

# Mission Design Document

## Operation Dark Tide

**Location:** Port 6

**Objective:**

- Infiltrate the unknown cargo ship
- Locate the missing agent
- Gather intel on strange activities



**Mission Overview:**

Agent, we've not received any reports from our agent, Blue Bird, currently operating missions on an unknown cargo ship. The ship is witnessed docking at Port 6 which has been controlled by a group of terrorists. Our intelligence reports indicate that agent Blue Bird went silent after boarding this vessel two months ago. Reports suggest he may have been held captive during the operation. Your mission is to confirm Blue Bird's status, investigate the situation, and evacuate with agent Blue Bird.

Other than that, we have not much info on the target site. So, make it loud or stay in dark. How to do this is entirely on your decision.

Good Luck, agent.

Estimated mission length: 24 minutes

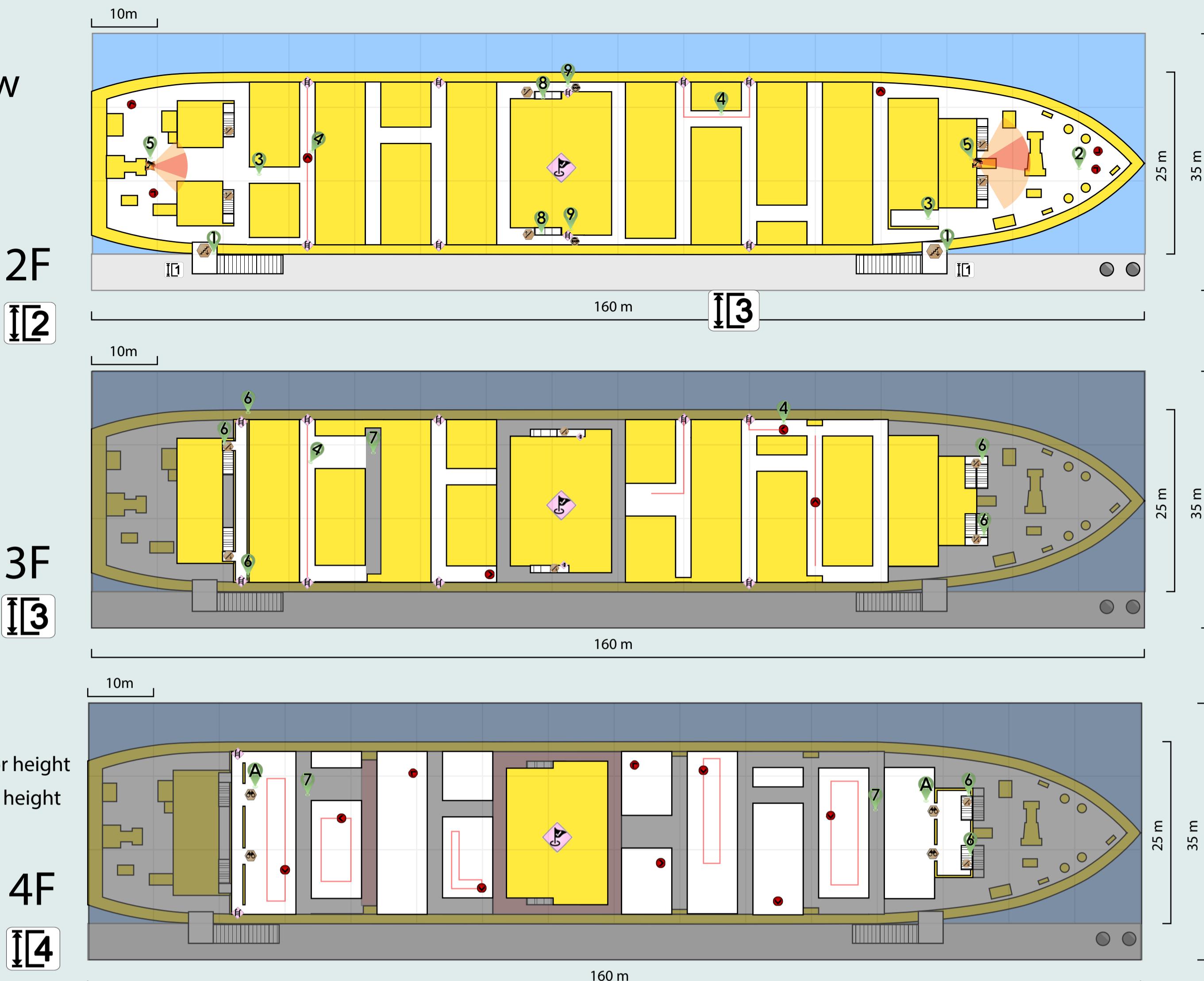
# Port Exterior Overview 1F



## Notes

- 1 Main roads that lead into the port. It guides players to discover the point of interest.
- 2 Watch posts that give players vantage points to scout the port area before entry.
- 3 Stealth entry paths, each paired with a vantage point or open view for players to scout and plan.
- 4 Cameras on main entrances to guide stealthy players to entry through stealth entry points. Cameras in the port guide players to points of interests that have rewards for player.
- 5 Port control room that offers keys to unlock the electricity control area on the right to reward thorough discovery.
- 6 Two enemy soldiers talking “this ship parks here every few months, but I don't see much containers loaded. Yeah, isn't that weird?”. Building narrative anticipation, also hinting on the containers on the ship are empty.
- 7 Security post, Players can access the top by ladder to gain a vantage point to scout the cargo loading area.
- 8 Security room, reward player for thorough discovery. The rewards are intel that can be convert into agent credit that can redeem weapons or other in-game content. Specifically, the center security room reward a schedule sheet of the port office, the left security room reward a piece of intel that the guards at the ship head often chat with each other and are not concentrating on patrolling.
- A Big cargo ship as a point of interest and a landmark to attract players to discover the area.
- B Cargo container piles and loading areas with container trucks as covers for players for both combat and stealthy encounters.
- C Stairs to get entrance to the cargo ship. Players can get on the ship from either front or back. The layout of the port ensures an engaging discovery experience by guiding players to encounter interest points no matter where they start approaching the ship.
- D Open areas, that discourage players from entering because of their high exposure to enemies, guiding them to go to points of interest.

