

Starships

Ship Basics

The following overview presents the basic rules for ship- to-ship combat in the Starship Fantasies rules. All ships use these rules for movement and combat.

Pilots

A ship requires two things to keep it moving—a pilot and a means of propulsion. A pilot is a creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher who is physically able to use the ship's control device. A ship's captain is often (but not always) the pilot. The pilot uses the control device and either her piloting skill or her Dexterity to control the ship. Without a pilot, a ship will not move or will continue moving in a straight line, depending on the ship's state when it becomes pilotless.

Crews

Most ships require a crew. A ship without a full crew complement, but with at least half its crew, takes a –10 penalty on all piloting checks. A ship needs at least half its crew complement in order to be piloted at all. If more than half of a ship's crew is killed, dazed, stunned, or rendered unconscious, the ship can only take the “uncontrolled” action (see page 13). Crewmembers can take no action while the ship is in motion except to aid in that ship's movement. Any crew required to operate weapons (see page 18) are in addition to those crew needed to operate the ship.

Size and Space

Ships have sizes and spaces different from creature sizes and spaces. In order to play out ship-to-ship combat on a Flip-Mat or battle mat, a single square on the map corresponds to 100 meters of distance, rather than 5 feet. Most ships are long and thin; rather than taking up a space of an equal number of squares per side like creatures do, a ship's width is always considered to be half its length rounded down.

Ships do not move like creatures, even when they use creatures for propulsion. They tend to move in the direction of their forward facing, and do so quickly.

Facing: Unlike creatures, ships have a forward facing. Usually one of the shorter sides of a ship

serves as the ship's forward facing. Facing represents the effect of inertia on vehicles. Ships move best when moving in the direction of their forward facing, and it takes time and skill to move them in other directions.

When piloted correctly, ships can move straight ahead, diagonally, or a mix of both within the same movement. Skilled pilots can make a ship zigzag in a forward direction with ease.

Movement: Ships have a maximum speed and an acceleration listing. The maximum speed is the fastest rate the ship can travel per round. A ship cannot usually start at its maximum speed. Each round, the pilot can attempt to accelerate the ship or decelerate it by a rate equal to its acceleration (see the Movement section in Ships in Combat). The rate at which a ship is currently moving is called its current speed.

Edge of the Map: When playing out ship-to-ship combat on a Flip-Mat or battle mat, the edge of the map forms an artificial boundary—in open space, there is no edge of the map. As a result, if a ship moves off the edge of the map, you should extend the map with a new blank Flip-Mat or battle mat, or reposition the ships so they have room to maneuver.

Piloting Check

To control a ship in combat, a pilot must make a piloting check to determine the maneuverability and speed of the ship that round. Starships always use the Pilot skill for their piloting check. A pilot can always make a Dexterity check in place of a piloting check. Outside of combat, the base DC for all piloting checks is DC 5. In combat, the base DC for all piloting checks is DC 20. A ship without a full crew complement, but with at least half its crew, takes a –10 penalty on all piloting checks.

Aid Another: Just as with other skills, a character can spend a standard action to use the aid another action. This represents an extra pair of eyes observing the enemy, giving orders to the crew, or simply helpful advice. The helping character makes a piloting check as well. If the result is 10 or higher, the pilot gains a +2 bonus on her piloting check. Only one character can use the aid another action to help a pilot on a single piloting check.

Controlling a Ship Outside of Combat: Since piloting a ship outside of combat is easily accomplished by taking 10 on the skill check, piloting checks are not normally needed. Almost every character can do it with relative ease; the DCs are given only to adjudicate special situations that may come up in your game.

Controlling a Ship without the Proper Skill: If a pilot lacks the proper skill to control a ship, the pilot can always make a Dexterity ability check instead of the appropriate piloting check. A pilot can even take 10 (when outside of combat) or gain the benefits of the aid another action when using Dexterity instead of the ship's normal piloting skill.

