

ROBOT RULES FOR *FEDERATION COMMANDER*

Designed by Stephen V Cole

Rev-1: UPDATED 10 October 06 with comments from Robert Knoke.

Rev-2: UPDATED 9 January 07 with comments from Franco Momoli.

Rev-3: UPDATED 14 March 07 with comments from Peter Samuels.

Rev-4: UPDATED 28 April 07 with comments from Duane Nordeen.

Rev-5: UPDATED 31 May 07 with comments from Scott Moellmer, Steve Petrick, Duane Nordeen.

Rev-6: UPDATED 24 DEC 08 with comments from Franco Momoli.

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Note: In each case, many updates, tweaks, edits, and rewordings are made simultaneously which are not based on the comments of the named playtesters, so don't blame them for *everything* in "their" update!

These rules are designed to use a Klingon D7 as the robot. These rules will (mechanically, at least) work for a Kzinti BC which has the same weapons. For that matter, it should probably work for any Klingon or Kzinti ship or any Orion ship armed with Disruptors and Drones. These rules assume squadron scale ships. We'll think about writing rules for Fleet Scale later.

All actions that require power, the rules assume that power is available. If power is not available, skip the action or do less of it (but do as much of it as you can within the assigned limit). For example, if it says to fire all of the phasers and the robot only has power to fire some of them, fire as many as it can. If it says to fire overloaded disruptors and the robot can only afford the power to fire standard disruptors, do that.)

Instructions to fire weapons assume that the weapons have the target in their firing arc. If not, don't fire.

Drones seek the enemy ship as per the seeking weapon rules. If a drone can follow the requirements without turning, it will do so. If it has to turn to satisfy the rules, it must do so.

This system does not currently implement suicide shuttles or Marines. I make no promises that it ever will. Well, I guess if you transport your Marines onto the Klingon ship that the Klingon Marines will fight back.

In all cases, the human-controlled ship completes Energy Allocation BEFORE step 1 of the robot rules. In any situation in which the robot ship moves at the same time as some other ship, the Robot ship moves last.

Damage Allocation uses the standard DAC chart. When selecting which of several identical boxes to mark as disabled, there is rarely any difficulty in making a decision as one hull (lab, cargo, left warp, whatever) box is pretty much the same as any other. This does matter in a few cases.

Tractors: Always select a tractor which is not holding a seeking weapon over one that is.

Phasers: Select the phaser to disable in this order.

1. Select a phaser that has fired over one that has not fired. If multiple phasers have fired (or none have), go to #2.
2. Select a phaser-3 over a phaser-1 or 2, and select a phaser-2 over a phaser 1.
3. Select an unfired phaser which cannot target the enemy ship or an approaching enemy drone over one that has no such target.
4. Select the phaser with the more limited arc.
5. Roll a die or toss a coin.

1. At the start of each turn:

1A: Set Baseline Speed; roll two dice AFTER the human player selects his baseline speed.

If the total is 2-4, the robot will use a baseline speed of 8

if the total is 5-10, the robot will use a baseline speed of 16

If the total is 11-12, the robot will use a baseline speed of 24.

If the ship does not have enough energy for the selected baseline speed, drop to the next lower baseline speed.

1B: Regenerate Shields

If any shield boxes have been disabled, roll one die. (If power is not available, ignore this.)

1-2: Regenerate two boxes on the weakest shield(s).

3-4: Regenerate two boxes on the shield facing the player ship (one on each if split shield).

5-6: Do not regenerate shield boxes.

Notes: If the die roll says to regenerate two boxes and you only have enough power to regenerate one box, then do that. If the weakest shield has only one disabled box you can (die roll 1-2) regenerate a box on the next weakest shield (which theoretically could happen in the case of shields which start at different strengths).

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1C: Seeking weapons held in Tractor Beams

For each drone/suicide-shuttle held in tractor beam, roll one die. Start with the weapon able to do the most internals if it strikes that shield and work your way down. (If power is not available to hold a drone, release it.)

- 1-2: release (unless facing a zero-strength shield, then pay to hold it) and allow the phasers to deal with the weapon. Do not release the tractor if there are no phasers able to target the weapon.
- 3-4: release (unless facing zero-strength shield or enemy is within 4 hexes and facing the same shield, then pay to hold it). Do not release the tractor if there are no phasers able to target the weapon.
- 5-6: Pay to continue to hold the drone/suicide-shuttle.

2. At the start of each Impulse, determine acceleration. Roll two dice.

If 2-4, the robot will pay one for acceleration if it has power available.

If 5-12, the robot will continue its baseline speed.