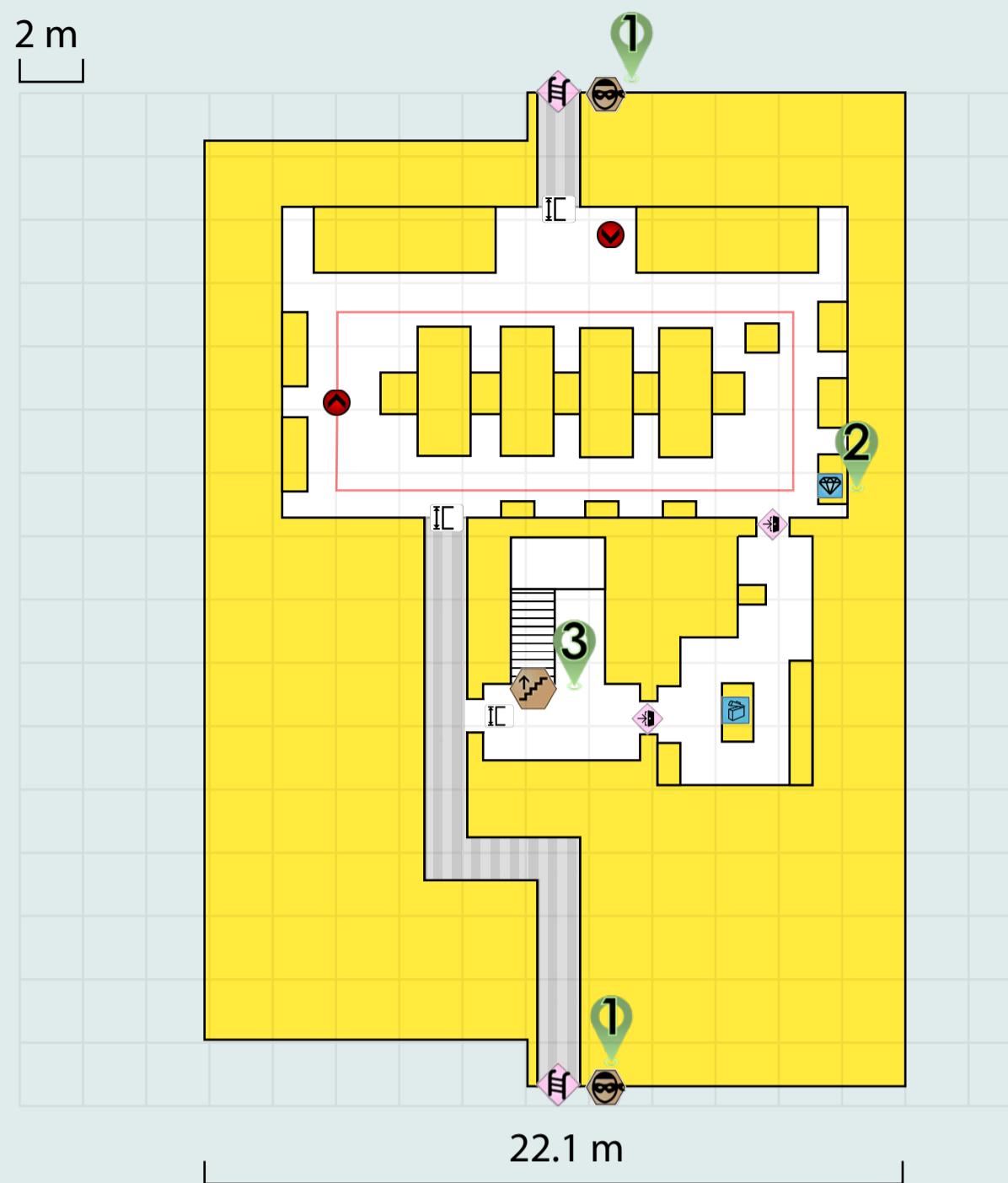
# Cargo Ship Interior Overview



## Notes

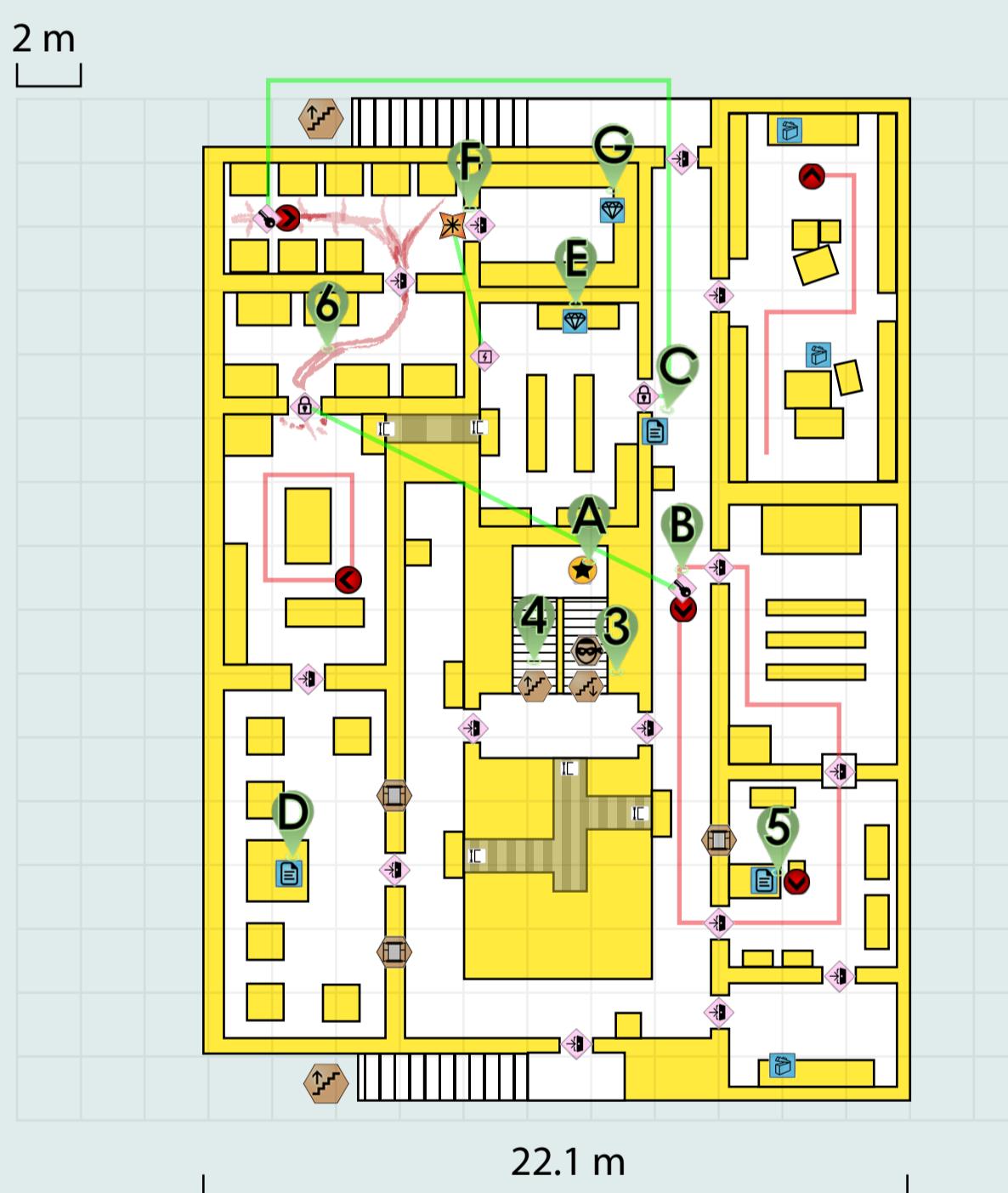
- 1** Player starting points.
- 2** Guards at the ship head chatting with each other and are not concentrating on patrolling. The player who got the clue from **8** from last page verify the clue happening. Narrative twists.
- 3** Open containers as tutorials that show players that some containers are open and can enter.
- 4** Enemies patrolling on different container layers. Showing players ladders for vertical traversing options.
- 5** Cameras: players have to avoid the monitoring area of the swinging camera. Minor action beat.
- 6** Stairs and ladders to go on top of the operating decks on both end of the ship. Players can get to top of the containers from them.
- A** Vantage points that allows players to observe the dangerosity of the container tops full of enemies, guiding players to drop down to layers below to enter stealth style.
- 7** Players can drop down to the lower platforms or lower containers. Lower layers have better covers and less enemies encouraging stealth approach.
- 8** Stairs to gain entrance to accommodation decks. Players enter from deck interior 3F.
- 9** Stealth approach to enter the accommodation decks. Players enter from engine room through vents.

# Deck Interior Overview



2F

↑ 2



3F

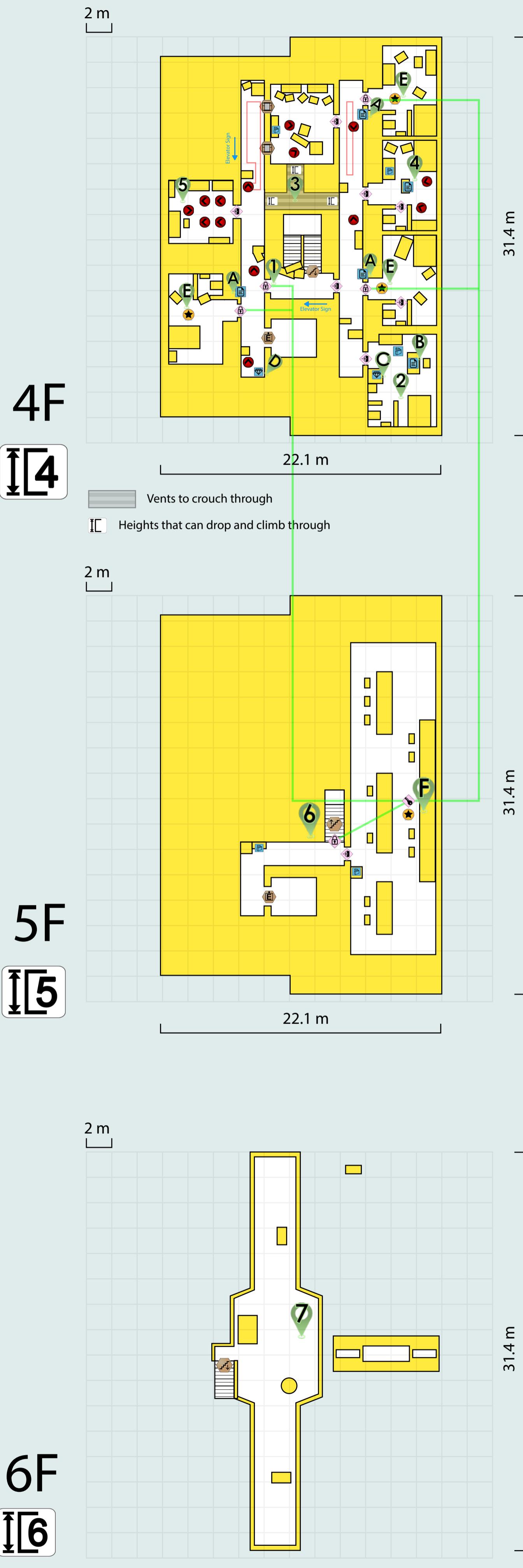
↑ 3

Vents to crouch through  
Heights that can drop and climb through

## Notes

- 1 Stealth entry points of 2F, can get access to the engine room through vents.
- 2 Rewards that can be converted to agent credits, specifically, a document about where the repair parts of the ship are purchased from.
- 3 Stealth entry points from 2F to 3F.
- 4 Stairways to upper decks. Players can get to the upper deck and skip the discovery content of 3F.
- 5 Fitness room that is altered for captive registration (with notes of the people captured onto the ship). Narrative beat
- 6 A long trail of blood left by someone being dragged on the ground. It leads players to discover the story of the ship.
- A Agent that the player is trying to find. As players go up the stairs. This enemy spotted you and counter-attacked you. Surprisingly he turns out to be the agent you are looking for. He told players that he has been in the ship for almost 2 month. People on the ship are tortured and brainwashed into cult soldiers. He was initially captured, but he managed to pretend that he has been brainwashed and turned himself into a undercover. Narrative twists. The protagonist decides to trust him and sent him to prepare an escape plan.
- B This enemy carries the key to the food storage rooms.
- C The door to the electricity room is locked. A note indicating the key to food storage room is carried by a patrol enemy in the hallway.
- D Note left by a guard that shows the dining area is turned into a praying area to train cult soldiers.
- E Rewards in the electricity room for discovery. This reward can be converted to agent credits. It is a file of the electricity usage of the ship. (This design beat intends to guide the player to return to other rooms of the floor and explore areas that have not been explored)
- F Door with laser trap. When triggered it raises alarm on the ship. Can be disabled through the breaker box in the electricity room.
- G Rewards in the fish room for thorough exploration. Specifically, it is the prison arrangement sheets that reveal the cruel imprisonment of the captives. This intel can be converted to agent credit to redeem weapons and other in-game items.

