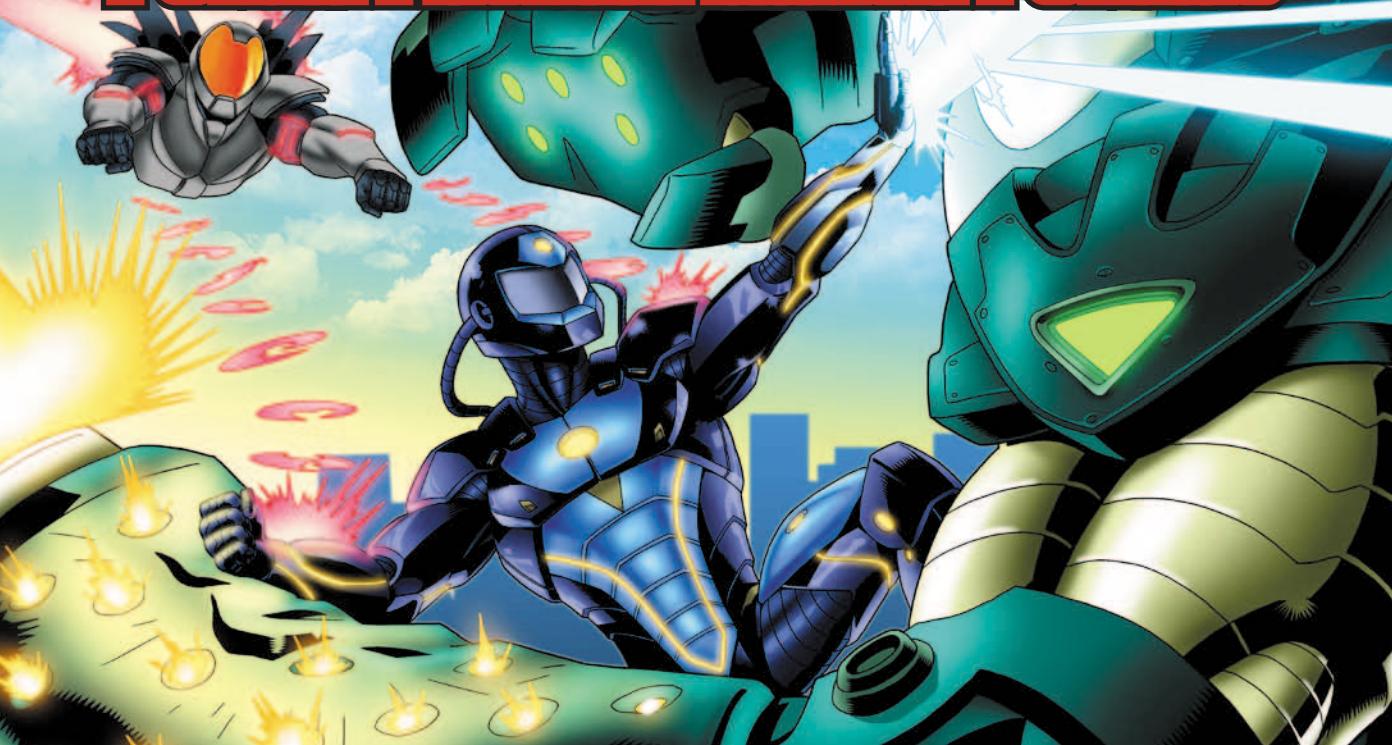


# POWER PROFILE: ARMOR POWERS



Some acquire amazing powers by accident or virtue of birth, but others *make* their powers or acquire them by wearing them, in the form of armor, like the knights of old. Suits of super-powered armor—and similar costumes—have become staples of the superhero comics for both heroes and villains. In their case the suit really can “make the man” although it is often the person inside who counts.

## ARMOR DESCRIPTORS

- **Armor:** Implies an external or worn suit of armor rather than natural armor like exceptionally tough skin, armor plates, or whatnot. This does not necessarily mean the armor is Removable, although it may. Some “worn” armor is actually integrated into the user’s body, or cannot easily be removed. More often than not, however, armor is a Removable device of some sort.
- **Technological:** Common, but also not required. High-tech battlesuits are the most common collections of armor powers. The kind of technology involved may imply other descriptors, including cybernetic, nanotech, or even things like clockwork or retro “steampunk” suits. This descriptor makes armor good for power stunts or applications of inventing (*Hero’s Handbook*, pages 159–160) based around jury-rigging the armor in different ways.
- **Magical:** Technology is not the only source of power armor, however. Some suits may have a “magical” descriptor instead, ranging from enchanted suits of mundane mail armor with enhanced protective properties and other abilities to magical automatons “worn” and piloted by a person inside of them.

