Asmadi GAMES

impulse

by Carl Chudyk

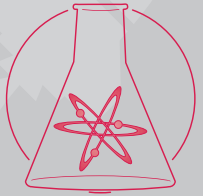
GUIDE TO THE SECTOR

COMPONENTS:

- 108 Action Cards
- 1 Sector Core Card
- 1 Colorblind Aid
- 2 General References
- 78 Ships (13 per color)
- 6 Command Centers
- 1 Space Prestige Board
- 1 Impulse marker
- 1 Invisible Space Fiend

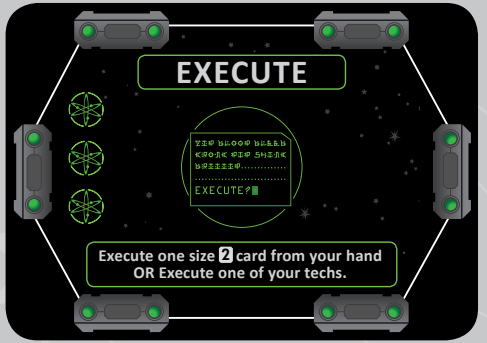
WELCOME TO IMPULSE

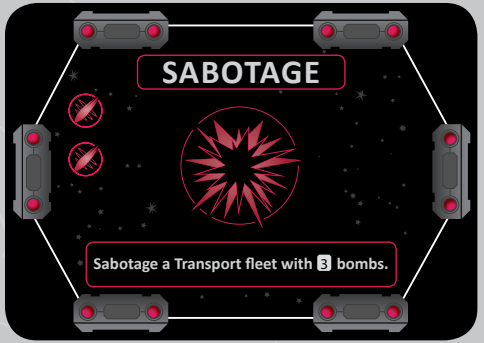






OBJECTIVE: In Impulse, each player commands a fleet of Transports and Cruisers, exploring an untouched sector of the galaxy. Through mining, research, and combat, plus taking advantage of the features native to the sector, you seek to earn enough Space Prestige to convince the native populations to join your interstellar federation. Twenty prestige, to be exact. Aliens of this region roughly translate prestige as "points."





CARDS:

There are **108** Action Cards in Impulse. Each has an action type at its top and an effect at the bottom. Every card has a color (Red, Blue, Green, or Yellow) and a size (1, 2, 3), determined by the number of icons on the left. Each card has six gates along its edges, which connect to other cards in the Sector Map.

The Sector Core card is not shuffled into the deck with the other cards. It forms the center of the Sector Map. The Colorblind Aid and two General References should also be removed before play.

CHOOSING A RACE:

The six available races in Impulse each have a unique starting Tech, the one on the bottom right of their Command Center.

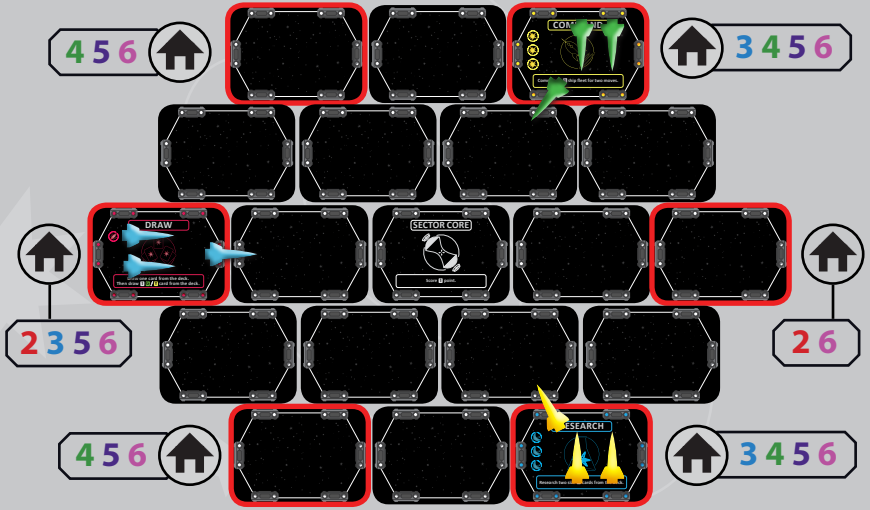
These provide you with a bit of direction to start the game, but will eventually be covered up by the Research action.

SETUP

Each player chooses a race and takes its Command Center card and all the ship tokens of one color.

Place 1 of your ships on the Space Prestige board's 0. Shuffle and deal out cards face-down to form the Sector Map as shown on the next page, with the Sector Core card at its center.

