DISREGARD FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

SECTION -01

Introduction

A primer on what's within.

Publication Notice

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WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Twenty years ago, the boundary with the place now commonly called The Next Door collided with our dimension of reality for approximately nine hours. The event has been recorded as the Disclosure.

Large sections of the world survived unchanged. Others did not and in many locations, the boundary between our reality and the next never closed. Those locations have been termed Cordons: These locations range from quarantined districts, industrial plants, laboratories, transit corridors, and sometimes whole towns or cities.

Concession holders like Halcourt hire licensed contractors like you to survey them, retrieve property, contain hazards, and bring back materials worth purchasing. The work is dangerous but high paying, enough to resolve thousands in debt for those who stick with it.

Your contracts with the Concession Holders will always name a task. Your employer issues equipment and sets the terms of their use.

The Office of Standards controls the perimeter to the Cordons and determines what may leave.

Within the Cordons, conditions are assessed by Depth; a standard of proximity to The Next Door established by Halcourt and Sakaime studies. The further a crew of contractors proceeds toward a Seam, the less reliably ordinary expectations of reality can apply.

The important task of Contractors such as yourself is to complete the assigned work given to you, document what was encountered to your superiors, and return with enough personnel and equipment to report for another shift.

THE STANDARD WORK CYCLE

Sign a contract. Identify the objective, employer, compensation, and any declared restrictions of the job.

Prepare. Take your corp assigned issue kit, purchase supplies as needed, and make room on each contractor's Manifest.

Enter. Pass the Office checkpoint and travel into the Cordon.

Work. Survey, retrieve, contain, or investigate. Make sure to track your way out; do not confuse completed tasks with a safe site.

Exit. Declare Articles and Nonconformances to the Office. Disputed findings may be retained pending review.

Debrief. Receive payment, update Hours and Commendations, treat injuries, settle obligations, and prepare for the next Rotation.

Relax. Your shift has ended and you can use all your money to enrich your life beyond the Cordon.

HOW TO READ THIS MANUAL

The opening chapters explain the world and the conditions of contract work. Section 1 and 2 cover character creation and the rules used at the table. The concession holders' materials describe equipment, training, and company terms. The Office section governs inspection and classification. The Supervisor Reference contains information for the person supervising the game and it's events, contractors are not authorized to read the material.

The game's Supervisor should describe the Cordon and adjudicate consequences of actions taken within the site. Players describe what their contractors attempt. When an outcome is dangerous and uncertain, use the applicable roll. When an approach is safe and sufficient, it works without one.

WHAT IS DFI?

DISREGARD FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS (DFI) is a d100-based dungeon crawler designed with influences from *Twin Peaks*, *Control*, *SCP Foundation*, *Lancer*, *House of Leaves*, *Severance*, *The Gone World*, *Half-Life*, Kane Pixel's *Backrooms* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. These works offer useful points of reference for DFI's atmosphere and intended environments. Largely represented by ordinary lives disrupted by the impossibilities beyond.

The rules themselves draw influences from the fantastic systems of *Into the Odd*, *Cairn*, *Knave*, *Traveller*, *Electric Bastionland*, *Mausritter*, *Liminal Horror*, and *Mothership*. Aiming for a similar focus on rulings, dangerous environments with severe consequences for poor decisions, and peculiar ecologies.

Player characters are company-hired contractors, paid immense amounts of money to work inside the physically, mentally, and existentially dangerous Cordons: quarantined places where the boundary between realities never fully closed.

The world of DFI takes place in the mid-2020s, approximately twenty years after humanity discovered it had neighbors to its reality through an event known as the Disclosure. The recognizable technology of the mid-2000s was knocked back to shielded circuits, physical controls, and machinery less reliant on computerization and the wonders of the microchip.

Despite this loss, the world has recovered and hardened itself against the disruptions that The Next Door brings to technology. What emerged is a world of paranormal engineering and 1980s-inspired analog futurism, a different road forced upon modernity.

Site Zero, a former national laboratory in the New Mexico desert, is the example Cordon used throughout this book.

DFI is built to support a variety of Cordons and strange locations. Supervisors should feel free to jury-rig, redesign, and rearrange whatever they need, or make something entirely their own to bring into the world of DFI.

The game's design holds to a few rules of its own, which Supervisors and players alike should keep in mind as principles that govern play:

- Weirdness is material. Every anomaly has a physical sign, a rule, and something a player can try against it—or at least some means to flee.
- Equipment does most work. What a character carries matters more than what they were born with.
- Every Cordon gets worse the further in you go. Deeper zones are more dangerous, pay better, and bend the rules of reality further.
- The cosmic is handled socially through paperwork. Forms, contracts, procedures, and safety language are how people live with The Next Door so close.

SECTION 00

The World

A kind welcome to the world of DFI.

THE WORLD TODAY

The New 2020s

Twenty years is a long time to recover from a disaster. It is also long enough for people to be living today with no memory of what came before.

The Disclosure killed or displaced hundreds of millions of people, changed the borders of many nations (Including the once United States of America), and left behind strange places that could not be recovered by conventional means. Its effects were felt by every country on Earth, though not equally. Entire urban communities disappeared while others saw relatively little disruption in their day to day.

Civilization nevertheless endured these trials. Governments resumed their duties, industry returned to full production, and the ordinary business of living continued with workers returning to their daily 9-to-5s. The Disclosure became a matter of public record, memorial observances, school lessons, and increasingly, something the young have only heard about.

Questions about what happened remain. There is no shortage of theorized answers, though none truly survive serious investigation.

Life Beyond the Cordons

The world beyond the quarantine fences is not especially unlike the one that preceded it. Roads connect cities, aircraft fly, businesses open in the morning, and people find all sorts of things to complain about that don't matter all too much in the grand scheme of things.

The Next Door is present here too, although its influence is generally less pronounced.

Most people have encountered some minor sign of it during their lives. Movement where nothing ought to be moving, an unexpected visitor, or an object behaving in a way its manufacturer never really intended. These occurrences are sufficiently common that municipal services, specialist contractors, and insurance companies have developed means of accounting for them.

Some of the things that crossed during the Disclosure have remained. Those capable of participating in human society have found places within it, though not always comfortably. The Office of Standards continues to concern itself with the legal questions this presents. Companies like Halcourt progressively championed efforts to integrate them into work life.

For most citizens, The Next Door is a familiar inconvenience, an occasional danger, or simply something best left to a professional like any other trade.

The World That Ensued

The technological consequences of the Disclosure proved particularly persistent across the years.

Much of the computerization achieved before the event could not be maintained reliably afterward. Industries that had spent decades replacing mechanical systems with electronic ones found themselves returning to older methods, while researchers sought ways to shield and improve what could be salvaged.

Relays, magnetic storage, analog instruments, physical controls, and vacuum tubes remain in widespread production. Shielded electronics are available, although their cost and reliability vary considerably by application. New technologies have appeared alongside them, including devices that could not have existed before the Disclosure.

A newly built industrial facility may look decades out of date to someone from the old world, while housing equipment its former engineers would scarcely understand the actual functionality or mechanics behind it.

Older digital technology has not vanished altogether. Much remains in private collections, warehouses, disused facilities, and the evacuated places within Cordons. Recovery crews occasionally find devices that have been sitting untouched since the day their owners left or vanished.

Manufacturers largely continue to advise against operating uncertified electronics near anomalous environments or objects.

A Cordoned Economy

The land inside a Cordon is not necessarily worthless simply because it cannot be safely inhabited.

Factories still contain machinery. Banks retain their vaults. Hospitals, universities, and laboratories hold decades of materials and research. In addition to these conventional assets, Cordons produce objects and substances found nowhere else in the universe!

Recovery of these old items and discoveries of these new resources began almost as soon as entry into cordons could be made practical.

Today, the concession system provides a regulated means for private organizations such as Halcourt to work inside the quarantined territories. The resulting industries encompass salvage, containment, research, medical services, and the manufacture of specialized equipment.

Five major concession holders operate at sites across the world, each with its own field of expertise, equipment, and employment opportunities.

Communities have grown around Cordon perimeters to serve these operations akin to the American Gold Rush of the old west. Contractors often require accommodation, transportation, treatment, entertainment, and somewhere to spend their wages. The people supplying these things do not ordinarily need to enter a Cordon themselves, though living near one can be a danger itself.

- **Veta Larga Recovery Cooperative** is an employee-owned industrial salvage cooperative specializing in the recovery of machinery, infrastructure, and valuable materials from abandoned sites and workplaces.
- **Mabaso-Venter Containment** provides security and containment services globally, with particular expertise in capturing and transporting living anomalous specimens native to The Next Door.
- **Sakaime Instruments** manufactures specialized scientific instruments and conducts surveys, cartographic work, and environmental research within the Cordons globally.
- **Oyelaran Biologic** specializes in medical services, biotechnology, and the study of biological changes associated with exposure to The Next Door.
- **Halcourt Applied Physics** develops advanced engineering applications and experimental technologies, undertaking specialized recovery and research operations in deeper Cordon environments.

Although their interests frequently overlap, each concession holder maintains its own employment terms, proprietary equipment, and contractual obligations. Further details are provided in the company sections of this manual.

Competition between concession holders is considerable. Claims over salvage, discoveries, and operating territory frequently overlap. Fortunately, the Office of Standards maintains procedures for resolving such disputes.

What Is Known

The term Adjacent is used in official records to describe the reality encountered during the Disclosure. The Next Door remains the more familiar name in common parlance.

Despite twenty years of investigation, there is little agreement between anyone on what, precisely, it is.

Researchers have documented recurring behaviors, developed instruments to measure them, and established Protocols that produce reliable results among even the most anomalous sites. None of these findings explains what The Next Door is.

None of this constitutes or derives from a complete explanation.

The Office of Standards, a globally recognized governmental body that operates internationally to secure Cordons, maintains extensive records of investigated phenomena.

Concession holders similarly conduct their own research and publish findings according to their commercial obligations. Public accounts vary in quality, and explanations offered by those who have entered the deeper Cordons are not always suitable for general circulation among the public.

Contractors are advised to distinguish between what has been observed, what has been demonstrated, and what someone insists must be true.

SECTION 01

Contractor Operations

The ins and outs of being hired as a Cordon site Contractor

Every contractor is hired from a pool of highly qualified individuals, though very little of daily living prepares one for the Cordons.

1.1 Making a Contractor

Making a character should take about ten minutes. Every character is a contractor licensed to work inside the Cordons.

1. **Choose a lineage.** This sets your contractor's starting stats and the die rolled for margin, which is the ability to withstand harm before suffering a lasting injury.
2. **Roll on the Disclosure table** for where you were when it happened. It adjusts stats, Draw included, and may give an item, a contact, or a Nonconformance.
3. **Serve up to three career terms.** Each term is one d6 roll on the career's table for a stat change, an item, or an event. A 6 is a Separation and ends the career. The worst Separations leave a Nonconformance, an inflicted wound from The Adjacent. The career's signature item starts with Hours already built into its Spec.
4. **Sign with a corporation.** Start at Tier 1 and take its issue kit.

For a quick start, pick a career package instead of rolling terms.

Lineage	What it is	Fitness	Response	Compliance	Draw	Margin	Slots
Human	Baseline	40	40	40	15	d6	12
Tuned	Sapient signal housed within a receiver and shell	50	25	45	15	d4	10
Rebuilt	Peoples whose bodies have been remade using post-Disclosure findings	45	45	30	15	d6	10
Posted	Unique species formed from warning signs	40	35	40	25	d6	10
Hosted	Humans carrying a Crosser symbiote	35	35	50	20	d6	10

1.2 Lineages

Human

Ordinary and adaptable. The Next Door has trouble holding onto them, which is where the extra slots come from.

