



New Player's Guide

Up to date for the 2025 season

Welcome to Altered!

At time of writing, Altered is one of the largest LARPs in Ontario.

This guide will help prepare you to attend your first event.

Never LARPed before?

Scroll down to start reading.

Experienced LARPer?

You can skip to:

[>> Attending your first event <<](#)

What's a LARP, and how does it work?

LARP is a theatrical improv experience held in real time. You play as a character who's trying to survive and thrive in a world of magic and danger.

It's similar to a tabletop roleplaying game (such as Dungeons & Dragons). But instead of sitting at a table and rolling dice, you camp in a remote area, physically interact with the environment around you, and resolve conflicts using your wits and padded prop weapons.

Overview of an event schedule

An Altered event runs for a full weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.

When you arrive at the game's site, you'll have time to set up your camping area. During this time, you're considered "out of game" (or OOG).

The event officially begins at the designated "game on" time on Friday night. Once "game on" is called, you're considered "in game" (IG) until the end of the event.

While you're IG, you're playing as your character, and should act the way your character would. You'll do things like meet allies, be attacked by monsters, discover strange items, and uncover secrets.

The event ends when "game off" is called on Sunday afternoon. After that, you'll pack up your belongings and clean up your campsite.

Many players then attend Afters, which is an informal social event held at a restaurant close to the game site.

Glossary of common LARP terms

- **Afters:** An informal player social held at [Steven's Bar-B-Q Restaurant](#) in Markdale.
- **Closing Announcements:** A post-event speech held in the player camping area after the event ends at 1300h (1 p.m.) on Sunday. All players must attend.
- **Forward Ops:** An administrative operational station located in the player camping area. You can visit Forward Ops to use certain skills or to check a copy of the rulebook.
- **Immersion:** The experience of being in-game. Other players don't like having their immersion interrupted, so when you're around them, act in in-game ways whenever possible. (However, if you need out-of-game assistance, other players will be happy to help!)
- **In Game (IG):** You're portraying a character. Speak, act, and make decisions the way your character would in light of the knowledge they currently have. Try to stay IG wherever possible.
- **The Keep/The Outpost:** An in-game way to refer to Ops.
- **Log:** Logistics. This is located at Forward Ops in the player camping area.
- **Meta:** Making in-game decisions that are guided by out-of-game information. While meta can sometimes help make interactions with other players more comfortable or engaging, never use meta to cheat or create a bad experience for other players.
- **Mod:** A module. Modules are scenes or experiences, produced by Altered staff, that your character can engage with.
- **New Player Mod:** A module designed to introduce new players to the Altered game world. You'll be taken directly to the New Player Mod after Opening Announcements.
- **NPC Shift:** A four-hour block of event time where you'll play a non-player character (or NPC) instead of your own character. See the [Your NPC shift](#) section for more information.

- **Opening Announcements:** The pre-event speech held at Logistics before the event begins. Opening Announcements begins at approximately 2230h (10:30 p.m.) on Friday night, and covers essential information about the game site and the upcoming event. All players must attend.
- **Ops:** The Operations building. This is located in the barn next to the parking lot. Altered staff use Ops to prepare and launch mods.
- **Out of Game (OOG):** You currently aren't portraying a character (i.e. you're acting the way you would in real life). Try to avoid going OOG wherever possible. If players accidentally engage with a player that's OOG, they may refer to that OOG player as being "just the wind" in order to maintain immersion.
- **Town/Town Centre:** The player camping area.

Preparing for your first event

Here's an event preparation checklist:

- **Read the [Altered LARP Rulebook](#).**
(We recommend focusing on the Core Game Rules section, as well as any skills or abilities your character can use. Don't worry if you can't memorize everything! Just familiarize yourself with as much of the content as you can manage.)
- **Join [Altered's Discord channel](#) and/or [Facebook page](#).**
You can keep up with announcements from the game organizers, talk to other players ahead of time, and ask questions.
- **Figure out how you're getting to the game site.**
The site is in rural Ontario, far from public transit. You'll need to drive yourself to the event, or carpool with another player.

(Check the [Altered Discord channel](#) or [Facebook page](#) for other players who are volunteering carpool seats.)

- **Decide who your character will be.**
Part I of the [Altered LARP Rulebook](#) describes the game's setting and what kind of person your character should be. Design a character who fits these guidelines.

This character can be as simple or complex as you like—their identity will grow and evolve as you play them.

- **Create a costume for your character.**
Your character is a person who came from Earth, so their costume can be as simple as a set of modern clothing.

Remember that LARP is a rough-and-tumble hobby that takes place in nature. Your costume is likely to get dirty or damaged.