Draw 5 cards plus the card on your Home location, and choose one of the six to place face-up there. Then place 3 ships on your Home: 2 ships on the card standing up (Transports), and1 ship on its side on the gate facing the Sector Core (a Cruiser).



SETUP EXAMPLE

A 3-player setup is shown above, after initial ship placement. The colored numbers **2**, **3**, **4**, **5**, and **6** show where Home locations are for a game with that number of players.

CARD SIZE:

The "Size" of a card is determined by the number of icons on its left side. Size 2 and size 3 cards have more powerful action texts.

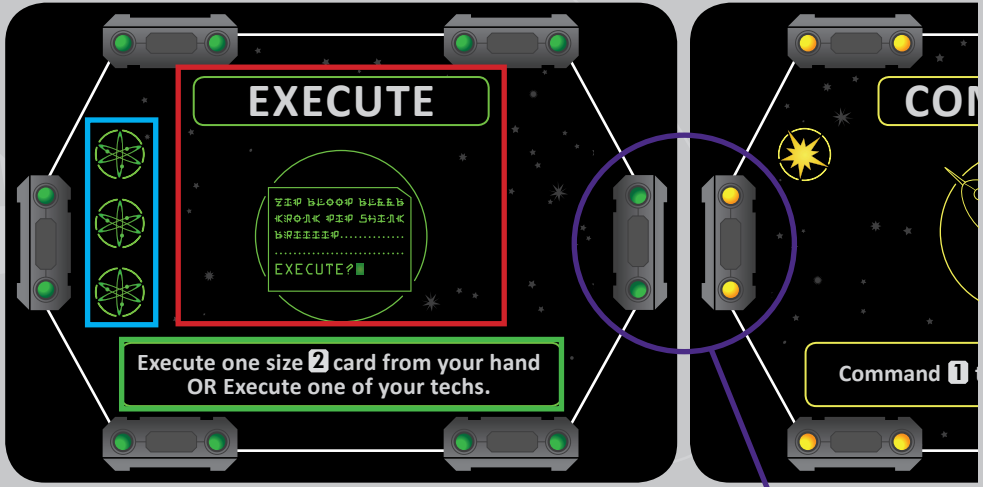
Since cards on the Sector Map and the Impulse get activated by your opponents, you should be careful what you share!

CARDS/MAP

ACTION TYPE: Shows what kind of action this card contains. There are 10 different action types, each of which are explained on pages 28 to 38.

SIZE ICONS: Shows a card's size. A card can be size 1, 2, or 3. Action cards with larger sizes have more powerful abilities.

EFFECT: The specific action for this card. Many different effects exist within each type of action. Every effect contains a number in a box. This value can be boosted when the card is used (page 22).

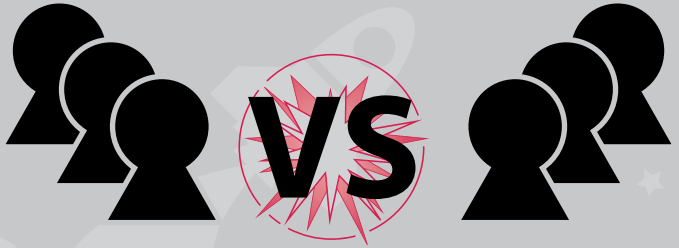


GATES: Adjacent cards form gates on the Sector Map. A pair of connectors like these is considered one gate. A fleet of Cruisers on a gate patrols both adjacent cards.

TEAM RULES + SETUP:

In 4- or 6-player games, you can play in teams of 2 or 3 players.

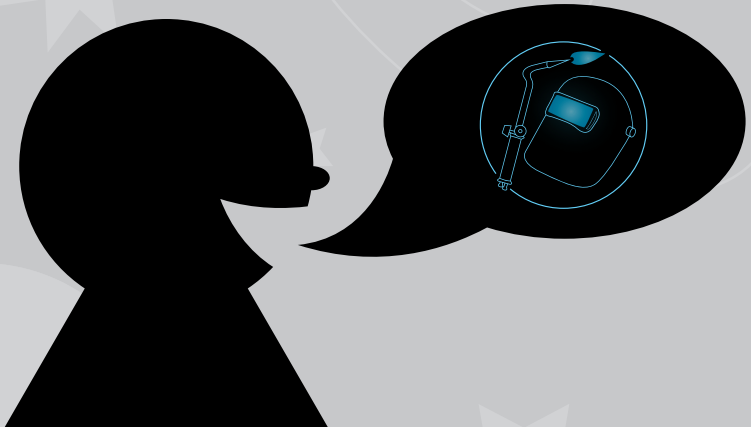
Your Home locations and seating should be chosen so that you are opposite from your teammates in both turn order and board position.