If the die roll is 5-10, AND the robot ship has fired his disruptors, AND the enemy ship is in the Rear Firing Arc, then a die roll of 5-10 means: pay for acceleration (to get out of Dodge).

Special: If it is the last sub-pulse of the Impulse and the robot ship is about to enter a hex that is on the centerline of the player-ship, and if the current hex is not on the centerline, decelerate (cancel movement) if the player-ship cannot move in such a way as to put the robot ship on the centerline. (If it can centerline the robot anyway, ignore this.)

3. Each sub-pulse....

3A. If the robot ship's turn mode is not satisfied, the robot will move straight (or sideslip as below if the robot's side slip mode is satisfied).

3B. If turn mode is satisfied:

3B0. If there is an incoming drone wave of six or more drones (including drones already held in tractor beams) coming from either the LS or RS arc OR four drones which will impact a single shield on the current impulse, and all of those drones are within 2-5 hexes, roll one die:

Die roll 1-4: sideslip away from drone wave, then go to step 4.

Die roll 5-6: Go to step 3B1. (If two or more of the drones of the wave are adjacent to the ship, treat a die roll of 5 as a 4.)

3B1. If the robot ship's disruptors have not fired, follow the steps below. If they have fired, skip to 3B2.

3B1a: If enemy is not in FA arc, turn to put enemy in FA arc (or FX arc if that is not possible).

3B1ax (update 6): If the enemy is not in the FA arc, but is within four hexes, roll one die.

On a result of 1-3, perform an HET "center" the enemy in the robot's FA Arc. Ignore this if doing the HET would not leave enough power to fire all of the disruptors. If doing the HET would leave enough power to fire all disruptors and overload at last half of them, the die roll is 1-5.

3B1b: If enemy is in FA arc, roll die.

Die roll 1: Sideslip toward player-ship. If slip mode not satisfied, turn instead.

Die roll 2-3: move straight ahead.

Die roll 4-6: Sideslip away from player-ship. If slip mode not satisfied, straight ahead.

3B2. If the robot ship's disruptors have fired, roll one die.

Die roll 1-2, the robot will move straight ahead. The robot will sideslip away from enemy center line if the robot ship's sideslip mode is satisfied. The robot will turn if a down shield is facing the enemy and the turn can place a functional shield in that direction.

Die roll 3-6, the robot will turn away from the enemy centerline if the robot is heading for the player ship's centerline, otherwise the robot will move straight. The robot will not turn if this would position a down shield facing the player ship (a condition that is ignored if a down shield is already facing the player ship).

In all of above cases, if the maneuver would place a down shield toward the player ship, and only one of the other options would not, use the one that will not. If both other options will not expose a down shield, roll again until you select one of those.

Update-6: Provision needs to be made to decelerate to keep enemy in arc.

4. Each impulse, Defensive fire step. If no impacted weapons, skip to 5.

4A: Start with shield hit by larger number of potential damage points and go to each shield in turn. If there is a tie, toss a coin or roll a die to pick a shield. Go to all shields with impacted weapons one shield at a time until all are resolved.

4B: If the weapons will penetrate the shield, roll one die for each weapon (starting with largest).

1-2: Use anti-drone if available and allowed; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-2s fired as phaser-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use

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bearing Ph-1s fired as phaser-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use tractor. Note that this, in effect, gives the Robot a kind of Aegis (shoot, look, decide, shoot), but it would be unfair to allow the human opponent to decide how many weapons to fire at a single drone, and setting up a die roll table would be impossibly complex. The Robot is pretty stupid and giving it this advantage just helps even the playing field.

- 3-4: Use anti-drone if available and allowed; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-2s fired as phaser-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use tractor. Do not use phaser-1s.
- 5: Use anti-drone if available and allowed; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use tractor.
- 6: Use anti-drone if available and allowed; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-3s; even if drone is not destroyed, do not use tractor.
- 4C: If the weapons cannot penetrate the shield (other than burnthrough), roll one die.
 - 1-2: Use anti-drone if available and allowed; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-2s fired as phaser-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-1s fired as phaser-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use tractor.
 - 3-4: Use anti-drone if available and allowed; if drone is not destroyed, use bearing Ph-3s; if drone is not destroyed, use tractor. Do not use phaser-2s or phaser-1s.
 - 5-6: Use anti-drone if available and allowed; use bearing Ph-3s; do not use tractor.
- 4D: After determining which impacted seeking weapons will hit:
 - 4D1: If the weapons will penetrate the shield, roll one die for each weapon (starting with largest).
 - 1-3: Use reinforcement.
 - 4-5: Use Reinforcement only if enemy ship is facing that shield.
 - 6: do not use reinforcement.
 - 4D2: If the weapons will NOT penetrate the shield, roll one die for each weapon (starting with largest).
 - 1-2: Use reinforcement.
 - 3-4: Use Reinforcement only if enemy (player-controlled) ship is facing that shield.
 - 5-6: The robot will not use reinforcement.