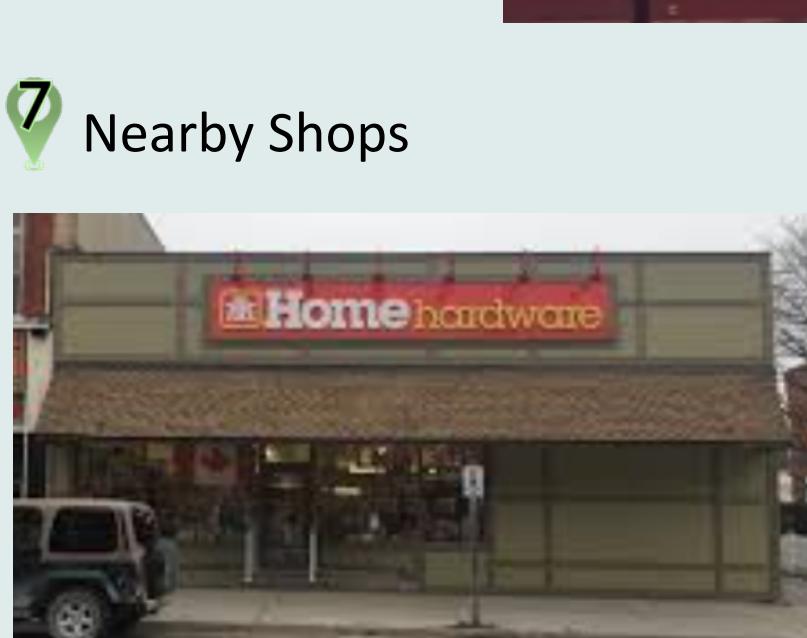
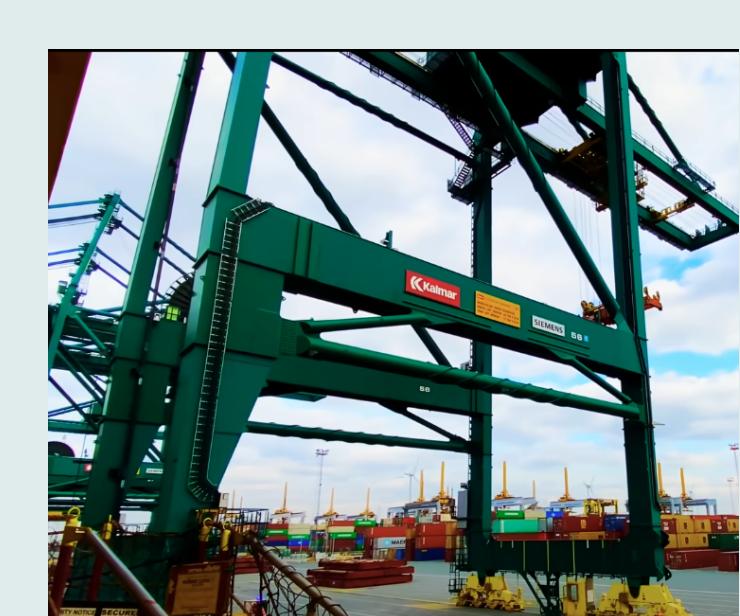
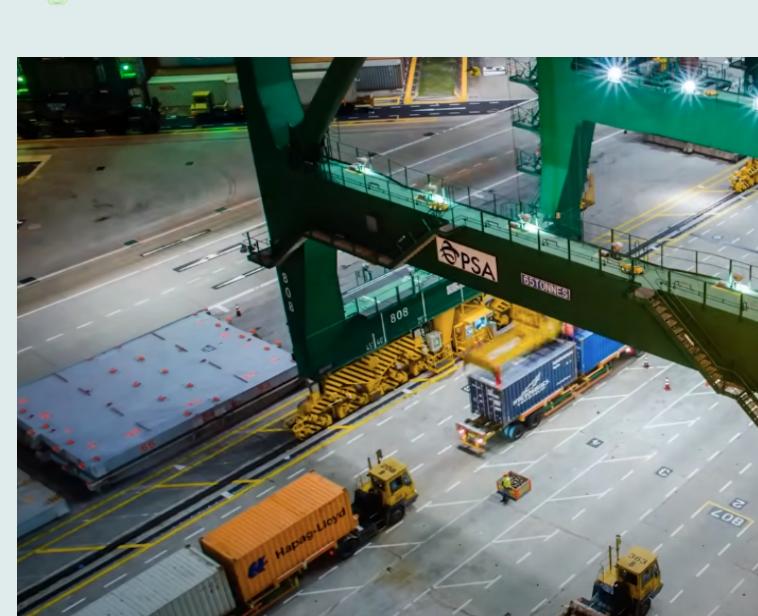
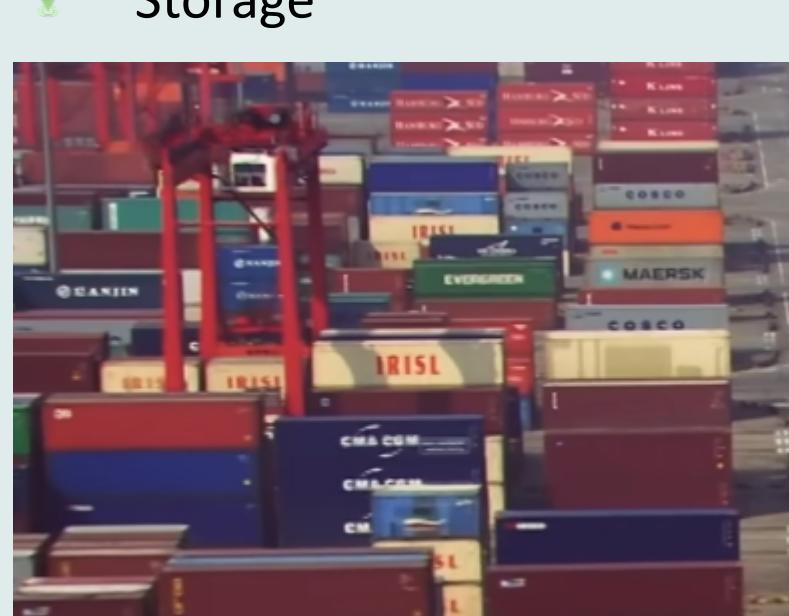
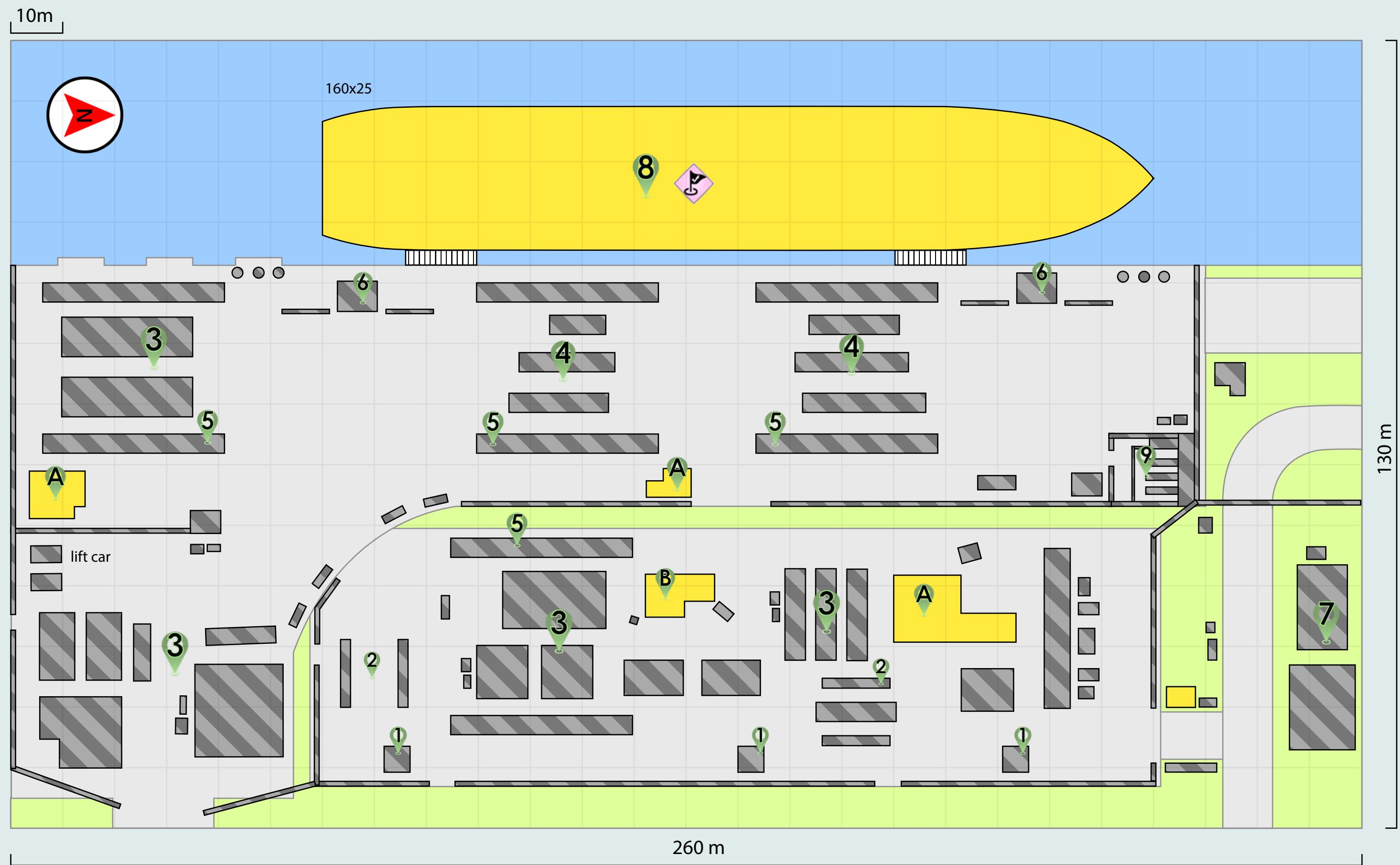
# Deck Interior Overview



## Notes

- 1 One side of the stairway is locked, player can only access the right door. This is to set players in the right order of narrative beats to convey what the ship cult crew is doing.
- 2 Captain's Room provides more narrative content and discovery rewards. It is hidden behind two big obstacles in the hallway making it harder to discover.
- 3 Vents that connect the recreation room and the hallways on each side provide stealth approaches.
- 4 Two enemies cleaning a messy and bloody crew cabin. A note on the desk is the diary left by a captive. It indicates a captive's suffering and his process of turning into a lunatic from brainwashing.
- 5 Medical rooms where one enemy is brainwashing the other four cult soldiers.
- 6 Stairs to the top deck. It is locked and can be unlocked after players get the captain key from the cult leader.
- 7 Top deck where players make their escape by jumping to the rising container to finish the level on a high note of action.
- A Captive cabins where captives are locked up for social isolation. Locked doors can be unlocked by the captain key. Notes near the locked cabins indicate that the people inside are new to the ship and are undergoing social isolation process (which is a common method for cult brainwashing). It also noted their brainwash session progress and effectiveness.
- B A document on the desktop shows that the ship has been operated for 2 years, training civilians, criminals, and hostages into cult soldiers. The leader of the cult kept the real use of the ship a secret. And there are explosives all around the ship with the detonation button on the navigation bridge in case this secret cult training facility is exposed.
- C Reward for discovery. This is an intel that lists other organizations that have close relation with the cult. This reward can be converted to agent credits.
- D Reward for discovery. This is an intel that lists the shift of patrols. This reward can be converted to agent credits.
- E Captives of the ship who are not yet turned into cult soldiers. Players can rescue them when they obtain the captain key from the cult leader.
- F The cult leader carries captain key that unlocks captive cabins and stairway door. Upon arrival, cult leader desperately detonate the ship, a 2 minutes time countdown will start. Players obtain the captain key and decide whether they go back to the captive cabins to save the captives. They can also use the key to escape alone through the stairs to the top deck.