Tuned

A living signal in a heavy mechanical chassis of vacuum tubes and cabled limbs, with a speaker grille or bulky monitor for a head.

- **Signal:** can speak through, and briefly inhabit, any working speaker, radio, or television in sight.
- **Chassis:** immune to disease, gas, suffocation, and spores. The body has Shielding Class 1 and one built-in plate (AP 1). It is repaired with Refit, not Recover.
- **Costs:** needs one battery charge a day. Drain results on the Shift Clock hit the Tuned as well as their gear.

Rebuilt

People reconstructed through post-Disclosure medicine, advanced prosthetics, and Adjacent forms of surgery. Some have only a few replacement organs. Others have been assembled from cultivated flesh, synthetic tissue, and mechanical components, with little left of their original bodies.

A Rebuilt might have visible seams, unique skin colors or mismatched skin, and artificial or biomechanical parts. Some have no outward indication of their condition. Most were ordinary people before undergoing this, and regard themselves as such.

- **Field Service:** Once per delve, a Rebuilt may spend one turn and use hand tools to remove one nonfatal Recordable from themselves. They must dismantle at least one slot of suitable non-Live equipment or salvage for replacement parts. The material is consumed. Roll as normal if the work is dangerous.
- **Living Machinery:** Rebuilt remain living people. They require food, sleep, and medical care, and are susceptible to ordinary biological hazards. Their replacement parts grant no inherent Shielding Class or armor.
- **Maintenance:** Rebuilt use Recover and receive medical treatment normally.

Posted

When The Next Door poured in during the Disclosure, it settled into many warning signs. Where there was enough signage, people took shape out of what the signs were saying. Most formed at reactors, refineries, streets, and other labs. Many still remember a door they guarded or a sentence they half recall saying.

Their head is a hazard trefoil with three spikes, and the diamond-shaped eye at its center is a hazard diamond. Their pale skin has the shine of enameled sign metal. What look like fins and tils are pennants and streamers, like warning flags and hazard tape, and they flutter when the air is still. The color at the tips shows what kind of warning they came from.

- **Innate Function:** a Posted is partly Live and starts with one Function from their origin sign. It works like a Nonconformance, rolled with Draw, with no Charges. A failed Experimental use spreads lettering across their skin and takes another slot.

d8	Origin Sign	Function	Tip Color
1	NO ENTRY	Close	Red
2	DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE	Stop	Red
3	CAUTION: WET FLOOR	Release	Yellow
4	RADIATION AREA	Count	Yellow
5	QUIET PLEASE	Quiet	Blue
6	AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY	Hide	Blue
7	EXIT	Open	Green
8	EYE WASH STATION	Mend	Green

- **Origin text:** every Posted carries the exact wording of the sign they formed from. It works as a true name, and most keep it secret.
- **Definition:** anyone who reads a Posted's origin text aloud with authority can define them. An Inspector using the Definition Protocol can suppress their Function for a scene, or post them. Posting names a place, and the Posted must go stand there as a sign, saving Compliance at the end of each round to break free. Manifestations that work through words can do the same.
- **Registration:** the Office treats an unregistered Posted as a possible Article and can retain one at exit inspection. Registering takes corporate sponsorship at Tier 1 or higher and filing the origin text with the Office. It protects them in law and gives the Office the means to define them

Hosted

The Hosted are humans carrying a cooperative Crosser symbiont known as a Lodger, which lives in a space behind the sternum.

The Lodger is a second intelligence sharing the host's body. It speaks to its host, ordinarily without making a sound, and may notice things its host has overlooked. Some pairs get along famously while others maintain a professional relationship. Others are a more hostile relationship that goes on despite what happens

Lodgers have appetites, preferences, and interests of their own. They are generally cooperative, although this does not extend to asking permission.

- **Second Opinion:** Once per session, the Hosted may ask the Supervisor for a hint about a present danger, creature, location, or circumstance. The Lodger offers a useful observation or piece of advice based on what it can perceive or understand. Its advice should be truthful, although it need not explain everything.
- **Two Minds:** Once per scene, when the Hosted fails a Compliance save against a Neighbor's influence, the Lodger may intervene. Reroll the save and keep the second result. This applies only to fear, compulsion, possession, and other attempts by a Neighbor to influence the host's mind.
- **Night Shift:** When the host is asleep or unconscious, the Lodger may take control of their body. The Supervisor determines its actions. It uses the host's ordinary capabilities and cannot ignore injuries, restraints, or Loss of Personnel. Control returns when the host wakes.
- **Appetite:** Every Lodger has it's own desires and wants, determined alongside the Supervisor on contractor creation. This should not be directly hostile to the host or allies, and should not involve the death of the contractor as that would kill the Lodger itself.
- **Two Occupants:** The Lodger occupies no Manifest slot and is not itself a Nonconformance. It cannot be removed through ordinary medical treatment. A Hosted contractor is still responsible for what their body does, regardless of which occupant was in control.

1.3 The Disclosure Table

d10	Where You Were	Effect
1	Asleep at home	Gain a contact who was not there before.
2	On the highway	Response -5, Compliance +5.
3	Underground for three days	Compliance -5.
4	In a hospital	A medical item or medical training.
5	In a crowd	Fitness +5. Still looking for someone.
6	On a plane	A passport from a country that does not exist.
7	With someone you lost	An obligation. Compliance +5.
8	Looking up	Compliance -10, Draw +5.
9	Near a Seam	Start with a Nonconformance. Draw +10.
10	Taken	Gone for months, then came back. Start with a Nonconformance. Draw +10.

1.4 Careers

Most contractors have worked elsewhere before entering a Cordon. Some come from specialist trades, while others from professions that have become considerably less desirable since the Disclosure.

Choose a career and take its signature item. Then roll a d6 on that career's table for each term served, up to a maximum of three terms.

Apply the result immediately. A roll of 6 is a Separation, ending employment in that career. If terms remain, the contractor may begin another career. They retain their original signature item but do not receive another.

Career equipment is personally owned and occupies Manifest slots as normal. Contacts and outstanding obligations should be recorded with the contractor's Employment History.

Signature Equipment

Every career begins with a signature tool familiar to its trade. Its listed Spec includes improvements earned through previous Hours. No additional Hours are marked at character creation.

These tools are not company issue and need not be returned if the contractor changes employers.

UTILITY LINEWORKER

Electrical grids, telephone exchanges, substations, transformers, and the hundreds of miles of infrastructure that nobody notices until they stop working.

Signature Item:
Climbing Rig - Climb 55, 2 slots.
Climbing and rappelling under pressure.

d6	Effect
1	**Pole Technician.** Fitness +5. You've spent more time above the ground than most people would like.
2	**Live line. Response +5.** You learned when to let go.
3	**Your own tools.** Take hand tools (1 slot), maintained long after your employer stopped paying for them.
4	**Dispatch.** You know a utility dispatcher who can still obtain old service maps, maintenance records, and information about local outages.
5	**An old connection.** You possess an obsolete utility map showing a line that runs into a present-day Cordon. According to the map, it was never disconnected.
6	**Separation:** Unauthorized shutdown. You cut power to a facility after being ordered to leave it running. Your employer blamed you for everything that followed. Someone in corporation management remembers your name.

HAZMAT REMEDIATION

Industrial cleanups, chemical spills, contaminated properties, and places where the old hazard warnings have largely become inadequate.

Signature Item:
Seal-Test Case - Test 55, 1 slot.
Checks protective seals, containers, ventilation, and for physical contamination under dangerous conditions.

d6	Effect
1	**Heavy exposure.** Fitness +5. You have spent enough time in protective clothing to recognize trouble by how it feels against your skin.
2	**Emergency response.** Compliance +5. You continued working through an evacuation alarm.
3	**Unreturned supplies.** Take a sealing kit (1 slot). It can close ordinary gaps, leaks, and damaged fittings.
4	**Second signature.** A former coworker signed the same incident report as you. They owe you a favor, although neither of you agrees on what happened.
5	**Dosimeter discrepancy.** Draw +5. Your exposure badge recorded an entire shift you never worked. The reading was never corrected.
6	**Separation: Certified empty.** A decontamination chamber was declared vacant while you were still inside. You emerged with one Nonconformance and no further employment.

LAB TECHNICIAN

Research laboratories, testing facilities, universities, industrial quality control, and the many institutions whose experiments have become harder to explain.

Signature Item:
Field Assay Kit - Analyze 55, 1 slot.
Testing and handling familiar chemical, biological, and material samples under dangerous conditions. It does not identify unknown Functions.

d6	Effect
1	**Controlled conditions.** Compliance +5. You are accustomed to following instructions whose importance is not immediately obvious.
2	**Laboratory accident.** Response +5. A rapid shutdown saved the rest of your department.
3	**Emergency supplies.** Take a first aid kit (1 slot). Nobody ever asked for it back.
4	**Research colleague.** A former lab partner now works for a university, research institute, or concession holder. They occasionally answer professional questions.
5	**Unrepeatable result.** Draw +5. You witnessed an instrument report a measurement outside its possible range. Every subsequent test gave the same result until the instrument was destroyed.
6	**Separation: Unscheduled trial.** Your name appears on the consent form for an experiment you do not remember. Gain one Nonconformance. Your employment records claim you resigned beforehand.

SECURITY CONTRACTOR

Private security, armed escorts, industrial site protection, access control, and the frequently thankless job of telling people they cannot enter.

Signature Item:
Entry Kit - Breach 55, 1 slot.
Forcing, dismantling, bolstering, or analyzing physical barriers under pressure. It does not bypass anomalous restrictions.

d6	Effect
1	**Armed response.** Response +5. You were trained to move before you understood the situation.
2	**Long watch.** Compliance +5. You held your post through an incident that sent everyone else running.
3	**Personal firearm.** Take a registered sidearm (d6, Loud, Restricted, 1 slot). Your license is still valid.
4	**Former partner.** A colleague from your old security team still works in the business and can be approached for assistance or information.
5	**Incident evidence.** You retained a copy of local security footage showing an intruder entering a room without opening its only door. Your old employer insists the footage is defective.
6	**Separation:** Use of force. You were dismissed after an incident in which witnesses disagreed over whether there had been any reason to shoot. Your disciplinary record remains on file.

CORDON GUARD

Perimeter patrols, quarantine checkpoints, evacuation enforcement, and keeping people out of places where they have no business going. A stepping stone to Contractor work.

Signature Item:
Alarm-Wire Kit - Secure 55, 1 slot.
Used for arming physical warning lines, alarms, and hooking into mechanical doorway controls.

d6	Effect
1	**Perimeter patrol.** Response +5. You learned to watch the ground as closely as the fence.
2	**Incident response.** Compliance +5. You were one of the guards who stayed when an evacuation order was given.
3	**Emergency stores.** Take three flares (1 slot). They were issued for an emergency that never appeared in the shift log.
4	**Checkpoint acquaintance.** You know an Office employee or former perimeter guard who still works near a Cordon.
5	**Unlisted personnel.** Draw +5. For several shifts you worked beside a guard who appeared on no roster and collected no pay. You remember their face clearly.
6	**Separation: Personnel discrepancy.** A headcount recorded one more guard than was assigned to your station. After the next inspection, the additional guard had your name. Gain one Nonconformance.

FREIGHT AND RAIL

Freight yards, warehouses, train crews, distribution centers, loading docks, and the surprisingly complicated business of ensuring that things arrive where they are supposed to.