You cannot fight battles against your teammates. You can move through friendly Cruisers and cards they patrol, but never end an action with your Cruisers and an ally's on the same gate.

Your points are all tracked individually. Your team wins together if any player on the team reaches 20 points. Each team has its own Impulse, populated only by the cards its members play.

You are permitted to discuss openly what's in your hand and what you will play as long as all players can hear you. All other rules remain the same in a team game. Some of the team rules refer to concepts explained later in the rulebook.



SHARING:

Remember that even though the cards you place on the Impulse might be used by other players, you can probably use them best!

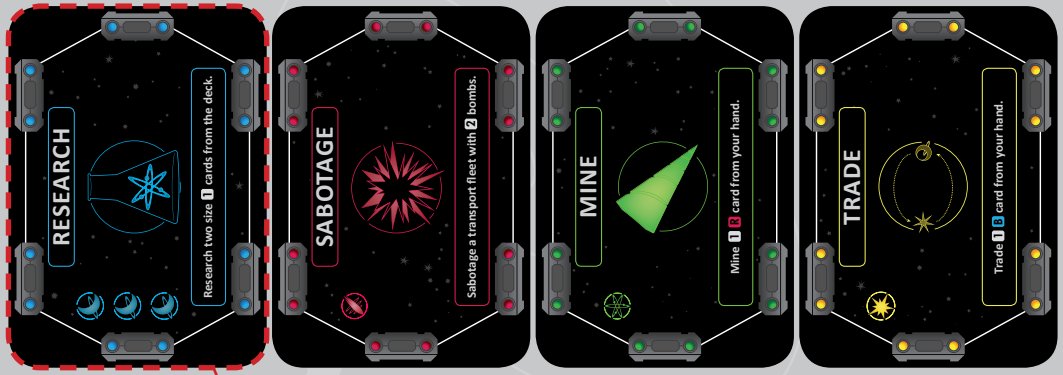
Sometimes it is okay to put a strong card out, especially if it needs a color that you have in your hand. Your opponents might not have any!

THE IMPULSE

The Impulse determines what actions you are able to perform on your turn. It is a line of cards common to all players that is placed next to the Space Prestige Board and the deck. On your turn, you will add a card to the Impulse and then perform all of the actions in order. At the end of your turn, the oldest card will be removed from the Impulse.

Essentially, the Impulse is a conveyor belt of actions that everyone shares. New cards are always added to the bottom, and trimmed cards are removed from the top. Use the Impulse marker to show which card is currently being used.

Use cards in order from top to bottom -->



Research, the oldest card on the Impulse, will be trimmed next.

ACTIONS ARE OPTIONAL:

You can always ignore part or all of any action card you use.

If you want to use an action but can only do part of it, do as much as you can.

Adding a card to the Impulse is not optional. If your hand is empty to start your turn, skip that step.

TURN STRUCTURE

Each turn consists of several steps, done in order:

1. Add a card to the Impulse from your hand.

2. Use one of your two Techs.

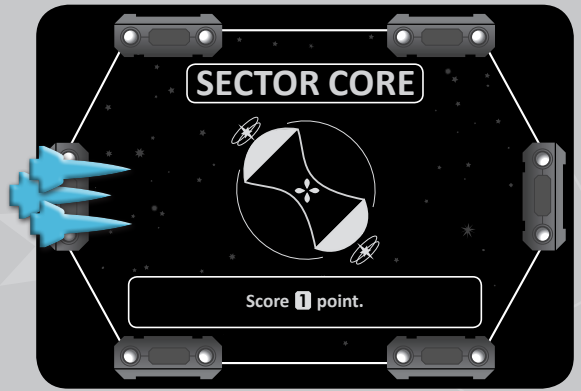
3. Use each Impulse card, in order from left to right.

4. Use your Plan. You may choose to delay if it has fewer than 4 cards. Discard your entire Plan if used.

5. Score 1 point for each of your fleets that patrols the Sector Core.

6. Draw 2 cards, and trim the Impulse to 3 cards.

Shuffle the discards into the deck if it is empty.



When scoring points for the Sector Core, the size of each fleet is irrelevant, score points only for the number of gates you have Cruisers on.

At the end of your turn, play passes clockwise to the next player.

In this example, BLUE would score 1 point.

AGGRESSION IS YOUR FRIEND:

Combat is a great way to score points, and a good way to catch up when behind.

The attacker gets an advantage when fighting (seeing number of reinforcements first), so use it!

