

The logo for Pandemic Survival Distancing Edition features a red silhouette of a city skyline at the top, including the Eiffel Tower, a lighthouse, a dome, a modern skyscraper, and the Statue of Liberty. Below this, the word "PANDEMIC" is written in large, bold, red letters with a yellow outline and a slight 3D effect. Underneath "PANDEMIC" is the word "SURVIVAL" in a similar red font but without the outline. A horizontal line separates "SURVIVAL" from the words "DISTANCING EDITION" below it, which are in a red, outlined, blocky font.

Pandemic Survival is the unique tournament format of Pandemic, and the first cooperative-style tournament in tabletop gaming.

This “Distancing Edition” lets us all play together from our own homes!

What is Pandemic Survival?

In Pandemic Survival, teams of two compete simultaneously to win the game or be the last team standing. Everyone’s setup is the same: roles, starting board setup, and preset decks. However, based on your team’s choices, your individual game will play out differently from other players’. Turns also have a time limit, which means you must act quickly and efficiently to discover the winning strategy.

What You’ll Need to Play

- Two or more teams of exactly two players each, plus a game master.
(Figure 5 to 21 people, assuming you all have enough bandwidth.)
- About 1 to 2 hours. Try to set aside 2 hours. This will ensure that you’ll have enough time for everyone to get set up and familiar with everything and give you enough time if people have questions or technical issues.
- Each team will need to have one copy of the base game.
 - If a single team is split across two locations they can still play together but they’ll need to figure out some way to share the state of their board with each other and communicate privately with each other. (Sounds tricky to me, but if you’re good with audio-visual gear, perhaps you can handle it.)
- Each location will need to be able to log into Zoom (or a similar video conferencing service).
 - Note: you won’t need to (or want to!) show your board on camera. You can share your smiling faces, or if bandwidth is an issue, you can conduct the game using only audio. (It’s easier if you have video, though.)
- You’ll need to pick one player to be the **game master**. The game master will also need a timer of some sort. (This can be the clock app on a phone, kitchen timer, stopwatch, or similar.)
- The game master will be in charge of setting up a **scenario** before you all meet (see below).

Important Concepts

- All players will face the same scenario:
 - All teams start with an identical setup.
 - All teams have identical Role cards and starting hands.
 - There is only 1 Player deck that is controlled by the game master. The game master will tell the players which Player cards to pick up off the table at the end of each turn.
 - There is only 1 Infection deck that is controlled by the game master. So all teams infect the same cities at the same time.
- Player turns are limited by time.
 - The first turn of the game is exactly **2 minutes**.
 - All subsequent turns are **1 minute and 15 seconds** (75 seconds). Once the game master says "Stop!" the active player should not perform any further actions or discuss strategy. Wait for the Game Master to signal that the active players can draw cards.

First: Select a Game Master!

- Before you meet, you'll need to select a person to be the **game master** who can facilitate the game.
- The game master is in charge of **designing the scenario**. To design a scenario:
 - Shuffle the infection cards to form the master Infection deck. If you're feeling especially devious, you can design the order of the cards in the Infection deck to make a particularly nasty or interesting game. Remember that you can also decide which cities are affected during epidemics by deciding which cards go *on the bottom* of the Infection deck.
 - Select the two roles that will be played in your scenario.
 - Remove the Forecast, Resilient Population, and One Quiet Night event cards from the game. Shuffle the other 2 event cards with the city cards, then deal them out to form two starting hands of 4 cards for each of the roles.
 - Build the Player deck with the remaining Player cards plus **5 or 6 epidemic cards**. Again, you can do this randomly or you can make it interesting, nasty, or go easy on the players. (If you're playing with relatively new players, you might start with 5 epidemics but 6 works great for experienced players.)
 - When arranging epidemic cards in the Player deck, try to make each epidemic card the second card that is drawn on that particular turn. You'll be less likely to forget to draw both cards that way when you're running the game.

Game Master: Get Things Going

Instructions for the game master:

Setup

- When everyone is on the call together, have each group announce their team and team name. Make sure everyone's audio and video is working.
- Get things started by drawing the infection cards to set up the initial disease cubes. As these Infection cards are drawn, announce the cities on them so players can add the necessary disease cubes to each of their boards.
- Tell everyone which two roles are in play as well as the hands of Player cards that go with each role. The members of each team then decide which role they want to play and put their matching pawn on the board in Atlanta.
- Tell everyone to lay out the remaining Player cards on their table within easy reach. (They may want to sort them by color and then alphabetically to make them even easier to find.) Warn players not to mix those cards up with the cards in their hands.
- Tell everyone which role will go first.
- Set the timer for 2 minutes for the first turn. Ask everyone to get ready, and ...

Play!

- Say, "Go!" then start the **2-minute timer for the first turn**. You're off and running!
- On subsequent turns, set the timer for **75 seconds** instead of 2 minutes. (Remind everyone that they'll have less time.) You may also want to give players warnings when there are about 20 seconds and 10 seconds left, then count down the last 5 seconds.
- If a player wants to play an event card during the Draw Cards or Infect step, stop what you're doing long enough for them to finish resolving the card. (There's no need to pause the game when events are played while the timer is ticking – players can just play them.)

Players: Play!

Play the game like you normally would except that:

- Any actions that you haven't done when the time is up are lost!
- Remember to **stop talking strategy when the clock isn't ticking**. (You'll have to all do this on the honor system since it's pretty easy to cheat when you're remote. But I know you all—you're better than that.)
- If you want to play an **event card** during the Draw Cards or Infect step, alert the game master. The game master will pause the game long enough for you to play your card.
- When you **find a cure**, be sure to announce it to the room!