Signature Item:
Cargo Kit - Repair 55, 1 slot.
Used for attaching, decoupling, repairing, and handling conventional cargo-handling and rail mechanisms under pressure.

d6	Effect
1	**Heavy freight. Fitness +5.** You know what can be lifted and what must be dragged.
2	**Yard accident. Response +5.** You survived by getting out of the way without thinking about it.
3	**Company property.** Take a handheld radio (1 slot). The identification number has been filed off.
4	**Freight dispatcher.** You know someone with access to shipping schedules, local warehouse inventories, and old or active railway records.
5	**Undelivered consignment.** You kept the original bill of lading for a shipment that no station admits receiving. The destination still appears on older maps, sometimes within the local Cordon despite the impossibility
6	**Separation: Inventory discrepancy.** A train arrived carrying considerably more cargo than was loaded. The company declared you responsible for the loss of its original shipment. You owe $3,000 in damages.

UNLICENSED RUNNER

Courier work, private deliveries, contraband, unauthorized salvage, and other employment that benefits from the absence of an official record.
Signature Item:
Lockwork Kit - Open 55, 1 slot.
Opening conventional locks under pressure.

d6	Effect
1	**Fast delivery. Response +5.** You rarely needed a second chance to get away.
2	**Long route. Fitness +5.** You can carry a package a very long way without stopping.
3	**A profitable job.** Start with an additional $2,000 in cash. You never told the client how much you kept.
4	**A fence.** You know someone willing to purchase questionable goods without involving the Office. Their prices are not particularly generous.
5	**Return address.** You kept a delivery ticket naming a building that now stands inside a Cordon. The address continues receiving mail.
6	**Separation: Package undelivered.** You accepted a delivery, discovered what was inside, and decided not to complete it. The client is still looking for you. You have since changed your name.

CORPORATE RECORDS

Personnel files, insurance claims, regulatory filings, archival work, contract administration, and the people tasked with ensuring the paperwork survives the people it describes, though sometimes more mysterious and important depending on the company.

Signature Item:
Recovery Case - Preserve 55, 1 slot.
Built for protecting and extracting fragile records, seals, small items, and physical documentation in hazardous conditions.

d6	Effect
1	**Compliance review.** Compliance +5. You've been through enough audits to remain calm when somebody starts asking the wrong questions.
2	**Archive relocation. Fitness +5.** The freight elevator never reached the same floor twice. Someone still had to move the boxes.
3	**Office supplies.** Take a portable carbon-copy set (1 slot). It can reproduce physical documents without electrical power.
4	**Records contact.** You know a clerk or archivist in a corporate office or government department who can help locate information through official channels.
5	**Retained copy.** You possess a duplicate of a file ordered destroyed. It names a particular location in a local Cordon.
6	**Separation: Administrative error.** An audit established that you had authorized your own termination several weeks before the paperwork was issued. Your former employer refuses to acknowledge the intervening period.

1.5 Signing On

Every contractor must sign with a concession holder before entering a Cordon. The company provides contracts for work, and benefits or compensation. In return, the contractor agrees to perform the assigned work and abide by the terms of their employment.

Choose one of the five concession holders. You begin at Tier 1 with that corporation and receive its standard issue kit. Each kit leaves room on the Manifest for your career's signature item and anything else you wish to bring along.

Issued equipment remains company property. You may use it for as long as you hold Tier 1 or higher with the issuing corporation. Drop below Tier 1, and the company will want its equipment returned or paid for.

Protocol binders are supplied with enough materials for three uses of each Protocol they contain.

Veta Larga Recovery Cooperative

Industrial salvaging and cutting edge industrial recovery efforts.

Veta Larga expects its contractors to bring something back, preferably in working order. Its equipment favors labor, machinery, and the recovery of materials that others have written off.

Standard Issue - 7 Slots

Work coveralls with one pressed steel plate, a rivet gun, load frame, hardened flashlight, rations, and a Protocol binder containing Lockout-Tagout and Dead Man's Count.

Mabaso-Venter Containment

Securing, capturing, and containing what's beyond.

Mabaso-Venter equips its personnel for hostile encounters and the unpleasant business of bringing dangerous things home alive. Its contractors are expected to secure their objectives rather than destroy them.

Standard Issue - 7 Slots

A plate vest with two ceramic plates, a registered sidearm, foam projector, basic respirator, and a Protocol binder containing Perimeter and Restraint.

Sakaime Instruments

Learning the unknown through discovery and surveillance

Sakaime places considerable value on an accurate record. Its contractors are equipped to measure the Cordon, document what they encounter, and return with their findings intact.

Standard Issue - 7 Slots

Work coveralls with one pressed steel plate, an Adjacent Lens, tape rig, hardened flashlight, two batteries, and a Protocol binder containing Baseline Reading.

Oyelaran Biologic

Harnessing the Cordons for the wellbeing and health of humanity.

Oyelaran supplies its contractors with the means to collect specimens and provide treatment under difficult conditions. Personnel should remember that a living specimen and an injured coworker may both require immediate attention.

Standard Issue - 6 Slots

Work coveralls with one gel-backed plate, a field surgery case, first aid kit, basic respirator, and a Protocol binder containing Triage and Sample Chain.

Halcourt Applied Physics

Making the Theoretical more than Real.

Halcourt offers the highest starting compensation and the least standardized equipment. Contractors are expected to exercise judgment in preparing for their assignments. Additional instructions will be provided when required.

Standard Issue - 7 Slots

A clearance badge, work coveralls with one pressed steel plate, a hardened flashlight, and a sealed envelope to be opened when instructed.

Choose four additional items from General Stores, paid for by Halcourt. The clearance badge occupies no Manifest slot. Halcourt does not issue Protocols to Tier 1 personnel, and protocol training begins at Tier 2.

After Signing

Record your employer, starting Tier, and issued equipment on your character sheet. Your company determines which contracts are given to you, where you may purchase special equipment, and special privileges. These are detailed in The Concession Holders.

The next step is to accept a contract, prepare your Manifest, and report to the Office checkpoint. Your employer will advise you of anything else you are required to know.

SECTION 02

Core Rules

Everything you need to know about doing your job.

2.1 Principles

DFI is built on these core ideas:

- Roll only when there is danger and the outcome of events is uncertain.
- Information is free. Clues should never depend on a roll but investigation.
- The right tool does the job. Without danger, a trained professional knows what they're doing.
- Every roll costs time, and inside the Cordon The Next Door may take part in the events that occur.
- A failed roll changes the situation in a consequential way.

2.2 Stats

Every contractor has four stats, set initially by their lineage and then following history, representing their capabilities when faced with danger and uncertainty.

- **Fitness** measures physical strength, endurance, and resistance to injury, toxins, and exhaustion.
- **Response** covers speed, reflexes, balance, stealth, and quick hands.
- **Compliance** measures one's ability to keep it together under fear, shock, and the pressures of The Next Door.
- **Draw** represents the ability to deliberately reach into The Next Door and shape what it does to our reality.
- **Margin** represents a contractor's ability to withstand harm before suffering a lasting injury. Roll it once per the lineage's die. Damage that gets past armor reduces Margin first. Once exhausted, further damage causes Recordables.

When an outcome is dangerous and uncertain, roll **d100 equal to or under** the relevant stat.

2.3 Rolling

When an action is dangerous and its outcome uncertain, roll **d100** and compare it to the relevant Stat or Spec. Doubles (11, 22, 66, etc.) are criticals. A double under is an exceptional success and should be rewarded.
A double over is a disaster, and causes some major mishap. This should not result in immediate death unless in extraordinary situations.

Spec: Tools built for dangerous work or specific scenarios carry a Spec. When using one within a dangerous situation or under pressure, roll its Spec instead of a stat. Most gear has no Spec. Weapons never do, as they rely on your Response.

Hours: After a delve, choose one Spec item that helped overcome an obstacle, complete a task, or escape danger. Mark Hours on it, whether or not it required a roll. At Debrief, roll over its Spec to increase it by 1d10.

2.4 Time Tracking

The game tracks time at five scales.

Unit	Length	Used for
Round	A few seconds	Combat
Turn	Ten minutes	Exploring interiors. The Shift Clock is rolled every 1 to 3 turns.
Shift	Six turns, one hour	Protocol durations
Watch	Four hours	Wilderness Travel. Crossing three miles on foot takes one.
Day	Six watches	Rations, sleep, and battery up-keep

2.5 The Manifest

Every contractor has a Manifest, a record of the equipment, supplies, and other objects they carry into and out of the Cordons. Most contractor lineages have a base of 10 Manifest slots, Humans have 12.

Each item occupies a number of slots according to its size. Most equipment takes one slot, bulky items take two, and heavy rigs take three. Anything recovered inside a Cordon must also be carried on someone's Manifest.

Unfortunately, the Manifest accounts for more than equipment. Recordables and Nonconformances each occupy a slot, representing injuries and changes to the contractor's body that make carrying equipment increasingly difficult and laborious.

If a contractor has no empty slots when they suffer a Recordable or Nonconformance, they must abandon equipment to make room. You can discard a tool, but you cannot simply put down an injury.

When every slot is occupied by Recordables or Nonconformances, the contractor becomes a Loss of Personnel.

While contractors are advised to leave room for salvage, they may find themselves needing that space for something else.

SECTION 03

Exposure

When The Next Door takes an interest in your work.

3.1 Depth

Every Cordon is divided into zones, each assigned a Depth from 0 to 9.
Depth is the accepted measure of how close a place has come to The Next Door, and how reliably the ordinary rules of reality continue to apply there.

At Depth 0, the world behaves as expected, for the most part. At Depth 1, the influence of The Next Door becomes measurable. As Depth increases, reality becomes less dependable. Familiar objects develop unfamiliar properties, rooms may no longer lead where they once did, and the things inhabiting a Cordon become increasingly difficult to understand or account for with the laws of our universe.

Depth is not necessarily a measure of physical distance. Although it generally increases as contractors approach a Seam, some locations run deeper than their surroundings. A hospital, laboratory, or heavily used office might register a higher Depth than the streets outside. Other places may be unusually deep for no apparent reason.

Depth can also change. A Shift, certain Protocols, or events within a Cordon may temporarily raise or lower the Depth of a location. A route considered safe during one expedition may be considerably less agreeable on the next.

Depth Table

Depth determines the chance of Exposure whenever a roll is made. Read the ones digit of the d100 result, counting 0 as 10. If it is equal to or below the location's Depth, The Next Door takes part in the action. This can happen whether the base roll succeeds or fails.

Depth	Chance	What it's like
0	None	Outside the Cordons. The Ordinary World
1	10%	The fence line. Neighbors around. Personalities can be heightened.
2	20%	Abandoned ground. Residuals present.
3	30%	Settled oddities. Rooms have reliable rules to be learned.
4	40%	Unsettled. Unshielded electronics misbehave or break.
5	50%	Things do not stay put. Maps often need fixing.
6	60%	Half-formed entities. Past rules or lessons may not apply.
7	70%	Space, time, and matter generally become less agreeable
8	80%	Only shielded gear is worth carrying as The Next Door intrudes.
9	90%	The Seam. Barely ordered. Constant pressure is often felt.

Shielded equipment offers some protection from Depth. When rolling an item's Spec, subtract its Shielding Class (SC) from the zone's Depth before checking for Exposure.

Deeper zones are considerably more dangerous, but are also where the most valuable salvage, unusual Articles, and important discoveries tend to be found. Contractors must decide how far they are willing to venture, and whether what they might recover is worth the increasing uncertainty of bringing it back.

Depth is measured by location. It is not a resource to spend or a countdown toward disaster. It describes the conditions in which everyone present must work.

Rating a Cordon

- Depth rises toward the Seam. Most Cordons run from 1 at the fence to 9 at the Seam. A small Cordon might never pass 4.
- Heavily used places run deeper than the ground around them. An office block or a hospital is often a level or two deeper than the street outside.
- Some spots are deeper than their surroundings for no visible reason.
- Depth can move. Shift results, some Protocols, and events in play can raise or lower a zone for a while.