SCORING

There are several ways to score points in Impulse.

1. COMBAT

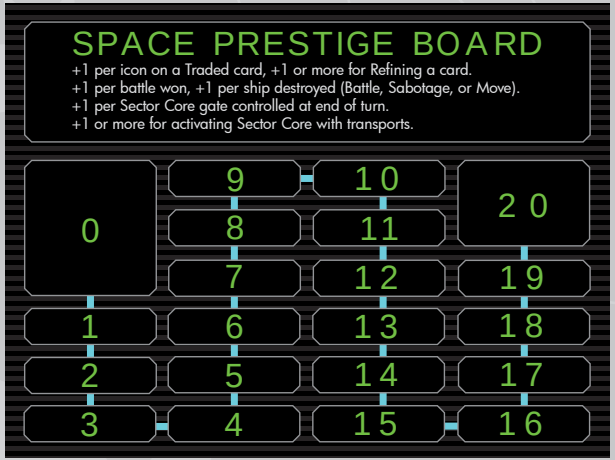
Each ship you destroy gains you 1 point, whether destroyed in battle or with a Sabotage action. Winning a battle is worth 1 additional point.

2. SECTOR CORE

Each turn, you will gain 1 point for every Cruiser fleet you have that patrols the Sector Core. You can also activate the Sector Core with your Transports, and you can choose which color of mineral to use to boost it each time you activate it.

3. ACTIONS

The Trade and Refine actions both allow you to sell your cards for points. Trade uses cards in your hand, and Refine uses mineral cards that you've gathered with the Mine action.



A mixture of poin sources is key to victory, but occasionally a sharp focus on one can prove successful.

Points are tracked on the Space Prestige Board.

COUP DE GRACE:

By going all out on a turn, you can score a lot of points to close out a game, especially if you're willing to risk combat.

Coasting to 20 is a safe strategy, but be wary of someone jumping past you to claim the prize!

GAME END

The game ends immediately when any player scores 20 points, even if it is not that player's turn. There is no way for players to simultaneously score points, so a tiebreaker is unnecessary. If there is still a tie, you cheated!

In a team game, remember that only one player on the team needs to reach 20 points for the entire team to be victorious.

EMPTY DECK
Any time the deck is empty, the discard pile should be shuffled to create a new one.

ELIMINATION
If a player has no ships on the board, they are eliminated from play. If all players but one are eliminated, the game ends. An eliminated player's Command Center cards and hands are all discarded.

HAND LIMIT
You can never have more than 10 cards in your hand. Any time you would draw a card into your hand and you already have 10, do nothing instead. For example, if you have nine cards at the end of your turn when it is time to draw two, then draw one card and stop. The only time the hand limit is ignored is when exploring a new card on the Sector Map with 10 cards already in your hand. At the end of the explore, you will be back down to 10.

COMMAND CENTER TIP:

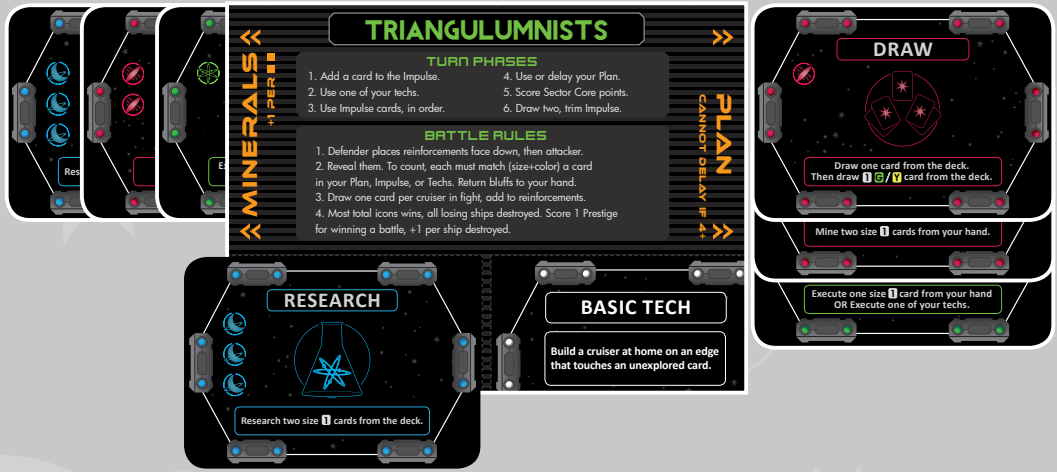
It might be tempting to spend all your efforts building up a massive pile of minerals and a large plan, don't forget that your opponents only need 20 points to win!