Tips for the Game Master

- Try to create a fun atmosphere and don't take things too seriously. Try to make sure people are keeping up and know what's going on. Do negative polling and ask, "is anyone not ready?"
- Between turns, periodically **ask players how many cures and outbreaks everyone has** so each team can get a sense of how they're doing. You can even have players hold up a piece of paper or whiteboard with this information to the screen so people can see everyone's status.
- When announcing the Player cards that everyone is drawing, **name the color first**, then the city name. That'll make it easier for players to find the card. That's a good practice when you're announcing the cities that are being infected as well.
- Find some way to **keep track of the current role each turn**. When drawing cards, remind the players who the card belongs to, for example, "The Medic's first card is Chicago. The Medic's second card is Karachi."
- When players draw an Event card, take a second to remind the players what it does.
- When drawing an Infection card that may cause an outbreak, go slow and give players the time they need to resolve them.
- **Things may go wrong at some point**—you'll bump into connection issues, hardware issues, or misunderstandings. Roll with it as best as you can. When in doubt, you, the game master should decide what to do.
- It's a good idea for the Game Master to also be the meeting's host so they have access to all of the controls such as **the ability to mute everyone**. This can be handy if the audio channel gets too noisy (especially when reading off what cards are being drawn). You can then unmute everyone when play resumes. Tell players to wave their hands while they're muted if they need something or need you to slow down when you're drawing cards.
- Read the room: you may want to check to see if anyone needs to take a quick break mid-game to grab a drink, take a bio-break, or otherwise take a breath for a minute. (At the very least, you may want to advise people to do this before things get rolling.)

Winning or Losing

The game can end in three different ways:

- Players win by finding 4 cures!
 - Congratulations, you do not need to do the next Draw step or Infection step, but you must wait until the end of the 1:15 mins to see if another team will find 4 cures as well.
 - If multiple teams find their 4th cure during the same turn, the game must go to a tiebreaker (described below). Players will not perform the Draw phase or the Infection phase.
- Players win by outlasting the other teams (last team standing)!
 - All other teams have lost; you are the winner!
 - During the Infection phase, each card is resolved individually before moving on to the next card. So, if a team loses on the 1st card and only one other team is still in the game, players do not need to draw the other card(s) in the Infection step, the last team in play wins.
 - If multiple remaining teams lose during the SAME INFECTION CARD, a tiebreaker must occur to determine the winner. (described below).
- There are no more Player cards to draw and more than one team is still alive:
 - A tiebreaker must occur. (described below)

Tiebreakers:

- #1: Number of cures found: The team that discovered the most cures wins.
- #2: Number of Outbreaks: The team that suffered the fewest outbreaks wins.
- #3: Number of Cities with 3 cubes of the same color: The team with the fewest cities containing 3 cubes of the same color wins.
- #4: Number of cubes on the board: The team with the fewest total cubes on the board wins.
- If there is still a tie after all 4 tiebreakers, randomly determine a winner.

Fine Points and Reminders

- If some people are playing with the first edition of the game (2008—early 2012) be sure they know that:
 - Toronto is now Montréal in the 2nd Edition. Madras is now Chennai.
 - The Operations Expert has a new second special ability. Once per turn while in a city with a research station, he may discard any one card to move to any city on the board.
- When, at any time, a player has more than 7 cards in hand, that player must **immediately** discard back down to 7 cards. This **can** be done by playing an event card, if it is allowed at that moment. Players should tell the game master when they want to play an event card during the Draw Cards or Infect steps.
- Event cards **may not** be played **during** an Epidemic. You must resolve the 3 Steps of the Epidemic (Increase, Infect, Intensify) before being able to play an event. This **can** be done before the new Infection phase.
- To perform the Share Knowledge action, both players need to be in the same city. If they are, they can give or take the card **matching the city they both presently occupy**.
- A disease can only be **eradicated** if the cure has been found. Taking all cubes of one color off the board, without having the cure for that color is **not** an eradication.

Resources

Zoom Backgrounds

[These backgrounds](#) can let people know with a quick glance the state of each team. They include a “biohazard” background that you can put up when your team is eliminated as well as backdrops communicating how many cures you’ve found (0, 1, 2, 3, and 4).

For Screen Share

Instead of using a kitchen timer or phone, you can use this [online countdown timer](#) using screen sharing. If you’re using Zoom, check the “Share Computer Audio” when you share it so everyone watching it can hear it go off when time is up.



The Official Pandemic Survival Tournament

Read all about the official tournament here:

<https://www.zmangames.com/en/events/pandemic-survival/>

Differences in the Official Tournament

The official tournament also uses roles, events, and the Virulent Strain challenge from Pandemic: On The Brink. Because of this, 5 event cards are always used. Feel free to use these rules as well if everyone playing in your distancing tournament also has Pandemic: On The Brink.

Note: the following event cards are not used in tournament play:

- One Quiet Night
- Resilient Population
- Forecast
- New Assignment

The official tournament rules are played on the Heroic level with and use **6 epidemic cards**.

The official tournament also has referees that typically watch over the teams as they play.

An Evolving Format

The first world championship was held in Essen, Germany in 2015 and has since traveled to Barcelona; Amsterdam; Lucca, Italy; and Vancouver, Canada. The format has been relatively consistent, but starting next year, the tournament will feature a **different Pandemic title each year**. The next game to be featured will be Reign of Cthulhu. This game was originally scheduled for 2020, but (given circumstances), that's been put off until 2021.

Those rules for that tournament have already been posted!

https://images.zmangames.com/filer_public/84/64/8464a626-15cb-4539-972b-176ca8e5d2e3/surv20_rules.pdf