3.2 Exposure

Inside a Cordon, read the ones digit of every roll, with 0 counting as 10. If it is equal to or under the zone's Depth minus the item's Shielding Class, there is an Exposure, and The Next Door takes part in what happened. This happens on successes and failures alike.

Steering: when an Exposure happens, you may roll Draw.

- **Success:** you choose how The Next Door takes part.
- **Failure:** the Supervisor decides what happens, and it goes worse.
- **Double over:** the Exposure goes worse, and you gain a Nonconformance. The Supervisor gives it a Function related to what happened.

An Exposure changes the action, its subject, or something nearby. It does not undo an ordinary success unless the consequence makes that success dangerous. The Supervisor uses what is present in the room and what The Next Door has already been doing there.

Steering rolls do not cause further Exposures.

3.3 Nonconformances

A Nonconformance is a permanent change to a contractor's body caused by The Next Door. They may develop from badly steered Exposures, Incidents, or particularly unusual injuries. The affected flesh becomes Live, acquiring properties that ordinary anatomy has no business possessing.

Every Nonconformance grants a Function: a single verb describing what the altered body part can do. Open, Create, Bloom, and Snap are examples. A hand might develop the ability to Open things it touches, while a strange growth could cause plants to grow around the contractor.

A Function describes an action, not every possible use of it. Contractors may discover increasingly unusual applications for their altered anatomy. The rules for doing so are explained under Live Articles and Protocols.

Each Nonconformance occupies one Manifest slot and increases Draw by 5. Unlike Live Articles, Nonconformances have no Charges and may be used as often as the contractor dares. A failed Experimental use spreads the change into another slot.

Every exit inspection records a contractor's Nonconformances and their Functions in the Office's files. The Office takes a particular interest in knowing exactly what its contractors have become.

SECTION 04

Harm and Survival

What it takes to stay fit for further employment

4.1 Harm

Roll damage, then apply armor.

Armor: armor is made of plates, and its AP is the number of plates still intact. Damage below AP is ignored. Damage at or above AP is reduced by AP and cracks one plate.

Damage types: Physical damage uses the above rules. Corrosive damage cracks two plates. Adjacent damage ignores every plate that is not Shielded.

Spares: spare plates take one slot per two. Swapping one takes a turn.

Cover: cover has AP but no plates, and is destroyed the first time a hit meets its AP.

Margin: damage that gets past armor comes off Margin first. Humans have a d6. Margin comes back with a short rest.

Recordables: damage past Margin gives the victim one Recordable, which takes a Manifest slot. Save Fitness, at -5 per point past Margin. On a success, the Recordable has no further effect. On a failure, the victim is down until the fight ends. Roll below.

d8	Result	Effect
1	Stunned	No lasting effect once the fight is over.
2	Hand injury	One hand cannot be used until treated.
3	Leg injury	Movement is halved. You cannot run or force march.
4	Exhausted	Short rests do not restore Margin until treated.
5	Collapse	You cannot move or act without help until treated.
6	Bleeding	Gain another Recordable at the end of each exploration turn until stabilized. These do not call for further Fitness saves.
7	Changed wound	Inside a Cordon, the injured part gains a Function. Replace this Recordable with a Nonconformance. Outside a Cordon, use result 6.
8	Fatal	You die at the end of the next round unless stabilized. Once stabilized, you cannot act until treated.

The Supervisor should describe all injuries according to what caused it. A fall, a gunshot, a stabbing, and an Adjacent attack can produce the same result, but usually do not leave the same wound.

Each Recordable occupies one slot. If there is no room, the contractor must drop equipment. A contractor whose every slot holds a Recordable or a Nonconformance is Loss of Personnel

4.2 Treatment

A contractor has a number of ways to handle their injuries.

First aid: a first aid kit stops Bleeding and stabilizes a fatal Recordable. It takes one action and spends one use. It does not remove the Recordable or restore Margin.

Field surgery: a field surgery case can treat one Recordable in a turn. Roll its Treat Spec if there is pressure. On a success, remove the Recordable and its effect. On a failure, the treatment is unsuccessful and the time is wasted. A field surgery case can also stabilize a fatal Recordable immediately, as first aid.

Triage: the Oyelaran Protocol suppresses the effects of one contractor's nonfatal Recordables for a shift. It does not remove them or restore Margin.

Recover: the Recover downtime action treats remaining Recordables and restores Margin, provided the contractor has access to medical care. A fatal Recordable must have been stabilized before the contractor reaches the clinic.

4.3 Incidents

When something terrible happens, the supervisor can prompt a contractor to save Compliance. On a failure, they roll on the Incident table. Inside a Cordon, some results give a Nonconformance. Surviving an Incident marks Compliance for Debrief.

An Incident can come from an encounter, a discovery, an Exposure, or something the Supervisor considers terrible enough. Ordinary danger should never call for it.

d6	Result	
1	**Freeze**	Lose your next action.
2	**Flight**	Move away from the source of the Incident before doing anything else.
3	**Collapse**	Fall down and drop what you are holding. Getting up takes an action.
4	**Shaken**	You cannot perform Protocols until you take a short rest.
5	**Attention**	Inside a Cordon, roll the Shift Clock immediately. Outside, something nearby notices what happened.
6	**Fracture**	Inside a Cordon, gain a Nonconformance related to the Incident. Outside, use result 4.

4.4 Combat

Combat is brief and frequently fatal. Attacks always hit, and damage dice determine the outcome. Contractors are generally advised to avoid engagement where possible.

Surprise and Order

When a fight starts, every contractor saves Response. Those who succeed act before the enemy, and those who fail act after it. A side that is surprised loses its first round entirely, which should be determined with a check.

A Round

Each round, every combatant can move about forty feet and take one action.

- **Attack:** roll your weapon's damage.
- **Use a tool:** roll its Spec if there is danger.
- **Use a Function:** a Live Article or a Nonconformance, as described under Live Articles.
- **Take cover:** save Response. On a success, attacks against you are Impaired until your next action. On a failure you are pinned down, and your own attacks are Impaired.
- **Something else:** swap a plate, reload, or treat a Recordable with a first aid kit.
- Protocols take turns, and cannot be performed during a fight.

Attacking

Attacks always hit. Roll the weapon's damage die, then apply armor, Margin, and Recordables as described under Harm.

Impaired: Reduce damage by one die size per impairment, to a minimum of 1 damage.

Enhanced: Increase damage by one die size per enhancement, to a maximum of d20. Helpless, unaware, and restrained targets grant one enhancement, even if multiple conditions apply.

Impairments and enhancements cancel each other out.

Several attackers: when more than one attacker hits the same target in a round, roll every damage die and keep only the highest.

Blast: a weapon that hits an area, such as a shotgun in a doorway, rolls damage separately for each target.

Loud: each round with Loud fire rolls the Shift Clock once.

Attacks never cause Exposure.

Pinned: Cannot move, and attacks are Impaired. At the start of each round save Fitness, or the save the source names, to pull free. On a success they are freed.

Range

Close: within arm's reach. Melee weapons only reach Close.

Near: across a room, about forty feet. Sidearms, rivet guns, and foam projectors reach Near.

Far: across a hall, a lot, or a street. Carbines reach Far. A shotgun at Far is Impaired.

Enemies

Enemies use Margin, AP, and Fitness the same way contractors do. When damage gets past an enemy's Margin, it saves Fitness. On a failure it is out of the fight: dead, fled, or broken. The second time damage gets past its Margin, it is out.

Human or Sapient enemies save Compliance when the first of them goes down, and again when half are gone. On a failure they flee or surrender. Most Neighbors do not check morale. They follow their behavior, and they withdraw when their weakness is used against them.

Fleeing

Moving away from an enemy at Close takes a Response save. On a failure, every enemy at Close gets a free attack. Once out of Close, a crew can run, and the Supervisor is the one who decides whether anything gives chase or can keep up with the crew.

Dying

Some Recordable results are fatal as per the Recordable table. A contractor whose every slot holds a Recordable or a Nonconformance is Loss of Personnel.

4.5 Capturing Neighbors

A Neighbor can be captured if it can be subdued and kept contained. Mabaso-Venter pays for living specimens. A dead Neighbor may still be worth something to Oyelaran.

Subduing

A Neighbor is subdued when it is helpless, pinned in foam, unconscious, or otherwise unable to resist capture.

A foam projector pins a Neighbor for one turn on a successful Contain roll. The foam can be broken or removed before then. A Neighbor still pinned when the turn ends can act again.

A subdued Neighbor can be bound with ordinary restraints if its body permits it. A Neighbor that can break those restraints may do so when it recovers.

Restraint Protocol: a subdued Neighbor held by the Mabaso-Venter Restraint Protocol stays subdued until released or the restraints are cut. This does not suppress its Function. A restrained Neighbor that spreads through sound, contact, or other means may still do so.

Transport

A captured Neighbor must be carried, led, or transported out of the Cordon.

Small: takes 2 Manifest slots when carried.

Human-sized: takes 3 Manifest slots when carried.

Large: requires a vehicle, recovery rig, or another means of transport.

The Supervisor assigns the size. Neighbors without bodies that can be carried require equipment suited to their Function.

A contractor carrying a Neighbor must have the necessary slots free. Several contractors can share the load of a large specimen if the Supervisor judges it possible.

A restrained Neighbor remains subdued during transport, but its Function and the hazards of its body remain active. The crew must account for these before bringing it through inspection.

Containment cage: holds one captured Neighbor. It takes 3 slots, regardless of the specimen's size if the specimen fits inside. Use its Contain Spec when loading an active or resisting Neighbor under danger. A contained Neighbor cannot escape by ordinary force while the cage is intact. Its Function may still affect things outside the cage if the cage fails to stop it.

Delivery

A living Neighbor brought out of the Cordon is inspected and transferred under the receiving company's claim. Mabaso-Venter pays 3 to 15 Tickets for a specimen delivered alive, according to its rarity and condition.

A Neighbor that escapes before delivery earns the contractor nothing.

SECTION 05

Field Operations

Learn your way in, through, and hopefully out of a Cordon

5.1 The Shift Clock

The supervisor rolls a d8 at the end of every 10 to 30 minutes exploring a location, basing the time off of how dangerous the area being explored is and it's depth. During outside travel, roll only once for each new hex entered.

d8	Result
1	Encounter
2	A sign of something nearby
3	Drain. Each powered item spends a charge.
4	Shift. Stairs, doors, or rooms change.
5	Notice. The next Shift Clock is rolled twice.
6-8	Respite, nothing occurs.

5.2 Hexcrawl

Every Cordon sits on a map of 3-mile hexes. A Cordon thirty miles across is about ten hexes wide. These rules assume the crew is inside a Cordon. Travel outside one is covered at the end of this section.

Hexes

Each hex has a terrain type, a Depth, and usually one feature. Depth usually rises toward the Seam, and a hex holding a town or a facility often runs a level or two deeper than the ground around it.

Features of hexes may range from evacuated houses, corporate facilities, camps of other crews or squatters, ruined vehicles like plains or trains, and more peculiar Adjacent disturbed grounds.

Travel

Travel uses minimal procedure. Hazards are keyed to individual hexes, and rolls are made only when the crew engages one.

Move: crossing a hex takes one watch on foot. A road or rail line halves that, and ruins or raw ground double it. Vehicles go twice as fast, but they are Loud and Powered, and they stall in hexes of Depth 5 or more unless their Shielding Class is 2 or higher.

Roll: each time the crew enters a hex, the Supervisor describes it and rolls the Shift Clock once. On the map, a Shift means landmarks can move or smaller details can change. In unmapped ground the crew drifts one hex toward the Seam, unless it is on a route or carries a theodolite.

Pressure: the first time each day the crew enters a hex of Depth 5 or more, everyone saves Compliance. A failure is an Incident.