Control Devices

Every vehicle has a control device for steering. A control device is typically an object with object immunities and resistances and with its own statistics. The following are some of the typical control

devices for ships, plus their usual Armor Class, hit points, and hardness. When a control device gains the broken condition, all piloting checks take a –10 penalty. When a control device is destroyed, a ship cannot be piloted until the control device is repaired.

Example:

Maneuvering Thrusters AC: 20 HP:20 Hardness:15

Evasion and Pursuit

In the wide, open space, one ship can spot another from hundreds of kilometers away, making it virtually impossible to surprise another ship. If both ships want to engage in combat, the ships close with one another and begin ship-to-ship combat normally. If one ship wants to avoid combat, however, a chase ensues. At the GM's discretion, a faster ship can always catch a slower ship, but even slow ships can take advantage of nebulae, asteroids, or planets to make good their escape. When two ships first encounter one another, the pilots of the two ships must make three opposed piloting checks. Whichever pilot wins at least two out of three of the opposed checks is victorious. If the pursuing ship wins, it catches up to the fleeing ship and ship-to-ship combat begins. If the fleeing ship wins, it escapes. If the result is a tie, the pilots should begin a new series of three opposed checks.

Such chases can take days, as one ship struggles to outmaneuver the other. At the GM's discretion roll 1d4 to determine the number of days a chase lasts.

Withdrawing: Once in ship-to-ship combat, a ship can withdraw from combat by simply moving off the edge of the battle mat, ending ship-to-ship combat immediately. At the GM's discretion, the ship has either escaped completely, or the two ships can go back to the evasion and pursuit rules above.

Ships in combat

The following are the rules for how ships act in the combat round.

Once at least two ships are ready to engage in combat, use a large, blank battle mat to represent the space in which the battle occurs. A single square corresponds to 100 meters of distance.

Determine which ship is the attacker and which is the defender. Represent each ship by using markers that take up the appropriate number of squares.

To establish the position of the ships on the battle mat, roll 1d4 to determine the ships' heading (the direction they are facing). Since both ships are coming out of a chase, they are both assumed to have the same heading. A roll of 1 is north, 2 is east, 3 is south, and 4 is west. Place the defending ship as close to the center of the map as possible on the correct heading.

Next, roll 1d8 to determine the bearing of the attacking ship (its position relative to the other ship). Follow the guidelines for missed splash weapons (Core Rulebook 202), with a roll of 1 indicating north, and counting squares clockwise for a roll of 2 through 8 to determine the bearing. In some cases, this will put the attacking ship ahead of the defending ship—this simply means the attacking ship overshot its quarry as the chase came to a close.

Finally, roll 1d6+2 to determine the number of squares on the battle mat between the two ships. Place the attacking ship on the map at the appropriate bearing and distance from the opposing ship. Unless otherwise detailed in an encounter, assume that each ship begins combat with a speed of 100 meters. Any weapons carried on a ship are likewise assumed to be loaded at the beginning of combat.

Initiative

When combat begins, the pilot of a ship should roll initiative as normal—the ship moves at the start of its pilot's turn. If a ship has no pilot, it moves on the turn of the last creature that was its pilot, or on a turn determined by the GM. If they wish to take actions in combat, the PCs (and important NPCs involved in the combat) should roll initiative at this time as well.

The Upper Hand

At the beginning of every round, each pilot makes an opposed piloting check to determine who has the upper hand that round. This represents the vagaries of luck, skill, and the environment. The pilot who succeeds at the check gains the upper hand, and can immediately reposition her ship by one square in any direction as a free action. For every 5 by which the successful pilot's check exceeds the opposing pilot's check, the pilot with the upper hand can reposition her ship by an additional square. On a tie, neither pilot gains the upper hand.

Alternatively, the pilot who wins the upper hand can change the heading of her ship by 90 degrees. For every 5 by which the successful pilot's check exceeds the opposing pilot's check, the pilot with the upper hand can change the heading of her ship by an additional 90 degrees.