You'll look silly if your war is lost before you fire a single shot.

COMMAND CENTER

Your Command Center is both your reference card and where all your accumulated action cards of various types will live during the game. Cards on your Command Center are not part of your hand, and therefore do not count against your hand limit. There is no limit to the number of cards that can be Minerals or in your Plan. Techs are limited to the two slots available.

If possible, your Command Center should be near your Home location, for ease of play. The only difference between the different Command Centers is their race names and their unique Tech.



REPLACING TECHS:

Having a good Tech to use every turn (or a good pair to choose from) is important.

Your starting Techs are great at the beginning of the game, but don't hesitate to replace them with better options when you have the chance.

TECHS

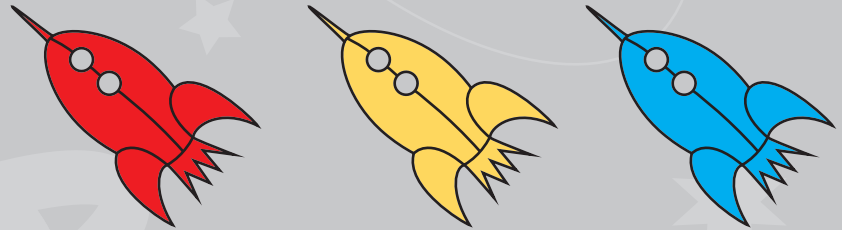
Your Command Center has two slots for Techs. The Research action will allow you to upgrade them. Before executing the Impulse on your turn, you may use one of your two Techs. You begin with 2 Basic Techs, one that is common to all races and one that is specific to yours.

MINERALS

The Mine action will allow you to turn cards into mineral cards, tucked under the left side of your Command Center. Each icon on a mineral card becomes a gem, which will help boost actions of that color. Gems can be turned into many points via the Refine action.

PLAN

The right side of your Command Center is your Plan, which is populated by the Plan action. Your Plan is like your own personal Impulse, which can be stored up and used on a turn when you're ready. After using cards from the Impulse on your turn, you may use your Plan. If you do, perform each card in it in order, and then discard the entire Plan. As with Impulse cards, you can skip individual actions, but they are still discarded at the end. If your Plan has four or more cards in it, you must use it at the end of your turn. The contents of your Plan are public.



BOOSTING:

Boosting your actions is one of the most important mechanics to master in Impulse.

Moving Transports in groups of two early in the game will allow you to do stronger things, and gaining some minerals is a priority!

ACTIONS

Each turn you will perform the action cards on the Impulse, and possibly additional actions from your Command Center, your hand, or the Sector Map. There are 10 different action types, all explained on the following pages. Each action card's text contains a boxed number that can be boosted.

Actions are always optional, and a number on an action card is always "up to". A card allowing you to "Mine two size [3] cards" could also be used to mine size 1 or 2 cards.

BOOSTING

You can power up any action by boosting the boxed number on a card in one of two ways. First, if you have Mineral cards in your Command Center matching the color of the action card, the number is boosted by 1 for every 2 gems you have of that color. These are not spent; you keep them.

Second, if the action is a card on the Sector Map, you can activate it with a Command action by moving Transports onto it. At the end of the action, you count each Transport you just moved onto the card (previously present Transports are ignored!) as 1 matching gem.

So if you moved onto a red card with 3 of your Transports, and you also have 1 red gem in your Minerals, you would boost its boxed number by 2.

CHANCE:

When drawing from the deck, you might want to know what the chances are of drawing a certain type of card.

Half the deck is size 1 cards, about a third is size 2, and about a sixth is size 3.

There are 27 cards of each color in the deck.

FROM THE DECK

Many cards instruct you to do something "from the deck". For example: "Mine two size [2] cards from the deck." This means you have two chances to draw a card of the appropriate type from the deck. Reveal cards from the deck one at a time, checking each to see if it satisfies the condition. If it does, perform the action on it. Otherwise, discard it. Such cards are revealed to everyone as they are drawn.

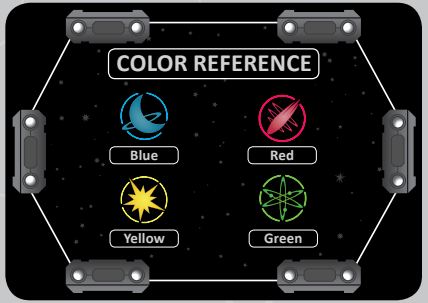
Remember that size requirements are always inclusive of lower values. In this example, if you revealed a size 3 Execute and a size 1 Command, you would place the Command card in your Minerals and discard the Execute.



