ESPER GENESIS: CRUCIBLE CORPS

GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

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This document provides advice to Game Masters for running adventures within the *Esper Genesis Crucible Corps* organized play program. Note that this document is not a comprehensive guide to all adjudications.

BEING A GAME MASTER

Running a *Crucible Corps* adventure is easy and fun. Official CC adventures can be run on the spot, often requiring minimal preparation.

NECESSARY TOOLS

To run Esper Genesis adventures for organized play, you'll need the following:

Basic Rules. This PDF is avaiable as a free download on DriveThru RPG. To enhance your experience and resources, its recommended you use the *Core Manual*.

Adventures. Once you have the rules, you'll need at least one adventure to run. If you're running at a public event, the event organizer may have available adventures for you to run, or they may have an opening as part of a convention's schedule. Otherwise, adventures are available for purchase online through digital partners or the *Starforger's Guild*.

GATHERING FOR PLAY

Whether you're running in person or online, it's recommended you have at least three players, but no more than seven players. Most adventures are optimized for five players. This does not include the Game Master.

LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

Crucible Corps adventures are typically designed for characters within a certain level range. Characters outside this level range should not be allowed in the adventure during an organized play session.

Some multi-table adventures (known as **Epic** or **Saga** adventures) allow for multiple level tiers of characters. A character must be within that level range to play in the section that accommodates that specific tier.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

These tools are useful for expanding your experience.

Threats Database. Official Crucible Corps adventures contain the stat blocks for each threat found in the adventure. However, some adventures (such as those found in the *Starforger's Guild*) may only contain special threats specific to that adventure, while directly referencing stats found in the *Threats Database* for the remaining encounters.

Master Technician's Guide. This book is an invaluable resource for preparing, running, and adapting adventures. It also contains many character options commonly used, as well as enhanced items that may be rewarded during play.

Game Master's Screen. Contains quick-reference tables. If you're running at a table, it's also helpful to hide your notes and other information not meant for players.

VIRTUAL GAMING

If you prefer to play virtually, several virtual tabletops are such as Roll20, Fantasy Grounds, or Shard Tabletop are available to help you with running your sessions.

If you're looking to add to your virtual play group, online tabletop platforms such as StartPlaying are a great resource to connecting with other players and GMs.

GETTING ADVENTURES

Official Esper Genesis *Crucible Corps* adventures can be found in PDF format on DriveThruRPG. Virtual tabletop versions are currently available on Roll20 and Shard Tabletop. These adventures have the official Esper Genesis or Crucible Corps logo (or the "EGCC" module code) and are typically playable in two to four hours.

Community Content. Conditionally, you can also use adventures written by community content creators. These are available on the Starforger's Guild.

Running Adventures

As the Game Master, your role is to narrate a fun and immersive experience for yourself and your fellow players. Consider the following advice when running your adventures.

Player Characters. Each player must have a character within the adventure's level range. If they do not have their own character, a pregenerated character can be used instead.

Reviewing Adventures. If you have time, feel free to read or scan through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself during your session, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC, or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure's appendices and threat entries.

You're a Part of the Group. Remember that you are not the enemy of, nor are you competing with any of the players. Your role is to present and run the adventure, encounters, adversaries, and story while maintaining flow of events. You also get to play any other persona in the adventure that are not the player characters.

Encouraging Dialogue. Introduce yourself to players you don't know and encourage them to do the same for both them and their character. Gauge the experience level of your players (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keeping With the Flow. While you are the authority on the rules and encounters, it is really your players that provide the catalyst to make the story go. Their actions and decisions should affect how you run encounters, while your method of presenting the story influences their decisions. This circular relationship allows everyone to be involved and have as much fun as possible. Use the rules as a tool to move the story rather than delay it. The best game masters use the rules in a fair, impartial, and consistent manner for every single player in their game. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players to keep things moving.

Making It Challenging. Depending on the level of your group, you can adjust encounter difficulty by adding or removing threats appropriate to the encounter. Some adventures even provide sidebar suggestions for doing so. Be careful to not overdo it, however. The goal is to create a fun, challenging experience, not to kill the characters.

