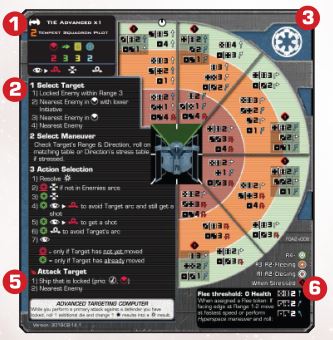
Introduction – AI Ships

AI ships do not program dials during the Planning Phase like human players do. Instead, they determine their maneuver when it is their turn to activate during the Activation Phase. The Empire always has Initiative, so AI ships will always act before Rebel ships of the same Pilot Skill.

When activated, AI ships choose a target and then roll to determine their maneuver based on the target’s current distance and bearing. AI ships do not take their target’s pilot skill into account; only its current position and facing. As a result, AI ships with low pilot skill are easy to outmaneuver, but Elite ships with high pilot skill that can barrel roll or boost are much more challenging to catch.

When activating an AI ship during the Activation Phase, follow Steps 1-3 on its statcard, top to bottom. Sometimes you will need to per-measure for maneuvers or actions in order to help it make the correct choice for the situation.

When an AI ship activates during the Combat Phase, use the “Attack Target” step to determine its attack target. Some mission special rules modify this.



Each AI ship has a statcard

with its basic stats as well

as logic for determining its

movement, actions taken,

and attack targets.

1. Ship Icon, Name, and Basic Stats
2. Activation Phase logic. These steps may be modified by mission special rules.
3. AI Ship’s Faction
4. Ship Image and Maneuver Table
5. Special Ship Abilities
6. Maneuver Table selection logic / Flee Threshold

AI Setup

For each AI ship present, you will need the model with its base and its AI card. AI ships do not need maneuver dials. For ships other than TIE Fighters, you will also usually need to draw an Imperial Pilot card to determine its equipment. See Enemy Ship Types, p29.

Ship Numbering

For each mission, number all AI enemy ships listed in the Squad Composition table in ascending order. For example, if Alpha and Beta Squadrons have 4 TIE Fighters each, number the Alpha Squad ships 1 - 4 and the Beta Squad ones 5 - 8. If additional enemy ships deploy later in the mission, continue numbering them in the same way.

This is most important for AI ships of the same pilot skill. The numbers on their bases will be the order they activate, move, and fire in, lowest to highest. This numbering system removes any player decision-making from the AI ship activation order.

AI Deployment

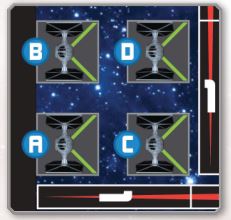
The mission’s Squad Composition table lists which enemy ships are present, and the mission diagram indicates where those squadrons enter play using numbered arrows (vectors). See Mission Setup Diagrams, p26 for more details.

Ships in a squadron are deployed in Formation, but the exact layout depends on the number of

ships. Centre a squad’s formation(s) over its numbered arrow on the mission’s setup diagram and follow the diagram to the left.

Deploy the highest numbered ship in position A along the board edge, the next highest in B, and so on until all ships in the squadron are placed. The ships should be spaced about 2cm apart, so that the width of a maneuver template fits between them.

Since the lowest-numbered ship in a formation moves first, this setup prevents them from overlapping each other (and losing their actions) most of the time.

AI ships always deploy in square formations to minimize collisions and focus their firing arcs.

If there are different types of ships in a squadron, deploy each type in a separate formation with both formations adjacent to each other.

There are no formations in the game with more than 4 ships.

Step 1: Select Target

Follow the steps on the AI statcard to choose the target that best meets the criteria. Use this target for all activation phase steps (1-3), but re-select a target when attacking in the combat phase.

Determining “Nearest”

The target that is physically nearest in the shortest range band is considered nearest. If there are several possible targets that are at similar distances, choose the one that is closest to being directly ahead of the AI ship.