These symbols on certain action cards indicate a card of the appropriate color. As with the size requirement, if a non-matching card is drawn, it would be discarded.

FROM YOUR HAND

Other action cards will use cards in your hand. Remember that all actions are optional, and you are never required to spend cards from your hand in this way. Cards on your Command Center do not count as part of your hand.



DEFINITIONS:

Ship - Any ship token on the Sector Map.

Cruiser - Any ship on a gate.

Transport - Any ship on the center of a card.

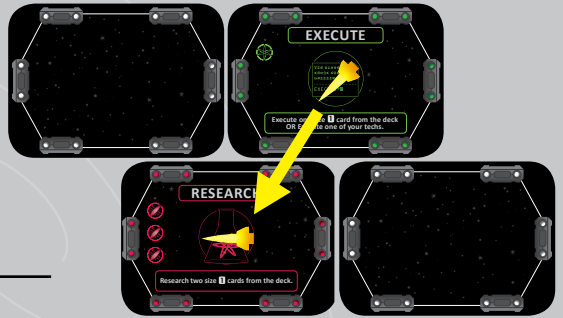
Fleet - A group of one or more Transports on the same card, or Cruisers on the same gate.

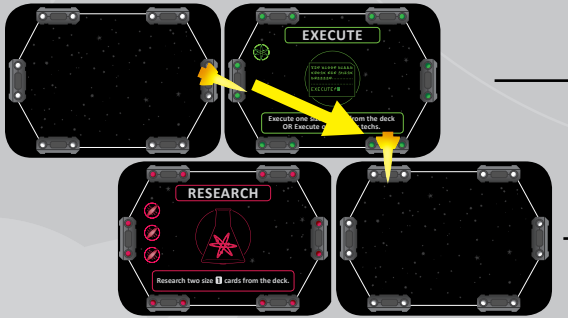
SHIPS

The Command action will allow you to move your ships on the Sector Map. You have a total of 12 ship tokens that you can have in play, mixed between Transports and Cruisers depending on where they are located. Ships never switch type while in play.

Examples for a single move are shown on the right. Transports move from one card through a gate to an adjacent card. Cruisers move from one gate, through a card to another gate on that card. Cruisers cannot be on a lone connector that touches the edge of the Sector Map.

Example of Transport move (card to card)





Example of Cruiser move (gate to gate)

SECTOR CORE:

Transports can activate the Sector Core to score points. You can choose what color it counts as each time you move there, and match mineral cards accordingly.

Remember that if any opponent patrols the Sector Core, you can't move Transports there.

ACTION TYPES

COMMAND

Command actions allow you to move your ships on the Sector Map.

Moving Transports allows you to use actions from cards on the Sector Map. After the Command action, use the card they ended their movement on before continuing with the next action on the Impulse. You cannot activate the card they started their movement on. Transports that just moved each count as a bonus mineral for the purpose of boosting that action card.

Moving Cruisers allows you to attack enemy ships and to patrol cards. A Cruiser fleet that moves through a card containing enemy Transports destroys them all, scoring 1 point apiece. However, if that movement results in a battle with enemy Cruisers, the Transports are only destroyed if you win the battle. A Cruiser fleet that moves onto a gate containing enemy Cruisers starts a battle. (See page 34)

You **occupy** any card where you have a Transport.

You **patrol** a card if you have a Cruiser on any gate touching it. Enemy Transports may not move onto a card you patrol. Enemy Cruisers cannot move through cards you patrol except to start a battle. If multiple players patrol the same card, the player moving ships can choose who to fight.

SPACE URBAN PLANNING:

You have control over how the Sector Map develops around you, as long as you get there first!

You have to weigh the benefits of moving out quickly before you have many options in your hand versus the ability to choose carefully if you wait to draw cards.

EXPLORING

If you move your ships onto or through a face-down card, you explore it. To explore a card, take it into your hand, then place a card from your hand (possibly the one you picked up) face-up where it was. You can temporarily exceed the hand limit while exploring. If you explore multiple cards during one movement, explore them one at a time. Note that you must declare your entire movement before exploring any cards.

When moving a Transport fleet to explore, the card they end their movement on will be activated immediately.

During any movement, your ships stick together. When you move a 3 Cruiser fleet, you cannot send two in one direction and the last in another. When starting a movement, however, you are not obligated to take the entire fleet at a location. For example, if you have 4 Cruisers on a gate and you use an action allowing you to move 1 fleet, you could take just three and leave the last to defend the gate.