Routes

Once a crew knows a way between two places, such as a road, a cleared rail line, or a chain of mapped hexes, it becomes a route. Write it down with its length in watches. Travel along a route is one step: spend the watches and roll the Shift Clock once for the whole trip. A Shift result closes the route until someone crosses it again the long way. A hex is mapped when a crew crosses it with a theodolite and makes its Survey roll. Sakaime buys all survey data it can.

Encounters: they start at Far in open country and at Near in ruins and woods. Everyone saves Response, as at the start of a fight, to see who spots whom.

Rest: a crew needs two watches of rest a day. Without rest, food, water, warmth, or a Tuned's daily charge, a contractor is Deprived and gets nothing from rest. Each full day Deprived adds an Exhausted Recordable.

Forced march: travelling more than four watches in a day calls for a Fitness save from everyone. A failure is an Exhausted Recordable.

Reading the ground: once a day, a contractor may roll Draw to feel the way to a place they know exists in the Cordon. On a success, the crew cannot drift on the way there that day.

People met on the way react on a d6. Neighbors act on their common behavior.

d6	
1	Hostile
2-3	Wary. Wants the crew gone.
4-5	Willing to talk or trade
6	Helpful, for now

Outside the Cordons

Outside a Cordon, Depth is 0. There is no Exposure, crews do not drift, and the Shift Clock is rolled once a day instead of once a hex. Most encounters are ordinary: traffic, other travelers, weather, and the odd neighbor at city density. Vehicles move at highway speed on working roads, and most regional trips take a single watch.

SECTION 06

Live Articles and Protocols

Practical applications for the otherwise impossible.

6.1 Live Articles

Live Articles are objects that spend a long enough time near The Next Door and come back Live. They largely retain their original physical form, and they gain one Function. A brass key Opens. A stopwatch Stops. Corporations catalog Live Articles by number, with handling notes, and pay well for them. They take up Manifest slots like anything else.

Using a Function

When using a Live Article the player describes the use and the Supervisor decides which category of use it would be. Hours on a Live Article add to Draw when using it.

Charge: most Live Articles hold 1 to 3 Charges, with some having more at great cost. With none left, it only functions for Labeled use. A steered Exposure can be sent into a carried or Near Live Article to restore one Charge.

Failure: the Function still happens, but wrong. It hits the wrong target, works backward, or acts on the user. A double over can change the Function, kill the item, or pass the Function into the user as a Nonconformance.

Use	Meaning	Cost	Roll	Exposure
Labeled	What the object is plainly for.	None	None	Normal
Off-Label	A related but different target, or extended use.	1 Charge	Draw +20	Depth +2
Experimental	An abstract or figurative target, or extraordinary scale.	1 Charge	Draw	Depth +4

Other Sources of Functionality

Nonconformances are Live flesh, a body part with a Function, used the same way. They have no Charges and can be used as often as the character dares. A failed Experimental use spreads the change into another slot.

Protocols are exacting written instructions that call up one fixed Function without a Live object. They roll Compliance. They are slow and rigid and cannot be stretched. Each corporation keeps its own, and the Office has the oldest.

Neighbors may possess Functions as part of their nature. Some will use them instinctively, while others can be persuaded, compelled, bargained with, or threatened. Capturing one does not guarantee its cooperation.

Article	Function	Labeled	Off-Label	Experimental
Brass key, Building 9	Open	Any lock or door	A sealed container, a wound	A person's secrets, a way through
Stopwatch	Stop	A machine or a timer	Bleeding, a fall, a neighbor for a moment	A minute, or the Shift Clock for a turn
Kitchen radio	Tell	What is happening in a nearby room	What someone is about to do	Tells The Next Door something it will treat as true
Office stapler	Fasten	Anything to anything	A wound shut, a shadow to the floor	A promise that cannot be broken
Hand mirror	Swap	Two small objects	You and your reflection	Two people's injuries or memories
Thermos	Keep	Its contents as they were	A dying person, from getting worse	A moment, to come back to once

6.2 Protocols

A Protocol is a fixed written function reliant on Compliance. Done exactly, it calls up one fixed effect without a Live object. Every corporation writes its own.

Protocols cannot be stretched. Exposure is read from the roll as usual. A shift is six exploration turns.

Every Protocol is listed in the Protocol Register.

Learning: a Protocol is learned and certified with the Train action, from a corporation at the listed Tier.

Paper: performing a Protocol takes its written copy in hand. A binder holds three and takes one slot.

Performing: spend the listed time and materials, then roll Compliance. A contractor who is not certified can follow a copy at Compliance -20.

Success: the effect happens. A double under doubles its duration.

Failure: nothing happens. Time and materials are spent.

Double over: something else fits into the procedure. The Supervisor decides what it does.

Interruption: an interruption means starting over.

SECTION 07

Equipment

The right tool for the job,
whatever the job turns out to be.

7.1 Equipment

Contractors obtain equipment through company issued kits, purchases from concession holders, the local general store with cash, or special recovery inside Cordons. The following equipment is available at any Cordon site.

A Supervisor running a different site should add local makers and local salvage.

Tier 0 items are bought with cash from anyone licensed to sell them. Everything else costs Tickets from the company that sells it.

Gear provided by the concession holders are detailed further in the later Concession Holders section.

Reading an Item

Slots: how much of your Manifest it takes. Bulky items take 2. Heavy rigs take 3.

Spec: the item's rated chance when used under pressure. Items without a Spec just work as they reasonably should

Shielding Class (SC): 0 to 3. Subtracted from Depth when checking Exposure.

Powered: holds 3 charges. Each use under pressure spends one, and Drain on the Shift Clock spends one. At zero it does nothing.

Tier: the Contractor Tier needed to buy it, and from whom. Tier 0 items are sold to anyone.

Tags: Loud items trigger an immediate Shift Clock roll when used. Sealed items protect against gas, spores, and corrosive air. Fragile items break on a double over. Restricted items must be registered with the Office and are logged at every inspection.

Equipment Power

A contractor may switch off any number of powered items they are carrying without spending an action. Switching off equipment belonging to someone else requires access to it.

Disconnecting a battery, shutting down damaged machinery, or reaching an inaccessible control may take an action. Roll only if there is danger.

Equipment that is switched off cannot be used until switched on again. Switching it off does not protect its stored charges from Drain on the Shift Clock.

Lost Equipment

Equipment lost, destroyed, or abandoned inside a Cordon is gone. It is not automatically replaced by the corporation.

Lost issue equipment is not replaced for free. A contractor may request another item from their employer, buy one with Tickets, or salvage a replacement.

Equipment specifically issued to a contractor remains subject to the company's normal terms. Lost equipment does not create a separate penalty unless the contract says the item or equipment is not to be lost.

General Stores

All items listed here are Tier 0

Item	Slots	Price	Notes
Hardened flashlight	1	$90	Powered. SC 1.
Flares (3)	1	$30	Light for a scene.
Chalk, string, and tape	1	$15	For marking routes and keeping counts.
Rope, 50 feet	1	$40	
Hand tools	1	$120	
Pry bar	1	$35	Opens what force can open. d6 as a weapon.
Batteries (2)	1	$25	Each refills a powered item.
Rations and water, three days	1	$45	
First aid kit	1	$80	Three uses. Stops a Recordable from getting worse until treated.
Basic respirator	1	$150	Sealed against gas and spores. Not against corrosives.
Handheld radio	1	$200	Powered. Short range.
Film camera	1	$250	Fragile.
Notebook and pencils	1	$5	Maps, notes, and copied procedures.

Weapons

Weapons largely differ in damage, noise, power, and who sells them.

Weapon	Damage	Slots	Tier	Cost	Notes
Knife or improvised	d4	1	0	$40	
Pry bar or hatchet	d6	1	0	$35	
Sidearm	d6	1	0	$700, with license	Loud. Restricted.
Rivet gun	d8	1	Veta Larga 1	3 Tickets	Powered. Also fastens.
Cutting torch	d8	2	Veta Larga 1	3 Tickets	Powered. Cuts through doors and metal.
Carbine	d8	2	Mabaso-Venter 1	3 Tickets	Loud. Restricted.
Shotgun	d10	2	Mabaso-Venter 2	8 Tickets	Loud. Restricted. Hits everything in a doorway.

Protection

Armor is a carrier that holds plates. Its AP is the number of intact plates.

Carrier	Slots	Plates	Tier	Cost	Notes
Work coveralls	1	1	0	$300, with one pressed steel plate	
Plate vest	2	2	0	$550, empty	
Hardsuit	3	4	Mabaso-Venter 2	8 Tickets	Sealed. Powered air. SC 1.
Sealed exo-plate	3	5	Mabaso-Venter 4	18 Tickets	Sealed. Loud. SC 2. fastens.

Plate	Tier	Cost	Property
Pressed steel	1	$150	Two spares per slot.
Ceramic composite	Mabaso-Venter 1	1 Ticket	Three spares per slot.
Lined ceramic	Mabaso-Venter 2	3 Tickets	Shielded. Counts against Adjacent damage.
Gel-backed	Oyelaran 1	1 Ticket	When it cracks, it absorbs the whole hit.
Prototype	Halcourt 2	3 Tickets	Shielded. On a double over against the wearer, it does something else.

Spec Tools

Specialized tools made for getting certain jobs done. Most are sold by Concession Holders.

Tool	Spec	Slots	SC	Tier	Cost	Use
Lockwork kit	Open 50	1	0	0	$400	Locks under pressure.
Climbing rig	Climb 50	1	0	0	$350	Climbing and rappelling under pressure.
Load frame	none	1	0	Veta Larga 1	3 Tickets	Three extra slots, for bulky salvage only.
Field surgery case	Treat 50	1	0	Oyelaran 1	3 Tickets	Treats a Recordable in the field.
Foam projector	Contain 55	2	1	Mabaso-Venter 1	3 Tickets	Powered. Seals doors and pins neighbors.
Adjacent Lens	none	2	1	Sakaime 1	3 Tickets	Powered. Shows neighbors and manifestations directly.
Tape rig	Parley 45	2	1	Sakaime 1	3 Tickets	Powered. Records and plays back neighbor speech.
Theodolite	Survey 55	2	1	Sakaime 2	8 Tickets	Powered. Fixes routes and measures Depth exactly.
Relay pack	Signal 45	2	1	Sakaime 2	8 Tickets	Powered. Reaches the outside from inside a Cordon.
Containment cage	Contain 60	3	2	Mabaso-Venter 4	18 Tickets	Holds one captured neighbor.
Prototype instrument	Varies	Varies	2	Halcourt 2	8 Tickets	Built from Live material. Each one is unique and has a Function as well as a Spec.

Advanced Equipment

Each concession holder sells a short line of advanced equipment from Tier 2 to Tier 5. Above Tier 3, most of it is built from Live material or Seam-tech. Each piece has a fixed Function that works as written: no roll, no Charge, and normal Exposure, unless the entry says otherwise.

Tool	Corp	Tier	Slots	SC	Cost	Effect
Hydraulic spreader	Veta Larga	2	2	0	8 Tickets	Force 60. Powered. Loud. Opens or crushes doors, vehicles, and collapsed structures.
Co-op crawler	Veta Larga	3	None	1	12 Tickets	A tracked salvage vehicle. Carries the crew and 20 slots of salvage. Powered. Loud.
Seam-rated work lamp	Veta Larga	4	1	3	18 Tickets	Powered. A heavily shielded light that keeps working at any Depth, lights a whole room, and is not affected by Drain.
Union hall door	Veta Larga	5	3	3	25 Tickets	Live (Return). A folding steel doorframe. Set it up and step through to arrive at the co-op hall outside the Cordon. Once per delve. The last person through saves Compliance or stays behind.
Snare pole	Mabaso-Venter	2	2	0	8 Tickets	Contain 50. Pins one human-sized neighbor at Close.
Null tape	Mabaso-Venter	3	1	1	12 Tickets	Live (Hold). Anything wrapped in it cannot move under its own power for a scene. Three uses.
Black hardsuit	Mabaso-Venter	5	3	3	25 Tickets	6 Shielded plates. Sealed. Powered air. Loud. The only armor rated for the Seam.

