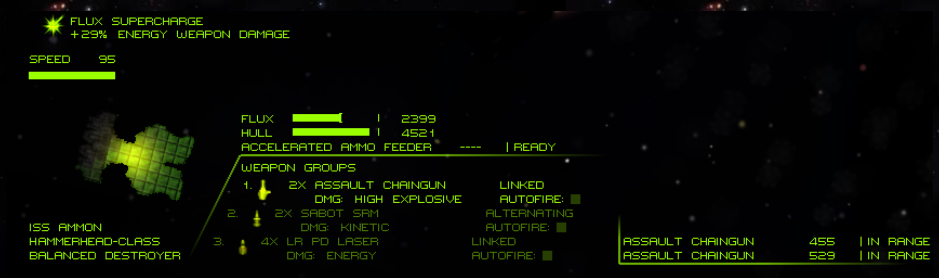
*In a fast ship you can use circular strafing to stay out of the enemy's weapon firing arcs or even get on its rear side! That is especially useful against ships with forward fixed shields.*

### Looking around

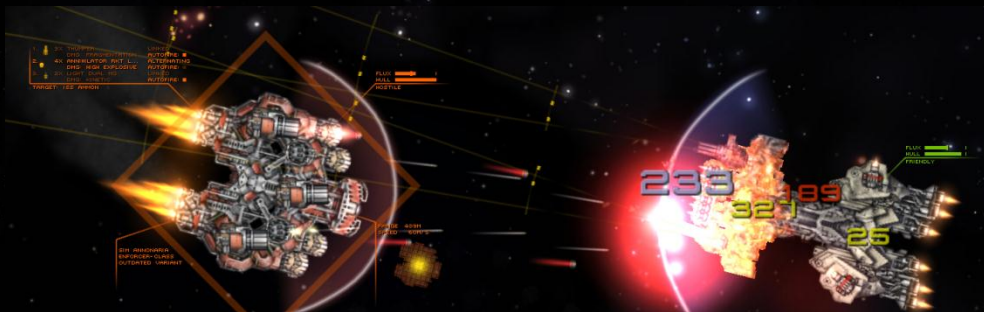
Move the mouse to pan the view around and use the mouse wheel to zoom in and out. Pressing Z locks your view on target, if you have one. Pressing Z again returns to regular panning mode.

## The Combat UI

The tactical overlay is your interface during combat and conveys all the information you need to know to survive. The details and meanings of everything will be explained in the following chapters, but for starters here are the two main parts of the overlay:



Fixed in the lower left corner you can see the most important information about your ship. To the left are special effects, speed and armor distribution. The middle shows flux and hull values, system status, and weapon status information. On the right are your ammunition reserves.



Superimposed over actual objects are: To the left: the target marker with information about the enemy ship. In the middle: your yellow weapon arcs, which show the current position, maximum range, and maximum traverse of your selected weapons. On the right: 3 kinds of damage floaters for shields (blue), armor (yellow), and hull damage (red).

## Flux

Firing weapons and using shields builds up flux and when the flux level reaches maximum the ship can't fire or use shields. Flux dissipates naturally over time. Your current flux level is indicated by the flux-bar; you can find it floating besides your ship, above the health bar, or in the bottom left of the screen:

### ***Venting***

You can get rid of flux quickly by shutting down and venting critical systems. While venting the ship can't fire or use shields, but dissipates flux at twice the normal rate. The ship stops venting flux once the flux level reaches 0. The ship's maneuverability is not influenced by venting, so you can still evade enemy fire.

Press V to vent flux.

### ***Overload***

If the flux level is maxed out due to damage taken by shields the ship will be overloaded. While overloaded the ship can't fire or use shields and dissipates flux at the normal rate. The effect is easily visible (and

audible), electric discharges will crawl all over the hull.

Overload lasts a lot longer if it was caused by a big hit (for example, overload caused by absorbing a torpedo will last for a long time).

*Avoid overloading at all costs! You are very vulnerable if it happens, so keep an eye on your flux level. But should it happen to you don't panic! Retreat out of enemy weapon range and wait till your systems come back online.*



## Hard Flux vs. Soft Flux

There are two different kinds of flux that fill the flux bar together. A little vertical line indicates the respective parts – left of it is hard flux, on the right soft flux.



Soft flux is generated whenever you fire a weapon. It dissipates naturally over time.

Hard flux is generated whenever your shield gets hit by an enemy weapon. It can only dissipate when you drop your shields. You can't stay under enemy fire forever!

Also note that beam weapons are special: they generate soft flux rather than hard flux.

Ships have different special systems that will be covered later. Those can also generate either hard- or soft-flux, depending on the system.

There are also some special rules for flux generation on phase ships that you can read about in their chapter.

*The shield efficiency of your ships determines how many points of flux a point of damage generates. A value under 1 is a sign of quite efficient shields.*



## Engine Boost

When the flux level is at 0 the ship is able to direct additional power to engines and gets a 50 unit boost to maximum speed. The boost much more significant for large ships whose speed is low to start with. Residual energy discharges prevent this boost from working on a ship inside a nebula. Beware piloting slow ships into nebulae!

*Sometimes it makes sense to stop all flux generation to get this boost. Press X to toggle the hold fire mode!*

## Energy Weapon Bonus



Energy weapons get a damage bonus equal to the current flux level - more flux, more damage! Weapons that get this bonus glow to reflect the size of the bonus. The bonus reaches a maximum of 50% at full flux. Note that this bonus applies to the energy weapon mount, not damage type: Graviton Beams get the bonus, Mjolnir Cannons do not.

## Weapons



### Types

Weapons in Starsector can be categorized according to two basic properties:

- The kind of damage they deal
- The kind of weapon mount they occupy

You can access the codex via the main menu or the campaign pause menu. It contains not only technical information but is rich in **lore** and **history** of many of the different weapons, ships and systems.

There are many other important properties like range, accuracy, fire delay and turn speed that make each weapon of Starsector unique.

Knowing exactly what your weapons can and can't do is elemental for your success in battle. You can look up every weapon's characteristics in the codex. You can also see its key information by hovering your mouse above it in the refit screen. In the same screen there is also a simulator that you can use to test you ships and weapons before purchasing them.

A faster way to evaluate a weapon is to just look at its primary role. You can read what every role means after the chapter about weapon mounts.

## ***Weapon Mounts***


All weapon mounts exist in three sizes (small, medium, and large) and in one of four types: ballistic, energy, missile, or universal (described below). Additionally, each mount can either be a turret or a hardpoint; turrets have wide firing arcs while hardpoints have increased weapon durability. Each mount can hold a weapon that fits its type and its size. Mounts can also fit a weapon of 1 size class smaller, except for universal mounts. You can learn how to equip your ships with weapons in [Part II](#).

## ***Turrets vs. Hardpoints***

A weapon mounted on a turret sits on the upper side of the hull and turns relative to the hull. Turning rate is an important feature that is determined by the weapon, not the mount. The arc in which a turret can turn, however, is determined by the mount. It can reach from almost complete coverage to a field somewhat over 90 degrees.

Hardpoints are embedded into the edge of a hull. They have a very narrow firing arc and rely on turning the ship to point at a target. For homing missile weapons this is less of a problem than for other weapon types. While hardpoints are twice as durable as turrets they often receive much more damage as they are right on the edge of the hull.

## ***Ballistic***

 Ballistic weapons are often equipped on older ship designs. They have a limited supply of ammunition, but most ballistic weapons have excellent damage per flux and superior range.



## Energy



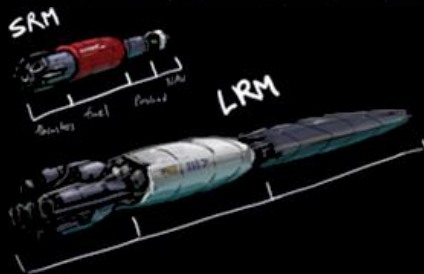
Energy weapons are often equipped on modern ships. Most energy weapons have unlimited ammunition, but low damage per flux. Energy weapons also get a damage bonus for flux levels – depending on flux level; they deal up to 50% more damage. Beam weapons are a special kind of energy weapon. They need little flux and are extremely accurate, but only generate soft flux on enemy shields. This makes them ideal in support roles.

*Note that “Energy” refers to both, a type of weapon mount and a type of damage! An energy damage dealing weapon does not necessarily have an energy type mount and vice versa, although that is often the case.*

## Missile



Missile weapons can be found on all types of ships. They are very powerful, but most have very limited ammo. Using them successfully requires careful consideration and good timing. Firing missile does not generate any flux. Many missiles are guided; they will home in on your selected target or the enemy closest to your cursor. While missiles still have fuel they will not hit friendly ships, but after they run out they will! Your point defense will not shoot down friendly missiles, so be aware of friendly fire.



## Universal

These mounts can fit all weapon categories and allow for maximum flexibility in ship design. They can only fit weapons that match their size exactly, though. They are very rare.

## Primary Roles

Roles are a great help to get a clue what a weapon can do at first glance. They are the second point in its description. Most weapons are useful in a variety of situations, but the primary role reflects the weapon's intended design and ideal circumstances for its use.

### Assault

The weapon has a high damage output, but limited range. Assault weapons are usually good on well-armored ships that can afford to take a beating to dish one out – or on faster ships that can use hit and run tactics.

### Close Support

The weapon has a good range (generally, up to 2x that of assault weapons), but is limited in some way – overall damage output, ammunition, rate of fire, etc. Depending on the specific limitations, close support weapons excel in many situations ranging from harassment to delivering a killing blow against an exposed enemy.

### Point Defense

The weapon has a sophisticated targeting system that allows it to automatically target enemy missiles. Other common characteristics (such as a high turret turn rate) make point defense weapons good against fighters as well.

### Strike

Strike weapons are optimal against bigger ships. They have huge destructive potential, but a hard time bringing it to bear, either due to their speed or range. If you want a smaller ship to go against cruisers or capital ships give it some strike weapons.

## Fire Support

Fire support weapons have fantastic range, so ships using them can stay out of sight. This makes them optimal for frail ships like carriers. While they are dangerous, they are also easy to defend against, mainly because of their low fire frequency. For fire support weapons to be effective a target has to be distracted in close combat.

## Damage

A ship has shields, armor, and hull with which to absorb enemy fire. Shields absorb damage at the cost of increasing flux, with better shields creating less flux per point of damage absorbed. Remember that flux generated by strikes to the shield creates hard flux, and cannot be dissipated while shields are up. Blue floating numbers represent damage to shields.

Armor is positional; it absorbs and reduces damage. Once armor on a part of the ship is fully destroyed, hits in that area will damage the hull. Armor also reduces damage on a per shot basis; smaller impacts have their damage reduced more than larger impacts. Damage can never be reduced to below 25%, however. You can find a detailed description of armor damage calculation in [Tips & Help](#). Yellow floating numbers represent damage to armor.

Damage that gets past shields and armor is applied to the hull. Once the hull integrity reaches 0, the ship explodes.

Don't get too near to an explosion, it hurts! Ships that explode become disabled and remain on the battlefield as crippled hulks. Further damage will eventually destroy the hulk completely. Red floating numbers represent damage to the hull.

*Try not to let enemy fire penetrate your first two defenses. Your hull is not only much more vulnerable, but also much more valuable since it houses your crew and subsystems!*



## Subsystem Damage

All your weapons and engines are subsystems and can be temporarily deactivated. If enough damage is applied to the area where a subsystem is located the system will be knocked out for some time. The duration depends on the size of the system. Local armor can reduce the damage that is dealt to subsystems as long as it holds, except against EMP weapons.

Your engines can be knocked out independently, which will usually result in a hard-to-control ship that drifts to one side. Enough damage to the engines will cause a “flame-out”, where every engine shuts down. If a flame-out occurs you will lose all propulsion and maneuverability. For bigger ships a flame-out lasts much longer. All engines will re-ignite at the same time.

## Damage types

Each weapon has an associated damage type which determines how effective it is vs. shields and armor. All damage types do 100% of the base damage to the hull.

### Kinetic



Relies on the physical impact of matter to do its damage. The typical kinetic weapon fires a solid slug and has long range.

Projectiles are usually white. Collisions with ships or asteroids deal kinetic damage, too.

Damage: 200% to shields, 50% to armor.

### High Explosive



An explosive shell or warhead, usually slower and shorter-ranged than a kinetic weapon. Projectiles are usually orange/yellow. Torpedoes and ship explosions deal high explosive damage.