Movement

At the start of a pilot's turn, she can take any of the following piloting actions (except the “uncontrolled” action) by making a piloting check to control the ship. The pilot must take whatever action is required before doing anything else that turn. Just as in normal combat, a pilot can perform a standard action and a move action each round. Once the pilot has selected an action, or takes some other action forcing the ship to become uncontrolled, the ship moves. If a ship has less than half its crew or has no pilot, or if the pilot takes no action, takes some other action instead of piloting the ship, or delays or readies an action, the ship takes the “uncontrolled” action.

Full Ahead (standard action): With a successful piloting check, the ship's current speed increases by its acceleration (usually 100 meters), but no higher than its maximum speed. The ship can move forward or forward diagonally. In other words, each time a ship enters a new 100-meter square, it can choose any of its forward-facing squares—the one directly in front or either of the squares directly forward and diagonal. This allows the ship to swerve. A pilot who fails her piloting check

does not accelerate and can only move into a square directly in front of the ship's forward facing.

Hard to Port or Hard to Starboard (standard action): The pilot can turn the ship while it moves forward at its current speed. With a successful piloting check, the pilot can change the ship's forward facing either left (port) or right (starboard) by 90 degrees at any point during the ship's movement. Do this by pivoting the ship so that the rear square of the ship takes the place of the ship's former forward facing square. If a ship's current speed is twice its acceleration, the pilot takes a -5 penalty on the piloting check. If a ship's current speed is three times its acceleration, the pilot takes a -10 penalty on the piloting check. If its current speed is four or more times its acceleration, the pilot takes a -20 penalty. On a failed check, the ship does not turn, but can be moved forward diagonally during its movement.

Cut Engines (standard action): With a successful piloting check, the ship's current speed decreases by its acceleration. On a failed check, the ship does not decelerate. Either way, the ship can move forward on its current facing and can move forward diagonally. If deceleration reduces a ship's speed to 0, some amount of inertia will continue to move the ship forward. The ship moves forward (either directly forward or forward diagonally) 1d4×100 meters before coming to a complete stop. Having the Expert Driver feat (Ultimate Combat 100) reduces this distance by 100 meters (minimum 0 meters).

Make Way (standard action): With a successful piloting check, a pilot can make a tricky or difficult maneuver that forces an enemy pilot to react. The result of this piloting check then becomes the DC of the enemy pilot's next piloting check. On a failed check, the ship's speed remains constant, but the ship cannot move forward diagonally, and the enemy pilot makes his next piloting check at the normal DC.

Stay the Course (move action): With a successful piloting check, the pilot can move the ship forward on its current facing at its current speed, and it can move directly forward or forward diagonally. Failing the check keeps the speed constant, but the ship can only move directly forward, not forward diagonally.

Full Reverse (full-round action): With a successful piloting check, the pilot can move the ship backward at a speed of 100 meters, moving either directly backward (the reverse of its forward facing) or backward diagonally. On a failed check, it does not move backward. A ship may only be moved in reverse if its current speed is 0.

Uncontrolled (no action): When the pilot does nothing, if there is no pilot, or if the ship has less than half its crew, the ship is uncontrolled. An uncontrolled ship does nothing except take the uncontrolled action until it stops or someone becomes its new pilot. An uncontrolled ship moves forward only (it cannot move forward diagonally) and automatically decelerates by its acceleration. Even if a ship does nothing, it can still perform ramming maneuvers (see Ramming, below).

Attacks

Some ships carry weapons. Provided that the ship has enough additional crew to operate them, these weapons can make attacks. While individuals aboard a ship generally don't play a significant role in ship-to-ship combat, important characters such as PCs might still become involved if they wish to fire weapons or if an enemy ship is in range of their spells. When attacking a ship, you can

attack the ship's structure, occupants, propulsion, or control device. You can also attempt to grapple and board a ship. In addition, a ship can make a ramming maneuver or shearing maneuver as part of its movement.

Attacking the Structure: This is an attack against the ship itself. If the attack is successful, the ship takes damage normally.