# Port Exterior Reference 1F



9 Electricity Control Area



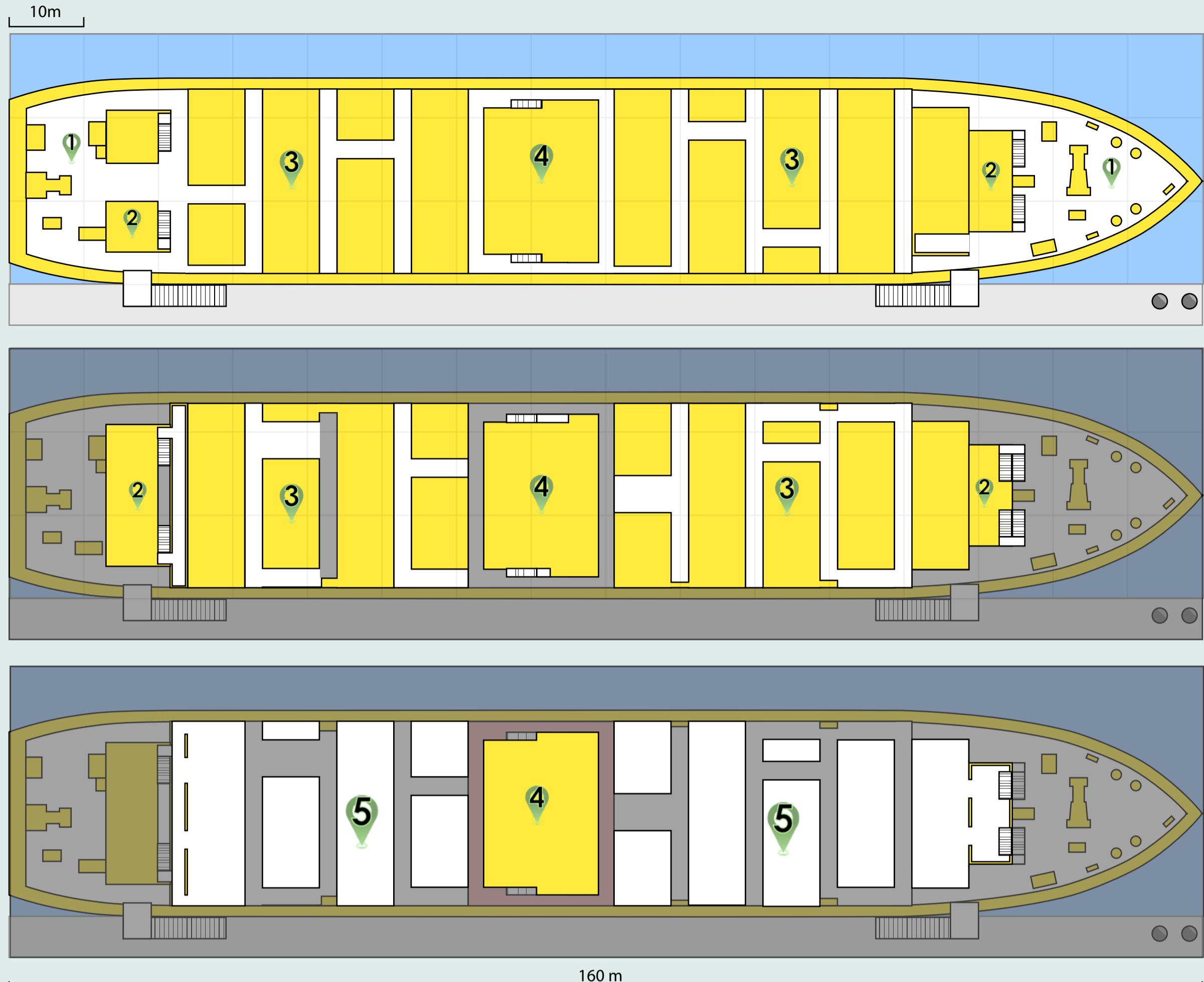
A Security Booth



B Port Control Room



# Cargo Ship Interior Reference



1 Ship Head and Tail



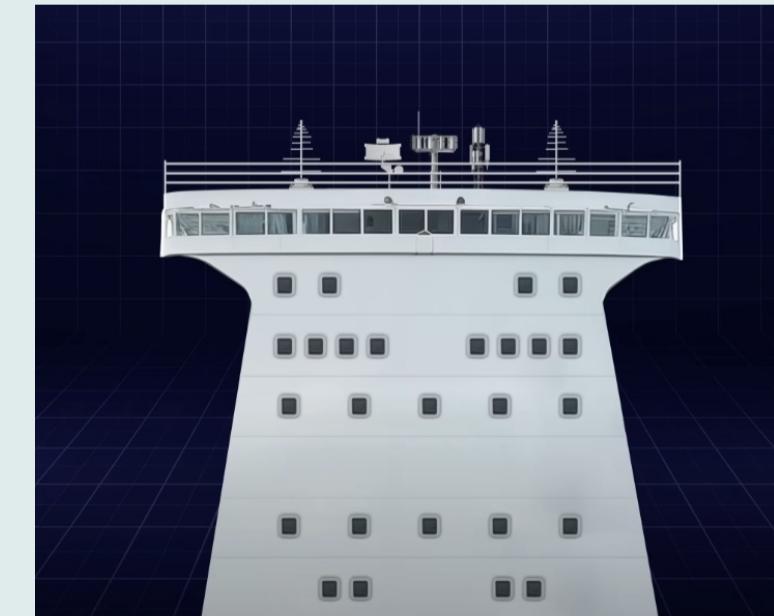
2 Handling Platforms



3 Platform Path Between Containers



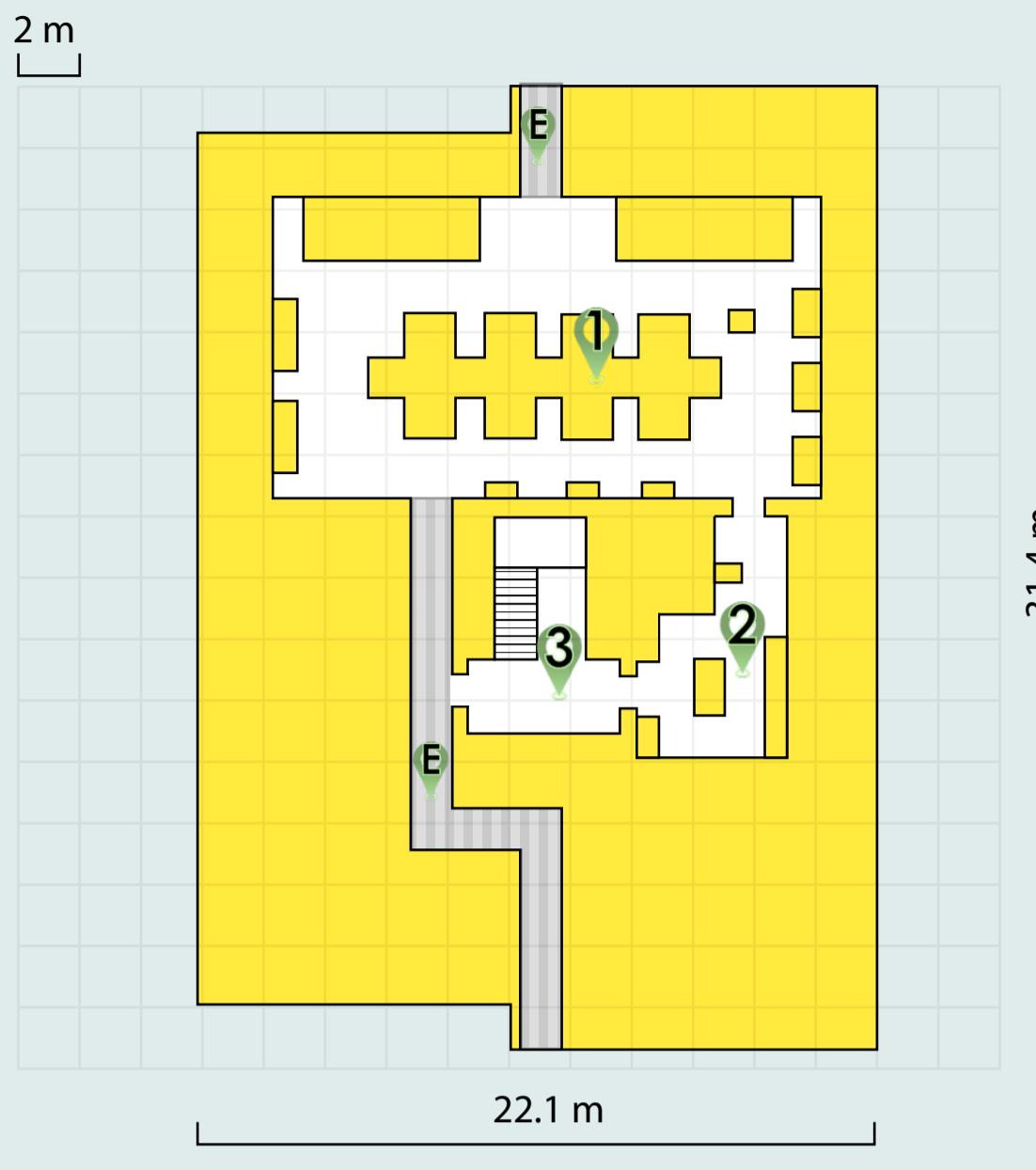
4 Accommodation Deck



5 Top of the container piles



# Deck Interior Reference 2F



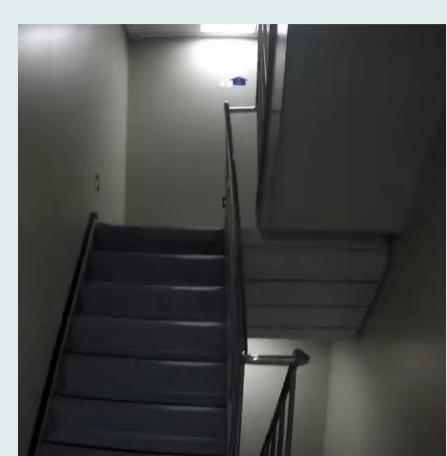
1 Engine Room



2 Engine Storeroom



3 Stairways



4



5



6 Crew Lounge



7 Gym



8 Change Room



9 Crew Mess



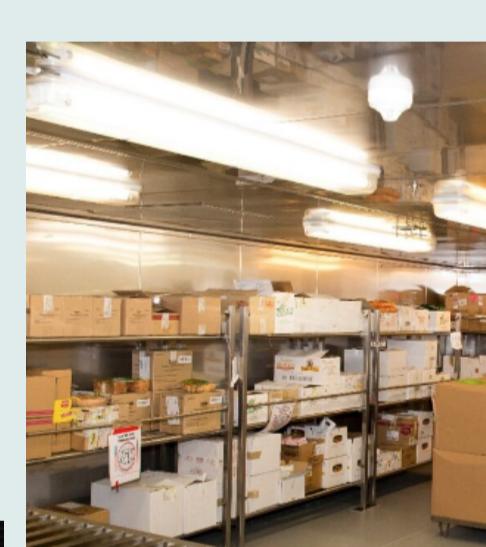
# Deck Interior Reference 3F



A Kitchen



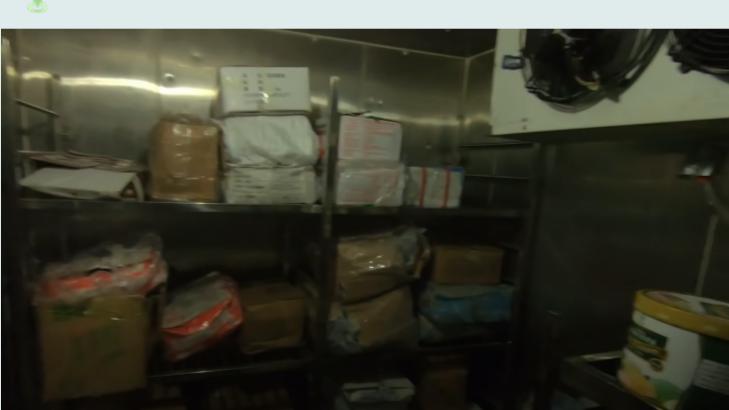
B Vegetable Room



C Meat Room



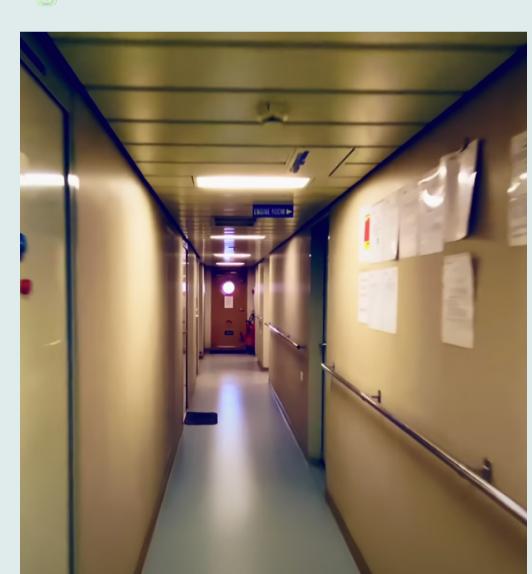
D Fish Room



E Vent



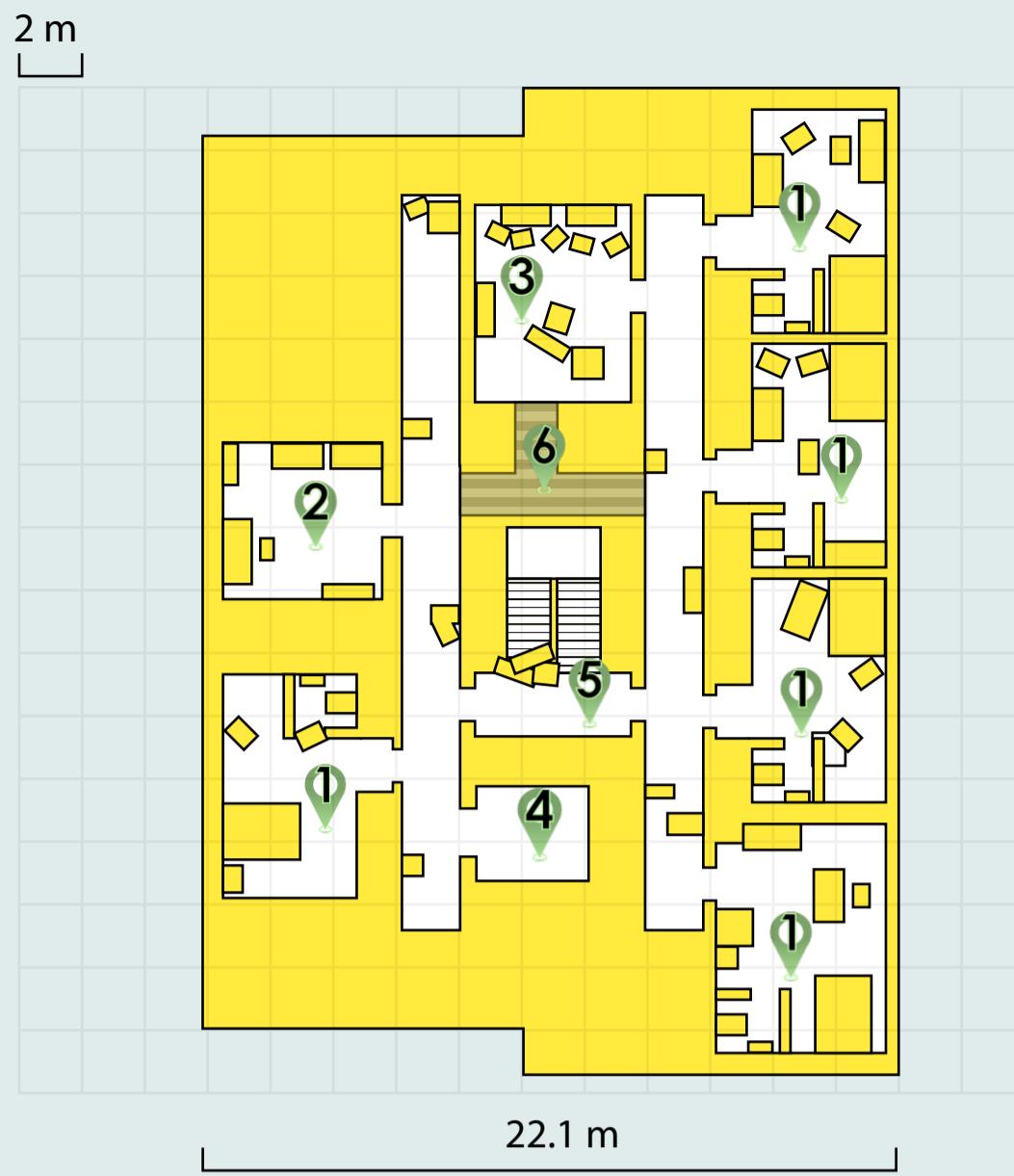
F Hallway



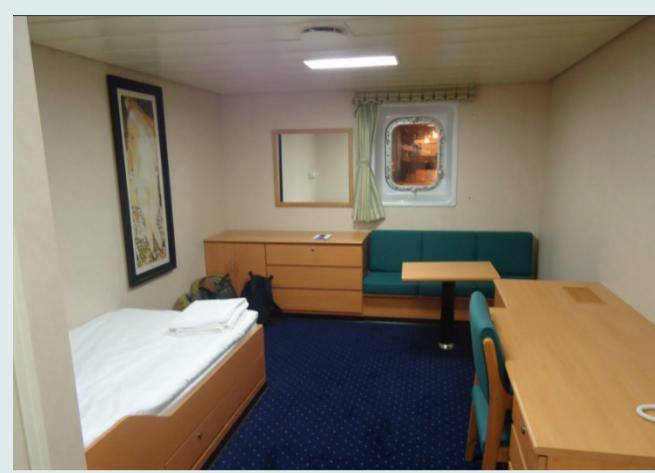
G Blood Trail



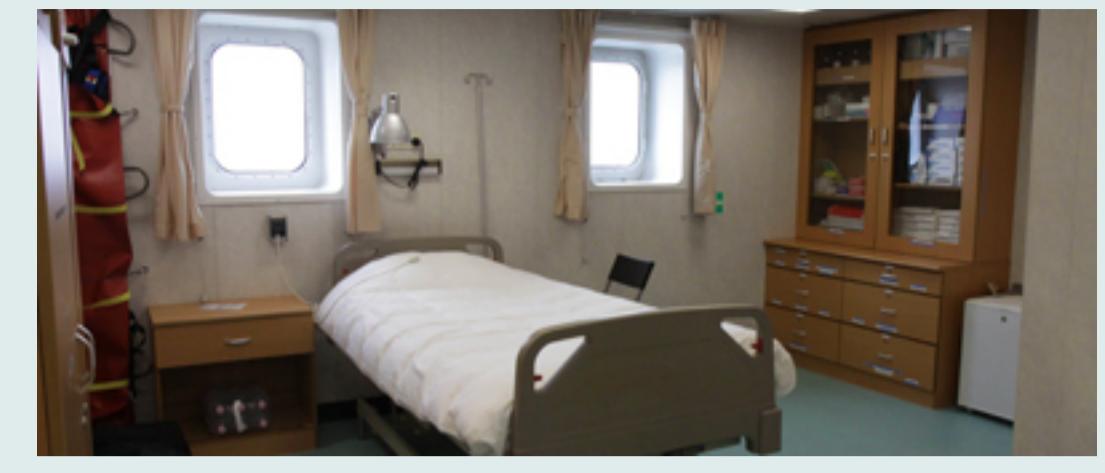
# Deck Interior Reference 4F



1 Crew Cabin



2 Medical Room



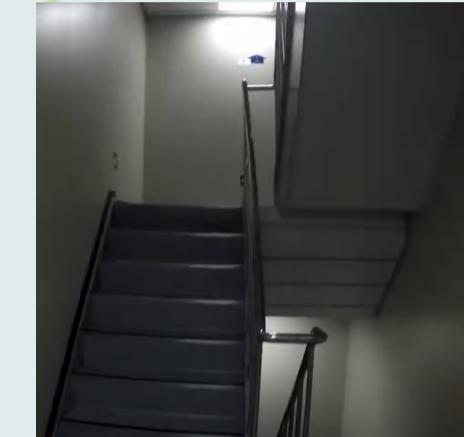
3 Recreation Room



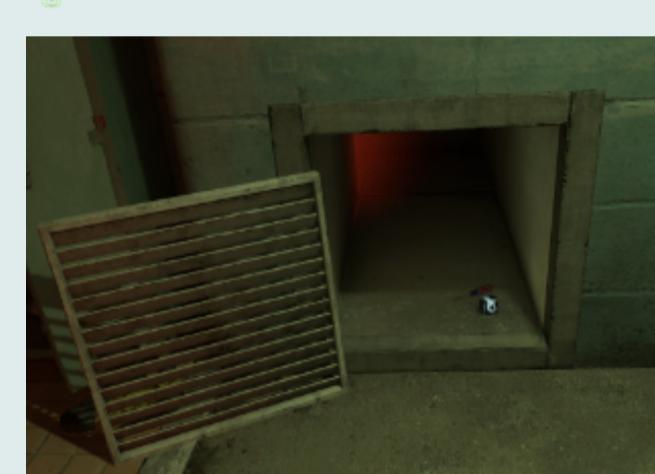