## ARMOR FEATURES

Armor is well-suited (no pun intended) for a variety of Features, adding minor capabilities to the armor that do not rate full-fledged power effects. Just a few of the many possible features include:

- A small display screen or projector, perhaps even able to produce translucent holographic images in empty air. This is solely for the display and sharing of information (and entertainment value) not an Illusion effect.
- A built-in piece of equipment costing 1 point or less, including the equivalent of a cell phone, computer, flashlight, or similar useful item.
- A loudspeaker able to amplify the wearer’s voice, like a built-in bullhorn (useful for crowd control and cutting through noisy situations).
- Built-in storage compartments or hidden places to conceal things.
- A data-storage drive, allowing the wearer to copy and store digital information easily (perhaps with an included interface cable or wirelessly).
- A design that not only disguises the wearer’s identity, but even allows the wearer to masquerade as a different sex or pretend to be a robot rather than a person in armor.

Armor Features are a great opportunity for retcons and stunts involving the armor’s capabilities, such as having just the right item in that hidden storage compartment, or access to the right Feature at the right time.

## REMOVABLE OR NOT?

Power armor often has the Removable flaw (*Hero's Handbook*, page 149) as the wearer can take it off and, presumably, have it taken off, or be caught without it in some situations. However, the flaw is not required, and different suits of armor may have different degrees of removability.

The Removable degree is the default. The armor can only be removed when the wearer is stunned and defenseless and takes some amount of time (GM's judgment, but at least a couple of rounds, to as long as a minute or more).

Easily Removable armor is relatively rare, but may be dependent upon some easily removable component or object; perhaps the armor has vulnerable exposed power pods, cables, or other components an opponent can grab in combat, rendering the armor inoperative.

Some armor is not Removable at all in game terms, not that the armor *cannot* be removed, just that it cannot be removed against the wearer's will in anything less than hours. Perhaps the armor has such sophisticated security a foe cannot remove it even when the wearer is incapacitated. Rather than a flaw, the occasional Power Loss complication might come into play (see **Complications**).

## OFFENSIVE POWERS

Power armor usually has some type of offensive capability provided by various built-in weapons.

### WEAPON ARRAYS

Power-armor is a prime candidate for an array of different offensive powers (weapons); each weapon is usable one at a time, but not all at once. See the **Alternate Effect** modifier on pages 136–137 of the *Hero's Handbook* for details on arrays and how they are set up.

The array can represent multiple settings on a single weapon—such as a blaster with direct and wide-beam applications, or with different Damage descriptors like laser and electricity—or it can represent the total weapon capabilities of the armor, limited by things like power usage and operator attention. An armor array might even include non-offensive powers, if it represents management of the armor's power or processing capacity.

Offensive armor powers can also make use of the Variable Descriptor extra (*Hero's Handbook*, page 145) to have different “settings” that are the same effect (such as Damage) with different descriptors (such as fire, laser, impact, and radiation, for example).

### BLASTER

The most basic type of armor weapon: a straightforward ranged blasting attack. The attack may originate from the armor's gauntlets or arms, shoulder-mounted pods, or from the chest-plate or helmet, depending on the de-

scriptors. Likewise, a “blaster” can be different types of energy or even physical projectiles.

**Blaster:** Ranged Damage • 2 points per rank

### CAPTURE WEAPON

A non-damaging ranged weapon intended to disable and incapacitate opponents without harming them. A capture weapon may be tranquilizer darts, stun gas, a taser, net, or similar weapon. See the Dazzle, Sleep, and Snare sample powers in **Chapter 6** of the *Hero's Handbook* for additional examples.

**Capture Weapon:** Ranged Affliction (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Incapacitated) • 2 points per rank

### HOMING MISSILE

You launch a micro-missile with an on-board guidance system, allowing it to lock onto and track its target. By default the homing missile is a heat-seeker, tracking its target by its heat emissions, but you can substitute another Sense effect worth 1 point (or spend additional points for a higher-ranked sense effect).