5. Each impulse, Offensive fire step.

(If a given weapon of the robot ship is not in arc of player ship, ignore that weapon)

5A: If an enemy drone, targeted on the robot ship, is within one hex, roll one die:

- 1: If a phaser-3 is available and in arc, fire it at the drone. If the drone is not destroyed, and if a phaser-2 or phaser-1 is available but no phaser-3 is, fire it at the drone as a phaser-3.
- 2-4: If a phaser-3 is available and in arc, fire it at the drone. If the drone is not destroyed, and if a phaser-2 or phaser-1 which cannot fire at the enemy ship is available but no phaser-3 is available, fire the phaser at the drone as a phaser-3. (This will also be done if the drone is within two hexes but in that case fire it as the kind of phaser it is, not as a phaser-3.)
- 5: If a phaser-3 is available and in arc, fire it at the drone.

Any other result: If a drone is within one hex and is facing a shield with seven or fewer boxes, and any phaser is available to fire at this drone, AND the ship has insufficient tractor beams to stop the incoming drones, fire the phaser at the drone (Priority is phaser-3 first, phaser-2 second, phaser-1 third, phaser-4 [which, of course, are only on bases] last). Otherwise, do not fire, proceed to Step 5S.

5A1: If there is a drone within two hexes, and the enemy ship is not within eight hexes, roll one die:

- 1-2: If there is a phaser-1 or phaser-2 available, fire it at the drone.
- 3: If there is a phaser-1 available, fire it at the drone.
- 4-6: Do not fire; move on to step 5B.

5B: If it is the last impulse of the turn, fire every available phaser and disruptor at the enemy ship, overloaded if energy is available and the target is in overload range. Proceed to step 6.

5C: If enemy ship is within four (4) hexes, roll one die:

- 1-2: Fire phaser-1s, fire disruptors (overload if there is power), fire phaser-2s, fire phaser-3s.
 - 3-5: Fire phaser-1s, fire disruptors (overload if there is power), fire phaser-2s; do not fire ph-3s.
 - 6: Fire phaser-1s, do not fire disruptors, fire phaser-2s; do not fire ph-3s.
- Note: if the robot has two phaser-1s/2s and only one point of power and is at a range of one hex from the player ship, use the power to fire both as phaser-3s.

5D: If enemy ship is within five-eight (5-8) hexes, roll one die:

SPECIAL: If the enemy ship is in the FA arc, and the robot ship is faster but behind the enemy, or if the two ships are "on a closing course" but are both at a baseline speed of 8 or 16, DO NOT FIRE. Wait for the next impulse when you will be closer. Ignore this rule if the robot ship is facing a down shield.

- 1: Fire phaser-1s, fire disruptors (overload if there is power), fire phaser-2s, fire phaser-3s. Do not fire Phaser-3s if the enemy (player) ship is not in the FA arc.

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- 2-3: Fire phaser-1s, do not fire disruptors, fire phaser-2s; do not fire ph-3s. Do not fire FA Phaser-2s if the enemy (player) ship is not in the FA arc. Do not fire any Phasers, other than waist phasers or rear phasers, if the enemy ship is in the FA arc and the robot ship is faster than the enemy ship.
- 4-5: Fire phaser-1s, do not fire disruptors; do not fire phaser-2s; do not fire ph-3s. Do not fire any Phasers if the enemy ship is in the FA arc and the robot ship is faster than the enemy ship.
- 6: Do not fire.
- 5E:** If enemy ship is within nine-fifteen (9-15) hexes, roll one die:
SPECIAL: If the enemy ship is in the FA arc, and the robot ship is faster but behind the enemy, or if the two ships are "on a closing course", DO NOT FIRE. Wait for the next impulse when you will be closer. Ignore this Special rule if the robot ship is facing a down shield.
- 1-2: Fire phaser-1s, fire disruptors, fire phaser-2s, do not fire phaser-3s. Do not fire Phaser-2s if the enemy (player) ship is not in the FA arc. Do not fire any weapons if the enemy ship is in the FA arc and the robot ship is faster than the enemy ship.
- 3: Fire phaser-1s, do not fire disruptors, fire phaser-2s, do not fire ph-3s. Do not fire Phaser-2s if the enemy (player) ship is not in the FA arc. Do not fire any weapons if the enemy ship is in the FA arc and the robot ship is faster than the enemy ship.
- 4-6: Do not fire.
- 5F:** If the enemy ship fires direct-fire weapons at the robot and scores damage, roll two dice:
2-5: If energy and batteries are available, use (up to) all available energy to reinforce the shields.
6-10: If energy and batteries are available, use up to half of the available energy to reinforce the shields.
11-12: Do not reinforce the shields.