Advanced Equipment Cont.

Tool	Corp	Tier	Slots	SC	Cost	Effect
Depth sounder	Sakaime	3	2	1	12 Tickets	Survey 60. Powered. Reads the Depth of every adjacent hex.
Shadow camera	Sakaime	4	1	2	18 Tickets	Live (Remember). Photographs show the room as it was one hour earlier.
Reference meter	Sakaime	5	2	3	25 Tickets	A sealed measuring standard. While it is carried, every item the crew carries counts as at least SC 1, and Calibration lasts a full delve.
Suppressant injector meter	Oyelaran	2	1	0	8 Tickets	Three doses. Each holds one Nonconformance still for a shift, as Quarantine does.
Graft kit	Oyelaran	3	2	0	12 Tickets	Treat 60. Removes a Recordable in the field, or stabilizes and treats a fatal one.
Living plate	Oyelaran	5	1 per 2	2	25 Tickets	Live (Mend). Shielded. A cracked living plate regrows during a short rest.
Phase lantern	Halcourt	3	1	2	12 Tickets	Powered. Its light points along the shortest route toward the Seam. A crew navigating by it cannot drift.
Repetition chronometer	Halcourt	4	1	2	18 Tickets	Live (Repeat). Once per scene, use the result of your last d100 roll again instead of rolling.
Halcourt shell	Halcourt	5	3	3	25 Tickets	Prototype carrier with 4 prototype plates. Sealed. On a double over against the wearer, the shell does something else.

SECTION 08

The Concession Holders

Meet the people signing your checks.

8.1 The Concession Holders

Five corporations hold rights at various Cordon sites, including Site Zero. They hire the crews, fight each other, and sell the gear. What a crew can do often depends mostly on which of them they will get contracts from.

Corporation	What it is	What it wants	Gear line
Veta Larga Recovery Cooperative	Employee-owned salvage and hardware cooperative	Bulk material hauled out, machinery and parts of electronics	Cutting tools, load frames, steel plates, recovery contracts
Mabaso-Venter Containment	Security and containment contractor	Neighbors captured alive. Claims every specimen	Foam projectors, Hardsuits, ceramic and Lined plates
Sakaime Instruments	Maker of shielded scientific equipment and Adjacency analyzing instruments	Data, surveys, and recordings, all under NDA	Lenses, theodolites, tape rigs, meters
Oyelaran Biologic	Medical and biotech firm focused on Nonconformances and the Adjacent	Tissue, Nonconforming bodies, crosser data. Holds a claim on its contractors' bodies	Surgery kits, suppressants, gel plates, chosen Nonconformances, revival contracts
Halcourt Applied Physics	Applied physics and defense contractor. Ran research sites before the Disclosure	Its old property back, routes to the Seams, and material for Seam-tech. Never says why	Prototype Seam-tech, Shielded plates, clearance badges

VETA LARGA

RECOVERY COOPERATIVE

A fair share for a hard day's work.

Overview

An employee-owned salvage co-op started by laid-off miners from both sides of the border. It hauls out what the others leave behind, and it pays the least.

Issue Kit

Work coveralls with a pressed steel plate. Rivet gun. Load frame. Hardened flashlight. Rations. Binder with Lockout-Tagout and Dead Man's Count. Total: 7 slots.

WANTS

Bulk material hauled out, machinery and parts of electronics.
All as much as possible.

OBLIGATION

Dues: takes 10% of each member's cash contract completion pay and salvage sales. Daily wages and Tickets are exempt.

RIVAL

Veta Larga will not sell goods of Tier 3 or higher to anyone holding Tier 3 or higher with Mabaso-Venter.

WORKING HERE

The yards are loud and the equipment has seen better days. Everyone has an opinion about how the job should be.

TIERS

Tier	Gear and Services	Protocols
1	Rivet gun, cutting torch, load frame	Lockout-Tagout, Dead Man's Count
2	Hydraulic spreader	Shift Change
3	Co-op crawler	—
4	Seam-rated work lamp, recovery team	Bring Them Home
5	Union hall door, seat on the co-op board	Work Stoppage

Protocols

Lockout-Tagout T1 — 1 turn · Padlock and tag

One machine, door, or fixture is held off for a shift. Nothing can start it, open it, or occupy it, from either side.

Dead Man's Count T1 — 1 turn · None

The crew counts off aloud. Anyone missing, extra, or not who they were is revealed.

Shift Change T2 — 1 turn · Padlock and tag

The crew rests in place. Margin is restored and the next Shift Clock roll is skipped.

Bring Them Home T4 — 1 turn · The missing person's name tag

For a shift, the crew knows the way to one contractor lost in this Cordon, living or dead.

Work Stoppage T5 — 1 turn · A whistle

For a scene, every Function, manifestation, and machine in the room stops, including the crew's own Live Articles and Nonconformances.

Procedures

Procedure	Tier	Effect	Side effect
Graded Load Conditioning	1	Fitness +5.	Lockout-Tagout, Dead Man's Count
Pulmonary Mineral Lining	3	Fitness +5. Immune to gas and spores, as if Sealed.	Shift Change
Skeletal Lattice Reinforcement	5	Live. Fitness +10. Three extra slots, for bulky salvage only.	—

Typical Contracts

1. Haul a ton of copper wiring out of a collapsed substation.
2. Recover the co-op's lost crawler and whatever is left of its crew.
3. Strip a wing for fixtures before Mabaso-Venter seals it.
4. Escort a vote counter to a crew still working inside.
5. Bring back the tools of members who did not come out.
6. Hold a building for a full Rotation so the co-op can claim it.

MABASO-VENTER

CONTAINMENT

Specialists in high-risk environments.

Overview

A South African security and containment contractor specializing on Adjacency related hazards. Hardsuits, foam, hazard tape, and paperwork for every shot fired.

Issue Kit

Plate vest with two ceramic plates. Registered sidearm. Foam projector. Basic respirator. Binder with Perimeter and Restraint. Total: 7 slots.

WANTS

Neighbors captured alive.
Claims every specimen that it can legally obtain or convince others to give it.

OBLIGATION

Every specimen belongs to the company. Lethal force is audited. Selling a specimen anywhere else breaks this obligation.

RIVAL

Mabaso-Venter will not sell goods of Tier 3 or higher to anyone holding Tier 3 or higher with Oyelaran.

WORKING HERE

There's a clear chain of command, new hires learn it quickly. Supervisors expect clean equipment and punctual report.

TIERS

Tier	Gear and Services	Protocols
1	Carbine, ceramic plates, foam projector	Perimeter, Restraint
2	Shotgun, Hardsuit, lined plates, snare pole	Clear and Hold
3	Null tape	—
4	Sealed exo-plate, containment cage, detention authority	Specimen Transfer
5	Black hardsuit, private containment wing	Lockdown

Protocols

Perimeter T1 — 1 turn · Padlock and tag

Tape off an area up to a room in size.
One named kind of neighbor cannot cross it for a shift.

Restraint T1 — 1 turn · None

A subdued neighbor stays subdued until released or the restraints are cut.

Clear and Hold T2 — 1 turn · Padlock and tag

While someone stands guard, Encounters rolled in a room become signs, for a shift.

Specimen Transfer T4 — 1 turn · Signed transfer order

One contained neighbor or Article passes inspection under Mabaso-Venter's claim. The Office must release it.

Lockdown T5 — 1 turn · Seal tape on every exit

For a shift, nothing enters or leaves one interior space by any route, the crew included.

Procedures

Procedure	Tier	Effect	Side effect
Reflex Latency Training	1	Response +5.	None.
Subdermal Polymer Infusion	3	+d6 to Margin dice. Roll and add the result to your Margin. Corrosive damage cracks only one of your plates.	You leak containment foam when hit.
Specimen Neural Coupling	5	Live. One captured neighbor obeys your Labeled commands while you live.	You share the neighbor's weakness.

Typical Contracts

1. Capture a named neighbor alive and deliver it to the nearest station.
2. Escort a containment team to a breach and hold the perimeter.
3. Recover a lost Hardsuit, and its occupant if possible.
4. Retake a containment cell that opened from the inside.
5. Tape off a zone before a rival crew reaches it.
6. Find a specimen that left its cage during transfer.

SAKAIME

INSTRUMENTS

Confidence in every reading.

Overview

A Japanese scientific instrument maker whose shielded equipment became the standard after the Disclosure. The closest thing anyone has to electronics engineers and scientists of the Next Door.

Issue Kit

Work coveralls with a pressed steel plate. Adjacent Lens. Tape rig. Hardened flashlight. Two batteries. Binder with Baseline Reading. Total: 7 slots.

WANTS

Data, surveys, and recordings of Adjacent sites and Adjacency related phenomena, all under NDA and close review of the top brass.

OBLIGATION

Every reading and recording belongs to Sakaime, under NDA. Sharing data outside Sakaime breaks this obligation.

RIVAL

Sakaime will not sell goods of Tier 3 or higher to anyone holding Tier 3 or higher with Halcourt.

WORKING HERE

Technicians take considerable pride in their work, and a poorly kept notebook can damage someone's reputation for years.

TIERS

Tier	Gear and Services	Protocols
1	Adjacent Lens, tape rig	Baseline Reading
2	Theodolite, relay pack	Survey Fix, Null Recording
3	Depth sounder	—
4	Shadow camera, field lab and instrument access	Calibration
5	Reference meter, instrument named after you; free Tier 4 item once per Rotation	Total Survey

Protocols

Baseline Reading T1

1 turn · Meter

Learn the exact Depth here and whether it is changing.
For a shift, the crew's Exposure checks here are made at Depth -1.

Survey Fix T2

1 turn · Survey stakes

A mapped route stays as mapped for a shift. Shift results cannot change it.

Null Recording T2

1 turn · Blank tape

Records silence. Played back, it cancels one sound-based manifestation for a scene.

Calibration T4

1 turn · Reference weights

Every item the crew carries gains +1 SC for a shift.

Total Survey T5

1 turn · Theodolite and survey stakes

The hex the crew is in is mapped completely, and its Depth drops by 1 until the next Rotation.

Procedures

Procedure	Tier	Effect	Side effect
Ocular Recalibration	1	Response +5. You can judge Depth to within 1 by sight.	You cannot sleep without a light on.
Chronometric Entrainment	3	Response +10.	You count under your breath. Response rolls to hide take -10.
Somatic Reference Certification	5	Live. Your body counts as SC 1. The Office cannot define your Nonconformances while Sakaime holds your measurements.	Sakaime owns your measurements. Leaving Sakaime breaks your obligation.

Typical Contracts

1. Take Depth readings at six marked points.
2. Record a neighbor's speech for at least one full minute.
3. Survey a wing that has changed since the last map.
4. Recover a field team's instruments with the data intact.
5. Install a sensor array and leave it running.
6. Retrieve a recording Sakaime will not describe.

oyelaran

BIOLOGIC

Advancing care for a changing world.

Overview

A Lagos biotech firm that grew rich treating Nonconformances and Adjacency related cases when no one else could. Its care is excellent, and comes with a claim on your body.

Issue Kit

Work coveralls with a gel-backed plate. Field surgery case. First aid kit. Basic respirator. Binder with Triage and Sample Chain. Total: 6 slots.

WANTS

Nonconforming bodies, data on crossers, and any adjacency effected biology. Holds a claim on its contractors' bodies.

OBLIGATION

A standing claim on your body, living or dead. Samples on request. On Loss of Personnel, your body is given up to them.