**Homing Missile:** Ranged Damage, Homing 2 Linked to Senses 1 (Infravision) • 3 points + 2 points per rank

### MACHINE-GUN

This weapon is a repeating type of blaster attack (see **Blaster**, previous): it may be a conventional machine gun or chain gun firing solid projectiles (or rubber bullets) or a pulsed energy weapon, depending on descriptors

**Machine-Gun:** Ranged Multiattack Damage • 3 points per rank

### MICRO-MISSILES

Your armor can fire explosive micro-missiles from an arm-, shoulder-, or chest-mounted launcher. Although the default effect of this weapon is Damage, see the **Grenades and Explosives** section of **Chapter 7** of the *Hero's Handbook* for some potential Alternate Effects.

A micro-missile might have partial ranks of Burst Area for three “tiers” of Damage: full Damage to the target of a successful attack check, Burst Area Damage to nearby targets in the blast radius, and half Burst Area Damage to targets in the blast radius who make a successful Dodge check.

**Micro-Missiles:** Burst Area Ranged Damage • 3 points per rank

### SURFACE SHOCK

You electrify the exterior surface of your armor such that anyone touching it gets a nasty shock, good for throwing off grabs and gangs of minions.

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**Surface Shock:** Affliction (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated), Reaction (when touched) • 4 points per rank

Alternate Effects of this power may include enough voltage to do Damage or a version using another medium, such as super-heating or cooling the armor's surface.

**Surface Shock:** Damage, Reaction (when touched) • 4 points per rank

## STRENGTH ENHANCEMENT

Your armor has a strength-enhancing exoskeleton, a strength-reinforcing force field, or some similar system, greatly magnifying your normal strength. Generally, this Strength Enhancement affects all aspects of your Strength rank, although some armor has ranks limited to slow, sustained applications of Strength, essentially with the Limited to Lifting modifier (see **Power-Lifting**, *Hero's Handbook*, page 123).

A truly massive suit of armor may provide Permanent and Innate ranks of Growth instead of or in addition to Strength Enhancement.

**Strength Enhancement:** Enhanced Strength • 2 points per rank

## DEFENSIVE POWERS

The primary power of armor is defensive, although different suits of armor protect their wearers in different ways and to different degrees.

### ARMOR

The most basic armor power is its namesake: protection against external sources of damage and injury. Some powered armor is reinforced, shrugging off minor attacks altogether, represented by ranks of the Impervious modifier (see **Impervious Options**, following).

**Armor:** Protection • 1 point per rank

### FORCE FIELD

Rather than armor plating or similarly protective materials, power armor may protect the wearer by generating a powerful force field. Descriptors vary from electromagnetic to magical or even cosmic.

For some suits, the force field is effectively permanent in duration: as long as the armor is worn and operating, its defenses are "up". Others may have continuous or sustained duration force fields capable of greater mutability (usable for stunts) but also subject to being shut-down under circumstances where the effect cannot be maintained. Note that a permanent force field may have the Noticeable modifier (if the field glows brightly, for example), while non-permanent fields are noticeable by default.

**Force Field:** Protection • 1 point per rank

## LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM

The next most common defensive power for armor after the protection it affords is some type of built-in life support or sealed system, allowing the armor's wearer to operate in virtually any hostile environment. Some power-armor is customized for particular environments, such as aquatic, arctic, or deep space, with lesser ranks of Immunity.

The Gamemaster may wish to require a lower rank of Immunity, or permit the Quirk (missing some Immunities, -1 point each) for a Life Support System that does not cover certain things, such as still requiring the armor's wearer to rest or resist diseases or poisons that manage to penetrate the armor's outer shell.

**Life Support System:** Immunity 10 (Life Support) • 10 points

### MIND SHIELD

Your armor is attuned to aid you in resisting mental attacks (generally Will resisted effects with a mental, psionic, or psychic descriptor; see the **Mental Powers** profile).

**Mind Shield:** Enhanced Impervious Will, Limited to Mental Effects • 1 point per rank

Alternately, your armor's systems might "screen out" some specific mental effect or from mental influences in general. If your armor only partially filters such things, Limit the Immunity to half effect.