6. Each impulse, during Launch Step

(Ignore this entire step if the robot ship has no drones available to launch.)

- 6A:** If enemy ship is within 8 hexes and approaching/pursuing, roll one die:
1-2: Launch two drones targeted on the enemy ship. (If only one drone is ready to launch, launch that one drone.) If the robot ship has more than two drone racks, roll again and add the resulting drone launches to these.
3-4: Launch one drone targeted on the enemy ship.
5-6: Do not launch any drones. If this is Impulse #8, launch two drones targeted on the enemy ship assuming availability.
- 6B:** If enemy is within 8 hexes, moving away, at speed 16 or less:
1: Launch one drone targeted on the enemy ship.
2: Launch two drones targeted on the enemy ship. (If only one drone is ready to launch, launch that one drone targeted on the enemy ship.)
3-6: Do not launch any drones.
- 6C:** If enemy is within 9-12 hexes, approaching/pursuing, roll one die:
1: Launch one drone targeted on the enemy ship.
2: Launch two drones. (If only one drone is ready to launch, launch that one drone.)
3-6: Do not launch drones. If this is Impulse #8, launch two drones.
- 6D:** If more than two enemy drones are targeted on your ship and within four hexes:
1: launch two drones (or one if only one is available), each targeted on a different incoming drone.
2-4: launch one drone (assuming it is available) targeted on one of the incoming drones.
5-6: Do not launch drones.
- 6E:** All other cases:
1: launch drone targeted on nearest enemy ship or inbound seeking weapon.
2-6: Do not launch drones.

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7. End of Turn phase

7A: Put as much power into batteries as the robot can.

7B: If systems are destroyed, use repair points in this order:

1. If all control boxes are disabled, repair one control box.
2. If all tractor boxes are disabled, repair one tractor box.
3. If any firing arc is not covered by a phaser, repair one phaser that covers that arc. Repair a phaser-1 in preference to a phaser-2 or a phaser-3. If there are multiple choices among the highest priority phaser, pick the one with the widest firing arc.
4. If all battery boxes are disabled, repair two batteries. If all but one battery box is disabled, repair one battery.
5. If all drone racks are empty, reload one of them. If ADD is empty, reload it (unless the robot's opponent has no drones).
6. If all transporters are disabled, repair one of them.
7. Repair one weapon in this order of priority (Phaser-1, Disruptor, Phaser-2) then one power system in this order of Priority (warp, impulse, reactor). Repeat until all are repaired. Then repair drone racks and reload repaired drone racks.
8. Repair all other systems in rotating order (one of each) in this priority until all are repaired: tractor, lab, control, hull, transporter, cargo. (Note that there is no way to repair "Frame" in Federation Commander. Pity about that.)
9. Repair probe launcher. Repair armor.

7C: If any shield has four or fewer boxes and is adjacent to a shield with 12 or more boxes, roll one die. If the result is 1-4, transfer four boxes from the stronger shield to the weaker one. In cases where there are multiple shields with less than 4 boxes and each is adjacent to one or more shields with 12 or more, select pairs of shields in a way to allow the maximum number of transfers. If there is a shield that could give power to (or take power from) two other shields and no other shields qualify as part of this decision, roll a die with 1-3 indicating to use the lower numbered of the two shields and 4-6 meaning to use the higher numbered shield.

Designer's notes: I always wanted to do this for *Star Fleet Battles*, but that was just too complex a game. *Federation Commander* adapts to the idea rather well. The basic concept is that somebody (the paper robot) is flying the Klingon ship while you fly your ship. In theory, the paper robot will always make all of the decisions for you, so you have a truly unpredictable enemy.

My theory is that, once the rules are advanced to a point they will "function", the way to get a workable battle is to give the Klingon a bigger ship. Just what percentage of point value you have to give the Paper Robot to get a "balanced" battle is to be found in playtesting.

Hey, just for fun, have a Robot Klingon play against a Robot Kzinti!

I do not plan to even start working on rules for plasma (on the robot or on opponent) until these Klingon-Kzinti rules are much closer to being finished. I ask all playtesters to focus on these rules until that point.