Touching

AI ships ignore targets they are touching unless there are no other targets within range. In this case, treat the target as being at Range 1 behind the AI ship.

Formations

During the Activation Phase, all ships in a Formation make the same choices during their Select Target and Select Maneuver steps. When the lowest-numbered ship in a formation activates, use its position and facing to determine the target. All other ships in the formation will select the same target.

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Other A.I. Target Selections

The default AI logic presented in this section is referred to as Attack. Many missions in the campaign have special rules that override the standard target selection for some squadrons of AI ships:

Strike AI

These AI ships relentlessly pursue a specific target (usually a mission objective) and will use that target for movement and action selection. If possible, they will also fire on the same target during the combat phase, unless they can make a Range 1 attack against something else.

Flee AI

Mission special rules will specify a board edge. These ships will use the nearest point of that board edge as their target. When performing a maneuver, use the fastest speed for the selected bearing.

Escort AI

These ships only have modified Action Selection. If their escort target is within Range 1, they will use the Protect Action on it. See Protect, p36.

Targeting Huge Ships

When selecting a target, use the nearest point of the huge ship’s base to determine if it is the priority target.

If the huge ship can move this round, use the distance and position of its front stand when selecting a maneuver. If the Huge ship does not move (due to mission special rules) use its nearest stand, and treat it as if it were Closing.

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Step 2: Select Maneuver

Once a target is selected, determine its distance, and facing relative to the AI ship and use this information to select the appropriate maneuver table from the diagram. Roll a six-sided die, and execute the maneuver that matches the result.

For targets on the port (left) side, use the corresponding table on the right side of the diagram, reversing the maneuver icons. Note that some ships like the Decimator have maneuvers that turn away from their targets.

Determining Direction

The AI’s maneuver tables are divided into 8 directions (plus Bullseye), but sometimes its nearest target is on a dividing line. In this case, use the table that the target ship is facing towards. If the target ship is pointing directly toward or away from the AI ship, randomly choose which table to use.

Determining range bands for movement

Use the appropriate range band on the AI statcard. Move outward one range band if the target is moving away.

Determining Target Facing

Draw a line across the front of a targets base. If the AI ship is in front of this line, the target is Closing (A). Otherwise it is Fleeing (B).

AI and Red Maneuvers

If an AI ship executes a red maneuver, it does not receive a stress token – simply skip its Action Selection step. This rule is crucial for operating the AI. However, AI ships can still receive stress from other effects such as Debris Fields. While an AI ship has a stress token, use the “stressed” portion of the maneuver chart. A stressed AI ship may still acquire tokens, but cannot perform free actions.

Ion Tokens

An Ionized AI ship with an Ion token does not need to select a maneuver as it must perform a 1 straight for the ionization effect.

Remember – Ionized ships may only perform a Focus action.

Obstacles and Board Edges

If the AI ship’s maneuver template or ship base will overlap an obstacle, it attempts to Swerve. Adjust its chosen maneuver once to try and avoid the collision, as described below. If it is unable to avoid the obstacle by swerving, execute its original move. If an AI ship begins its movement overlapping an obstacle, it does not attempt to Swerve that turn.

Swerving

Adjust the intended bearing of the maneuver 45º in either direction and then select a new maneuver at the same speed (or closest speed possible within the limitations of the ship’s dial) that brings it closest to its target. Koiogran Turns 2 will change to banks 9 . If the ship’s new maneuver will still collide with the obstacle, perform the original maneuver chosen and suffer the collision.

Swerving and Formations

Although all ships in a formation select the same maneuver, they move one at a time in ascending order and each will swerve independently as required. This may cause ships to break formation – see Breaking Formation, p23.

Board Edges

Unlike avoiding obstacles, AI ships make every effort to avoid the board edge. If their chosen maneuver causes them to leave the board, select the most similar maneuver that still keeps on the board. If there is no possible maneuver that achieves this, the AI ship is destroyed. If the AI flies off the board as a result of being ionized, the player that ionized them scores XP for the kill.