Damage: 50% to shields, 200% to armor



### Fragmentation



Typically an explosive warhead that relies on shrapnel to do damage. Fragmentation weapons often have an area effect that is deadly vs. fighters and missiles. They can't do much against bigger ships with intact defenses.

Damage: 25% to shields, 25% to armor

### Energy



Directed energy weapons, either in the form of a projectile or a beam. A typical energy projectile weapon has short to medium range and high damage; beams have long range and low damage.

Damage: 100% to everything

### EMP



Occurs as both a primary and a secondary effect of some weapons. EMP damage has no effect on shields, armor or hull. Instead it can penetrate armor and disable weapons and engines for a limited time. The duration of the effect is determined by the size of the system (bigger means longer), further EMP damage will not influence it. Shields

can completely block out EMP.

## Weapon control

Weapons are organized in up to 5 groups. Each weapon can only fire in a fixed arc. Weapons in the selected group will turn to track the mouse cursor and turn much faster when not firing. Press 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 to select a group and press the left mouse button to fire. Holding the mouse button will result in continuous fire.

*Some weapons loose accuracy if you fire continuously! If might be a good idea to take a break every few shots if you find yourself missing.*

### ***Linked vs. Alternating Groups***

A group can be set to “linked” or “alternating” mode during ship loadout (not during combat). In a “linked” group under player control, all weapons fire at the same time. If you aim in a direction in which not all weapons can face only the correct facing weapons will fire. This is the right choice for most turret weapons. In an “alternating” group under player control, the active weapon changes with each mouse click. You can also press the group number to keep cycling through the weapons. This mode is most useful for missiles and other low-ammo weapons. For example, if you have 4 torpedoes in an alternating group, you can select the group and one torpedo will be launched for each mouse click. As opposed to linked mode, alternating weapons will fire even if the mouse is outside of their arc.

If a group is set to “linked” or “alternating” fire has no influence on autofire. Weapons in autofire mode will always fire independent of each other.

### ***Targeting and Missiles***

Press R with your cursor near a ship to target it. This will expand the target reticule around it and display more information. Weapons in autofire mode will fire at a marked target, as long as it is in range. Guided missiles will go after the targeted enemy ship; or the enemy ship closest to the cursor if you don't have a target/your target is friendly. Guided missiles (such as the Harpoon MRM) will not hit friendly ships unless they run out of fuel. Unguided missiles and torpedoes can and will hit friendly ships.

### ***Autofire***

Weapons in a group in autofire mode will track and attack their own targets, even while you have another group selected. A target that you marked with R is thereby a priority target. Using autofire allows your ship to fire multiple groups at once. It also makes it possible to attack multiple small targets that are tough to target manually (such as fighters) at the same time. Be careful though: using autofire with too many groups at the same time will max out flux levels quickly. Using autofire on a missile group is also not recommended, missiles with limited ammo (less than 10 for small , 20 for medium, 30 for large weapons) will automatically never autofire.

Press Shift and 1/2/3/4/5 to toggle autofire mode for a weapon group.

In the ship load-out screen you can set which groups are on autofire mode at the start of a battle.

## Shields

One of the many questions people have been unable to answer for the past 200 Sector Cycles is how Domain scientists managed to incorporate the negation of force tensors into shield emitter technology, without there being any overt link between the emitters and the weapons systems on ships. The progress humanity had achieved is truly astounding.

Shields absorb damage at the cost of raising the ship's flux and are turned on or off using the right mouse button. A shield has an arc that it will cover, ranging from relatively small (~90 degrees) to full coverage (360 degrees). Shields take some time to fully fan out and expand to their full coverage. Shields constantly generate a bit of soft-flux while they're up, effectively reducing the rate of flux dissipation.

In addition, flux increases due to absorbing damage, known as hard-flux, will not dissipate while shields are up. Shields will need to be turned off occasionally to allow hard-flux buildup to dissipate.

The amount of firepower a shield can withstand is determined by 3 factors:

**The ship's total flux capacity.** Every ship has a base value that can be modified by extra capacitors, hullmods or character skills.

**The shield efficiency.** Every point of damage on the shield is transformed into a certain amount of hard-flux in the capacitors, the smaller that amount the more efficient are the shields. Base values range between 1.4 and 0.6 and can be modified via hullmods and skills. Veteran and Elite crews reduce damage taken by increasing shield efficiency.

**Any other flux buildup** due to firing weapons or using systems. Soft-flux can dissipate while shields are up, but it still needs time to do so and until then takes up capacitor space. Offense and defense have to be carefully balanced.

### ***Omni***



Omni shields can rotate around the ship and will follow the mouse cursor. That allows you to turn them towards incoming fire and even actively “catch” missiles or torpedoes.

However, you can’t manually fire in a direction without turning the shields in that direction as well.

*If you have Omni shields and are attacked from an unexpected direction, it can be faster to drop and reactivate them on the other side of your ship, instead of rotating them all the way around.*

### ***Frontal***



Front shields are static and will always face in the direction of the ship’s front. If their shield arc is wide enough they can still protect your sides and even your rear. They should not be carelessly dropped though, since it can take them some time to fan out and cover those areas again.

## Ship Systems

Most ships in Starsector have a special system. Systems are an integral part of a ship type and cannot be changed. They range from simple defensive additions to ship-defining main weapons.



Some systems generate flux, either soft- or hard-flux depending on the system. If your flux level is too high the system will not activate.

Some of the more powerful systems have dangerous drawbacks; you should learn about and test a system before actual battle. For example, the High Energy Focus raises your energy weapon damage by 50% but at the same time increases taken damage by 50% and deactivates shields. So, depending on the situation, it can either seal your victory or your doom.

Systems should also be considered when planning the load-out of a ship. Some systems benefit a certain kind of weapon, like Fast Missile Racks. Other systems make some weapons almost superfluous, like PD drones.

Systems are activated with F.

### *Offensive*

Offensive systems enhance a ship's attack power, sometimes at cost of its defense. They can be useful to break through shields or to give an ailing enemy the finishing stroke.

Example: Accelerated Ammo Feeder, High Energy Focus

### *Defensive*

Defensive systems supplement or bolster a ship's defenses. Some are just emergency measures, others can be elemental for a ship's defensive strategy.

Example: Flare Launcher, Fortress Shield




## ***Movement***

Movement systems increase a ship's mobility. They can be useful in combat to evade fire or flank an enemy, but also to move faster across the battlefield. It depends on the system which one is the main function.

Example: Burn Drive, Maneuvering Jet, Phase Skimmer

## ***Drones***

 Drones can be deployed to assist in combat. Their functions range from point defense to sensor improvement to active fighting. The first press of F will deploy drones in holding pattern; they will stay in close proximity to their mother ship. The second press will deploy them in free roam mode; they will seek out enemies in view distance and engage them. The third press of F will call them back. With the exception of the Terminator Drone destroyed drones cannot be replaced during combat.

*If your ship is overloaded or otherwise incapacitated, drones might be your only line of defense. Don't waste them!*

Example: Sensor Drones, Terminator Drone

## ***Special***

Systems that don't fit in any other category. The Phase Cloak is *technically* a special system, but it is not activated with F and allows a second system on the same hull. The Phase Cloak replaces shields.

Example: EMP Emitter, Phase Cloak



## **Ships**

Many different ships traverse the vastness of Starsector's space. To identify these ships and assess what threat or value they might mean to you is essential. You don't have to learn about every ship in detail before you can estimate its potential; there are several ways the ships can be categorized.

### **Epoch**

In the time after the Collapse, modern technology and the supplies to support it became rare and contested. Many remembered the (often easier to maintain) technologies of the past, ships and designs that were formerly believed obsolete. The ships flying together today were designed during the different Epochs of the Domain hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years apart. The long lapse of time is not without consequences; often you can identify the epoch a ship has been designed in at first glance and make some educated assumptions about it.

### ***Mastery Epoch***



The oldest designs are of the time when humanity first mastered the vastness of space; in an unreflective shift of perspective they are often called low- tech. In reality they were constantly upgraded and still pose an enormous threat to all space faring folk that oppose them. They rely on thick

armor and hull for defense and are unmatched in their forward facing firepower and use of ballistic weapons. Their low speed and maneuverability often makes it hard to bring that power to bear against more agile ships, and they are vulnerable against fast strike craft such as bombers. Typical missile weapons of these ships are unguided torpedoes and rockets. They are recognizable by their brownish hulls and orange engine exhausts.

### ***Expansion Epoch***

Ships of the Expansion Epoch, sometimes dubbed mid-line, are masters of compromise. Their defense is a combination of reasonable armor, large frontal shields, and good maneuverability. They utilize energy and ballistic weapons alike. Their standard missile load out is equally varied and consist of old and newer designs. Their hull is greyish and their engine exhaust has a yellow tone.



### ***Modern Epoch***

The ships designed in the period just before the collapses are called high-tech. They are often considered superior, and their market price certainly reflects that assessment. They rely on very efficient shields and great speed, but that is dearly bought with thin armor. Energy weapons are their signature feature, but their astounding special systems are often just as dangerous. The most sophisticated missiles and guided torpedo systems can usually be found on high-tech ships. Due to the high degree of automation on board, crew requirements are often much lower than on older designs. These ships are easily recognizable by their bluish hull and engine exhaust.



### **Size**

The ships in Starsector can be categorized in 5 different sizes: Fighter, Frigate, Destroyer, Cruiser and Capital Ship. The size of a ship can be an indicator for its value and combat strength, but there are many different roles that a ship might have been built for, so don't just judge by size. For example there are carriers in destroyer size and freighters in capital ship size.

## Fighters

Fighters are the smallest ships in Starsector and can't be controlled directly. Fighters in a wing always stick together and take orders as a single unit. If you have a carrier deployed, fighters can go back to repair and re-arm mid-battle, and come back with the wing at full strength - any destroyed fighters are replaced. The time and supply cost of repairing is specific for the fighter-type, it is marginal for cheap interceptors and can be quite substantial for elite bombers.

Fighters function much the same way as bigger ships; they use the same weapons and rely on hull, armor, flux and sometimes shields. Fighters can't be refitted though, and they don't have the ability to actively vent flux. Fighters don't collide with other ships or friendly fire; they move somewhat above the battlefield, closer to the camera.

**You wonder how lost fighters can be replaced so fast?**

It's simple, really: Replacement fighters are packaged in a supply container designed to minimize space. Then a carrier's mini-autofactory comes into play. It doesn't really build that much, but mostly just activates the fighters with the help of a specific **Universal Access Chip**. If all fighters are lost the digital fighter-activation rights on that chip **expire**. Oh DRM, bane of the carrier captain...

## Interceptors



Fast and fragile. Great for capturing objectives and taking down enemy bombers. Can be a match for frigates, but get torn apart by any kind of significant point defense.

Example: Talon, Wasp

### Bombers



Carry a small number of strike weapons (bombs or torpedoes) and preferentially target larger enemy ships. Very dangerous - a single successful attack run can cripple or destroy a large ship.

Have a tough time dealing with frigates and other fighters.

Example: Dagger, Piranha



*Bombers are tough, but they can't really evade and stand no chance against capital ship guns. Distract a target before your bombers arrive!*

### Heavy Fighters



Heavily armed and armored fighters. Effective against all types of smaller craft, these pose a credible threat even to destroyer-class ships.

Example: Broadsword, Thunder

### Assault Fighters



Assault fighters are slower and even more heavily armed than heavy fighters. Instead of making attack runs, they engage their target in close quarters and stick with it, much like interceptors do.

Example: Warthog

### Support Fighters



Support Fighters are not equipped with weapons that offer much destructive potential. Instead they can support other wings and ships by offering additional PD and anti-shield capabilities.

Example: Longbow

*Frigates*



Frigates are the smallest ships with an independent hyperspace drive. A frigate will be the first ship you pilot in the campaign.

Many frigates can match the speed of fighters, which makes them excellent at scouting and objective capturing. Their tactical flexibility is great and, depending on load-out, they can escort, support or assault ships many times their size or go hunting for small fighters.

Frigates are inherently fragile; they have to rely on their nimbleness to avert destruction. It is extremely dangerous for a frigate to go against (or even near) a capital ship where a single mistake could cost it everything. It's only with much skill, luck, or support that their maneuverability allows them to approach from a safe vector and target weak points.



Selected attribute range of (combat suited) frigates:

Minimal Crew Requirements	5-25
Hull Strength	750-2000
Ordinance Points	30-60
Flux Capacity	750-3000

*Destroyers*



Destroyers are middle-of-the road ships. They are fast enough to quickly get wherever they're needed and exercise battlefield control. Objective capturing and recon is better left to smaller ships, though. They are generally hardy enough to

withstand heavy fire for some time; that makes them well suited to escort bigger ships in PD or fire support role. Many non-combat vessels are destroyer sized; you can read about them under "Special Ships".