Respect for Yourself and Others. At all Crucible Corps events, there should be zero-tolerance for personal harassment of any kind within your group. If you wouldn't want something said to you, chances are no one wants to hear it from you either. Don't make assumptions based off anyone's ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation. Show consideration and respect for people's names and how they wish to be called. Be mindful of others' feelings and always ask for and expect the same in return.

Disruptions During Play

There are situations that may arise that disrupt your game or make the session difficult to manage.

Disruptive Players

If a player is being disruptive during a play session or acting in a manner that makes your or anyone else in the group uncomfortable, you should act right away. Take the player aside, explain how their behavior might be disruptive and politely ask them to stop. If the problem persists, you can ask them to leave the group. If you're running a public event, contact the staff or an even organizer instead to help resolve the situation.

Disruptive Items

Sometimes a particular piece of equipment or enhanced item can be used in a way where they become disruptive to the flow or overall enjoyment of the adventure. If an item's use causes disruption in play, take the player aside and explain the situation to them. You can also choose to temporarily remove the item from the adventure and offer the player choose another item from their gear locker. You can also offer a temporary replacement item of equal value or rarity.

However, these situations should be extremely rare and only if such items cause serious issues during play. You should never remove items or gear from play simply out of personal preference.

Running Your Game

In addition to providing a fun experience, you are also responsible for adjudicating the rules and providing rewards at the end of your sessions.

Using the Rules

Crucible Corps adventures use the core rulebooks for the Esper Genesis RPG (*Core Manual*, *Threats Database*, and *Master Technician's Guide*). You should adhere to these rules whenever possible, only issuing rulings or creating guidance in situations where the rules become vague or inconsistent.

You should never make up your own rules for situations where an official rule is available. The rules as written in the core rulebooks take precedence, and you should always use the most current version of the rules.

Using Downtime

Characters spend downtime days between adventures and sessions. There may be some situations in which there is insufficient time available for any downtime activity, such as when a new adventure picks up immediately after the last, with perhaps only a few hours in between. In these situations, you can disallow characters from using their downtime. Avoid doing this too often and be fair and consistent when doing so.

Gear Locker Access

Just as with using downtime, there may be situations where there is insufficient time or availability for characters to access their gear lockers and change out equipment (such as being stuck or trapped in a remote location between adventures). Use your best reasoning and discretion when disallowing access to a character's gear locker.

Death and Continual Effects

Diseases, poisons, and other debilitating effects last until they're removed or at the end of an adventure. During an adventure, characters may also purchase services to treat or remove negative effects, provided they have the time and ability to travel.

Medical Treatment. Characters can receive medical attention at a hospital, apothecary, or similar medical center anywhere in a settlement with a considerable population (1,000 or more residents). Some settlements of any size may also have a specific NPC with access to the necessary supplies.

Esper Powers. In regions where advanced medicine is unavailable, a settlement may have an NPC who provides sale or trade for use of their esper powers. Alternatively, there may be an NPC that sells *core stones* that hold the corresponding powers. *Core stones* higher than rank 5 are not available for purchase in this manner.

Purchasing Services. The cost for medical services or powers can be found on the following table. Each entry lists a medical service with its corresponding esper power effect in parentheses. If applicable, treat each effect as if received by an esper with an esper ability modifier of +5. The table also lists the time and cost required. If the character instead purchases services of an esper NPC, the time required is instead equal to the power's activation time. Some services may only be available as esper powers and listed with no medical alternative.

Treatment Services

Rarity	Time	Cost
Wound treatment (*mend*)	10 min	100 cu
Bio-restoration (*minor remedy*)	1 hour	450 cu
Group care (*mass treatment*)	1 hour	450 cu
Restore pattern	—	900 cu
Unravel effect	—	900 cu
Cellular therapy (*major remedy*)	8 hours	2,250 cu
Bio-renewal (*revive*)	12 hours	10,000 cu
Cellular cloning (*full revive*)	24 hours	350,000 cu
Full restore	—	3,000,000 cu

Rewards

At the end of each adventure, characters earn rewards in the form of money, loot items, and level advancements.