Attacking Propulsion: A ship's means of propulsion usually has its own set of statistics, while creatures propelling a ship use their own statistics. Individual ship stat blocks detail their means of propulsion.

Attacking the Control Device: A ship's control device is an object with its own statistics (see Control Devices above). When a control device is destroyed, the ship can no longer be piloted.

Attacking a Weapon: Weapons mounted on a ship have their own statistics. Weapons on a ship benefit from cover (+4 ac, +2 reflex saves).

Broadsides: Some ships can carry a large number of weapons. Rather than bog down ship-to-ship combat with numerous individual attack rolls, weapons can be fired in "broadsides." All weapons of the same type on a single side of the ship can fire at once. Broadside attacks can only be used to attack the structure of a ship or propulsion. Make a single attack roll for all of the weapons in the broadside. If the attack roll is successful, all of the weapons hit their target. If the attack roll fails, all of the weapons miss. On a successful attack roll, take the average damage of a single weapon and multiply it by the number of weapons in the broadside to determine the total damage dealt.

For example, a ship with a bank of 10 laser cannons on its port side fires a broadside attack. A single laser cannon deals 5d8 points of damage, for an average of 22.5 points of damage. If the attack hits, the broadside deals 22.5×10 , or 225 points of damage.

Grappling and Boarding

When the crew of one ship wishes to board an enemy ship and attack its crew, they must first grapple the other ship. To grapple, the two ships must be within 100 meters of one another (in other words, they must be in adjacent squares on the battle mat). If both pilots want to grapple, grappling is automatically successful. The two ships throw out tractor beams or grappling lines and draw the ships together. If both ships are reduced to a speed of 0 as the result of a ramming maneuver, they are also considered grappled.

If only one pilot wants to grapple, she must make a combat maneuver check against the target ship's CMD, using the base CMB of the ship plus the pilot's piloting skill modifier (or Dexterity skill modifier if she is using that ability to control the ship) as the total CMB of the grappling maneuver. If the check is successful, the target ship is grappled. On the next round, the two ships are moved adjacent to one another, and the speed of both ships is reduced to 0. If a ship has less than its full crew complement, the pilot takes a -10 penalty on her combat maneuver check to make a grappling maneuver.

Breaking a Grapple: The pilot of a grappled ship can attempt to break the grapple by making a combat maneuver check against the opposing ship's CMD, but at a -4 penalty. If the check is successful, the crew has cut the grappling lines and the freed ship may now move as normal.

Boarding: Once two ships are grappled, a crew can board the other ship. The pilot with the highest initiative can choose whether to board the opposing ship with her crew first or wait for the

opposing crew to board her ship.

Ramming

To ram a target, a ship must move at least 100 meters and end with its forward square in a square adjacent to the target. The ship's pilot must make a ramming combat maneuver check against the target's CMD, using the base CMB of the ship plus the pilot's piloting skill modifier (or Dexterity skill modifier if she is using that ability to control the ship) as the total CMB of the ramming maneuver. If the check is successful, the ship hits its target, dealing its ramming damage to the target. The ramming ship takes half that damage. A ship's base ramming damage is listed in its stat block. If the pilot's combat maneuver check exceeds the target's CMD by 5 or more, the target takes twice the ship's ramming damage. If the combat maneuver check exceeds the target's CMD by 10 or more, the target takes twice the ship's ramming damage and the target's speed is immediately reduced to 0. Regardless of the result of the combat maneuver check, the ramming ship's speed is reduced to 0. A failed ramming check means that the attack ship continues on past the defending ship at its current speed.

If a ship collides with another ship or a solid object (an immobile structure with a hardness of 5 or more), it also makes a ramming maneuver, regardless of the pilot's intent. There is no combat maneuver check for this ramming maneuver; its effects happen automatically. When a ship makes a ramming maneuver against a solid object, to determine how much damage both the solid object and the ship take, allow the ship to enter the solid object's space. The ship will only travel through that space if the damage is enough to destroy the solid object; in all other cases, the ship takes the damage and its speed is immediately reduced to 0 as it comes to a sudden stop directly in front of the solid object.