Swerving Examples

A TIE Fighter attempting a 1 turn right will collide with an asteroid. Changing the maneuver’s bearing would result in a 1 bank right , but the TIE Fighter can’t perform that maneuver. Instead it chooses the next closest speed for that maneuver it has; a 2 bank right . This will not result in the TIE hitting an asteroid, so it performs the 2 bank right

Another TIE Fighter begins its move with an asteroid directly in front of it. The players are pretty sure this is a dumb TIE Fighter pilot and that there are no moves that will avoid the asteroid. The TIE selects a 4 K-turn . Since this maneuver will overlap, swerving changes it to a 3 bank right . This new maneuver will still cause the TIE Fighter to overlap, so it simply performs the original 4 K-turn and collides with the asteroid anyway, in classic TIE Fighter style.

Step 3: Select Action

After moving, if an AI ship is not stressed, did not perform a red maneuver, or overlap an obstacle or ship, it will perform its action step. Check each condition of its action priority in order, top to bottom and perform the first action that meets the criteria. If the ship can perform multiple or linked actions, continue until it has performed as many actions as possible.

Pre-measuring Actions and Range

When deciding which action to perform, most will require you to measure range, check arcs, or see if repositioning will fulfill that action’s criteria

Sometimes you may be able to judge these criteria by eye, but usually you will need to lay the range ruler or move templates and move the AI ship to check. If it turns out that the ship can’t meet the criteria for doing an action after you’ve measured or moved it, simply move it back and check its next priority.

Clearing the Effects of Critical Hits

If an AI ship suffers from the effects of a critical hit that can be removed with an action, such as Damaged Sensor Array or Console Fire,

it will perform that action as top priority (unless it is stressed).

Step 4: Attack Targets

Each AI ship determines a target to fire upon during the Engagement Phase, following the steps on the AI statcard.

Rolling Attack and Defense Dice

AI ships attempt to maximize the result of each dice roll they make using any tokens and reroll abilities, regardless of the defense value of the target they are firing upon, or how likely they are to hit.

Use tokens assigned to the ship as required below at the first opportunity.

Spending Tokens when Attacking

Spend tokens to maximize damage. If the AI has a target lock on the defender, use it to reroll all blanks. If the AI does not have a focus token, also reroll all focus results. Spend a focus token if there is at least 1 eye result to convert to a hit.

Spending Tokens when Defending

Spend Focus and Evade tokens to reduce damage as much as possible, without adding excess evades. If a ship has both tokens, spend its Evade token first, and Focus token second, unless the Focus token would prevent all damage taken. If spending a token won’t affect the amount of damage taken, don’t spend it.

Damage and Critical Hits

Damage and critical hits are resolved as usual. Since the majority of Imperial ships have no shields and most missions require many ships to be in play, consider assigning them the orange damage tokens instead of drawing damage cards:



Any critical hits suffered can be tracked by placing the card on the table beside the affected ship or, if the ship is the only one of its kind, on its AI statcard. This greatly helps to keep things organized.

Applying Effects

If the AI player must choose the target of an effect (such as Ruthlessness), it is described on its Imperial Pilot card for that ship. Otherwise, use the AI ship’s target priority to determine which ship(s) or targets are affected.

Earning Experience Points

Players gain Experience Point tokens whenever they damage or destroy enemy ships. See Earning Experience, p37.

Breaking Formation

AI Ships will break from their Formation and act independently when one of three things happen:

1. The ship is no longer at Range 1 of any other ship in its formation.
2. The ship is no longer facing the same direction as the majority of ships in a formation. This can happen due to swerving to avoid an obstacle, or being unable complete a maneuver due to overlapping other ships.
3. One (or more) ships in the formation collides with, or suffers damage from, a player-controlled (Rebel) ship. Do not break formation for Imperial collisions.