4 Elevator



5 Stairways



6 Vent



7 Navigation Bridge

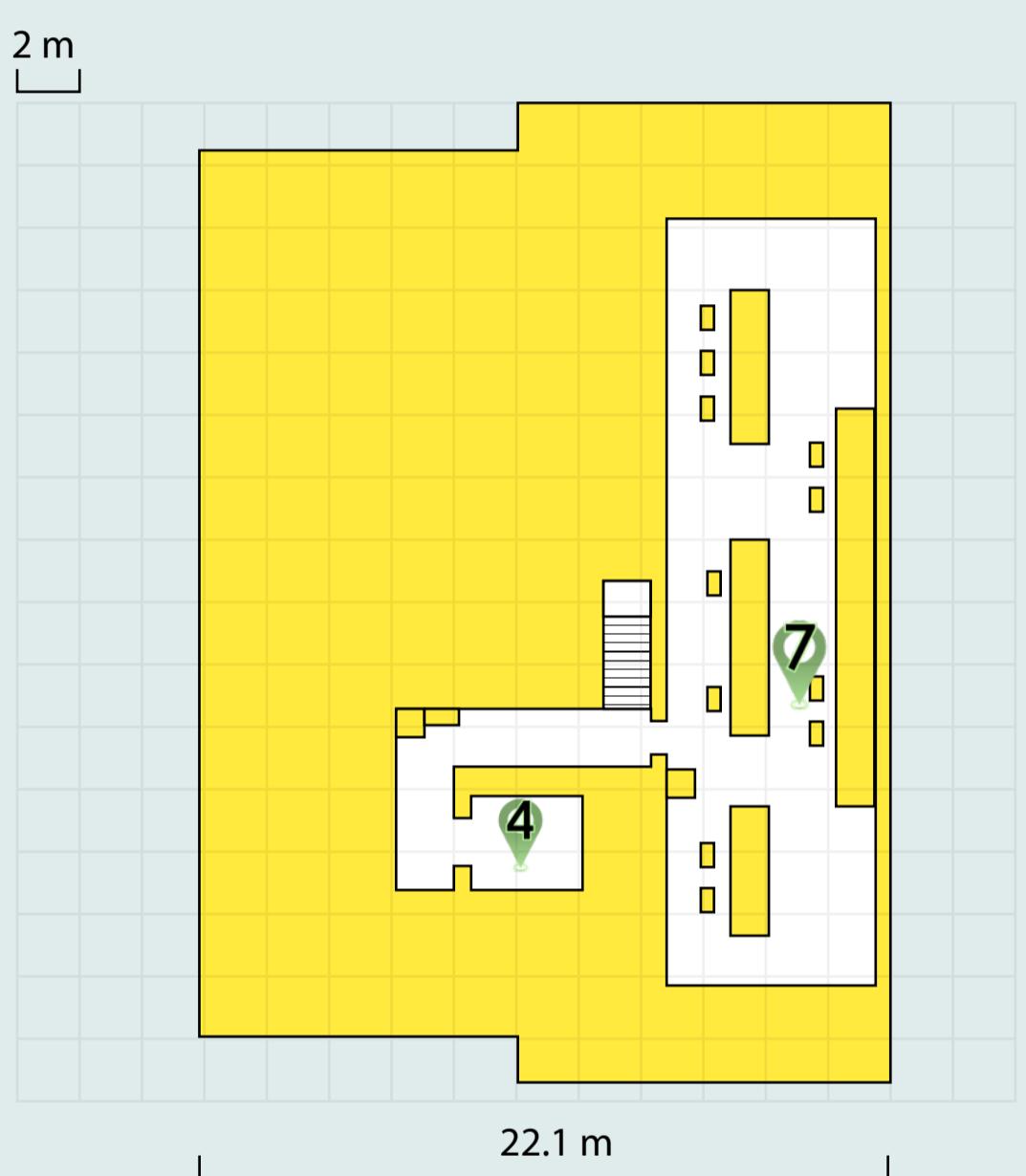


8 Compass Deck



5F

↑↓ 5

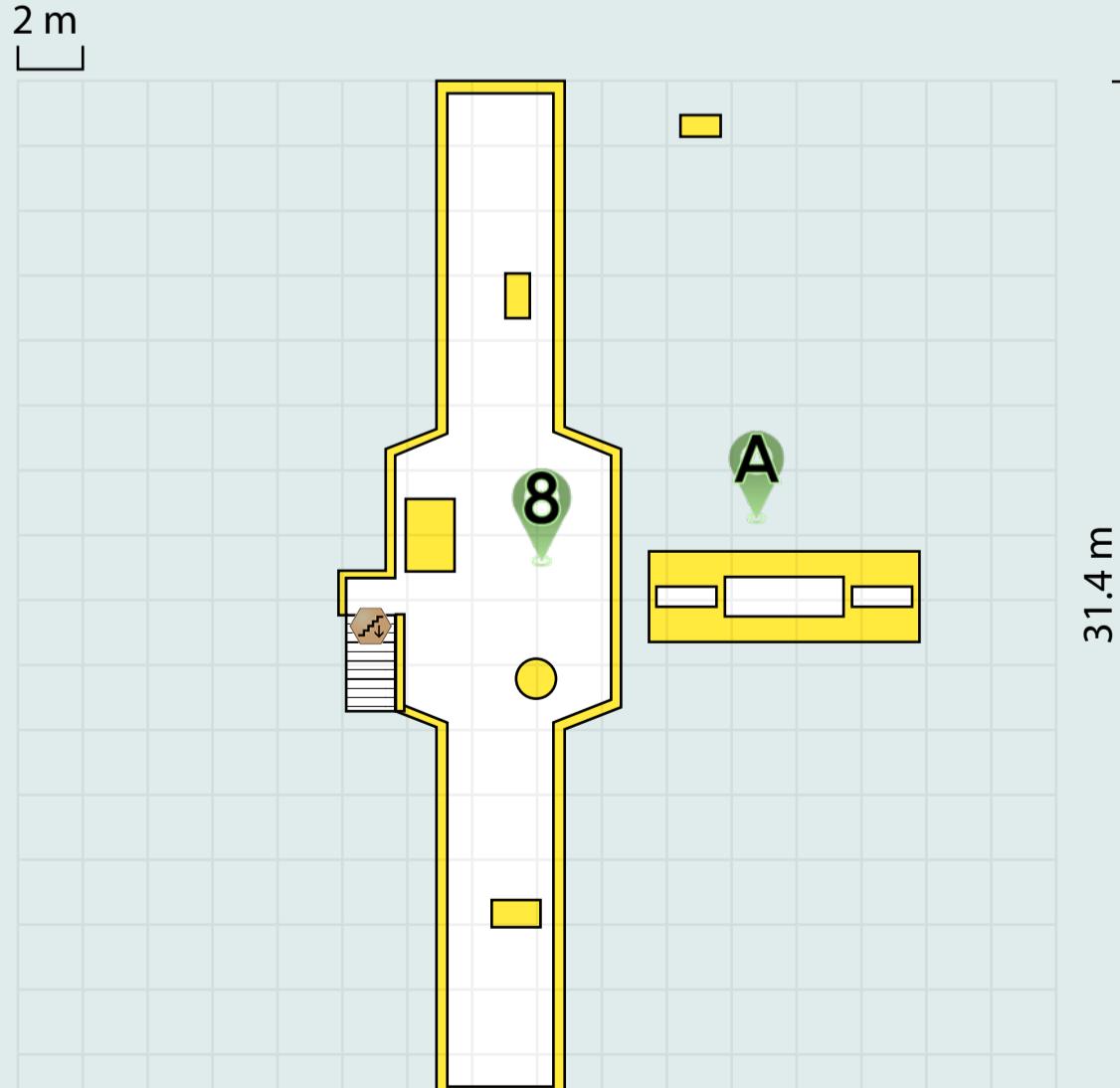


A Loading Container



6F

↑↓ 6



# Port Walkthrough 1F

↑1



Example Aggressor Walkthrough

Example Stealth Walkthrough

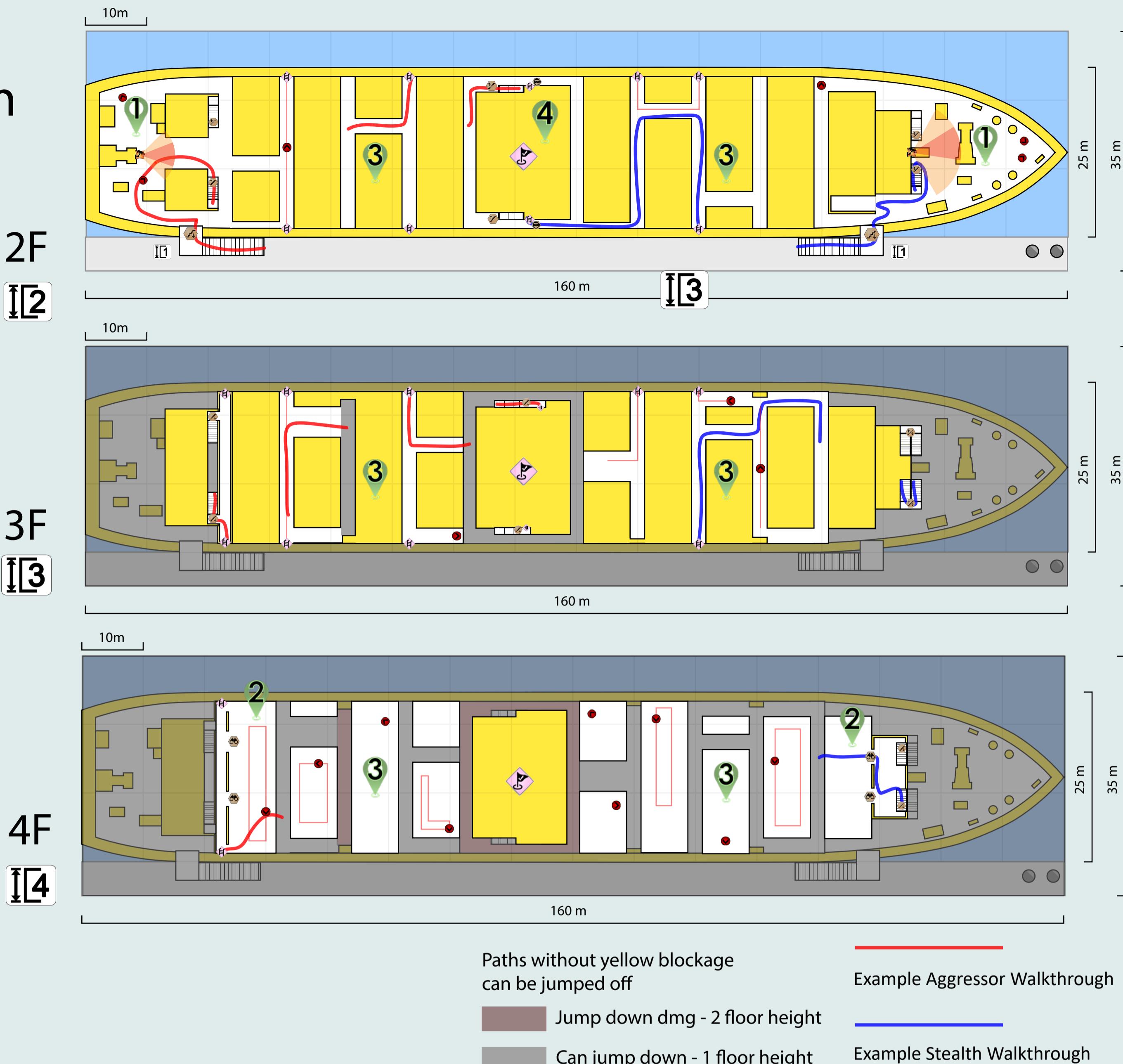
For this FPS level, although most of the level can be completed by a pacifist play style, the level did not support a complete pacifist play style because a pacifist playstyles need to limit the amount of enemy presence which can take away the excitement of gunplay in a FPS game level.

## Notes

### Get to the Ship

- 1 Entry to the port area. Approach the port and saw the giant ship parking in the port (Spot Landmark). The player can select an entry location fitting their playstyles. Aggressor players can come in from the gates. Cameras will raise alarm letting players jump directly into combat. Stealthy players can go through stealth entries and use the vantage points and open views near the stealth entries to scout and plan their infiltration.
- 2 Infiltrate the port through big piles of containers. Commander calls on telecommunication giving mission brief: "An agent was reported missing in the ship, your mission is to get into the ship and investigate the incidence. Make it loud or stay in the dark. How to do this is entirely on your decision."
- 3 There are some management sheds and booths with a lot of unloaded containers. The player travels through a couple of loosely guarded areas and reaches close to the ship. Specifically in this shed, two gaurds chat: "this ship parks here every few months, but I don't see much containers loaded. Yeah, isn't that weird?" (building narrative anticipation)
- 4 (Optional) Points of Interest for discovery. The player can discover security rooms and port control rooms to gain intel and keys to unlock specific areas for rewards. This hints to the player that their exploration will be rewarded to encourage the playstyle.
- 5 The player gets closer to the ship bypassing/eliminating a few enemies (low difficulty). The player reaches one of the stairs. And board the ship. Stairs should be long and with obvious colour for players to perceive clearly.