A ship can be outfitted with a ram on its forward facing. A ship equipped with a ram deals an additional 2d8 points of damage with a ramming maneuver, and ignores the damage for the first square of a solid object it enters, and all damage from ramming creatures or other objects (such as other ships). A ram can be added to a Large ship for 5000 Cr, a Huge ship for 10,000 Cr, a Gargantuan ship for 30,000 Cr, and a Colossal ship for 100,000 Cr.

If a ship has less than its full crew complement, but has at least half its crew, the pilot takes a -10 penalty on her combat maneuver check to make a ramming maneuver. A ship without at least half its crew complement cannot make a ramming maneuver.

Taking Control of a Ship

If a ship has no pilot, another creature can take control of the ship as long as the creature is adjacent to the ship's control device and makes a piloting check as a free action. The ship's pilot can always give over control to another adjacent creature as a free action. If a creature wants to take control of a ship from another forcefully, it must kill the pilot or otherwise remove the pilot from the control

device. When a new creature becomes the pilot, the ship moves on the new pilot's turn, but not on the new pilot's first turn after taking control of the ship.

Damaging a Ship

Ships have hit points and hardness based on their primary components. Most ships are made of mithril (30 hit points per 5-foot-square, hardness 15). When a ship is reduced to below half its hit points, it gains the broken condition. When it reaches 0 hit points, it gains the hull breach condition.

Broken Condition: Ships—and sometimes their means of propulsion—are objects, and like any other object, when they take damage in excess of half their hit points, they gain the broken condition. When a ship gains the broken condition, it takes a –2 penalty to AC, on piloting checks, saving throws, and on combat maneuver checks. If a ship or its means of propulsion becomes broken, the ship's maximum speed is halved and the ship can no longer gain the upper hand until repaired. If the ship is in motion and traveling faster than its new maximum speed, it automatically decelerates to its new maximum speed.

Hull Breach Condition: A ship that is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points gains the hull breach condition. A hull breached ship cannot move or attack, and it decompresses completely 10 rounds after it gains the hull breach condition. Each additional hit on a hull breached ship that deals more than 25 points of damage reduces the remaining time for it to decompress by 1 round. A ship that decompresses completely can no longer support life and is considered destroyed. A destroyed ship cannot be repaired—it is so significantly damaged it cannot even be used for scrap material. Magic (such as make whole) can repair a hull breached ship if the ship's hit points are raised above 0, at which point the ship loses the hull breach condition. Generally, non magical repairs take too long to save a ship from destruction once it begins to go down.

Repairing a Ship

The fastest and easiest way to repair a ship is with spells. Mending is not powerful enough to meaningfully affect an object as large as a ship, but make whole affects a ship as if it were a construct, repairing 1d6 points of damage per level. In addition, more mundane methods can also be used to repair ships. Because of their specialized construction, ships usually require the Craft (ships) skill to repair. Depending on the nature of the damage various Profession skills can be used to repair ships with the GM's approval. In general, a day's worth of work by a single person using the appropriate skill to repair a ship requires 1000 Cr of raw materials and a DC 10 skill check, and repairs 10 points of damage on a success, or 5 hit points on a failure. Fabricate can also be used to create the raw material needed for repairs.

Fire

Fire is an ever-present danger on every ship. Note that many instantaneous fire spells do not automatically catch a ship on fire, but those that deal fire damage over multiple rounds have a better chance of causing a fire on board a ship.

When a ship takes fire damage (such as from a laser, certain spells, and other effects at the GM's discretion), it must immediately make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + number of hits taken that round) or catch fire. Unless an attack specifically targets a ship's means of propulsion (such as thrusters), it is assumed that such attacks affect the structure of a ship itself.