Selected attribute range of (combat suited) destroyers:

Minimal Crew Requirements	35-60
Hull Strength	2500-5500
Ordinance Points	65-100

*Cruisers*

Cruisers are probably the first really heavy ships a player will encounter in battle. They often serve as flagships for smaller or independent fleets. Cruisers generally can't rely on their maneuverability but have to take most fire on their shields or armor. On the other hand they can also return a lot of fire and, unlike smaller ships, many cruisers have the necessary number of weapon mounts to have an answer for every kind of threat. In bigger fleets they can fill more specialized niches, often as a brawler or dedicated close support ship.



Selected attribute range of (combat suited) Cruisers:

Minimal Crew Requirements	50-200
Hull Strength	5000-11000
Ordinance Points	100-180
Flux Capacity	7000-15000



## Capital Ships

These are the biggest ships you will encounter in Starsector. A capital ship costs a small fortune and needs hundreds of crewmen to operate. Capital ships with direct combat roles can be roughly separated in two groups: Battleships and Battlecruisers.

To build and supply a capital sized vessel is an enormous economical undertaking. Only the wealthiest and best organized factions, such as the Hegemony, can crown their fleets with such a behemoth, let alone several. Hence the free market price for capital ships equals a **whole fleet** of smaller vessels.



Battleships have the heaviest armor and most devastating firepower. While there is nothing they can't crush easily, they have a hard time getting to their prey – Battleships are sluggish and slow.

Battlecruisers on the other hand sacrifice a good part of the armor and some of the firepower to reach speeds that match those of cruisers. They haunt the nightmares of more than one destroyer or cruiser captain.

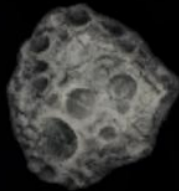
Selected attribute range of (combat suited) capital ships:

Minimal Crew Requirements	350-500
Hull Strength	10000-20000
Ordinance Points	195-350
Flux Capacity	12000-25000

## Special Ships

### *Phase Ships*

Not all combat ships in Starsector are built for open conflict, bow to bow. Phase ships have the ability to “phase out” of normal space and enter the so called p-space. If the Phase Cloak is activated, the hull becomes semi-transparent and the phase coils that are embedded in the hull begin to glow violet.



When phasing technology was new and the first phase ships appeared on the battlefield they were virtually **undetectable**, thus the name phase-cloak. Since then cloak detectors have become a standard part of every sensor package.

A phased ship is invulnerable to all attacks; enemy fire just passes over it. At the same time the ship itself can pass through all physical objects in the game. The phase ship has to de-cloak to attack.

Phasing however generates hard flux. As with shields, in p-space hard flux cannot be dissipated or vented. A ship can only stay phased for so long before it has to re-appear in normal space to vent. Soft-flux however can dissipate in p-space, and at a faster rate than hard-flux builds up. That means that a ship with high soft-flux level (from firing weapons) can phase and exchange its soft-flux for a smaller amount of hard flux.

As the relative flux level increases, a repelling force builds up that pushes the ship away from objects that occupy overlapping space. The phase ship is losing the ability to hover over objects.

The phase coils are needed to anchor the ship in normal space. If the anchor were to fail, the ship would be permanently lost in p-space. To this day there are rumors of ghost ships floating through vessels and stations alike in their hope to return to normal space, leaving no trace but a tingling on one's back.

Phase ships have no shield. Their phase-cloak is therefore their only renewable defense and should be used prudent. Generally speaking, phasing is superior to shields if you are under heavy fire, but light suppressive fire can drive up the flux just as fast and force the ship into the open. Guided missiles are especially dangerous; unlike with shields they can turn and come back after passing over a phased ship.

Phasing is activated with the right mouse button. Every phasing generates a bit of flux, so constant toggling is ill-advised.

*If you pilot a fast vessel, it's a viable tactic to hover over a slower phase ship and thus prevent it from returning to normal space for some time.*

## Carriers

Carriers allow your fighter wings to come back at full strength, even if the wing is down to a single badly-damaged fighter. Carriers are weak in direct combat



though, so you'll want to place them just outside the melee, but close enough so the fighters don't have a long way to go to repair and refit. It's often a good idea to outfit a Carrier with long range fire support weapons so it can make itself useful. Since damaged fighters are replaced rather than repaired, the only difference between the processing speed and capacities of different carriers is their number of flight decks.

*Don't let enemy fighter wings escape back to a carrier - they'll just come back at you again at full strength! Try to eliminate fighter wings completely if possible. If you destroy a carrier while a wing is docked inside, the wing dies with its host.*

## ***Logistic Ships***

Logistic ships have little combat value, but are necessary to supply your fleet on long voyages and for effective trading. If you get in an engagement it is usually best to keep the logistic ships in reserve, except if you are inferior to your enemy and your goal is to escape. There are 3 kinds of logistic ship in Starsector and all come in different sizes and flavors.

### *Freighters*

Freighters are important to haul around supplies, weapons and loot, all of which you can read about in Part II of this manual. In combat most freighters are almost completely useless. They are slow, badly protected, and don't carry more than a bit of point defense weaponry. There are some notable exceptions, though, namely the Mule combat freighter and the Hound frigate.

### *Tankers*

Tankers are freighters for fuel. Like their cargo-hauling counterparts they are useless in combat, but this time without exceptions. Since fuel is of no use as of yet, there is no need to employ Tankers.

### *Troop Transporters*

Troop transports can carry a lot of personnel. Since they are military grade vessels they are somewhat better armed than freighters and tankers, but still no match for a dedicated combat ship. Just like tankers they are currently of little use.



## COMMAND & CONTROL

As long as you are captain of a single ship there's no need to give any tactical orders, everything is directly controlled by you. But if you fly alongside allied ships you will want to give them commands sooner or later. This chapter will teach you how.

*Consider that Starsector is not a classical strategy game where a unit needs your every order just to scratch an itch. While you should guide them and set goals, your captains are trained experts; they often know very well how to handle a situation. Only interfere if it's necessary.*

## Deployment



At the start of a bigger battle, you have to deploy some of your fleet. Deploying each fleet member costs some "fleet points". The amount of fleet points available depends on the relative strength of the enemy fleet - the larger fleet gets more points to deploy. The total

amount of fleet points cannot exceed 100.

Your flagship is marked with a special icon. Note that you don't actually have to deploy your flagship with the first wave of ships.

If you lose a ship or a ship retreats, or you capture battle objectives, you will get more fleet points that you can use to deploy your remaining ships into battle. Press the "Reinforcements" button or the shortcut G (works outside of the map) to bring up the deployment dialog again.

Reinforcements [G]





## The Command UI

The Command UI (or map) is where you give orders to your fleet. Press TAB to bring it up, and press TAB again to hide it. By default, the game will pause when you bring up the map, but you can pause/unpause by pressing SPACE.

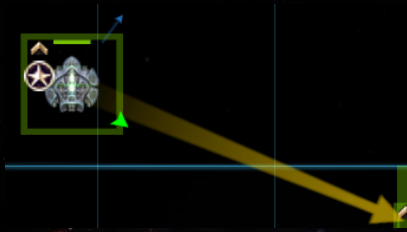


You can move the camera by touching the edge with the cursor or with the arrow keys. You can zoom in or out with the mouse wheel. The part of the map you are currently viewing on the combat screen is marked by a faint blue square.

The map is covered by a fog of war that lets you see map features but no enemy ships. Every one of your ships and captured objectives has a certain sensor range, within the fog is temporarily lifted.

All your ships are circled by a green square, enemy ships by a red diamond. Note that on the map all your ships face towards the upper boarder of the map while all enemy ships face towards the lower boarder.





The current real orientation is indicated by a small green or red arrow. The direction and velocity of movement is indicated by a thin blue error.

The thick arrow indicates a ship's intention; it is only visible for allies. The color marks the cause for the intention:

Green Arrow – Going to an assignment

Yellow Arrow – Following a direct order

Orange Arrow – Freely engaging an enemy

If you click on a ship some basic info and a pictogram of its hull will appear in the lower left corner. If you hover your cursor about that pictogram all relevant stats will be listed.

## Giving Orders

There are three types of orders you can give – Assignments, Direct Orders and Other Commands. You will learn about all in the following chapters. Assignments and Direct Orders cost Command Points, which are limited.



Creating an assignment or giving a direct order opens up a “command channel” for a few seconds (of game-time, the channel will stay open indefinitely while paused), or until the command UI is closed. While the channel is open, you can give direct orders for free. Creating assignments still costs a command point, though.

At the start of battle, your fleet has no assignments and every ship will engage the enemy at will.

Every time you open a command channel you call a **conference** among the captains. I know, it might feel as if only a few seconds pass, but as every warrior knows, combat time isn't the same as actual time. There are only so many of these you can call before it becomes a **fatal distraction**, with better admirals being able to get more done. CPs represent this.

There are two basic ways to give orders in Starsector. The first way is to place orders by left-clicking on an object. Assignments created this way are given to the target, not the executioner of the order! That means if click for example on “light escort”, that means that the ship will *get* an escort, not be one.

After selecting the target the available orders will show up in the lower right corner of the command screen. They are also accessible via keyboard shortcuts; it’s a good idea to memorize those for easy control. What kinds of orders are available depends on the object you clicked on. Orders can be placed on allied ships, enemy ships, objectives and waypoints. Placing an order in empty space will create a waypoint.

In the second way of giving orders you choose the executioner before you choose the target assignment. You can select one or several of your ships. One ship is selected via left click, multiple can be selected via shift + left click or by drawing a square around them with the hold down left mouse button. Right clicking somewhere will create an appropriate assignment for the selected ships to follow or add them to a preexisting one. For example: Selecting two fighter wings and clicking on your carrier will make them escort it, clicking on an enemy bomber wing will issue an intercept assignment.

### *Assignments*

An assignment is a task you create for your fleet to achieve as they see fit. Your subordinates will organize the fleet and assign ships to particular tasks automatically. Creating an assignment costs 1 command point. An assignment can be cancelled at any time at no cost.

To create an assignment, open the map and left click on an objective/ waypoint/ friendly or enemy ship and select it from the context menu that appears.

Like an ancient leader of humanity once said: “Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity. Even if they are not real people, but lines of code.” Or something.

Alternatively you can select a ship via left-click or select multiple ships by left clicking and drawing a frame around them. If you then right-click on an empty space (or an objective without an assignment), the game will automatically pick what it thinks an appropriate assignment and send the selected ships. If you click on a pre-existing assignment the selected ship will try to fulfill it.

## Capture



Applies to: objective

Order an objective to be captured. Initially, a single fast ship or wing is assigned. In case of enemy presence in the area this is automatically updated to call in comparable forces. This is a very dynamic assignment, make sure that not more ships are recruited to the objective than you can afford.

## Control



Once an objective is captured the assignment changes to "control". If the area secured your forces will proceed to other tasks, but like with "capture" your forces will respond dynamically to enemy presence. It will change back to "capture" if the objective should be lost again.

## Assault



Applies to: objective, waypoint

Order an assault on an objective. A great part of your forces is assigned, regardless of enemy presence. If your forces take the objective, the task is automatically converted to "Defend" at no cost.

## Defend



Applies to: waypoint

Order the defense of a waypoint by a significant number of your ships. Automatically converted to “Assault” if waypoint is lost.

## Engage



Applies to: enemy ship (destroyer or above)

Order your fleet to engage a specific enemy ship and its escort. All ships not required for other tasks will be assigned. Bombers and support fighters assigned to engage a target will behave as if on a strike assignment.

## Intercept



Applies to: Enemy Ship

Assign frigates or fighter wings to intercept the target. Other ships can be assigned manually. They will try to get to the target as fast as possible and avoid distractions. That means also that they might neglect their defense more than usual. Useful to prevent enemy escape or bring down a priority target.

### Harass

Applies to: enemy ship (destroyer or above)



Order a single frigate to engage the target. The ship will attempt to stay at longest non-missile weapon range and keep away from the target.

### Strike

Applies to: Enemy Ship (destroyer or above)



Order bomber wings and support fighters to attack the target ship.

### Rally Task Force



Order a custom group of ships to gather at this waypoint. No ships will be assigned automatically; only ships that receive a direct order to carry out this assignment will do so.

### Rally Civilian Craft



Rally civilian ships at waypoint or objective. Civilian ships are usually freighters, tankers or transporters. This is useful to keep them out of the battle or coordinate an escape.