# Cargo Ship Walkthrough



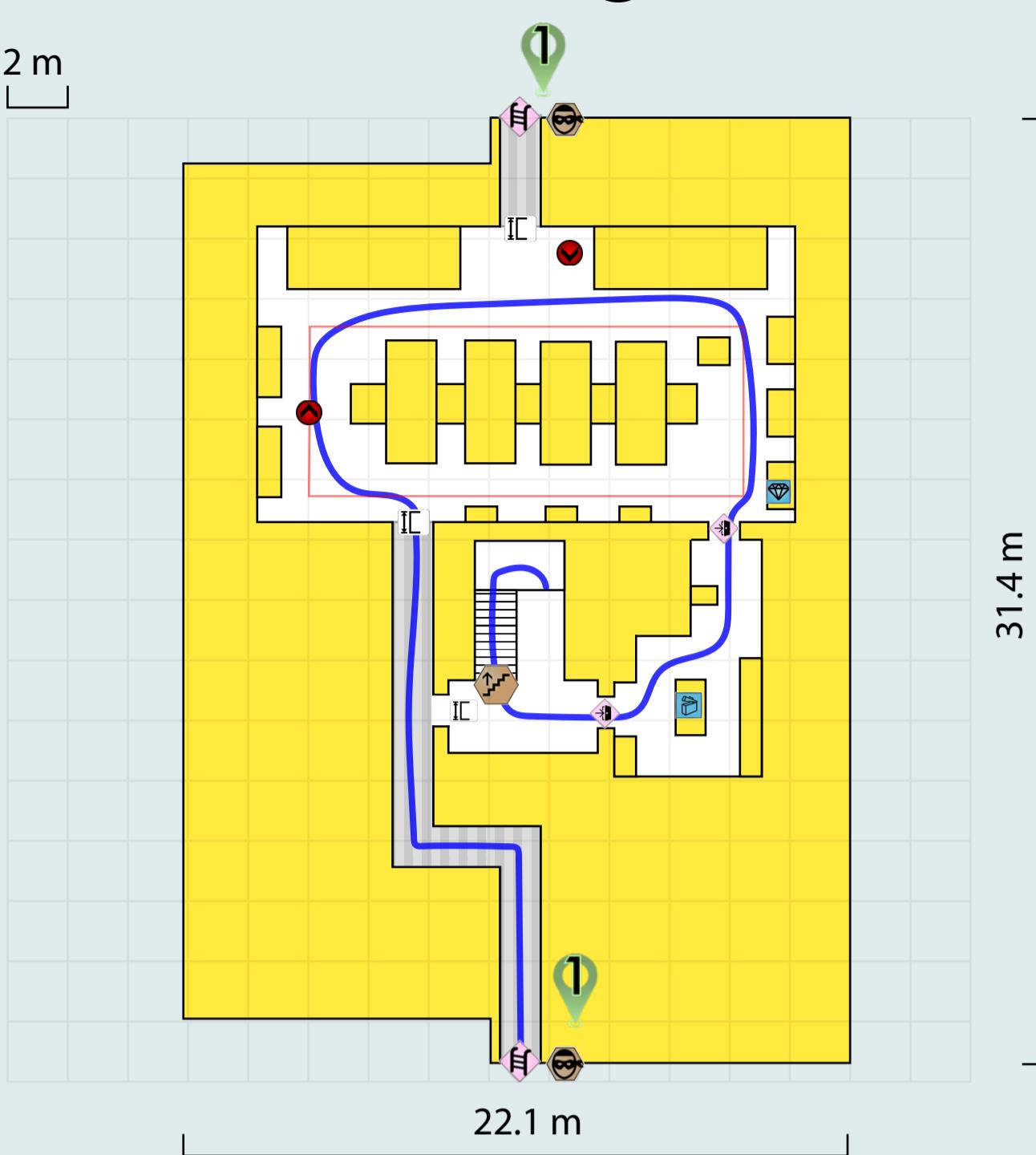
## Notes

### Between Edges

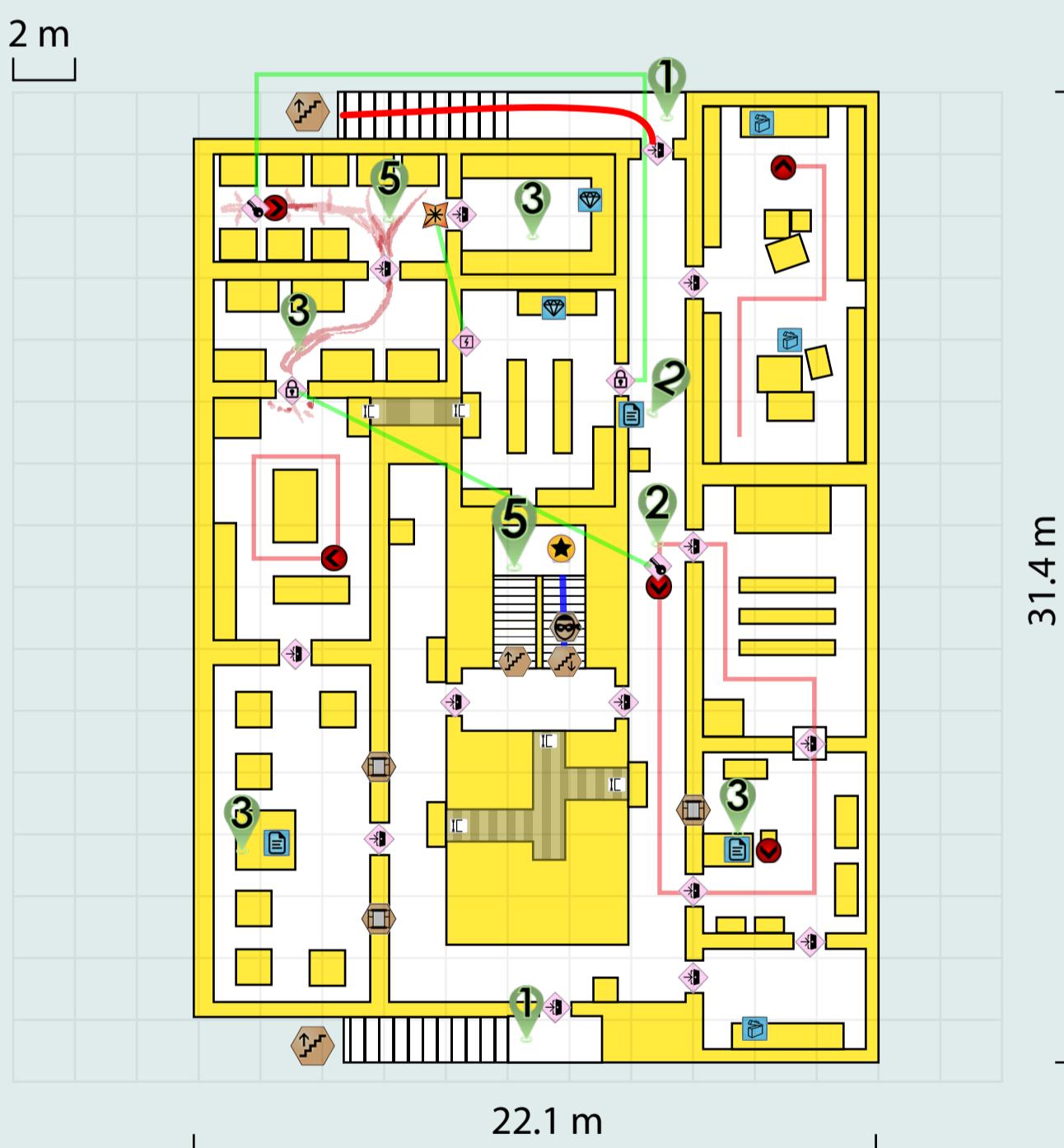
- 1 The player boarded the ship and spotted loose enemy presence. Enemies are not facing the player giving chances to stealthily bypasses/kills these enemies as a tutorial to the stealthy playstyle change. They will also encounter an opened container to hint to players that some containers are empty and they can go through.
- 2 The player reaches the top of the handling platforms and uses them as vantage points to scout the next area where they will need to traverse through the tight passages between containers. Intel com: "It is tight space in there, you would not want any attention here, careful."
- 3 The player traverses between the narrow pathways between containers. Lots of enemies are on top of the containers. The player needs to traver up and down between 2F and 3F. This environment setting conveys tension and dangerous emotions by putting players in a narrow space and by having enemy footsteps over the player where can not be seen. Exposure can attract enemies attack the player from the top which is very dangerous (facilitate stealth playstyle). While the player explore the container area. He/she would also find several containers that are open. They are all empty that allows the player to go through. Making player guess why are all containers empty? (building narrative anticipation)
- 4 The players can gain access to the accommodation deck by the stairs or vents (stealth entry). Vents would be made relatively less obvious than stairs to reward thorough exploration and keen observation.

# Deck Walkthrough

2F



3F



Vents to crouch through

Heights that can drop and climb through

The interior space is tight and would be messy for walkthrough lines. Please refer to the gameplay beats and the red and blue lines beside it to see example walkthrough path of different playstyles.

## Notes

Example Aggressor Walkthrough

## Undercover

Example Stealth Walkthrough

(1) The player gain access to the accommodation deck by vents to the 2F engine room or stairs to the 3F hallway. Engine room can also be accessed by going down stairs from 3F as a exploration area.

(2) The 3F focus on optional exploration with puzzle gameplay. The note serves as the starting point of the puzzle. The player sees that the electricity room is locked. A note indicating the key to food storage room is carried by a patrol enemy in the hallway.

(3) Optional discovery areas that add narrative beat to the exploration of the ship. (Building narrative anticipation)

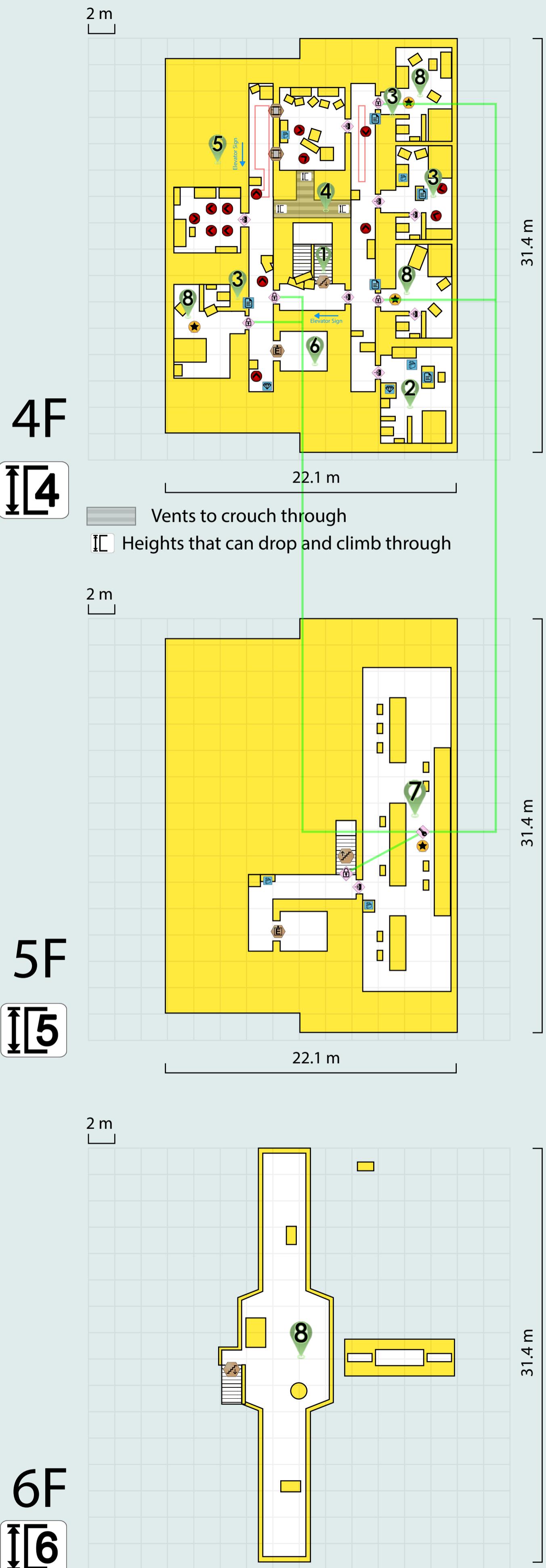
- Cages in the vegetable storage room.
- Blood in the meat room.
- Dinning area turned into a praying room
- Fitness room for registration (with notes of the people captured onto the ship).

(4) As the player go up the stairs. An enemy spotted the player and counter-attacked the player. Surprisingly he turns out to be the agent Blue Bird the player are looking for. He told the player that he has been in the ship for almost 2 month. People on the ship are tortured and brainwashed into cult soldiers. He was initially captured, but he managed to pretend that he has been brainwashed and turned himself into a undercover.

(Reveal of narrative anticipation)

Agent decide to trust Blue Bird and sent him to prepare a escape plan.

# Deck Walkthrough



The interior space is tight and would be messy for walkthrough lines. Please refer to the gameplay beats and the red and blue lines beside it to see example walkthrough path of different playstyles.