Once a ship has caught fire, it automatically takes 2d6 points of fire damage per round (ignoring hardness) as the fire spreads. The ship's crew can attempt to extinguish the flames as a full-round action for one crew member per size category above medium (min. 1), allowing the ship to make a Reflex save (DC 15 + the number of rounds the ship has been on fire). A successful saving throw means the fire has been put out. A failed saving throw results in the ship taking the normal 2d6 points of fire damage for the round.

A ship must take the "uncontrolled" action each round that its pilot attempts to put out a fire, as they are not piloting the ship at this time.

Ship Statistics

A vast variety of ships exist. To represent the numerous distinctions of shape and size that exist between space-going vessels, the following stat blocks categorize several standard ship sizes and their respective statistics. GMs can use or alter the statistics below to create new ships for specific cultures or races to suit the needs of their individual campaigns. All ships have the following traits.

Name: The name or type of the ship.

Size and Type: The size and type of the ship.

Squares: The number of 100-meter squares the ship takes up on the battle mat, followed by the ship's actual dimensions. A ship's width is always considered to be half its length rounded down.

Cost: The ship's cost in Cr. Sometimes the description or the weapons section provides possible modifications for the ships. These are not included in the cost of the ship, nor are additions like rams or weapons.

AC and Hardness: The ship's base Armor Class and hardness, based on its size, defenses, and its construction material (hardness 15 for most mithril ships). To calculate the ship's actual AC, add the current pilot's piloting skill modifier (or Dexterity modifier, if she is using that ability to drive the ship) to the ship's base AC. Touch attacks against a ship ignore its pilot's piloting skill or ability modifier; thus a ship's base AC is its touch AC. A ship is never considered flat-footed. If the ship is not in motion, it has an effective Dexterity of 0 (-5 penalty to AC), and an additional -2 penalty to its AC.

HP: The ship's total hit points. A ship that takes damage in excess of half its total hit points gains the broken condition. At 0 or fewer hit points, a ship gains the hull breach condition. A ship that decompresses completely is considered destroyed. Ships do not have ability scores, and are immune to ability score damage or drain. They are also immune to bleed damage. Unlike other objects, ships do not take half damage from energy attacks, but do take half damage from all ranged weapons except other ships' weapons. This line also lists the total hit points for the ship's means of propulsion.

Base Save: The ship's base save modifier. All of the ship's saving throws (Fortitude, Reflex, and Will) have the same value. To determine a ship's actual saving throw modifiers, add half the pilot's piloting skill modifier (or half the pilot's Dexterity modifier) to the ship's base saving throw. A ship is immune to most effects that require a Will saving throw (though pilots, crew members, and passengers typically are not).

Maximum Speed: This is the fastest that a ship can move. When a ship has more than one means of propulsion, it may also have more than one maximum speed.

Acceleration: This is how fast a ship can increase its speed each round. It also determines the maximum amount a ship can safely decelerate each round.

CMB and CMD: The ship's base CMB and CMD. To calculate the ship's actual CMB and CMD, add the current pilot's piloting skill modifier (or Dexterity modifier, if she is using that ability to drive the ship) to the ship's base CMB. A ship is never considered flat-footed. If the ship is not in motion, it has an effective Dexterity of 0 (–5 penalty to CMD), and an additional –2 penalty to its CMD.

Ramming Damage: The base damage dealt by the ship on a successful ramming attack (without a ram).

Propulsion: The types of propulsion used by the ship.

Piloting Check: The skills typically used to make a piloting check with this type of ship.

Control Device: The typical control device the pilot uses to steer the ship.

Means of Propulsion: The actual means and amount of propulsion used to move the ship.

Crew: This is the minimum number of crew members needed to move the ship, in addition to the pilot. If a ship uses creature propulsion, the number and size of creatures providing the propulsion are listed here as well. Any crew required to operate a ship's weapons is in addition to this number.

Decks: The usual number of decks on a ship and any important information about those decks is given in this section.

Cargo/Passengers: The amount of cargo (in tons) a ship can hold, as well as the number of non-crew passengers it can carry.