### Rally Strike Force



Rally strike craft at waypoint or objective. Strike craft are bombers armed with strike (anti-large-ship) weapons and support fighters.

### Rally Carrier



Rally a carrier at a waypoint or objective. A carrier is any ship with flight decks, that is capable of refitting fighters during the battle. Only one carrier is automatically assigned, as always more ships can be added manually.

### Light Escort



Applies to: allied ship or wing

Orders a wing of fighters or a frigate to escort the target. This will not select ships that are slower than the target.

### Medium Escort



Applies to: allied ship (destroyer and above)

Orders a destroyer or two frigates/wings to accompany the target.

### Heavy Escort



Applies to: allied ship (destroyer and above)

Order several frigates/ wings or two destroyers or a cruiser with escort to accompany the target.



### ***Direct Orders***

Direct orders are orders you give to a specific ship, breaking the existing chain of command. Each direct order given costs 1 command point. Direct orders can be rescinded at no cost. To give a direct order, open the map, click on a friendly ship, and select an order from the context menu that appears. Some direct orders are fleet-wide; you can find them in the upper right corner of the command interface.

#### *Repair & Refit*



Order a fighter wing to go back to a carrier to repair and rearm.

Note: fighter wings will go back automatically when they take too much damage or run out of ammo, but this order can be used to make them do it earlier than they would otherwise.

#### *Retreat*



Order a ship to retreat. Useful to get a damaged ship out of action to avoid its destruction. Does not cost a command point if your fleet's goal is "Escape".

#### *Search & Destroy*



Order a ship to engage the enemy at will. The ship will not be assigned to any tasks unless this order is rescinded.

#### *Search & Destroy*



This order cancels the current assignment and lets your ship engage the enemy at will. Does not cost any command points.

## ***Other Commands***

### *Show Video Feed*



Switch view to selected ship. A button press will bring you back to the map. Shortcut: F

### *Transfer Command*



You and your command staff take off from your flagship and move to another ship in a shuttle. May take some time if the target ship is far away. Can be used at any time, even if the flagship has been disabled/destroyed or not deployed yet. You can also change your destination while the shuttle is in flight. Shortcut: X

### *Autopilot*



If autopilot is on, it will take over control of your flagship until you turn it off or attempt to control the ship manually again. If you manually give your flagship an assignment the autopilot will be activated automatically.

## More Info



Brings up the Codex interface with more information about the selected ship.

## Fleet-wide: Search & Destroy



Fleet-wide order that cancels all current assignments and lets your ships engage the enemy at will. Useful for mopping up at the end of a battle. Does not cost any command points.

## Fleet-wide: Full Retreat!



Orders your entire fleet to retreat. After this order is given, you can't deploy any more reinforcements, give orders, or create new assignments. Does not cost any command points.

## Battle Objectives

Objectives are small installations scattered throughout the battlefield that can be captured to give your fleet an advantage. Small battles (8 or less ships total) don't have objectives and start with both sides fully deployed and close to each other.

### Nav Buoy



Gives 10 extra fleet points, a 25% maneuverability bonus and 25 unit bonus to speed. Note that the speed bonus is a flat 25 units, not a percentage. The bonuses do not apply to fighters and frigates.

Capturing grants 1 command point.

### Sensor Array



Gives 10 extra fleet points and a 25% weapon range bonus to your ships, except frigates and fighters.

Does not affect missiles. Also has 5000 unit sensor range of its own. Capturing grants 1 command point.

### Comm Relay

Gives 30 extra fleet points. Capturing grants 2 command points.



These Comm Relays are scattered throughout space where they make up a vast interstellar communications network. Thanks to them information can be transmitted faster than light, but news still can take days or weeks to get around...

## ***Fleet Goals***

A fleet may engage in battle for different reasons. For example, pirates may be keen on making sure the enemy fleet cannot escape, while a trader attacked by superior forces may be intent on escaping. How you set a fleet goal is explained in [Part II](#).

### **Goal: Attack**

The fleet engages in an all-out attack. Penalty to starting fleet points to represent relative lack of organization. Retreating ships will move to the nearest edge of the map, and may be captured by the enemy after the battle if the battle is lost. To win, the enemy fleet must be routed. Enemy ships will retreat if damaged too badly.

### **Goal: Defend**

The fleet is either holding ground or cautiously advancing on the enemy. Bonus to starting fleet points to reflect good organization. Retreating ships will move to the starting edge of the map, and are unlikely to be captured if the battle is lost, to represent an orderly retreat. To win, the enemy fleet must be routed. Enemy ships will also retreat if damaged too badly.

### **Goal: Escape**

The fleet is trying to disengage from the enemy. Retreating ships will move to the enemy edge of the map, and will never be captured. Ships remaining in reserve will always be captured if the enemy has ships in play when the battle is over. To win, at least 25% of the fleet must successfully retreat.

Beware! At the moment it rarely makes sense to choose the escape option. If you have slow ships in your fleet or are vastly outnumbered (which is likely if you want to escape) it is often better to choose the “Attack” or “Defend” goal and then immediately order a full retreat. That will allow all or most of your ships to retreat with some hull damage, escaping can often lead to very heavy losses.

## **Part II: Starsector's Campaign**

Space battles are great, but all the battles in the galaxy are without meaning if they are not fought for a cause. To find this cause and to struggle against the odds toward its fulfillment is the substance of Starsector's campaign.

Or at least it will be, as of now this part of the game is not even near completion. Therefore this part of the manual is still full of holes and missing parts.

To get an overview read the chapter "Basics", just ahead. It will also refer you to the right place to investigate further about any particular topic.

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# Basics

## *Character creation*

At the beginning of a new campaign you have to create a character. You can give him or her a name and choose a portrait. If you want extra challenge you can activate the Iron Mode which automatically saves the game on exit, so you cannot reload after a mishap. This is not recommended for beginners.

Next you choose the backstory of your character in two steps. The first choice determines most of the skills, the second one your starting ship and some more skills. If you only choose “Did something else” you can freely distribute all your points. Next you can choose one of two ships, and then distribute points in different skills in the same menu that will be used for that purpose later on. More about character progression and point distribution is explained in the chapter “Character”.

*For the Wolf choose 'quartermaster', for the Lasher 'adjutant in the Hegemony Navy', for the Vigilance 'helmed a patrol ship' and for the Hound 'did something else'. The Lasher is recommended for beginners.*



### ***Finding your way around***

After you made your character, you will find yourself in a little ship in the star system Corvus. In the current development stage of Starsector this is the only system, later on more will be added.

Your ship is encircled by a green ring; other fleets have rings of different colors, depending on the faction they belong to. As your fleet is growing, so will the size of the ring.

To move your fleet around just click on the place you want to go. If you hold the mouse button your fleet will follow the cursor. You can zoom in and out with the mouse wheel. Note that planets and stars have gravity wells that will slow you down, the closer you are the slower you become. To learn more about traveling read the chapter "[Travel](#)".



## Interactions

There are two things you can interact with more closely: you can dock on stations (small circle on the right) and have encounters with fleets (big circle on the left). You can hover the cursor about any object to get additional information about it, including its stance towards you and current intentions.



Encounters with Fleet and Stations will be the topic of the chapter “Encounters”. The functions of stations are further explained in “Managing your Fleet”.

You can read more about the different factions of Starsector, what motivates them and how to best handle them in Part III of this manual, Lore.

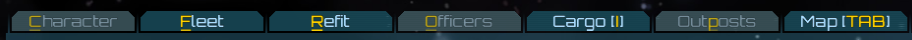
*For starters you should avoid all red circles that are bigger than you! Those are big pirate fleets and probably much too strong for you...yet. All other fleets are neutral towards you and won't harm you, as long as you don't attack first.*

## Menus

On the upper left corner of the screen you will find the current date, the Risk of an Accident happening in your fleet and the Speed at which you travel.

DATE      CYCLE  
**Dec 2, 205**  
 Accident risk: **None**  
 Speed: **97 (+0%)**

On the lower edge of the screen you can see a menu bar. It leads to all your information and control options for your fleet. You can click on the tabs or hit the shortcut for access. If you are docked at station the same menus will be available in a modified form that allows you to interact with the station.



The Character tab allows you to spend gained experience on new skills. Read more under [“Character”](#)

Everything you need to know about the Fleet and the Cargo tab you can read in the chapter [“Managing your Fleet”](#).

The [“Refit”](#) tab allows you to modify your ships. Its functions are explained in the chapter [“Refitting your ships”](#).

“Officers” and “Outposts” are not yet part of the game.

If you press escape the pause menu will appear.

Here you can:



- Save your progress, one slot pro character
  - Load the last save state or other characters
  - View the games internal encyclopedia
  - Adjust the controls and settings
- } Go to the main menu

You can also save your game with F5 and load it again with F9.

# Travel

## System Travel

You can move your fleet by left-clicking anywhere on the system. If you click on a moving object, your fleet will start to follow it until it catches up. Your ships will however move in a straight line without projecting the targets movement, so this might not be the fastest way to reach a moving fleet. Interplanetary travel does not consume fuel, fuel has no function yet. Your crew will however consume supplies.

The central star and planets have gravity wells that slow down your fleet. In open space you get a 100% fleet speed bonus, this bonus gradually declines if you get near a gravity well. You can see your current bonus in the upper left corner.

If you hold the SHIFT key the flow of time will be twice as fast. That is useful for longer travels, but you can't react to enemy fleet movement as well, so be careful with this feature. For far distance travel the system map is the way to go, read about it in the next section.

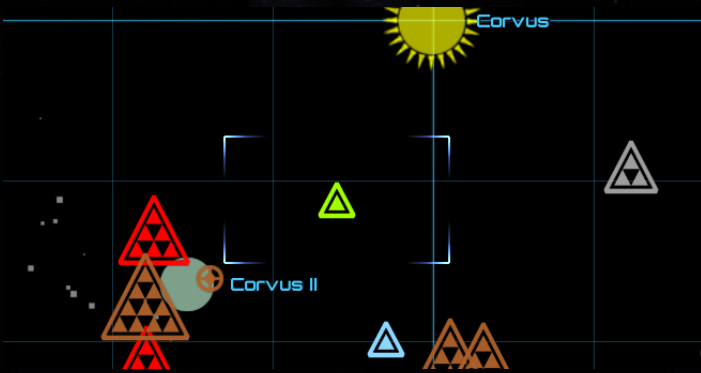
All permanent objects in the system move in orbits, either around the central star (planets) or around a planet (moons, stations, asteroid belts). That means there is no use in memorizing the exact location of something, it is more useful to know its distance from the central star. The time in Starsector is measured in Cycles, one Cycle is exactly the time that Corvus II (the Hegemony's home planet in the system) needs to circle Corvus (the central star) once.

Friendly or enemy fleet can get into the system in two ways: Either they spawn from a Planet (defense and patrol fleets) or they come from outside the system (resupply convoys, traders). A Fleet can spawn from a planet at any time, so even if you have already beaten all enemies close to their planet, stay careful.

## *The System Map*

Press TAB to bring up the system map. As long as the map is open the game is paused. You can zoom in and out with the mouse wheel. You can click on any object to set a course towards it.

Triangles represent fleets; circles with a cross are stations. The size indicates the fleet size, the color the faction alignment. You can read which color stand for which faction in next chapter, Encounters. Your own fleet is green; your current field of view is indicated by a blue frame.



## **Interstellar Travel**

Interstellar Travel is not yet part of the game. The only thing known about it is that it will consume fuel.

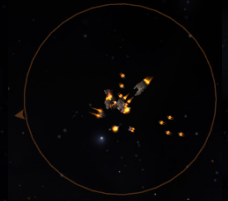
## Encounters

You can have encounters with stations and fleets. Stations are necessary to supply your fleet. Fleets can be neutral, a danger to you or even your prey.

Every fleet and station belongs to a faction. You can learn more about the background of some factions in [part IV of this manual, Lore](#). Here is a short overview:

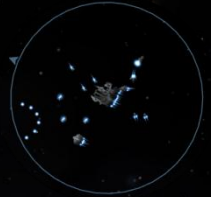
### Hegemony

The color of the Hegemony is **brown**. They possess very big fleets of low-tech ships. They've got one station in the Corvus system. Their initial stance towards the player is neutral.



### Tri-Tachyon

The color of the Tri-Tachyon corporation is **blue**. They possess big fleets of high-tech ships. They've got one station in the Corvus system. Their initial stance towards the player is neutral.