**Mind Shield:** Immunity 5 (one mental power, such as psychic mind control) or Immunity 10 (all psychic or psionic mental powers) • 5 or 10 points

### IMPERVIOUS OPTIONS

Armor often has the Impervious modifier (*Hero's Handbook*, page 141) applied to one or more of its defenses, particularly Toughness.

For those who prefer an alternative to the game system for Impervious Defense given in the M&M *Hero's Handbook*, consider one of the following options:

- Limit Impervious ranks to no more than the series power level (to limit their use in defense trade-offs against power level limited attacks).
- Impervious Defense ignores effects with a rank less than its own (rather than equal to or less than half its rank). You may wish to double the modifier's cost in this case.
- When rolling resistance checks using an Impervious Defense, add 10 to a roll of 1–10, like spending a hero point on a re-roll.
- Make resistance checks normally but, if the effect rank is less than your Impervious rank, reduce any degree of failure by one; zero degrees of failure counts as one degree of success.

## SENSORY SHIELD

Filters and baffles in your armor, particularly in the helm or faceplate, are designed to shield your senses from overload due to outside stimuli. This allows you to largely ignore things like blinding light, deafening noise, nauseating odors, and so forth.

If your armor only partially filters such things, Limit the Immunity to half effect (changing the cost to 3 points).

**Sensory Shield:** Immunity 5 (Sensory Affliction Effects) • 5 points per rank

## MOVEMENT POWERS

Power-armor may be equipped with propulsion systems, allowing the wearer to move quickly in a number of different ways. Multiple propulsion systems may be bundled together as an array of different movement powers.

### AQUATIC TURBINES

Powerful turbines deploy from your armor to propel you underwater.

**Aquatic Turbines:** Swimming • 1 point per rank

### LEG HYDRAULICS

Powerful hydraulic or other strength-enhancing devices in the lower body of your armor greatly enhance your leaping ability, allowing you to jump great distances.

**Leg Hydraulics:** Leaping • 1 point per rank

### LIMB EXTENDERS

The arms and legs of your armor can telescope, extending many times their normal length, controlled remotely by you. This allows you to rise up on stilt-like legs or reach out with extended arms to grab or attack.

**Limb Extenders:** Elongation • 1 point per rank

### SKATES

Roller skate wheels (or in-line skates) deploy on command from the boots of your armor, allowing you to zip along the ground. Your skates may even be rocket powered, letting you move *really* fast! Unpowered skates should be limited to around Speed 3, while rocket-powered or magnetic skates could be up to rank 7 or 8!

**Skates:** Speed • 1 point per rank

### THRUSTERS

The most common power-armor movement effect involves rockets or other thrusters, allowing the wearer to fly. Some types of armor may have even more sophis-

ticated anti-gravity systems or magical flight capabilities. These may have a rank of the Subtle modifier, being almost silent in use.

**Thrusters:** Flight • 2 points per rank

## TUNNELING

Armor designed for underground exploration might have the ability to tunnel through soil and bedrock, using built-in drills, digging lasers, or similar devices. Perhaps the entire suit becomes a “tunneling machine” of sorts that “flies” through earth and solid rock!

**Tunneling:** Burrowing • 1 point per rank

## UTILITY POWERS

As mentioned under **Features**, power armor often has a wide range of different utilities and devices built into it.

### COMBAT COMPUTER

Computer systems in your armor analyze combat situations and potential threats and offers a variety of options, even exerting some subtle influence over your movements and actions to allow you to deal with unexpected situations faster than having to think about them.

**Combat Computer:** Enhanced Advantages (choose from Assessment, Close Attack, Favored Opponent (previously assessed), Improved Initiative, Ranged Attack, and Uncanny Dodge) plus Enhanced Defense (Dodge and Parry) • 1 point per rank of Enhanced Advantages + 1 point per rank each of Enhanced Dodge and Parry

## COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Your armor features a comm system, allowing you to communicate, usually via radio or cellular link, with maximum range determined by its effect rank. Scrambled or encrypted communication systems apply the Subtle modifier. This system is powerful and self-contained, for the simple ability to tap into existing CB or cellular communications, add an appropriate Feature (cell phone or radio).