RIVAL

Oyelaran will not sell goods of Tier 3 or higher to anyone holding Tier 3 or higher with Sakaime.

WORKING HERE

Facilities are comfortable, the staff are friendly, and most employees genuinely believe in the company's work. Medical privacy is a rather different matter.

TIERS

Tier	Gear and Services	Protocols
1	Gel-backed plate, field surgery case	Triage, Sample Chain
2	Suppressant injector	Quarantine
3	Graft kit	—
4	Revival contract	Harvest
5	Living plate, priority care, second revival contract, monthly Nonconformance removal	Transplant

Protocols

Triage T1 — 1 turn · Field dressings

One contractor's nonfatal Recordables have no effects for one shift. They still occupy Manifest slots. Fatal Recordables are unaffected.

Sample Chain T1 — 1 turn · Sample case

Preserves a tissue sample for sale, and reveals the Function of the Nonconformance or neighbor it came from.

Quarantine T2 — 1 turn · Sealant and a sterile bag

One Nonconformance is held still for a shift. It cannot spread and cannot be used.

Harvest T4 — 1 turn · Surgical kit and a jar

Removes a Nonconformance from a dead or unconscious body. It stays Live in the jar, as an Article with the same Function.

Transplant T5 — 1 turn · Surgical kit and a sterile field

Moves one Nonconformance from one living body to another willing one. This can be used on Neighbors that are willing or captured.

Procedures

Procedure	Tier	Effect	Side effect
Histocompatibility Profiling	1	Fitness +5. First aid restores 1 Margin to you.	Oyelaran keeps your samples on file.
Elective Nonconformance Implantation	3	Gain a Nonconformance with a Function chosen from the clinic's catalog. It takes a slot and adds 5 to Draw as usual.	Filed at the next inspection.
Accelerated Tissue Regeneration	5	Live. Once per delve, remove one nonfatal Recordable during a short rest.	Your scars move. Oyelaran asks to photograph them every Rotation.

Typical Contracts

1. Return a tissue sample from a named neighbor.
2. Recover a contractor's body under an Oyelaran claim.
3. Escort a medic to a crew with untreated Recordables.
4. Collect residue from a marked room in sealed jars.
5. Bring a Nonconforming volunteer in for observation.
6. Retrieve a revival candidate before the Cordon keeps them.

HALCOURT

APPLIED PHYSICS

The next frontier is already here.

Overview

Many of Halcourt's facilities, funded by governments around the world, now lie inside Cordons. Halcourt holds the concessions to most of them and pays more than its competitors for information about the Cordons.

The company rarely explains why.

WANTS

All of it's property back among prototypes, records, and instruments at old sites.
Access to the seams.

RIVAL

Halcourt will not sell goods of Tier 2 or higher to anyone holding Tier 2 or higher with Veta Larga.

Issue Kit

A clearance badge, which takes no slot. Work coveralls with a pressed steel plate. Hardened flashlight. A sealed envelope, to be opened when told. Four more items of the contractor's choice from General Stores, paid for by Halcourt. Total: 7 slots.

OBLIGATION

Secrecy. Halcourt at Tier 3 or higher means no Tier 3 anywhere else.
Halcourt highly values their employees.

WORKING HERE

The benefits are excellent and the offices are remarkably quiet. Employees can spend years working alongside people whose actual job they don't know.

TIERS

TIER	GEARS AND SERVICES	PROTOCOLS
1	Issue kit and clearance badge	—
2	Prototype plate, prototype instrument	Damping, Controlled Breach
3	Phase lantern	Reference State
4	Repetition chronometer, sealed-site clearance	Phase Alignment
5	Halcourt shell, explanation of the envelope	Recall

Protocols

Damping T2

1 turn · Tuning forks

Depth locally drops by 1 for a scene. When it ends, Depth locally rises by 1 for a scene.

Controlled Breach T2

1 turn · Chalk diagram

Causes an Exposure on purpose. It is steered with Compliance instead of Draw

Reference State T3

1 turn · A photograph or original schematic

One fixed object or passage returns to the documented condition as in the material provided for one shift.

Phase Alignment T4

1 turn · A prototype plate

One item gains +2 SC for a scene. Afterward, roll Compliance or it gains a Function.

Recall T5

1 turn · A stopped clock

Once per delve, the crew returns to where it stood one turn ago, and that turn did not happen for anyone else. Everyone saves Compliance. If over half fail, there is an Incident.

Procedures

PROCEDURE	TIER	EFFECT	SIDE EFFECT
Phase Exposure Therapy	**2**	Draw +10, without a Nonconformance.	You repeat one small gesture constantly.
Recursive Memory Conditioning	**4**	Live. Once per Rotation, reroll one d100 roll after seeing it.	Halcourt debriefs you after every delve. You lose one downtime action each Rotation and do not remember where it went.
Senescence Arrest	**5**	Live. You stop aging. +d6 to Margin dice. Roll and add to your Margin.	You must stay signed with Halcourt at Tier 1 or higher, and you cannot retire.

Typical Contracts

1 Recover inventory item 4471-C from room B-212 by Thursday.

2 Escort a technician to a sealed door, then leave.

3 Map a route one zone deeper than anyone has gone.

4 Retrieve a box of personnel files. Do not open it.

5 Leave a sealed case in a marked room.

6 Open your envelope.

SECTION 09

Compensation and Advancement

Making a living, and perhaps a little more.

9.1 Pay and Tickets

Contractors are paid competitively in cash and Tickets from completed work. Cash pays for life outside the Cordon. Under the concession framework, Cordon-rated equipment, Protocol materials, and corporate services can be sold only to licensed contractors, and only by the company that holds the license. Each corporation pays part of every contract in Tickets, which is the only currency its counters accept.

Contract wages and completion rewards are paid to each participating contractor. Payments for recovered goods are made once per delivery and divided among the crew.

Cash

Cash is in dollars, though any other currency can work similarly. It pays for rent, debts, families, lawyers, cars, and General Stores gear, and it is what most fences and criminals deal in. It cannot buy anything above Tier 0.

Pay	Amount
Day rate inside a Cordon, Tier 0	$600
Day rate, Tier 1	$1,000
Day rate, Tier 2	$1,500
Day rate, Tier 3	$2,500
Day rate, Tier 4	$3,500
Day rate, Tier 5	$5,000
Routine contract, on completion	$3,000
Dangerous contract, on completion	$8,000
Contract the company badly wanted	$20,000 to $50,000

A Tier 1 contractor completing a two-day dangerous contract earns $10,000 before upkeep and other expenses. Longer contracts pay more, provided those days were authorized.

Paid Days: Contracts state how many days the employer will pay for. Paid overtime requires agreement. Each contractor receives their own Tier's daily rate of pay.

Contract Property: Items named for recovery in a contract belong to the employer. Their value is covered by completion pay unless specified.

Salvage: Unclaimed equipment, scrap, and recovered materials may be kept or sold for cash. The Supervisor sets their value when stocking the site. The crew receives one payment for each find, divided as agreed. Salvage named in a contract earns no additional payment unless specified.

Tickets

Tickets are numbered corporate scrip, accepted only by the company that issued them. Each participating contractor receives the listed Tickets for completing a contract.

Payments for Live Articles, captured Neighbors, and surveys are made once per delivery, regardless of crew size. A contracted recovery earns its agreed payment with no additional sale bounty.

Source	Tickets
Routine contract	2
Dangerous contract	5
Contract the company badly wanted	10
Conforming Article sold to the company	1 to 10 by rarity
Neighbor delivered alive to Mabaso-Venter	3 to 15 per specimen
Hex survey delivered to Sakaime	1

Tickets buy everything above Tier 0: gear, plates, Protocol training, corporate procedures, clinic work, and other circumstancial expenditures.

Source	Tickets
Tier 1 gear	3
Tier 2 gear	8
Tier 3 gear	12
Tier 4 gear	18
Tier 5 gear	25
Ceramic or gel-backed plate	1
Lined ceramic or prototype plate	3
Learning a Protocol	2 per Tier
Suppressing a Nonconformance	3
Removing a Nonconformance	10
Revival contract	40

Credit and the Black Market

Credit: from Tier 1, a corporation will advance its own Tickets against future work. Ticket debt grows by a fifth, rounded up, every Rotation, and cash cannot pay it down. Tickets earned from a corporation first pay down any debt owed to it. Apply interest to the remaining debt at the end of each Rotation.

Black Markets: fences buy Live Articles, salvage, and unwanted Tickets for cash, at about $300 a Ticket. They never sell Tickets. A sale traced to the crew adds 1 Scrutiny.

The Office: Office contracts pay cash and Office vouchers. Every concession holder must honor a voucher as one of its own Tickets, for Tier 0 and Tier 1 goods only.

Upkeep and Retirement

Cash pays for a life outside the Cordon, and for the way out of the work.

Upkeep: each Rotation, every contractor pays $1,500 for rent, food, and dependents. A contractor who cannot pay cannot take the Recover action that Rotation.

Legal fees: once per Rotation, a contractor can pay a lawyer $5,000 with the Deal action to lower the crew's Scrutiny by 1.

Retirement: keep a Banked total on the contractor sheet. A contractor with $250,000 banked, after upkeep and debts, can retire at any Rotation. They leave play alive, and their player makes a new contractor.

Referral: a new contractor hired to replace a crew member who died, retired, or was retained, starts with half that member's Commendations with the hiring company, rounded down, up to Tier 2.

9.2 Contractor Tier

Every contractor has a Tier from 0 to 5 with each corporation. Tier is the corporation's record of whether you can be trusted with its equipment, its procedures, and its secrets. It works the same at every Cordon. A Supervisor who adds a local company should give it the same six Tiers.

Commendations

Completing a contract for a corporation earns Commendations with it:
1 for routine work, 2 for dangerous work, 3 for something it badly wanted. Tier rises when total Commendations reach the numbers below. A character starts at Tier 1 with the corporation they signed with.

Each tier above 0 grants some kind of benefits to the contractor:

Tier	Commendations
1	2
2	6
3	12
4	20
5	30

- **0** - Day Labor. General stores only. Paid on delivery. No credit.
- **1** - Contracted. The issue kit, and Tier 1 goods. Credit up to a limit. Services at list price.
- **2** - Certified. Tier 2 goods. Better contracts. Office sponsorship: legal backing and +20 at Determination.
- **3** - Senior. Tier 3 goods. Services at a discount.
- **4** - Cleared. Tier 4 goods. The company's Tier 4 asset.
- **5** - Principal. Tier 5 goods. First call on the best contracts. The company's Tier 5 privilege.

At Tier 4 and 5 a contractor is given notable benefits in recognition of their dedication and services to the company.

Tier 4 Assets

Veta Larga: A recovery team that will go in after you should you not return.

Mabaso-Venter: Authority to detain other crews inside the Cordon.

Sakaime: A field lab at the Cordon edge, and first use of new instruments.

Oyelaran: A revival contract.

Halcourt: Clearance to Halcourt's sealed sites, within the Cordon or outside.

Tier 5 Privilege

Veta Larga: A seat on the co-op board. Once per Rotation, choose which contract the co-op takes in the local Cordon.

Mabaso-Venter: A containment wing. Captured specimens can be kept and studied based off your own desires instead of delivered directly to MV.

Sakaime: Your name on an instrument line. Once per Rotation, take any Sakaime Tier 4 item into the Cordon at no cos.

Oyelaran: Priority care. A second revival contract, and the clinic removes one Nonconformance each Rotation at no cost.

Halcourt: An explanation of the envelope.

Limits

A character can hold Tier 3 or higher with at most two corporations, and Tier 4 or higher with only one.