### Pirates

The color of Pirates is **red**. They possess medium-sized fleet of low-tech ships. They've got one station in the Corvus system. Their initial stance towards the player is hostile.



### Independent Mercenaries/Traders/Miners

The color of Independent fleets is **grey**. They possess small fleets of varying tech levels with mid-line predominating. Their initial stance towards the player is neutral.





## Stations

To dock on a station just click on it. Your fleet will move close to it and a number of options will appear.

### You decide to...

Trade, or hire personnel [I]

Buy or sell ships [F]

Make use of the dockyard's refitting facilities [R]

Repair your ships at the station's dockyard [A]

Leave

Stations offer a multitude of services. You can read all about them in the “Managing your Fleet” respective “Refit” chapter. Here’s just a quick overview:

- Buying and selling of ships
- Buying and selling of weapons
- Hiring and discharging of crew
- Buying and selling of all kinds of supplies
- Instant repair and refit

You can still dock on a station that belongs to a hostile faction. Trading is unaffected, but they will refuse to repair your damaged ships

## Fleets

To make contact with a fleet you can click on it to plot a rendezvous course. If the fleet is hostile to you it will either try to avoid or to catch you, depending on how it assesses its chance to win against you. Contact is established as

soon as the two fleet circles touch. Note that you can also just fly through non-aggressive fleets as long as you don't directly click on them.

Once you are in contact with a fleet they will hail you.

You are being hailed.

You decide to...

Open a comm link

Move in to engage

Leave

*After a fleet had an encounter it cannot have another one for several seconds! You and your enemies can use that to escape if more threats are nearby.*

## Before battle

You can choose to either open a comm link, move in to engage or try and leave.

Opening a comm link results in a brief statement from your counterpart that will show you his stance towards you.

If you move in to engage two things can happen. If the engagement is small, that means less than ~9 ships, there are no further tactical options.

In big encounters you have the choice between three fleet goals:

Commit your forces to an all-out attack

Hold your position

Attempt to break through the enemy lines and escape

Your counterpart has the same choice. What happens next depends on the combination of both choices. Generally,

If you have no further business you can click on leave. If the other fleet is not hostile, you will be able to. If it is hostile, the success depends on the same factors as in the escape fleet goal.

formation the enemy fleet is in. A fleet in aggressive formation will thwart you

### ***Autoresolve***

<http://fractalsoftworks.com/2011/11/09/automatically-resolving-combat/>

### ***After battle***

The losing fleet gets a 50% speed bonus for half a day. The winning fleet gets a 50% penalty for a quarter of a day.

<http://fractalsoftworks.com/2011/12/31/post-combat-mechanics/>

Losing ships in combat gives bonus XP, if the fleet has more than 5 fleet points worth of ships

Losing a battle gives double XP for that battle, if your fleet was worth more than 5 fleet points

Boarding

## Managing your fleet

Proud as you may be of your first own ship, at one point you probably want to expand your fleet. There are two basic ways to do that: capture new ships after battle or buy new ships. But don't just rush out of the space dock once you got that new, shiny toy at your hands. A new ship is nothing but a hull, it first needs some refitting and logistic considerations before it can do just what you want it to. To learn about the latter just read on, the former is the topic of the next chapter.

### Buying and selling ships



You can buy and sell ships at stations. Just go in the fleet tab while docked at a station. On the upper half are your ships, on the lower what the station offers, sorted by size. If you hover your cursor above a ship you can see how much it costs/sells for. You can just drag a ship from one side to the other. To finalize the trade click "Confirm Transaction" in the lower right corner or hit G. Just above it the total prize/profit is visible.

*If you want to sell a ship you should repair it first. The repair cost is much lower than the price bonus you will get for a ship in perfect condition.*

You can't sell your last ship (fighter wings don't count here).

## Logistics



This is the central information panel for all your fleet management concerns. You can see it in the Fleet and in the Cargo tab on the right. If you hover your cursor about any of those 5 logistic indicators or the panel below, additional information will appear. Everything you really need to know is directly visible here, though.

The left number on a bar is your current amount of a resource; the right number is the maximal capacity for it. You can exceed that capacity, but that will lead to increased supply costs and eventually accidents.

## Supplies



Supplies are the central currency when it comes to fleet logistics. They contain everything your crew and ships need to function, from food supplies over repair parts to entire replacement fighters. They are cheaply and plentifully available at stations, where you can transfer them into your cargo bay. Sustaining your fleet consumes a changeable amount of supplies. Your crew always consumes a certain amount, but if you have to make extensive repairs or exceed your logistic capacity you will burn through your supplies much faster. If you run out of them you will get a message, make sure to resupply your fleet swiftly to avoid accidents.

### ***Fleet Points***

Your fleet points, or FP, represent your character's ability to organize your fleet. He or she has to oversee the optimization of maintenance routines, supervise fleet maneuvers and keep all his headstrong captains under control. Luckily, all you have to do is watch out that your fleet point level doesn't exceed your maximum too far. Every ship uses up a certain amount that is somewhat correlated with its overall value. These are the same points used in combat for deploying ships. Initial you have 100 FPs, a number that can be exceeded like other logistic indicators. Character abilities can earn you additional FP.

### ***Hangar Space***

Hangar space on board your ships is used to store fighters and bombers. The fleet points a wing cost is the room it will take up in a hangar. Hangar space is not necessary to deploy fighter craft as long as you travel within in star system. Fighters can simply accompany your ships with their own power here; this will only cost a little more supplies. For Interstellar travels your fighters have to be stored in hangars, but since that is not implemented yet, hangar space is of little concern.

Hangars are not to be confused with Flight decks; they can't rearm or repair your fighters in or out of combat.

Hangar Space	
Provided	
ISS Aphaea, Gemini-class Freighter	15
Used	
Talon Interceptor Wing	3



## Cargo Capacity

Cargo Capacity	
ISS Aphæa, Gemini-class Freighter	250
ISS Amaethon, Wolf-class Frigate	50
Talon Interceptor Wing	0

All ships (except fighters) have a certain amount of cargo space. How much is different for each ship, some can't store more than a few crates, other are dedicated freighters with thousands of

tons capacity. Cargo capacity is used up by supplies and weapons. The mouse hover will reveal how much space a certain stack of weapons or supplies is using.

To move cargo around there are a number of ways. Identical cargo is stacked up to 1000 units. If you left click on such a stack you can drag it in/from your cargo space. If you shift+ left click on a stack only one of the items will be picked up. You can shift + left click multiple times to pick up multiple items from the stack. Finally, if you press shift + hold the left mouse button over a stack, a slider will appear. You can slide it to the right to select the amount of items you want and let go of the mouse button to pick them up. Regardless of the method, to drop the items on a new place click the left mouse button again. To cancel the transfer click the right mouse button.

## Fuel

Fuel is not consumed by traveling within a star system. Only the hyperspace drive for interstellar travel needs fuel to run. But interstellar travel is not yet implemented in the game, thus fuel is of no use to you. You can just sell it all.



Fuel Report	
Fuel capacity (used per light year)	
ISS Aphæa, Gemini-class Freighter	150 (1.8)
ISS Amaethon, Wolf-class Frigate	40 (0.8)
Total fuel used per light year	2.5
Travel range (light years)	9.6

## Personnel



All your ships have to be manned by crew. Crew is available in different levels; lower levels can progress to higher levels by gaining experience. Experience is only gained in combat, after combat a message will tell you how many of your crewmen leveled up. The experience your crew gains is calculated the same way as your character's XP, but is otherwise independent.


Personnel Report			
Crew capacity (skeleton crew required)			
ISS Alphaea, Gemini-class Freighter	120	(35)	
ISS Amaethon, Wolf-class Frigate	30	(15)	
Talon Interceptor Wing	4	(4)	
Total skeleton crew needed	54		
Crew			
Green	0	Veteran	67
Regular	23	Elite	13
Total crew	103		
Marines	0		
Supplies/day consumed by personnel			1.0

The effective crew level of a ship is determined by its crew composition, there are no intermediate levels. The necessary proportion of high level crew to make that level the effective one is dependent on the ship size. Frigates and Fighters have to have 100% of a high crew level, for bigger ships the necessary proportion becomes gradually smaller. Which of your ships get your best crew is determined by its position in the Fleet tab. To man a ships with your best crew drag it to the position in the upper left corner, your ship in the lower right corner will only get leftovers. The crew is automatically distributed the most efficient way, e.g. your veteran battleship will only get as much veteran crew as it really needs and the rest will serve on the next ship.

*If a ship's hull gets heavily damaged there will likely be casualties among the crew. It's a good idea to take extra crew with you to replace losses or your ship might become unable to fight! This will never happen during a fight though, only after.*


Excess crew above the skeleton crew level has no influence on a ships performance, only the after combat repair times are somewhat fastened.

## Green

 Inexperienced recruits. The best that can be said for them is that they can get the ship moving and the batteries firing in the right general direction.


Damage taken by ship	110%
Combat and Travel speed	95%
Target leading accuracy	Poor
Cost to hire	12 Credits

## Normal

 Spaceship crew regulars. Through training or hard-won experience, these man and woman have become capable of efficiently carrying out the will of their commanding officer.

Damage taken by ship	100%
Combat and Travel speed	100%
Target leading accuracy	Normal
Cost to hire	60 Credits

## Veteran

 Veterans, hardened by combat. Having survived many battles through circles of service, these crew members can be relied upon to keep a ship running even in toughest engagements.

Damage taken by ship	90%
Combat and Travel speed	104%
Target leading accuracy	Good
Cost to hire	120 Credits

## Elite



Few crewmen throughout the sector survive long enough to gain the knowledge and experience to be considered truly elite. The infinite gulf of space is more their home than any planet.

Damage taken by ship	80%
Combat and Travel speed	110%
Target leading accuracy	Excellent
Cost to hire	360 Credits

## Marines



Heavily armed and equipped with powered armor, marines specialize in breaching and boarding disabled ships. The number of marines in your fleets decides if you are able to successfully board a boardable ship after combat. They will likely suffer some casualties during a boarding action, the number depends on the ratio of your marines vs. the enemy crew. Marines don't have casualties during ship-to-ship combat. They also have only one level.

Cost to hire	36 Credits
--------------	------------

## Repair

There are two ways of repairing ships in Starsector, both cost supplies. If you dock on a neutral or friendly station you can use the local dockyard to repair your fleet instantaneous. To do so, click on the option "Repair your ships on the station's dockyard". But if you are in open space your crew has to repair all ships manually and that takes some time. The remaining hull strength in % and the estimated days to repair it will be displayed in the Fleet tab.

The time needed to complete repairs is determined by the ship's HP and your crew's repair speed. You can see the repair speed in the Logistics Reports, which will pop up if you hover your cursor over the lowest logistic panel. If your crew strength is at skeleton crew level or below, it will be 100%. Over capacity crew hastens repairs to up to 200%. Every additional percent of crew makes for an additional percent of repair rate, the level of crew has no influence. The rate never drops below 100%.

Fighter repair rate is calculated independently. If you have any ship with a flight deck in your fleet, fighters will be repaired instantly (outside combat). Otherwise they have a base repair rate of 25%. If you have any ships with hangar space in you fleet (not to confuse with flight decks) it will rise up to 100%. For every percentage of your fighters that have no hangar space the repair rate will drop um the equivalent percentage. For example, if you have 20 FP of fighters and hangar space for only 10 FP of fighters, your fighter repair rate will be 50%.

## Accidents

All your logistic indicators (FP, Hangar, Cargo, Fuel and Personnel) have certain limits. You can go up to 50% over each limit without any penalty, except for additional supply costs. Your crew can account for unexpected logistical requirements by building improvised containers, jury-rigging life support systems, performing emergency maintenance and suchlike. This is indicated by a red bar which overlays the normal indicator bar from the right.



Personnel: 1743 / 455

Accident risk

Extreme

But if you stress those makeshift measures too much and exceed your limits more than 50%, the risk of accidents will come into play.

The current accident risk is always visible in the upper left corner of the screen. You can also see it in the fleet or cargo tab, the logistic bar that is responsible will flash red.

If you hover the cursor over the logistic summary the accident risk factors are listed in more detail. “None” is harmless. “Minor” will result in no overall

Logistics Report <span>Sort</span>	
Accident risk	Extreme
Accident risk factors	
Fleet too large for command ability	None
Cargo capacity exceeded	Critical
Fuel capacity exceeded	Major
Personnel capacity exceeded	Critical
Lack of supplies	None

accident risk as long as you have supplies. If you run of supplies you crew will have problems keeping the makeshift solutions functional and “Minor” risks will result in an overall low accident risk. A lack of supplies

will also *directly* influence the accident risk.