- **Optional: Build or buy weapons and armour props.**

If you want to get involved in the simulated combat aspect of Altered, you'll need weapons and/or armour props.

You can build your own props following the guidelines in the [Altered LARP Rulebook](#). Alternatively, you can buy finished props from professional manufacturers like [Calimacil](#). (Use discount code ALTEREDLARP to save 10% on your Calimacil order!)

- **Pack for the event.**

Here's a list of essentials you shouldn't skip:

- **Somewhere to sleep** (i.e. a tent, sleeping bag, and air mattress).
- **Enough food to last a full weekend**, and a way to store it (i.e. a cooler). Pack more than you need; LARP is a very active hobby, and you'll need the energy.

Some players run kitchens on the game site where they sell snacks or meals, but be prepared to make it through the event on your own food supply in case of unexpected developments.

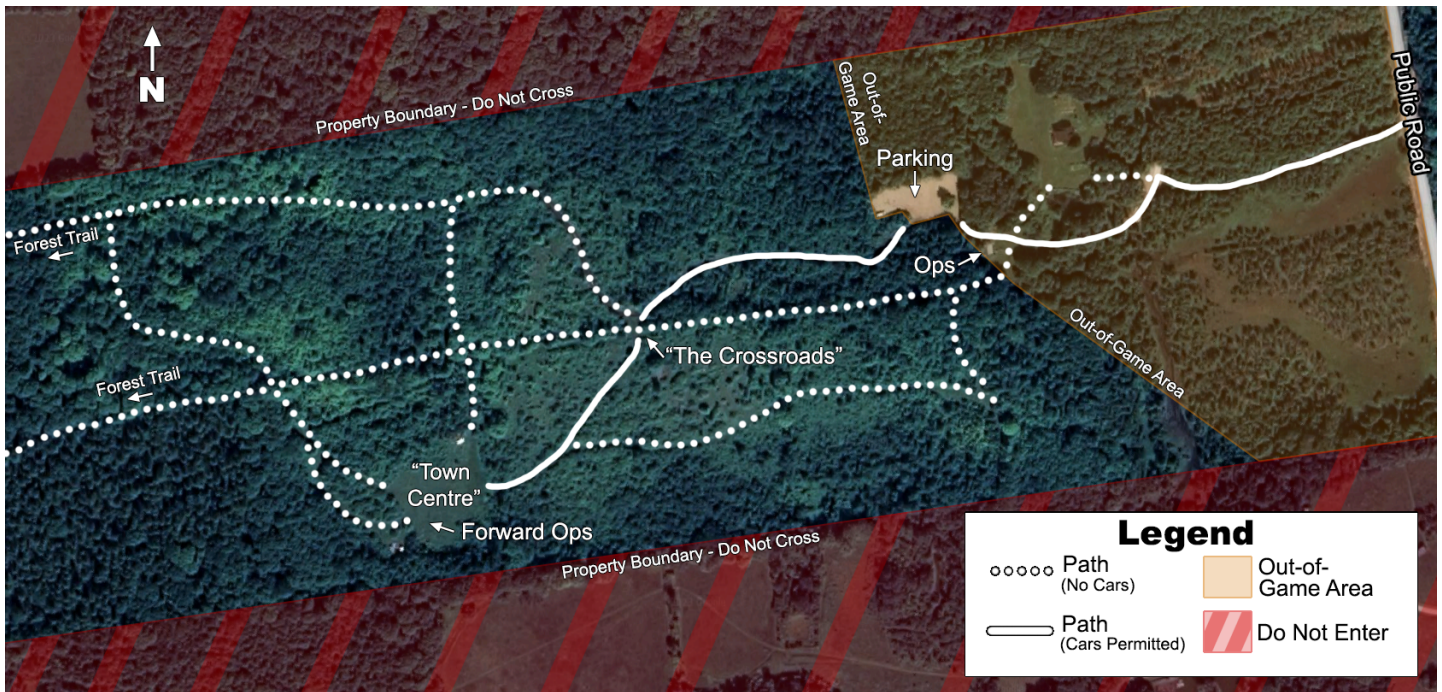
- **Lots of drinkable water.** The only potable water tap is at Logistics, a one-kilometre walk from the player camping area.
- **Portable hygiene products like wet wipes.** The game site currently doesn't have indoor toilets, mirrors, or showers.
- **A change of black or otherwise dark clothing.** You'll need to wear these clothes to your NPC shift. (NPC shifts are explained in the [Your NPC shift](#) section.)
- **Clothing for cold and inclement weather.** At night, the game site gets colder than you might expect. Pack plenty of warm clothing, even if it's not part of your character's costume.