Level Advancement

When a player successfully completes an adventure, they can choose to gain a level. Some adventures may have specific leveling instructions, in which case follow those instead. If running a continuous story with no clear cut-off point, award the opportunity to gain a level after completing a play session of at least two hours.

Characters cannot gain more than one level per session. Regardless of when it's offered, a player can always decline to have their character gain a level.

Enhanced Items

Characters can hold and use any enhanced item that is specified in the adventure as found. At the end of an adventure, each character can keep any enhanced items they found, which become part of their gear locker (see the *Crucible Corps Player's Guide*).

Lost or Destroyed Items. Enhanced items that are lent to a character or that the adventure specifically describes as being lost or destroyed can't be kept. However, there should be no situation in which an adventure can cause a character's own items to be permanently lost or destroyed. Permanent enhanced items can't be destroyed unless they have such a condition defined in their description (such as a *cosmic cipher*).

Random Items. Some adventures may have a random loot table or call for the GM to roll randomly on the Enhanced Item tables in the *Master Technician's Guide*. If the adventure doesn't specify the rarity of the item, it must be of a rarity appropriate to the tier of the character receiving it (see the *Crucible Corps Player's Guide*).

Money, Gear, and Other Equipment

Mundane items and equipment found during an adventure can be used then divided up as the characters decide at the end of the adventure. Money and sellable valuables can be spent during the adventure, with the rest converted into cubil and divided evenly between the characters.

If an adventure doesn't provide a monetary reward, you may add one as appropriate either during the adventure or at the end of the play session. Use the following table for guidance.

Monetary Awards per Adventure

Adventure Level	Monetary Value
1st – 4th	1d6 x 1,000 cu
5th – 10th	1d6 x 10,000 cu
11th – 16th	1d6 x 100,000 cu
17th – 20th	2d6 x 200,000 cu

Story Awards

These are story-driven effects or items that are only usable during adventures in which these awards are earned or called upon. Story items don't count toward a character's enhanced item limit and can only be possessed by one character at a time during play.

Player Starships

Many *Crucible Corps* adventures incorporate space travel and starship combat. In most cases, the adventure provides the party with a ship to use during those encounters.

In rare circumstances where space travel or ship combat is called for without a specified ship, you can grant the party use of or access to one of the sample ships in the *Core Manual* or *Master Technician's Guide*, depending on the size of the ship required for the encounter. Each ship size also notes a minimum suggested tier in parentheses).

- **Small (Initiate):** Small Starfighter (*CM*)
- **Medium (Initiate):** Starfighter (*CM*)
- **Large (Initiate):** Light Freighter (*CM*) with up to two additional stations (one technician and one gunner) if necessary.
- **Huge (Expert):** Starcruiser /Carrier (*MTG*)
- **Massive (Master):** Capital Ship/Battle Cruiser (*MTG*)

A Living Galaxy

More than anything, the stories that power EG adventures are about heroic characters and the fate-altering choices they make.

When *Crucible Corps* was first launched, one of its goals was to give players and GMs a chance to shape the galaxy as it grows. With this in mind, we've introduced different methods to allow for a campaign world, as well as the Esper Genesis setting as a whole, to grow and change.

Destiny Markers. Some hardcover adventure books introduce destiny markers, which are story events the GM keeps track of throughout the storyline. At the end of the campaign, the GM references the effects of the markers using a table or log provided with the adventure series. The results can determine important aspects of lore and provide hooks for future campaigns.

Divergence Markers. Divergence markers are recorded only during special public events (such as Epic or Saga adventures) either approved or organized by the development team. These choices shape the lore and major events that occur within the official Silrayne Arc setting, influencing some of the content in upcoming products and adventures. If you are running an adventure that prompts a divergence marker, your event organizer will let you know how and when to record it before you run the adventure.