“Major” or “Critical” risk factors should be avoided; they result in a high or even extreme overall accident risk.

An accident will happen suddenly while you fly around in a star system. You will get an accident report. It shows the cause, the damage that was done and a recommendation how to avoid similar accidents in the future.

The consequences of an accident depend on its cause, but will always work to mitigate the underlying problem. For example, a personnel-related accident will cause a loss of crew and marines – though it may also cause some collateral damage to cargo or fuel, especially if those are over capacity as well.

The consequences can be very harsh – up to the total loss of a ship – but accidents are also something you should not be seeing on a regular basis. They only happen if you have made a mistake (didn't carry enough supplies to support your fleet, say), or for when you have made a gamble and lost (can I tow this extra loot to the station to sell?).





## Refitting your Ships

Every ship above fighter size in Starsector can be refitted. Refitting involves the installation of new weapon systems and hull modifications together with the adjustment of the ship's flux systems. It allows you to individualize your ship and to give it the ability to fill the tactical role you want it to fill. Such a customization is called a Variant. To refit a ship visit the refit screen, press R in the campaign.

### Variants

A variant is what you have at hand when you finish refitting a ship. You can save variants to load them again and automatically outfit the ship as specified, provided the necessary parts are available. To do so click "manage variant" or hit V in the refit screen.

There are also pre-made variants in the game that can give you an idea how to load-out your ship. The AI fleets use those variants. You can look up variants in the codex.

A given variant might specialize a ship to a combat role (such as fire support), or it might create a balanced, all-around vessel. Specialized variants are better in large fleets, when they can count on support from other ships, while all-around variants are more useful in smaller fleets.

### Ordinance Points

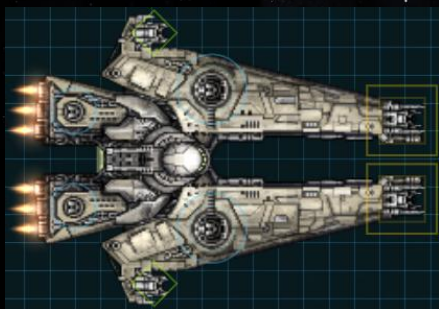
OPs can give you a hint how good a weapon is. If a weapon costs far more than it seems to be worth, you have probably overlooked something. Maybe it has great range or additional EMP damage!

Ordinance points (OP) are the "currency" in which you buy all modifications. A ship has a base value of OP that can be eventually be modified by some skills of your character. Every weapon and every hull mod has a certain OP cost associated with it. To strike the right balance between the investment in weapons to attack and hull mods or flux to bring you in a good position to do so is the key to a good ship.

## Weapons

The 4 types (Ballistic, Energy, Missile, Universal) and 3 sizes (small, medium, big) of weapon mounts are described in detail in Part I. The differences between a turret and a hardpoint are also explained there. If you are unsure about any of these it is recommended to read up on it before proceeding.

What weapons you mount is in most cases the most important choice you will have to make about a variant. They are the first thing that determines what role it will fill in combat.



Ballistic weapons mounts are indicated by a yellow square, energy weapons by a blue circle, missile weapons by a green diamond, universals by all those shapes colored white. Small weapons have one symbol, medium have two, and large mounts have three nested symbols.

To add a weapon simply left click on the mount and a list of suitable weapons will appear. On the top will be weapons that are already in your possession. If you are currently docked at a station, below in a yellow tint will be all suitable weapons that the station sells. These are the same weapons you can buy directly in the cargo menu. You can install as many weapons as you like and try them out in the simulator. The purchase will not take permanent effect unless you leave the refit screen or switch to a different ship. Weapon can be dismounted via right-clicking.

*If you installed a weapon on a mount, you can install the same kind of weapon on other mounts by shift + left clicking on them. This will save you a lot of time with bigger ships.*

After you have installed your weapons you can assign them to one of five weapon groups. Click on the “Weapon Groups” button or hit W.



Click on the button under a number to assign the weapon in the same row to that group. If you press shift and click you can assign all weapons of a kind to that number. This is very useful on big ships with a lot of point defense weapons. To auto assign click the “Auto” button, the same thing happens if you finish a variant without assigning any weapon groups. Click on the button directly underneath the weapon group to set its default auto-fire status.

*Auto assign will put all your missile weapons in the same group. That can be rather impractical if you have very different kinds of missiles!*

## Hullmods

Hull mods provide passive bonuses such as increased armor and top speed, as well as more exotic ship and weapon attributes. Some hullmods are always available, but the better ones have to be unlocked via character progression.

You can combine different hullmods; similar bonuses generally stack. The costs of hullmods vary, for big ships the same hullmods cost more than for small ones. In compensation the provided bonuses are often better for big ships.

The right choice of hullmods can make the difference between a great and a useless variant. Depending if you want to make a balanced or specialized variant, you can either try to compensate natural weaknesses of a hull or try to emphasize its strengths. For example, if you have a carrier with long range missiles, you could try to improve its missile capacity and accuracy, finalizing its uselessness in close combat. Or you could improve its shield strength and turret range, giving it a fighting chance in a brawl, but deducting from its fire support capability.

## Flux Systems

You can also spend ordinance points on installing additional flux vents and flux capacitors, each costing one OP. Every vent increases the flux dissipation rate by 10. Every capacitor increases the maximum flux limit by 200. Depending on ship size the maximum number of each is 10/20/30/50. If you hold shift and the left mouse button while adding/subtracting vents or capacitors, the process will be much faster. If you have weapons that generate a lot of flux or if you rely on shields you should invest in good flux handling. A good balance of firepower and flux efficiency is critical for a successful design.

*Both vents and capacitors are useful. Slow, tough ships that have to stay in melee a long time profit more from vents. For quick strike ships that can retreat after maxing out their flux capacitors might be the better fit.*

# Character



## Level progression

You can increase your character's level by gaining Experience (XP). Currently the only way to gain XP is through combat. The amount of XP you get is determined by the Fleet Points destroyed enemy ships are worth: every destroyed FP gives you 250 XP.

Losing ships in combat gives bonus XP, if the fleet has more than 5 fleet points worth of ships. Losing a battle gives double XP for that battle, if your fleet was worth more than 5 fleet points.

The experience your crew gains is the same amount, but is otherwise independent from your character's XP.

There is a soft level cap at level 40. That means you can still increase your level after reaching 40, but it will required so much XP that it is not practical to do so.

## Aptitudes

Aptitude points represent the general direction of your character's specialization. You gain one AP every second level up. The four aptitudes are Combat, Leadership, Technology and Industry. Each can be increased up to aptitude level 10. The aptitude level itself provides only a small bonus, its main function is to unlock associated skills.

**Combat** – Governs skills that are related to the combat prowess of your personal flagship.

**Leadership** – Governs skills that allow you to expand and manage a larger fleet efficiently.

**Technology** – Governs skills that enable you to improve ships of your fleet

**Industry** – Will eventually govern economy related skills. Has no function as of now.

In deciding what Aptitudes you will improve you are deciding on your preferred play style. It is a good idea to know what you want to do in Starsector before investing much in one Aptitude. If you want to be a great fleet admiral you can't neglect Leadership, for a hot shot captain the Combat aptitude is more suitable. At character level 40 you will have had enough APs to maximize two Aptitudes or maximize one Aptitude and bring two to half strength.



## Skills

You earn two Skill points every level up. Each aptitude governs up to ten skills. Every skill has ten level. Increasing it one level costs one skill point.

Skills are direct improvements of your character's or fleet's abilities. To see the benefits hover your cursor above the skill. The exact effects are diverse, but skills can have up to three kinds of benefits.

- 1) A small benefit that increases with every level of the skill
- 2) Perks which unlock at a certain skill level and don't improve further
- 3) Hullmods which enable you to make certain modifications on the ships of your fleet.

Example:

### Missile Specialization (2) - aptitude level reached

Governing aptitude: **Combat**

**Missile systems are a world unto themselves. An expert can override many safety parameters, getting a significant increase in performance as a result.**

**+10% missile speed and maneuverability** (piloted ship, **5%** per skill level)

Hull mods: **Expanded Missile Racks (3)**, **ECCM Package (7)**

**Autoloader Reprogramming (5)**

**+50% missile rate of fire** (piloted ship)

**+1 missile weapon ammo** (piloted ship)

**Increased Yield (10)**

**+50% missile damage** (piloted ship)

Effects that already apply are bright, inactive effects are darkened. Behind every improvement is noted in brackets if it will affect your piloted ship or the whole fleet. Behind the perks and hullmods is written in orange at which skill level they will be unlocked.

Skills are very powerful and can completely change your play stile and the role of your ships. Choose wisely!



## UNDER CONSTRUCTION



**Officers**

**Outposts**

**Industry**

**Trade**

The Sector-wide currency is the Domain Credit, or just credit for short. In the times of the Domain it was backed by the universal authority of the Second Economic Dictatum, which served to create the universal currency amongst other things. Post-Collapse, the Sector has failed to produce a financial authority that supersedes that of the Domain.

## Part III: Tips and Tactics

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### Tips for Battle

#### Defense

*aka "Oh god, oh god, we're all gonna die!"*

#### Don't panic!

Don't forget that there is pause mode you can use at any time. If you'd want you could play Starsector probably almost turn-based, where you have time to think about your reaction after every enemy action. If you don't know how to face an enemy you can always select it as a target and click "More Information" or press I. That will open its codex entry where you can read more about it and discover possible weaknesses in its stats.

#### Eyes wide open

Starsector is not a game where you can lay back and rely on your superior equipment very often. You have to closely pay attention to what is going on around you, there are a lot of hints and signs for danger. The thing that will most likely kill you is the thing you don't see coming. Is there an enemy ship with missiles nearby? It's just waiting for you to turn your back to it. Are the bombers on the battlefield? Ships with long range missiles? One of you allies in trouble? And maybe the most important thing: how high is your flux level?

### Armor

Before you go to battle, check your ships armor. Some ships can rely on it, some ships just can't. If you pilot a ship with weak armor it is completely different thing to drop shields. With some ships you just can't or you are dead.

### Torpedoes



Pay attention to torpedoes. They're big, red, and menacing for a reason. Even one will cripple a destroyer. There are also smaller yellow torpedoes that can home in on you. Using Q/E or Shift - A/D to strafe can be a good way to dodge them, as can turning away just in time to avoid a torpedo passing too close for comfort. Friendly torpedoes can hit you as well, though friendly ships will take care not to launch them at you.

### Bombers

A well-lined-up bombing run can be as devastating as a torpedo strike - pay attention to enemy bomber wings. Torpedo bombers are especially dangerous, as they can launch a large number of torpedoes with little warning.

### Shields

Shields are particularly good against missiles - most of those do high explosive damage, which is reduced against shields. It's almost a waste to fire missiles at a target that's capable of raising shields against them. On the flip side, kinetic weapons drain shields extremely quickly (remember, white-colored projectiles mean kinetic). So if you're taking a lot of kinetic fire, it's usually best to *turn the shields off* and take the hits on the armor.

### Offense

*aka "How am I even supposed to bring that guy down?"*

#### Autofire

Use it! (Remember: Shift - 1/2/3/4/5 to toggle for a group) Especially effective for point defense weapons and anything in a turret. With so many weapons firing at the same time, you'll have to watch your flux. Vent periodically, and don't get caught with your shields on and flux near maxed out - that's asking for an overload. The risk is worth it, though, as you'll put out a lot more firepower. It's usually not a good idea to turn autofire on for missiles - chances are they'll be wasted quickly.

#### Expanded Magazines

The hullmod "expanded magazines" does not only benefit ballistic weapons with limit ammo. It is also great for burst weapons like the Burst PD-laser, the Thermal Pulse Cannon and the Autopulse Laser. It effectively adds 50% to their attack power at low cost.

#### The Proximity Charge Launcher

Got problems with enemy fighters or bombers? This is the solution. Their effect is so devastating that one or two hits on any fighter will destroy or incapacitate the entire wing. Any bombs or torpedoes get annihilated as well. This makes Proximity charges a great defensive tool against anything that comes in swarms, kind of like a Flak Cannon in missile weapon form.

#### The Pincer Maneuver

Many ships can use their shields only in one direction at any time. If you see such a ship engaged with an ally of yours, try to surround the enemy and hit him in the back.

## Fleet Command

*aka "Why doesn't everyone just KNOW what I want?"*

### Level of control

It was said before, but once more: Starsector is not a RTS. Aside from "capture that objective" and "deploy that ship" there is really no command you *must* give.