**Comm System:** Radio Communication • 5 points per rank

### SENSORS

Power armor often comes equipped with sensor devices, feeding into displays in the armor’s visor or helmet. Low-light and Darkvision are particularly common, but virtually any Senses effect with an appropriate descriptor may be included in power armor’s sensor package.

**Sensors:** Senses • 1 point per rank

# OTHER POWERS

“Power armor” or, even more broadly, “power suit” can be a descriptor for virtually *any* sort of power, simply saying the power resides in the suit rather than the wearer. So, for example all of the various fire powers (see **Power Profile: Fire Powers**) could also be armor powers for a suit of “fire-generating” armor, equipped with flamethrowers, able to project a fiery aura, and so forth. Throw magic or alien super-science into the mix, and you can even have super-suits providing mental or mystical powers!

# ARMOR COMPLICATIONS

A number of complications can stem from wearing, using, and maintaining a suit of power armor. Cutting-edge technology (or mysterious magic), power armor may come with various known and unknown “bugs” or side-effects.

## DISABILITY

A common concept is the armor that compensates for some disability, such as giving an otherwise paraplegic wearer the ability to walk, or a blind wearer the ability to see (or some compensatory sense, like sonar imaging). In essence, the character still has a disability, but the occasions when it comes into play are dependent on whether or not the armor is available and functioning normally (see **Power Loss**, following).

The flip-side of this is armor that *causes* some type of disability when it is worn and used. For example, the armor might greatly reduce the wearer’s sense of touch, making it nearly-impossible to feel anything outside of it, or it may restrict the wearer’s senses apart from the armor’s own sensor inputs.

## IDENTITY

A full-body suit of armor is an excellent means of concealing one’s identity. While most superheroes have to make do with flimsy masks and changes of clothes or hair color, an armored hero conceals virtually everything, possibly including voice (filtered or distorted) and race, sex, or species! (See **Armor Features** for armor this concealing.)

## POWER LOSS

This is the primary complication associated with armor powers. Under different circumstances, the armor may fail, suffer damage, run out of power, or otherwise stop working. This can be due to damage suffered in combat or the course of adventuring, or other circumstances chosen by the player and the Gamemaster. For example, getting hit by a falling power cable may short-out or damage armor systems, or they may be affected by radiation, electromagnetic interference, sunspots, or what have you. Magical armor may likewise suffer power loss due to shifts in the cosmic currents or changes in the wearer’s condi-

tion, such as armor intended for a faithful champion of justice faltering when the wearer doubts his mission or performs an unworthy deed.

## RELATIONSHIP

Sophisticated high-tech armor might require a “support staff” or “ground crew” to assist with its maintenance and even operation. Such a helpful relationship may qualify as a Benefit advantage, particularly if the ground crew has useful skills or insights. Where the complication comes into play is when members of the support staff develop their own agendas or manage to get in over their heads, and the hero has to come charging to the rescue.

## REPUTATION

It’s fairly easy for an armored character to get a reputation, one which may be attached as much to the armor as to the person inside of it. For example, a hero who adopted an infamous suit of military armor once used in wartime might have to deal with the atrocities associated with the armor, even though someone else was using it at the time.

## RIVALRY

Power-armor is specialized technology (or rare magic or the like) so armored characters often have enemies or rivals with similar devices. For example, the inventor of a suit of armor might have a rival who developed similar technology but claims to have invented it first. The rivalry between Ultramarine and Steelhead in the *Emerald City* setting is another example: step-siblings who each wear a prototype aquatic armor design.

## SECRET

Along with identity (see previous) armor wearers can have various secrets, ranging from a troubled past to secrets concerning the armor itself, where it came from, and how it works. For example, perhaps the “maverick inventor” who uses his power armor to fight crime is in fact a military test-pilot posing as an independent to test a government prototype in plain sight, or witnessed the death of the real inventor of the armor and now uses it to try and make things right.

## WEAKNESS

Power armor may have or cause weaknesses for the wearer. Other than potential power loss (see **Power Loss**), armor weaknesses may include a vulnerability to electrical or magnetic attacks, vulnerability to technology-influencing effects (like a computer virus or a machine-controlling villain), or even things like additional degrees of effect from sensory attacks due to the armor’s sensor feeds or the like. As usual, when the weakness comes into play, the armor’s wearer gets a hero point.

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