Each corporation resents one other:
Veta Larga resents Mabaso-Venter,
Mabaso-Venter resents Oyelaran,
Oyelaran resents Sakaime,
Sakaime resents Halcourt,
and Halcourt resents Veta Larga.
A corporation will not sell goods of Tier 3 or higher to anyone holding Tier 3 or higher with the company it resents, or Tier 2 in Halcourt's case.

OFFICE OF STANDARDS

INSPECTION / CERTIFICATION

OFFICIAL NOTICE — OFFICE OF STANDARDS

The following section is issued by the Office of Standards. It takes precedence over any conflicting instructions supplied by a concession holder.

INSPECTION / CERTIFICATION COPY OOS-17

The Office of Standards is the federal authority responsible for the classification, containment, and regulation of Adjacent material. We administer the concession framework, license contractors, supervise Cordon perimeters, and determine what may be brought into general circulation.

Our work predates the Disclosure. Beginning in the 1950s as a restricted unit of the federal weights-and-measures service of the USA, the Office maintained records and secured specimens of phenomena then considered exceptional. These records, facilities, established procedures, and long histories formed the basis of the global federal response following the Disclosure, and the Office of Standard's reach is far beyond it's original scope in the 50s.

Office Inspectors are authorized to examine personnel, equipment, and recovered materials at Cordon Stations, and anywhere near a Cordon site within a proximity of 50 miles.

Cooperation with the Office is a condition of licensed Cordon work.

The Office of Standards has arranged coordination with multiple world governments and organizations to ensure the safekeeping, tracking, licensing, and general oversight of Live Articles, Adjacent Phenomena, and Nonconformance inhibited individuals.

10.1 Inspection

All personnel and recovered Articles must pass through Inspection Station One upon leaving a Cordon. Inspectors verify Manifests, record Nonconformances, and classify Live Articles before release.

Classification	Disposition
Conforming	Stable. Approved for release to concession holders.
Variant	Released under Office seal. Restricted to Labeled use.
Uncertifiable	Retained indefinitely. No acknowledgment of the Article is required.

Retained Articles earn no compensation. A concession holder's prior claim does not override Office classification.

Inspectors may conduct examinations within a Cordon, including the certification of occupied spaces and recovery of restricted material.

10.2 Office Protocols

Office Protocols are standardized procedures for maintaining defined conditions. All require a Compliance roll. Their prescribed steps must be followed without alteration.

Classification	Disposition
Certification	Complete measurement and documentation fixes a room in its present condition for one shift.
Sealing	An Office seal restricts a Live Article to Labeled use until broken.
Definition	Reading a filed specification aloud in the subject's presence suppresses its Function for one scene.

10.3 Definition

The Office maintains specifications for Live Articles, registered Posted, contractors with recorded Nonconformances, and many categories of Neighbors in local cordons.

At exit inspection, each Nonconformance is entered into the contractor's file with its Function. An Inspector holding that file may read the entry aloud to suppress the recorded Function for one scene.

An unfiled Nonconformance cannot be Defined. Failure to declare one constitutes an infraction.

Contractors are reminded that registration establishes the conditions under which continued work within Cordon Sites are permitted in general.

10.4 Office Requests

Licensed contractors may submit requests for records, restricted access, field inspection, or review of an Office decision. A request takes a Deal action during a Rotation.

Routine requests may be approved without further conditions. Restricted requests require authorization, evidence, or service to the Office. Crews with high Scrutiny are subject to additional review.

Office contracts may grant access to records, permits, or Inspector assistance alongside their normal compensation. Authorization applies only to the matter named in the request.

10.5 Scrutiny

The Office maintains a Scrutiny rating for each crew, beginning at 0. Infractions increase Scrutiny. Documented cooperation may reduce it.

Classification	Scrutiny
Undeclared Article discovered	**+2**
Concealed Nonconformance discovered	**+2**
Presence at a restricted operation	**+2**
Unregistered Posted, per inspection	**+1**
Unauthorized sale traced to the crew	**+1**
Disputing an Office seizure	**+1**
Registering a Posted or filing a Nonconformance	**-1**
Clean inspection, all items declared	**-1**
Completing an Office contract	**-2**

Concealment: Roll Response, with –5 for each point of Scrutiny. Failure results in discovery.

10.6 Determination

Contractors whose Nonconformances occupy half or more of their Manifest may be referred for Determination. The hearing establishes whether the subject remains eligible for classification as personnel.

The subject saves Compliance. Corporate sponsorship at Tier 2 or higher grants +20.

Result	Determination
Success	**Conforming.** Released without restriction.
Failure	**Variant.** Released under seal. Nonconformances are restricted to Labeled use. Breaking the seal adds 2 Scrutiny.
Double over	**Uncertifiable. Retained.** The contractor leaves play. No acknowledgment of retention is issued.

Classification is an administrative determination. Personal testimony does not supersede the examination result.

Enforcement Measures

The following measures taken by the Office are cumulative. They remain in effect while Scrutiny meets their threshold.

Determination is called when Scrutiny first reaches 10; remaining at 10 does not trigger another hearing each Rotation. Further hearings require new grounds.

Scrutiny	Enforcement measure
2	Close inspection. All filed Nonconformances are reviewed. Concealment suffers a further –10.
4	Mandatory audit each Rotation.
6	One Shielded item impounded for review each Rotation.
8	An Inspector accompanies the crew into the Cordon.
10	All eligible personnel referred for Determination.

Typical Contracts

1. Certify a room and hold it for a shift.
2. Seize an Article that passed through a local fence.
3. Escort an Inspector. Do not ask what they are doing.
4. Recover a seal broken inside the Cordon.
5. Find a contractor who missed exit inspection.
6. Retrieve a Schedule Nine item. You will not be told it is one.

END OF OFFICE NOTICE

Contractors requiring clarification should address their inquiry to their nearest station. An inquiry does not suspend an existing requirement.

INSPECTION / CERTIFICATION COPY END



SECTION 11

Between Delves

Rest, recreation, and other approved uses of your time.

11.1 The Rotation

Time off-site between expeditions is counted in Rotations, usually one week. Contractors receive payment, attend to injuries, settle accounts, and prepare for further work. The Cordon continues to change while they are away.

A longer break may cover several Rotations. Resolve upkeep, debts, and changes to the Cordon for each one.

Rotation Sequence

1. **Inspection.** The Office examines the crew's Manifest, classifies recovered Articles, and records Nonconformances. Adjust Scrutiny.
2. **Payment.** Collect wages, contract rewards, Tickets, and Commendations. Settle corporate deductions.
3. **Debrief.** Resolve Hours, Compliance, and Margin advancement.
4. **Upkeep.** Pay living expenses as described under Compensation and Advancement.
5. **Actions.** Each contractor takes two downtime actions.
6. **Accounts.** Settle Ticket repayments and apply interest to outstanding debts.
7. **The Cordon Moves.** Advance sites, corporate interests, and other factions. Update the work available for the next expedition.

Debrief

Roll d100 for each mark on Compliance and each Hours mark on an item. On a result over the current number, Compliance increases by 1d5 or the item's Spec increases by 1d10. Clear the marks afterward.

Surviving an Incident marks Compliance. Equipment earns Hours as described under Core Rules.

Each item keeps its own Hours.

Taking a Recordable on a delve and making it out marks Margin. At Debrief, roll your Margin dice, (lineage's die plus any added by procedures). If the total is over your Margin, it rises by 1.

Downtime Actions

Action	What it does
Recover	Treat Recordables and restore Margin at a clinic or hospital.
Treat	Suppress or remove a Nonconformance, or undergo a procedure, at a clinic.
Refit	Repair equipment, replace plates, and purchase supplies.
Train	Learn a Protocol, or undergo a corporate procedure, where Tier allows.
Deal	Sell recovered goods, negotiate contracts, settle debts, dispute seizures, or submit an Office request.
Pursue	Follow a personal thread, such as a missing person or a contact, or take a callout.

Pursue: The Supervisor provides a useful discovery, meeting, or opportunity related to the contractor's inquiry. Further action may be needed to resolve it. Information that can reasonably be obtained is not withheld behind a roll.

Pursuits can involve multiple contractors at once, with each participant spending a Pursue action. They may combine their resources, and efforts toward a goal.

Callouts

The Office and concession holders also hire crews for work outside the Cordons. A Live object turns up in someone's house. Neighbors infest a substation. Someone lost in the Disclosure returns after twenty years. Or they just need someone to deliver an important item without questioning it.

Callouts usually involve investigation, containment, or recovery. They allow the Supervisor to use the wider world without preparing or changing the Cordon.

A substantial callout may become an expedition of its own.

Pacing

A Rotation should take twenty to thirty minutes of play, including downtime actions and one or two scenes. Resolve routine business quickly.

Longer town sessions are expected to occur when character's own interests such as investigations come into play, or larger corporate conflicts come to a head. This additional time is also extremely valuable if your players involve themselves in the intrigue and drama of the Cordon's local town.

11.2 Clinics

Every concession holder operates a clinic at the Cordon perimeter. Oyelaran's facilities are the best equipped among them. Civilian hospitals treat ordinary injuries for cash but do not handle Nonconformances.

Clinic services require the appropriate downtime action.

Service	Where	Cost
Injury care	Company clinic	Free at Tier 1 or higher
Hospital care	Civilian hospital	$2,000 per Recordable
Suppression	Oyelaran, or any clinic at Tier 2+	3 Tickets
Removal	Oyelaran clinic	10 Tickets
Corporate procedure	Offering company's clinic	Tickets by Tier
Revival	Oyelaran clinic	40 Tickets, in advance

Injury care: Recover removes all Recordables and restores Margin. Civilian hospital care takes the entire Rotation.

Suppression: Treat holds one Nonconformance still until the end of the next delve. It cannot be used or spread.

Removal: Treat removes one Nonconformance, frees its Manifest slot, and reduces Draw by 5. Save Fitness. On a failure, the site leaves a Recordable until the next Rotation. The Office retains the original file entry.

Procedures: Train at the company offering the procedure. Each procedure may be taken only once.

Revival: A contractor with a revival contract whose body is recovered after Loss of Personnel returns the following Rotation. Clear all Recordables, reduce Fitness by 5, and gain one Nonconformance related to the death.
The contract is consumed.

Tuned contractors use Refit at a company workshop instead of Recover, at the same costs.

11.3 The Next Job

After each Rotation, the Supervisor presents two to four available jobs. Each offer names an employer, an objective, compensation, and any declared restrictions.

Jobs should reflect what happened during previous expeditions. A site left unsecured may need another crew. An employer may offer more for something its rivals have discovered. Work the crew refuses may remain available, change terms, or be taken by someone else.

The crew chooses its next assignment and prepares accordingly. Contractors may accept separate contracts, but conflicting obligations can put the entire crew at risk.

YOU HAVE RECEIVED ALL NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS.

Further information is restricted to supervising personnel.











Further information.

SUPERVISOR REFERENCE

RESTRICTED TO SUPERVISING PERSONNEL.

SUPERVISOR NOTICE

The referee. Runs the game and ensures impartiality..

The Supervisor Reference contains information for the person supervising the game and its events. Contractors are not authorized to read the material.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Supervisor runs the Cordon and everything in it. They describe the site as the crew works through it, play the neighbors that live there, and speak for the concession holders, the Office, and the people of the town. Players describe what their contractors attempt, and the Supervisor decides how the Cordon and world around them responds, keeping those calls fair and consistent from one session to the next.

The Supervisor also keeps the records. During a delve that means the Shift Clock, and between delves it means Site Conditions, faction tracks, and each crew's Scrutiny, along with whatever changed in the Cordon while the crew was away. Finally, the Supervisor keeps its secrets. This book will never say what The Next Door is or why the Disclosure happened, so each Supervisor settles those questions for their own table and should only let the crew uncover what they can.