## Notes

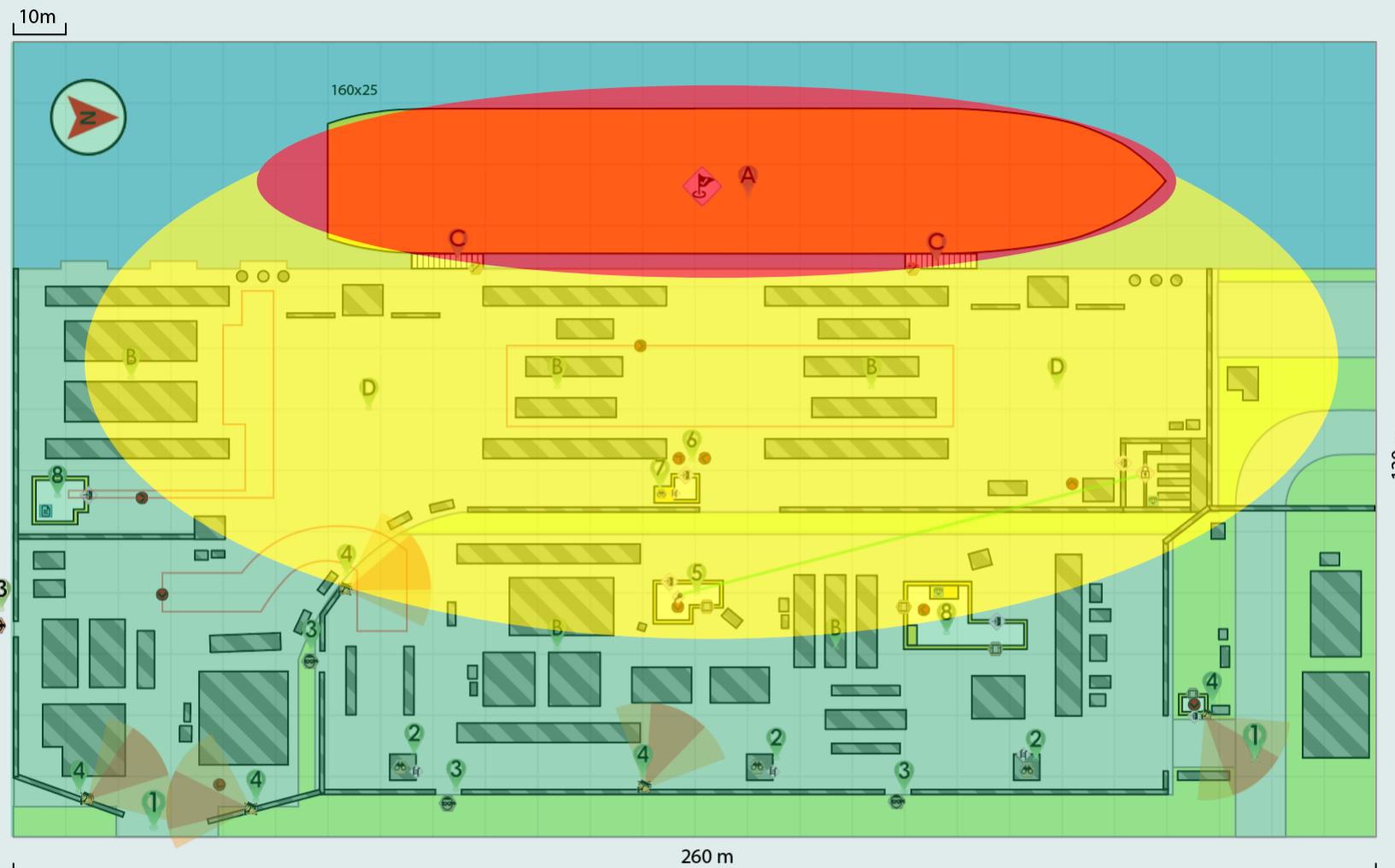
### Grand Finale

Example Aggressor Walkthrough

Example Stealth Walkthrough

- 1 The player gains access to the 4F. The player can only go through the door on the right. This floor focuses on more intensive and linear action/combat experience. The player will face more enemies and have to directly confront some enemies to build excitement to reach the narrative climax.
- 2 The player discovers the captain's cabin. On the desk, there is a document revealing the secret of the cult. "The ship has been operated for 2 years training civilians, criminals, and hostage soldiers into cult soldiers. The leaders of the cult kept the real use of the ship a secret. And there are explosives all around the ship with the detonation button in the bridge at the top of the ship deck." The objective now is to get to the navigation bridge and capture the cult leader.
- 3 As the player travels through hallways, he/she will see notes on locked cabin doors that show captives are socially isolated as part of the cult brainwashing process. One open cabin has a note showing the captive's suffering during the brainwashing process.
- 4 Stealth approach to combat. The player can use vents to quickly lose enemies and sneak attack from another end of the vents.
- 5 Areas where players will confront enemies in medical room and recreation room. The medical room is turned into a brainwash room. An enemy is brainwashing the other four enemy soldiers.
- 6 Take the elevator to gain access to the navigation bridge.
- 7 The enemy leader desperately detonated the ship to destroy evidence. The player gets the key to the ship cabins and the compass deck. A timer of the explosion shows up: 2 min left. Agent: "I have controlled a loading machine. Go to the top and jump off to the cargo right below, I will catch you!" Player: "There are still people on the ship." Telecom says: "2 minutes! You got to evacuate! They are turning into cult freaks anyway!"
- 8 Moral Decision:
  - #1: Going back to cabins to save people (optional).
  - or
  - #2: Evacuate through the compass deck.
 #1: The player runs back in the dark and red alarm lights. Enemies run around seeking to evacuate and ignore the player. The player can shoot enemies running away while saving as many people as he/she can. The player goes back to the top to evacuate through the compass deck.
- #2: The player runs to the compass deck and escapes. The agent: "I am sorry."

# 360 Approach



Mission set place in a port. It is assuming players will be approaching the ship by land therefore 360 approach are applied with a tendency to the land area.

## Safe Approaching Area

- Scout and Plan
- Intuitive guide with cameras, routes and landmarks

## Minor encounters

- Tutorial on gameplay elements
- Minor hostile encounters
- Starter narrative clue

## Main Mission Stage

- Rich narrative content
- Exploration and puzzle
- Intensive Hostile encounters

# Level Beat Pacing Sheet

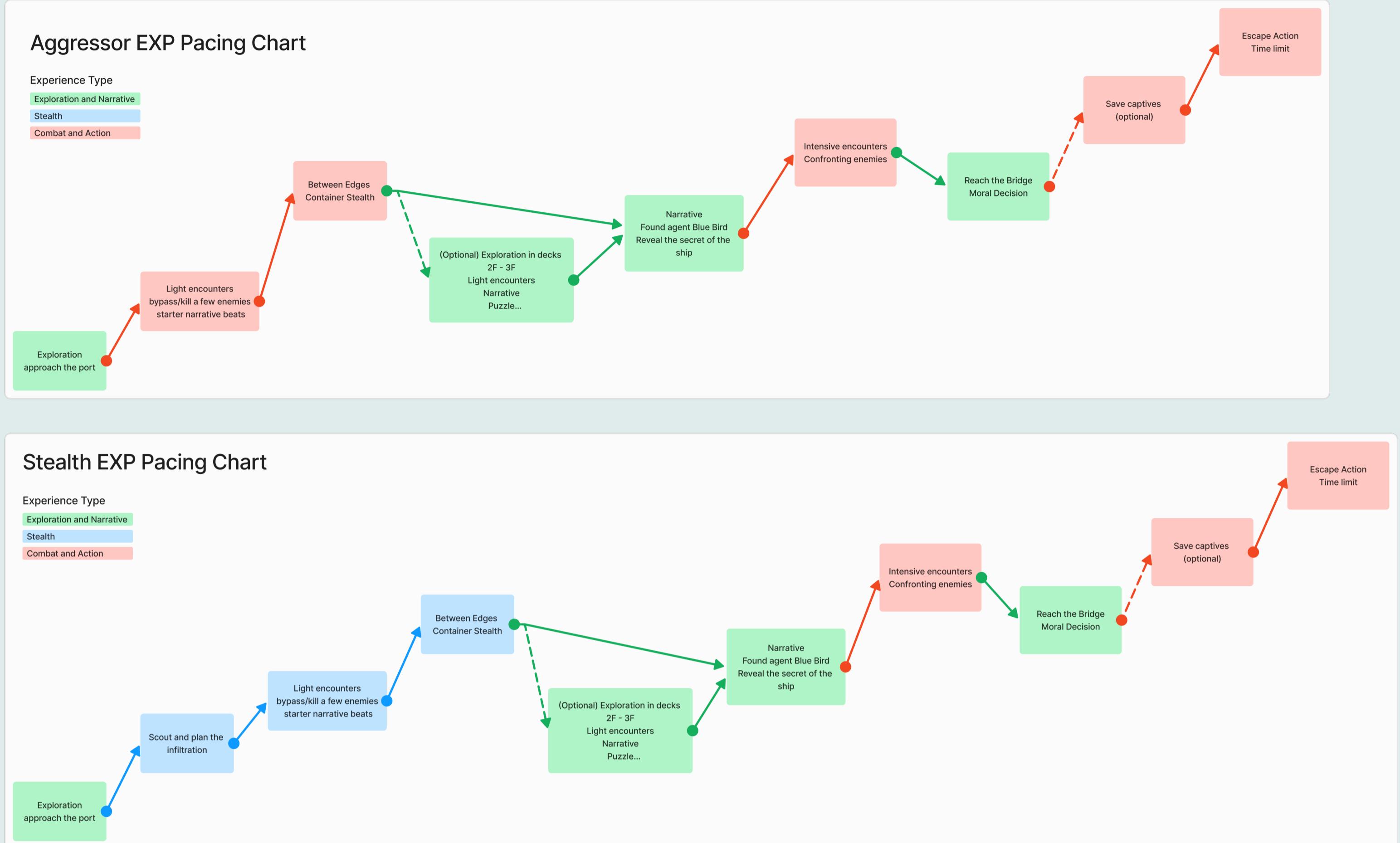
LEVEL BEAT PACING SHEET								
Beat Title	Port	Get to the ship 1	Get to the ship 2	Get to the ship 3	Between Edges 1	Between Edges 2	Undercover 1	Undercover 2 Find the agent
Event / activity	Exploration	Scout and Plan	Light encounters Stealth/Aggressive Narrative	Light encounters Stealth/Aggressive	Vantage Stealth tutorial	Medium encounters Stealth Exploration	Light encounters, Stealth Narrative, Exploration, Puzzle	Narrative
Description	Approach the port and saw the giant ship parking in the port (Spot Landmark)	NPC calls on telecommunication giving mission brief:  An agent was reported missing in the ship, the player need to get into this ship and investigate about the incidence.	There are some management shed with a lot of unloaded containers. the player travers through a couple of loose guarded area and reach close to the ship.  Two guards chat: "this ship parks here every few months, but I don't see much containers loaded. Yeah, isn't that weird?"	the player get closer to the ship bypassing / eliminating a few enemies (low difficulty).  the player reach one of the stairs. And climbed up to enter the ship.	Player gets on top of a container and stealthily killed one enemy as a tutorial to the play style change.  Intel com: "It is a tight space in there, the player would not want any attention here, careful."	Player traverse between the narrow pathways between containers.  Some enemies are on top of the containers. Player need to travers top and down. Expose themselves attract enemies attack them from the top which is very dangerous (facilitate stealth play style).	Player navigate through different desks and find strange clues. (Building anticipation)	As the player go up the stairs. An enemy spotted the player and counter attacked the player. Surprisingly he turns out to be the agent the player are looking for. He told the player that he has been in the ship for almost 2 month. People on the ship are tortured and brainwashed into cult soldiers. He was initially captured, but he managed to pretend that he has been brainwashed and turned himself into a undercover. the player decide to trust him and sent him to prepare a escape plan.
Location	Outerside of the port	Vantage Points (Outerside of the Port)	Outerside of the port	Outerside of the port	Between ship container piles	Between ship container piles	In lower decks	In lower decks
Duration/min	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	3	4	1
Beat Title	Undercover 3 Find the secret of the ship in captain room (optional)	Reach the bridge	Detonation	Grand Finale 1	Grand Finale 2 Save people in locked cabins and cages, 0/4 (Optional)	Grand Finale 3 Go back to the bridge	Grand Finale 4 Jump off to the lifeboat deck	
Event / activity	Narrative Puzzle	High encounters Stealth / Aggressive / Action	Narrative	Player Agency/Emotional Experience	Narrative Action	Narrative Action	Narrative Action	
Description	Through a vent connected with the captain room, the player enters the captain room. the player found a document on the desktop. The document shows that the ship has been operated for 2 years training civilians, criminals, and hosted soldiers into cult soldiers. The leaders of the cult kept the real use of the ship a secret. And there are explosives all around the ship with the detonation button in the bridge at the top of the ship deck.	the player begin to go up from the lower decks.  On the way player sees several room with cruel scene (reveal anticipation). Cabin rooms are also at this deck and people are crying to get out. All the cabin doors are locked.  E.g. Cabin room with notes of suffering and social isolation. Medical room with notes that brainwash	The enemy leader despatchly detonated the ship to destroy evidence. Player get the key of the ship cabins. A timer of explosion shows up: 2 min left.  Agent : "I have controlled a loading machine. Go to the top and jump off to the cargo right below the player!"  Player "There are still people on the ship." Tele-com says: "2 minutes? the player got to evacuate!"	Moral choice: going back to cabins to save people (optional). Or Evacuate with the agent	the player runs back in dark and red alarms. Enemies run around seeking evacuate and ignores the player.  Players can shoot enemies running away while save as much people as they can.	Player run to back to the top. Agent tells players to hurry and jump to the unloading cargo.  Player run to the bridge and climb the ladder to the compass deck.	Cinematic actions. Player leaped on to the raising cargo container and evacuate. Ship explode underneath.	
Location	In lower decks	In higher decks	Bridge	Bridge	In higher decks	Higher decks > life boat deck door > Bridge > Compass deck	Compass deck > Lifeboat deck	Estimated Total Mission Length
Duration/min	2	3	1	0.5	3	2	1	24
Exploration & Narrative								
Stealth								
Combat and Action								

This level beat pacing sheet is what I use to generate an engaging plot for level pacing. Most content are also covered in the walkthrough. But I think this is a good reference of level pacing since it also has the estimated time for each gameplay beat.

(There are iteration changes when designing the final walkthrough, please refer to the final walkthrough for any difference.)

▪ Player experience flow charts on next page >>

# Player Experience Flow Chart



## Addtional Notes

- Added abundant cover spots and turns to support players during encounters.
- Treasures in the form of intel convert into agent experience and achievements, fitting the theme.
- All gameplay mechanics are introduced within the port area, allowing players to familiarize themselves in a controlled, safe environment before entering the main mission area.
- Varied environments create diverse encounter scenarios, leading to unique and dynamic gunfights.
- Moral decisions added to enhance player agency and emotional engagement.

Thank you for reading!