Several Command cards contain text like "Command two fleets for [2] moves apiece. Each must move to the same card." If moving Transports, all move together and activate the card once. If moving Cruisers, each fleet could move to a different gate attached to that card, possibly starting multiple battles. You could also move one Transport fleet and one Cruiser fleet. You cannot move the same fleet twice with these cards.

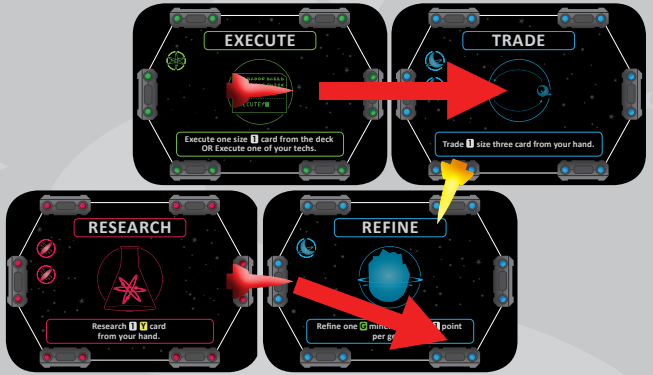
DEFENDING TERRITORY:

Powerful cards can wind up on the Sector Map, and you don't want your opponents to use them!

Blockading them with a patrolling Cruiser fleet is a great way to shut down an opponent's engine.

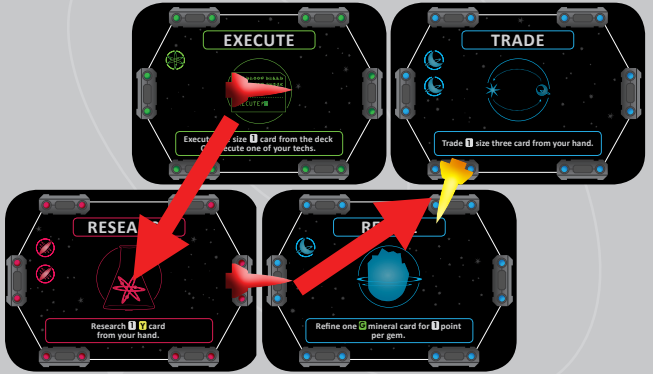
Destroying their ships also works.

✕ ILLEGAL MOVES ✕



Both of these moves are illegal. Since Yellow patrols the Trade card, Red cannot move a Transport there. Similarly, the Cruiser cannot move through the Refine card except to start a battle.

✓ LEGAL MOVES ✓



These moves are both legal. If Red moved a Transport to the Research card, they would be able to use the card's action text. The Cruiser would start a battle against Yellow.

REINFORCING:

Using reinforcements effectively is critical to victory. Getting size 2 and 3 cards into your Plan or Techs can help you in combat.

Always keep in mind your cards in hand as potential reinforcements when deciding what to put on the Impulse or the Sector Map!

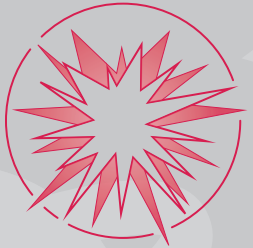
BATTLES

A battle occurs when two Cruiser fleets wind up on the same gate. Combat is resolved by both players drawing a card from the deck for each Cruiser, and adding up the icons on all cards drawn. Each side can also add reinforcement cards from their hand.

A card in hand can be a reinforcement if it matches both the size and color a card on the Impulse, your Plan, or either of your Techs (not Minerals).

The defending player places any number of cards face-down in front of them, followed by the attacker. All are revealed, and any "bluff" cards (ones that do not match) are returned to that player's hand. Then each player adds 1 card per Cruiser to their reinforcements. The player with more total icons (defender in a tie) is the winner. The entire losing fleet is destroyed, and the winner scores 1 point for winning, plus 1 additional point per ship destroyed. All the cards used in the battle are then discarded.

A battle ends a fleet's movement. If a Command card allows you to move multiple fleets, they can all converge for one battle.







SABOTAGE:

Since the deck is 50% size 1 cards, you can roughly count on one out of every two bombs connecting.

Since you are not particularly lucky, you should instead count on roughly one out of every four bombs connecting.

RESEARCH
Research allows you to upgrade the Techs on your player board, giving you an action each turn that you do not have to share with opponents. Your Techs go on your Command Center, overlaying one of the two Basic Techs printed on it. Discard Techs when replaced. Once covered up, Basic Techs are gone!

EXECUTE
Execute will let you perform an Action Card's text once and then discard it without placing it on the Impulse to be shared with others. Alternately, you can activate one of your Techs.