### Deployment

In a small battle, you'll be able to deploy your entire fleet immediately. In larger battles, it helps to deploy the faster frigates and fighter wings first. You can use those to capture objectives, and use the fleet points gained from that to bring in a wave of reinforcements containing your heavy ships.

### Objectives

If you have lots of ships to deploy, capturing a Comm Relay can be key - each one gives you 30 fleet points. On the flip side, denying the enemy a Comm Relay can make a big difference if they have lots of ships to deploy.

## Miscellaneous

### Cruising

If you reach top speed thanks to a bonus (provided by zero flux, passing a planet, navigation buoys or maneuvering thrusters), even if you lose the bonus you will not lose the speed as long as you rely on inertia and don't use the engines. E.g. you can accelerate with a Conquest and cruise with 150 speed to the other side of the map, shield active, guns blazing and ship system ready at all times

## Tips For The Campaign

### Getting started

Choose your enemy wisely! At the very beginning almost everyone is stronger than you are, identifying the few who are weaker is key. Those are usually

- Single Hounds
- Single Buffalo MK.IIs
- Fighter and bomber wings travelling alone or in a pair

### Catching Fleets

Once your fleet is big enough, smaller enemy fleets will try to avoid you. To catch them anyway you can:

- Get between the enemy fleet and their destination, chasing them away for a bit. Then reverse course. That will lead them to return to their original course. If you reverse course again while they accelerate in your direction you can charge headfirst into them.
- If you see an enemy fleet moving towards a slowing obstacle (planet, sun, asteroid belt) you can sometimes go around the obstacle much faster and wait for them on the other side.
- Wait until they have to resupply at their base and block their path while they try to do it. They won't try to evade if they are close to their base.

## Tips for Modding

There is a variety of mods available on the Fractal Softworks forum. These range from the addition of simple comfort features over addition of new factions to total conversions. Visit the [index of mods](#) to learn more. Mods are very simple to install, you just have to drop them in the Starsector/mods directory. Then you can click on “mods” in the Starsector startup window and select the installed mod.

You can also find tips and guides in the forum how you can start making your own mods.

Here are just some simple tips how you can modify your game to your taste.

### Activate color blind mode

Go to Starsector/Starsector-core/data/config/settings.json and open it with a text editor. Find the line `“colorblindMode”:false` and change it to `“colorblindMode”:true`.

### Activate devMode (Cheatmode)

You can activate development mode by going to data/config/settings.json. and changing `“devMode”:false` in `“devMode”:true`. This mode will enable a number of new features. It lets you zoom out much further, avoid battles by pressing escape on the encounter screen, lets you give yourself credits with pressing K and lets you swap to other (even enemy) ships by ctrl-clicking on them during battle.



### Enhance capture chance for ships of a specific faction

Edit `starsector-core/data/world/factions/tritachyon.faction` and change each fleet's "extraCrewPercent" to something much lower. Any changes you make will show up when a new fleet is spawned, so existing fleets will still be difficult to capture.

### Activate autoturning

There is a "autoturnMode:false" setting in `data/config/settings.json`. If you bind turn left/turn right to shift-A/D, and set "autoturnMode":true, you'll always turn to follow the mouse unless you're actively turning or holding down shift. So it's the opposite of the current behavior.

### Adding opponents to the simulator

You want to test your Ships against an opponent that is not in the simulator database? That's no problem, just add it! In `Starsector-core/data/campaign` you will find the file `sim_opponents.csv`. It's a simple list that contains the simulator ships. You can just add a existing variant to the list and it will appear in the simulator. You can find a list of existing variants in `data/variants`.

## Part IV: Lore

This part of the manual isn't directly concerned with gameplay. It contains background information, the history of some of the factions you will encounter and bits and pieces about the technology of the Starsector universe. The second part holds fan-written Starsector short stories.

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## Backgrounds and Lore

### The State of Affairs – Welcome to the World of Starsector

The Now is what the ancients would call “year 3126.” We do not call it that anymore. It is pointless to cite large numbers that remind us how far we had come, and how far we have fallen. Since we do not even know where Old Earth is anymore, and cannot reach it – we use a new way of telling time, the sector cycle. In our sector of space, it is cycle 206.

Not much is known about the ancient past. What we know is what survivors recorded or told us. They described a vast galactic nation – the Domain of Man. Spanning hundreds of thousands of worlds in the Milky Way, ruled by the Ecumenical Benevolent Council, with its seat at Old Earth... It is told that one could travel the stars in the blink of an eye through gates constructed by the men of the Domain. Resources were nearly limitless, growth was not bound. Our sector was relatively new on the scene. Some worlds in it had only been settled for 20 or so cycles before the great calamity. The populations of the planets in our sector were still giddy with the initial excitement that every new venture brings. The sector was truly a heaven that we can now only dream of, hoping we go to a place like it when we die.

No one knows for sure what caused the end of this paradise. The records and stories only tell us bits and pieces. Exactly 206 cycles ago, all gates in our sector went dead at once. All communication links to the Domain were severed. Initially, there was no great disturbance in the daily lives of the colonists, it was assumed the gates would be reopened by the Domain, and communications reestablished. So they waited. But the gates were silent.



The conflict that almost consumed the entire sector began as a simple resource fight. Most of the colonies that were already established at the time were not yet self-sufficient in their food production. It was Domain policy that one in five settled worlds should become a farming world, given time and proper terraforming. However, the vast technological superiority of the Domain meant that even a planet considered a barren rock by men today, could be nurtured to become such a breadbasket. The new colonies were picked almost at random, as the Domain had confidence that their great industry and logistics could deliver the required biomass to the sector as it was needed. Sadly, most of the settled worlds were nowhere near autonomy from this logistical juggernaut when the calamity struck. Only a few of the worlds had received the necessary shipments of soil nanites. Fewer still had actual farms producing foodstuffs.

Within a week of the Collapse, as it was now being called, colonies sent supply ships to the dead gates. Their intent was simply to be first to go through and resupply, if the gates miraculously opened. Some colonies

sent their own patrol craft in order to maintain order. Tensions rose and the inevitable occurred – a patrol craft attempting to place warning shots instead found its mark, and blood was spilled. Others immediately avenged their losses. The sites of the dead gates became the first battlefields of a conflict that few yet dared call war.

The strife quickly migrated to the home fronts. As colonies had no planetary defense installations, commando raids for supplies became commonplace. Crafty spaceborne pillagers would wait for the marines to do their work, and ambush their transports on the way back from successful raids. The resulting chaos spread and brought famine to all colonies.

And so, time passed, as we were locked in a constant struggle with one another. In the 206 cycles since the Collapse, many factions and alliances have vied for control of the slowly diminishing industrial capacity of the sector. None have been able to dislodge the Hegemony from their high seat. With available resources, but with fewer and fewer functioning industrial facilities and ships, it may be only a matter of time before it is toppled. When that will happen, none of us can say. Neither can anyone predict how our fates will change should that come to pass.

## The Factions of Starsector: An Introduction

### *The Hegemony*

Nowadays they Hegemony forms a big, monolithic, largely obtuse but powerful organization that claims to be the spiritual successor of the Domain of Man. The Hegemony features one of the most rigorously administered chains of command in the history of humanity, too complex to list here. As such there are many organizations within the all-encompassing Hegemony, such as the Administratum, the Engineer Concilium, and the Military. All of these are of course subservient to the High Hegemon-Administrator.

But how came all that to be?

About three months after the Collapse, a Domain task force emerged from hyperspace in the sector. It was named Strike Force Pollux, and consisted of elements of the 14th Domain Naval Battle Group. The ships were running on full automation, as it was sent many years ago with the objective of studying the effect of long term cryo-sleep on human beings. Soldiers from the disgraced 200th Legion constituted the bulk of the test subjects. As the officers and crew of the task force were awakened, they quickly recognized the small colonial community was on the brink of collapse.

The task force could not be matched in battle in space or planetside, but they lacked crucial supplies. They sought to annex worlds that needed their protection, and that could also feed the tens of thousands of their soldiers and crew. The farmers of Verdaria II, and the men who maintained the works in an industrial autoworld of Hastaeus Prime were annexed first to secure basic provisions and repair facilities for the fleet. They were followed by the fledgling colony of Itos II, highly sought for the rare resources found there. These three core worlds and the men and women of the Domain task force were the foundation of the Hegemony.



### ***The Tri -Tachyon Corporation***

Before the collapse Tri-Tachyon was a mega-corporation with great capacities in advanced military research and production. Their technological superiority and military power allowed them to stay relatively unchanged. Even now Tri-Tachyon's internal organization closely resembles that of a corporation.

They see themselves as keepers of knowledge, heirs to the technological marvels created by the Domain. Obsessed with efficiency and the acquisition of technology that remains in the Sector, they condemn those that shun them. They are prone to over-thinking problems as a group, and care little for the plight of those outside their inner circle. At their best, they are competent, effective and cooperative with one another. At their worst, they are detached, elitist and cruel. Their belief is that the non-functioning star gates are merely dormant, and they are actively looking for the key that will awaken them – thus restoring to them the lost technological wealth of the Domain. Actual research has become a rare thing though – research is understood as the rediscovery and reverse engineering of lost domain technology. Secret tech-mining operations run by the Corporation can be found in the farthest reaches of the Sector.



### ***The Cult of Lud***

The Ludii are a fanatic cult that abhors all technology. According to their beliefs, the Sector will not only survive, but flourish if all technology is eliminated and humanity returns to an agrarian society. For proof that humans can function without the curse of technology, one need look no further than the Chronologicon, which describes a time of blissful utopia that existed on ancient Terra before the invention of space travel.

They actively try to sabotage advanced technological installations and prevent discovery of new UACs. They don't stop at terror attacks and the destabilization of governments. Use of technology for their cause is considered a necessary evil, and is only sanctioned by the Messiah, Hand of Lud or High Priests.

The Ludii do not actually have a chain of command at all, just the Messiah and various High Priests.

### ***Pirates***

## The Universe of Starsector – History and Technology

### *Industry and UACs*

Before the collapse, the only way colonies could build new war materiel was to rely on autofactories programmed with the correct blueprints. Orbital docks worked in a similar fashion to the ground factories and they too were limited in this fashion. Very few of the colonists were knowledgeable enough to even activate these massively complicated devices, and they lacked the precious blueprints that were the input of the machines. Everyone knew what they wanted built – a tractor, a rifle, a ship's engine. But no one knew how to build these things. A priori knowledge of concepts helped the colonists make progress, but they lacked many of the blueprints used all over the Domain to build everything from utensils to spaceships.



A blueprint consists of a factory control program stored on a Universal Access Chip. Most are also augmented with custom circuitry, and decades of corporate competition ensured that the chips are nearly impossible to duplicate, leaving companies with a tight hold on their manufacture. Before the Collapse blueprints of all items made in the Domain had been available from their makers, but not many such blueprints had found their way into the sector. The few functioning autofactories had them on hand, while the rest belonged to armchair historians, tinkers, and the insatiably

curious. Overnight, these devices had become the most valuable commodity in the entire sector. The people that had access to the chips were rarely able to benefit from this value, as others, a more cunning and ruthless lot, were quick to 'liberate' the UACs from their rightful owners. Whether it was a forced barter, a theft, or worse, the chips quickly found their way into the hands of the highest bidder, no questions asked. Seeing this, many owners hid their UACs where ever they could, in the hopes of being able to recover them at a later time. Some were buried, others launched into low orbit, hidden in asteroid fields, frozen within glaciers on icy moons or simply jettisoned out the nearest airlock, lest they fall into the hands of those that did not deserve them.

### *Glassing*

Decivilized worlds vary, but they are usually in the extremely dangerous and hostile range of the spectrum when it comes to the inhabitants. Pirates, rebels and criminals of all calibers use them as their base of operation and can destabilize neighboring star system. The only decivilized world that is somewhat safe is one that has been glassed. Glassing is the result of heavy orbital bombardment. It leads to the development of such enormous heat that the silica in the planet's soil is molten and fused into glass. This does not only kill all present life, but also makes the planet uninhabitable on the long run.

## Starsector Stories

These stories are fan fiction. The content does not represent official lore of the Starsector universe, although they are supposed to take place in it.