Additionally, it might rain even if it isn't in the forecast, so bring a change of dry clothes, even if you don't think you'll need it.

- **Comfortable footwear.** Ground at the game site is rough and rocky. Wear shoes or boots you'd use to go out on a hike.
- **Several pairs of socks.** You'll spend most of the event on your feet, and your socks will get sweaty, wet, or dirty. Change your socks frequently, especially before bed.
- **A way to check the time, like a wristwatch.**

Attending your first event

Game site map



Setting up when you arrive

When you arrive at the game site, follow the driveway in from the road. Turn left over the bridge. Continue until you arrive at the gravel parking lot.

The road continues on toward the player camping area. (Sometimes, depending on the weather, you may not be able to drive directly into the camping area. If this happens, you'll have to park in the parking lot and carry your equipment about half a kilometre into the camping area.)

Choose a spot in the camping area to set up your camping equipment. If you're not sure where it's okay to camp, ask other players for guidance. They can direct you to a good spot, or advise you that a certain area is reserved for a specific group of players.

Logging in

Once your campsite is set up, go to Logistics at Forward Ops in the player camping area. At Logistics, you'll check in for the event and be given your character sheet. Your character sheet describes key information about your character, and is very important—don't destroy or lose it! (Tip: Bring a sealable Ziploc bag so you can keep your character sheet dry.)

Here's what to bring with you to Logistics:

- Your game fee (if you didn't pre-pay for the event).
- Any weapons or armour your character will be using. These will be assessed by an Altered Marshal or Director to ensure they're safe to use.

Make sure you've reported to Logistics before 2230h (10:30 p.m.). Opening Announcements starts at this time. You'll learn important information about the game site and the upcoming event, so don't miss it.

After Opening Announcements, you'll be taken directly to the New Player Mod. This is an adventure designed to introduce you to the Altered game world.

You won't get a chance to go back to your campsite between Opening Announcements and the New Player Mod, so bring everything you need to comfortably play the game (like your costume, weapons, armour, water, snacks, etc.) to Opening Announcements with you.

The New Player Mod is an experience that's designed to scare you. Many legacy players look back on it with fond memories. Good luck, have fun, and don't forget to run!

Playing at the event

You'll be in-game from Friday night at "game on" until Sunday afternoon at "game off."

During that time, **keep out-of-game talk to a minimum.** Focus on what your character is experiencing. Think of yourself as being part of a huge stage play, where everyone around you is simultaneously a fellow actor and a member of the audience.

If you ever need to ask an out-of-game question, put a closed fist on top of your head to designate yourself as being out-of-game. Keep out-of-game breaks as brief as possible. If you need to take out-of-game actions, like check your phone or discuss an out-of-game topic, do it in a place where other players can't see or hear you.

If you have questions or issues, approach an Altered Marshal or Director. These are members of the game's organisational staff. You can identify them by the "Altered Marshal" buttons they wear. (Look for the black palmtree design.) The Marshal or Director will go out-of-game to assist you.

Your NPC shift

While you'll spend most of your event playing your character (a "player character", or PC), you'll also be assigned a **four-hour NPC shift.**

Your NPC shift is a specific block of time where **you'll play the roles of various "non-player characters"** (or NPCs) to help move the event's story forward.

Altered's organisational team uses NPCs to tell the event's story. You could be cast as a bandit on the road, or a monster in the forest, or a trader that has wares to sell. The roles you're issued can be tailored to the types of activities you're comfortable doing.

Report to Ops for your NPC shift. Wear an all-black (or all-dark-colour) change of clothes instead of your character's costume. Ops will issue you costume pieces depending on which NPC roles you're asked to play.

You can find your NPC shift time on the character sheet you were issued at check-in. Please arrive a few minutes before your scheduled shift.

The essentials of combat

Even if you're not interested in participating in the simulated combat aspect of Altered, you'll occasionally be attacked by enemies.

Here are the basics you need to know:

1. **When someone strikes you with a prop weapon, they call a number out loud.** (Example: "1" or "2" or "3 Flesh".) That number tells you how much damage the strike deals. If the strike misses you, you don't take any damage.
2. **By default, you have a pool of 4 Flesh points.** When someone strikes you, subtract the number they call out loud from your current Flesh point total. (Example: An enemy strikes you and calls "1." You subtract 1 from your current Flesh point total of 4, leaving you with 3 points of Flesh.)
3. **If you take enough damage for your current Flesh point total to reach -1 or below, your character starts dying.** You must immediately fall to the ground and roleplay being in great pain. You can't move or take any other actions during this time, but you CAN talk or shout for help.
 - During this time, count in your head how much time has passed since your Flesh points reached -1 or below. **After 3 minutes, your character dies.**
 - **If your character dies, roleplay being dead for another 3 minutes.** Then your character "dissipates." Put your closed fist on top of your head to designate yourself out of game, then go to Ops to inform an Altered Marshal or Director that you've died. They'll give you further instructions.
 - **However, other characters can administer medical aid to your character while they're dying.** If someone tells you that you've been "stabilised" before your dying count reaches 3 minutes, that means they've stopped your character from dying.
 - **While your character is stabilised,** you can't run or fight. Another character can heal you to restore the points of Flesh you lost; if they do, you can start acting normally again. However, if you take any damage while you're stabilised, you start dying again, and restart your 3-minute count from the beginning.
4. **Sometimes, you'll be struck with an effect call along with the damage number.** (Example: "Disarm 1" or "Knockdown 2".) These calls have specific effects that you need to act out.
 - **If you don't know what an effect does,** put a closed fist on top of your head to designate yourself out of game, then ask the person who struck you what the effect does. They'll pause to explain.

After your first event

The event ends at 1300h (1 p.m.) on Sunday. You'll hear a call of "game off."

Closing Announcements takes place in the player camping area immediately after the event ends. Among other things, you'll receive instructions on how to turn in your character sheet. If you don't turn in your sheet, your character may not get credit for attending the event.

After Closing Announcements, you may be asked to help clean up certain areas of the site. Once you've finished your assigned task, you can take down your own camping equipment.

Many players attend Afters, an informal social event at [Steven's Bar-B-Q Restaurant](#) in Markdale. This is a great way to eat some good food after a high-energy weekend, as well as to get to know other players out of character. All players are invited—just show up and ask to be directed to the group reservation.

FAQ

Where do I sleep?

There are no publicly available permanent structures on the game site. Pack like you're going on a camping trip: Bring a tent, sleeping bag, pillow, and something to sleep on (like an air mattress or a cot).

Are there washroom facilities like?

Currently, Altered uses portable toilets. There are no flush toilets, mirrors, or showers.

Are other players friendly?

Yes! Don't be afraid to ask other players for directions or assistance. While some characters can be standoffish or rude, the people who play those characters aren't. Players don't mind going out of character for a moment in order to help a new player.

Will other players be upset with me if I don't know how the game works?

Nope! Altered has a big rulebook, and nobody comes to their first event knowing all the rules.

If something happens to you that you don't understand, you can put your closed fist on top of your head to designate yourself as out of character, then ask for an explanation. Other players will pause the current scene and explain.

How do I get involved with things during an event?

If you see something interesting happening, just walk up! Other characters may advise you to stay away for your character's safety, but the people playing those characters should never forbid you from participating in a scene just because you're new.

Most players will make time for their character to engage with yours (unless the player is too busy at the moment). If you want to talk to another character, approach them during a calm moment and start a conversation. Many players are interested to learn more about new characters, and they're often willing to give new characters helpful advice (or even useful items).

I feel overwhelmed at an event. What do I do?

You can retire to your tent in order to take an out-of-game breather. If you need an extended break, or just need somewhere to warm up, you can put a closed fist on top of your head to designate yourself as being out of game, then go to Ops. (For more information, see the [In-Game, Out-of-Game, and the Line Between](#) section in the rulebook.)

I'm not having fun at the event. What do I do?

Approach an Altered Marshal or Director and ask for assistance. They may be able to offer ideas or guidance for getting involved in the event.

What do I do if I arrive at the game site late on Friday night?

If you arrive at the game site after 2300h (11 p.m.), park in the parking lot and go to Ops near the game site entrance. An Altered Marshal or Director will tell you what to do.

If you arrive after the event has begun, you may be asked to manually move your camping equipment from the parking lot to the player camping area.

Don't drive past the parking lot during event hours. (It's fine to drive toward the site entrance.)

Can I leave the game site during an event?

Yes. Just remember to remain unobtrusive so you don't disturb other players. (For example, while you're in character, don't talk about the out-of-character trip you just took to Tim Hortons.)

What do I do if I have to go home before the end of the event?

Speak to an Altered Marshal or Director. If you aren't sure who those are, ask another player to direct you. The Marshal or Director will give you instructions on how to pack up and leave in a way that won't disrupt the event.

Don't drive past the parking lot during event hours. (It's fine to drive toward the site entrance.)

Thanks for reading!

We hope to see you at an event soon.

For more information on Altered, including the game's rulebook, event schedule, and directions to the game site, visit alteredlarp.com.

If you have additional questions not covered here, ask them in the [Altered Discord channel](#) or on the [Altered Facebook page](#).