BUILD
Build actions construct new ships. The Build card will specify where you can build your ships and whether they are Cruisers or Transports. Some will allow you to build either type. You are limited to 12 ships, and if you run out you cannot build additional ships until some are destroyed. You cannot voluntarily destroy your own ships. Ships can be built on enemy patrolled cards, but you cannot build a Cruiser on a gate containing another player's Cruisers.

SABOTAGE
Sabotage allows you to destroy enemy ships without fighting them head-on. You can only Sabotage ships on cards that you patrol with Cruisers or occupy with Transports. For each bomb targeting a fleet, reveal 1 card from the deck. For each size 2+ card revealed, destroy 1 ship in that fleet, and score a point. Do not score points for overkill. For example: 4 hits on a 2-ship fleet scores 2 points, not 4.

PLAN TIMING:

Having a good Plan on your Command Center is good for many reasons (especially combat reinforcements!), so waiting to use it isn't a bad idea.

A big Plan / full hand can also be a deterrent to being attacked.

PLAN

The Plan action adds cards to the end of your Command Center's Plan. Plan cards are ordered, much like the Impulse. After using all the cards on the Impulse, you have the option to use or delay your Plan. If you use it, you use each card in your Plan, and then discard it. You cannot delay your Plan if it has at least 4 cards. If you are using your Plan and are required to add more cards to it, they go into a new Plan that can be used on your next turn.

DRAW

Draw allows you to take cards into your hand directly from the deck. Remember that you have a limit of 10 cards in hand, and once reached no additional cards may be drawn.

TRADE

Trade allows you to discard cards from your hand or the deck to score points. A traded card is worth points equal to its size.

MINE

Mine allows you to add cards to the Minerals section of your Command Center. These will allow you to boost your future actions of matching color. Tuck them under your Command Center so only the gems are showing.

REFINE

Refine allows you to convert Mineral cards from your Command Center into many points. Refining a card sends it to the discard pile, which means it will no longer boost actions. Note that the boost is calculated before discarding the card -- you don't lose the bonus mid-action if the gems match the color of the Refine card.

BGG ROCKS:

As some of you are no doubt aware, we beta test and proofread our rulebooks with BoardGameGeek. It is immensely useful, and thanks again to everyone who helped!

We encourage you to support the site if you don't already, and come to BGGCon, because it is awesome.

CREDITS

Impulse © 2014 Asmadi Games

Designed by Carl Chudyk
Developed by Chris Cieslik
Art and Design by Alanna Cervenak, Cara Judd

Playtesting: Shuai Li Fang, Aerjen Tamminga, Evan Dunn, Daniel Hutchins, Andy Latto, Anthony Rubbo, Christopher Yoder, Rafał Kruczek, Ari Iwan, Timothy Iwan, Dave Kudzma, Jonathan Harrison, everyone from the Beta program, folks from the Boston Festival of Indie Games, anyone who joined us in the Department of Fun at Gen Con, and my local game nights!

For rules or other questions, check the BoardGameGeek forums for Impulse, visit our website at AsmadiGames.com, or contact us through email at AsmadiGames@gmail.com

Asmadi GAMES

FOLLOW US AT
www.facebook.com/AsmadiGames
www.twitter.com/AsmadiGames

IF IN DOUBT:

In general, if you can't do an entire thing in Impulse, do as much as you can and ignore the rest.

FAQ

Q: What if there is no discard pile and the deck is empty?
A: In this rare scenario, all players discard two cards from their hand to form a new deck.

Q: Can I move Transports onto a card with enemy Transports?
A: Yes, as long as no enemy Cruisers patrol that card.

Q: Can I patrol an enemy Home with a Cruiser?
A: Yes. This has no effect other than making their life difficult.

Q: I created an infinite loop!
A: Yes, you can move Transports back and forth between two Command cards. You should probably stop eventually.

Q: What does "The last card on the impulse" mean on my Basic Tech?
A: These refer to the bottom card, the one most recently played.

Q: My Build card allows me to build more ships than I have available. What do I do?
A: Remember that any part of an action is optional! So you can always choose which ships to build out of the options available.

Q: My opponent just scored 12 points on a Refine action! Is that supposed to happen?
A: Yep! Impulse is not meant to be a long drawn out game -- if you don't move in on an opponent amassing Mineral cards for a big sale, don't expect to win by claiming 1 or 2 points a turn at the Sector Core.

Q: If I add matching gems during a Mine action, do I boost the rest of it?
A: No. The level of a boost is calculated before the action begins.

One giant leap.





©Asmadi Games, 2014