# Mistakes

By Veneke

*Within a week of the Collapse, as it was being called, colonies sent supply ships to the dead gates. Their intent was simply to be first to go through and resupply, hoping that the gates would miraculously open. Some colonies sent their own patrol craft to maintain order...*

In an abandoned government archive on the backwater planet of Yorelius II an old man sits shuffling through yellowed papers held loosely together by long-rusted clips. Taking another off the pile the old man, Bracchus, carefully repositioned it onto the reading frame; even under the magnified display the faded pencil marks were barely legible. It would take several minutes for the reading frame to scan and display the page in a manner which was recognizable, a process which allowed Bracchus altogether too much free time in which to wonder if this was yet another dead-end. There had been so many of them over the years. Still though, this might be it... The faint print at the top of the ancient paper was becoming clearer - **Doc. 1789 CY435 Patrol Log Y2921.**

**Log entry:** P/18/10/387

**ID Capt:** Richard Falmore

**ID Ship:** CY435 'Radiant'

## Log begins

<<You have to understand, none of us meant for this to happen. It was meant to be a simple op. We were to turn up and put ourselves between the Gate and the supply ships and just keep an eye on things. The admiralty were



worried that some of the supply ship captains might damage the Gate or each other in their panic. There had also been reports of mutinies and sabotage and all manner of crazy things. So the decision had made sense, right up until the point where we arrived. It was pandemonium. There were ships scattered all around the Gate, big ones, little ones, every kind imaginable. There were a few military ships too, including a small squadron of frigates that had either become separated by the dangerous manoeuvrings of the other ships or had decided to join in with them.>>

<<On arrival I called the senior staff together as we stood off at some distance to discuss our options. We were, by a good margin, the largest military vessel around and certainly boasted more guns than anything nearby, including that disorganized frigate squadron. Its remarkable just how easily several metres of hull and a half-dozen weapon systems can turn you into an arrogant sod. AT any rate, it was decided pretty quickly to make directly for the Gate and establish a perimeter. It went well too, for a time...>>

The reading frame had reached the end of the page and Bracchus pushed the next one in, impatiently waiting for it to finish its analysis.

<<It's truly amazing what the presence of a well-armed destroyer willing to take a couple of clear-miss pot-shots at freighters will do for establishing order. It wasn't long, however, before it all went horribly wrong. Some of the more ambitious captains decided to try and jump the informal queue that had developed by moving ever closer to the edge of the exclusion zone. The first few intrusions we let slide but that only prompted more incursions and eventually we were forced to open fire. That certainly got their attention and some less-than-courteous calls from other patrols that had recently joined the small flotilla that was trying to maintain the exclusion zone around the Gate. Of course we were all vastly outnumbered by the increasing volume of supply ships all waiting for the Gate to reactivate even had we been unified

under a single banner. In hindsight we should've turned tail and ran right then and there or maybe forced the supply ships to withdraw. It all seemed to be going so well though and, I admit, I smelled a promotion in the offing; maintaining order during this desperate hour at one of the most strategically significant points in the system? That would definitely get me on the short-list.>>

<<The Lioness, however, changed all of that. She was one of the big supply ships and captained by the type of man you hope never to have to deal with. You know the type, brash and bullish in equal measure. He made right for the Gate, full-speed. Who knows what he was thinking, he certainly wasn't responding to our hails. We fired a number of warning shots but he wouldn't be dissuaded. I ordered the Radiant into position at her stern and aimed for her engines with a pair of precision lasers. It was only meant to have disabled her but whatever it was she was carrying caused her to erupt like a supernova, her lifeless hulk sent careening through space. The radio chatter died for a moment, an otherworldly calm before the storm. It would've all still been fine but some random frigate raised his shields to protect itself from the debris. That prompted some fool captain to scream something about being under attack over the open radio and soon enough everybody had shields raised, lasers firing at random and, when the missile tubes went active, we had a full-scale battle. It was a bloodbath.>>

<<Things could've been done differently that week, though I'm not sure it would have made a difference. We certainly didn't mean for any of it to happen. That has to count for something, right?>>

The log ended there and Bracchus pulled the paper out, smoothing down a crease and placing it carefully back in the pile.

"No, it doesn't."



# The Shaming of the 200th Legion

By Pendragon

This story is how the 200th Dominion legion who would go on to become the founders of the Hegemony earned their exile in cryogenic storage aboard the battle group that would eventually arrive in the Corvus system.

General Arthur Warden of the 200th legion of the Dominion stared at the display in front of him, his hands clasped behind his back as he watched the shapes move back and forth across the projected terrain. He stared for a long time before reaching out and taking the proffered headset from his technician.

‘This is General Warden.’ His voice was scholarly, clipped and controlled, matching his slight build and solemn featured face, his head slightly balding. But for the fatigues and colonel’s pips at his collar he looked like a school teacher incongruously placed in the military command post.

He heard his commander’s voice, Lord General Orgeen Pattinoss, bluff and angry, they had never got along well. ‘Warden, we’re moving the time-table forward. You are to retire to alpha-four-four immediately and link up with elements of the 130th.’

Arthur lowered the mic and glanced at his second in command, ‘Colonel Montague, what’s the ETA to civilian evacuation?’

Montague was a tall, heavy-set man, well-fed but powerfully built, he had a gruff, grave voice. ‘At least thirty-six hours sir.’

Arthur nodded and closed his eyes, to say anything was useless, to say nothing was cowardly. ‘My Lord, civilian evacuation is not complete. These are slavers sir, if we...’

Pattinoss' voice cut across him. 'Dammit Warden! I do not give a rat's arse about the civilians! We are here to secure the auto-factory and mining facilities and ensure these seditionists are not able to salvage anything!'

'Sir, the 130th and 51st are both entrenched with air support! The auto-factory is in no danger. I respectfully request permission to have the 200th remain on-station to defend the civilian population!'

'I am giving you a direct order! Grid alpha-four-four! I expect your men in position in eight hours to act as a reserve.'

Arthur lowered the microphone and looked around his small command post, knowing already that he would not, could not obey. Somehow he had known it would come to this. Montague watched him with the other colonels and a score of his majors and captains, the officers that directed the thousands of men under his command. The sergeants that manned the comms equipment grew quiet too, joining the silent tableau of watchers, their eyes on him. He met their eyes, their fatigues stained and battle-worn by the year-long campaign to quell the seditionists in this system. Many of them were from this planet, he knew at least two companies in one of his regiments had been raised by recruiting parties in this very city.

Arthur swallowed, ignoring the insistent voice in his ears as the general roared at him for acknowledgement. He pressed the transmission button, then released it, then pressed it again, the words refusing to come. His eyes rose and his men who knew him so well saw the hesitation on his face. When he spoke it was to them, simple words. 'I cannot order you, so instead I ask you, will you stand with me?'

For an endless moment there was no response. Then one of his Colonels stepped forward, a tall, broad shouldered man in his forties, he had the

vaguely up-turned eyes and small nose that the colonists of this planet bore. One hand racked the slide on his concussion rifle, the mechanical click sounding clearly in the quiet that enfolded their small group. 'With your permission sir my regiment will begin establishing static positions in the western suburbs of the city.'

He stood apart from the rest for only a moment before another stepped forward, 'Sir, with permission, I will move my regiment to the northern western residential district, reports indicate that evacuation efforts there are proceeding slower than anticipated and the civilians will need cover.'

Another, 'Sir, the third engineers request permission to deploy alongside to offer logistical support.'

Another, 'General, forth regiment requests to be posted to grid cappa-four-two.'

Another, 'Sixth regiment requests permission to accompany the forth Sir.'

'First regiment requests permission to begin deployment along highway one-oh-four.'

'Second regiment requests permission to deploy to highway one-two-six.'

More joined them, each man stepping forward until they ringed him and Arthur felt his heart swell at the faith and loyalty in their faces as each in turn, captain, major and colonel not only pledged but begged to stand with him. Montague advanced through them, the rest parting until he stood before his general and snapped to attention. 'Sir, it has been the greatest honour of my life to serve with you.' The words were all the more meaningful for being spoken with Montague's customary candour. 'I have stood beside you on every battlefield from Harlech to Boron Ridge. I will stand beside you

now.'

Arthur swallowed, tears shining in his normally solemn eyes as he met the gaze of each man in turn, emotion threatening to crack his voice as he nodded his thanks and raised the mic to his lips, his eyes moving from officer to officer in the command post as he spoke. They were words that ultimately sealed the fate of the men of the 200th legion but words that not one man would ever look back on with anything but pride. When they faced the martial court of enquiry not a single man broke the pact they made that moment. Arthur clicked the transmit toggle on the headset. 'Command, last transmission unclear. Suspect comms interference. 200th will remain on-station.'

*Men of honour, wake from sleeping  
See their ships and ranks a' seething,  
Hear their savage war cries leading,  
To this battlefield.*

*Men of honour, stand ye steady,  
It cannot be ever said ye,  
For the battle were not ready,  
We shall never yield.*

*Men of honour on to glory,  
This will ever be your story,  
See these burning words before ye,  
Our line shall not yield.*

- (Excerpt) Anthem of the 200th Legion – Men of Honour

## FAQ

I found a contentual error or spelling error. What to do?

- Please report in the [Fractal Softworks forum](#). You can either post in the respective thread or send a PM to the user Gothars.

What does contentual mean?

- Belonging to, or dealing with, content. It's a proper word!

This is cool, I want to help. Can I?

- Sure, there is still a lot to do and I am glad about everyone who wants to help. As before, go to the forum-thread or send a PM to Gothars.

What is the best ship in the game?

- There is no best ship. All ships in Starsector have certain things they are good in, but none is good in everything. That's why it is important to know the strength and weaknesses of ships and build a fleet in which they can complement each other. ...It's the Paragon.

This manual sucks and you suck, too!

- That's not even a question. Wait a...

I lost my Starsector product key, how can I retrieve it?

- Send an email to [keys@bmtmicro.com](mailto:keys@bmtmicro.com)

## FAQ

- Alternatively, if you have still installed Starsector on a windows PC you can open the registry editor if you type regedit in the command console (or the search function). Then follow the path  
HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\javaSoft\Prefs\com\fs\Starfarer->serial  
Your serial number is separated by slashes ( / ).

## Notes for Editors

### Miscellaneous

The document is created with MS Word 2010. I don't know if any of the functions used are not backwards compatible or how other text programs handle them. If the document looks for you in some way different than the PDF let me know and we will see if it can be fixed or ignored.

The page size is din A5, half a normal page. That is partly because I like it so and partly because of the possibility of a nice booklet print version.

PM me if you have any questions.

### Font types

The main text body is now written in Calibri (Body), size 11, color white.

The Hint boxes are written in Calibri (Body), size 11, color white, *italic*.

The lore boxes are written in Garamond , size 10 but variable, color white, **bold**.

The main title is now implemented as a picture (originally written in 911 Porscha, you can download that and the original font "futura" here:

<http://www.fontyukle.net/en/911+Porscha.ttf>

<http://www.fontyukle.net/en/FuturaExtended.ttf>

[http://www.fontyukle.net/en/Futura+\(Light\).ttf](http://www.fontyukle.net/en/Futura+(Light).ttf)



## Tables and structure

Throughout the text boxes and main text are often bound together by a 2x1 table. That was necessary to archive a certain state of stability. For editing it can be useful to color a nearby table and make it visible. Otherwise you might accidentally be writing inside a table and get some weird effects.

Headlines apparently have to be outside (above) a table for the table of contents to work properly.

Most pictures are imbedded with text wrap “through” or “square”.

Sides are usually ended with a page break.

The document is parted in sections. The integrity of the sections is important for the headers to show the correct topic. If you are in chapter A and the header shows chapter B, you probably deleted a section break. If you are not sure how to fix it, leave me a note.

If you mess up the format while editing and can't fix it yourself, please mark the section and its headline **in bright red.**

In Word you can bring up spacers and formatting marks with File/Options/Display/Show all Formatting marks. Can be useful to see what going on behind the scenes.

## Table of contents and hyperlinks.

The table of contents is structured in 5 levels. In my version of word it has to be reinserted to allow assignment of levels 4 and 5.

The navigation bar at the start of every major part of the text contains hyperlinks. Those links tend to brake if a part moves around in the document. Let me know if you find a broken link.

**Version number**

Generally you don't have to concern yourself with that. Just for info: The version number contains the version of Starsector the manual is written for and a number behind M (for manual) that reflects the current state of completion in reference to the game version. A manual V 0.54a M1.00 that is perfect might fall back to a V 0.55a M0.8 with the next release.

## Credits

### **Starsector – The Game**

Alex Mosolov – development and game design lead

David Baumgart – art, game design

Ivaylo Kovatchev – lore, game design, coding

Stian Stark – sound, music

Matthew Steele – sound

### **Starsector – The Manual**

Chief Editor – Gothars

Graphic Layout – Gothars

Copy Editing - Thaago