

# GUARDIANS™



## RULEBOOK



# GUARDIANS™

*In the years before the rise of InterGov, the Guardians were the light that pointed the world to a brighter future. Legendary heroes capable of inhuman feats, they fought to protect humanity from oppression and chaos. It was only through the establishment of InterGov, a global alliance dedicated to stabilizing and safeguarding the nations of the world, that the Guardians were finally able to step aside and let peace prevail. These heroes retreated from the stage, and the world moved on without them.*

*Nearly three decades have passed, and once again the world stands on the verge of crisis. InterGov struggles to maintain control as renegade factions push to destabilize the central government. Some believe this is the only way to recapture the lost stability of former years, while others hope to profit from the chaos. To combat this threat, InterGov has chosen to reactivate the Guardian Network. A new generation of heroes must rise to challenge the enemies of peace. Though untested, these heroes have gathered at the Hall of Unity in the hopes of defending this InterGov landmark against an incoming attack by renegade forces.*

## INTRODUCTION

Guardians is a tactical card game of combat and strategy for 2 or 4 players. In Guardians, players command a team of heroes who battle for control over a series of locations. Players will construct their teams by drafting unique heroes and adding their power cards together to form a draw deck. The first player (or team) to score 9 points is the winner.

## TOKENS



Damage Token



Control Token



Charge Token



Shield Token



Immobilize  
Token



Powerlock  
Token

## COMPONENTS

- › 1 Rulebook
- › 1 Location Deck (14 Cards)
- › 10 Hero Cards
- › 10 Ultimate Cards
- › 10 Power Decks (6 Cards Each)
- › 4 Basic Decks (6 Cards Each)
- › 2 Double-Sided Faction Cards
- › 2 Condition/Control Token Summary Cards
  - › 4 Control Tokens
  - › 24 Double-Sided Damage Tokens
    - › 18 Condition Tokens
    - › 18 Charge Tokens

## LOCATION CARD



1. Name
2. Control Track
3. Faction Spaces
4. Effect
5. Points

## HERO CARD



1. Name
2. Attack Value
3. Life Value
4. Ability

## POWER CARD



1. Name
2. Play Cost
3. Card Type
4. Hero
5. Effect
6. Charge Point

## OBJECTIVE OF THE GAME

The first player to score 9 points immediately wins the game. A player scores the points of a location card when its control token is on her faction space during the Score Phase of her turn. There are 3 ways to move a control token:

**Control Phase:** During your Control Phase, if you control a readied hero at a location and your opponent does not, you move the control token at that location 1 space.

**Knock Out a Hero:** Whenever an opponent's hero is knocked out, you move the control token at that hero's location 2 spaces.

**Card Effect:** Certain cards will move control tokens.

When a player is instructed to move the control token at a location, she must always move the control token towards her faction space on the control track, if able. A player cannot move a control token past her own faction space.

## 2-PLAYER RULES

The rules that follow are for setting up and playing a 2-player game. For rules on how the 4-player game differs from the 2-player game, see the 4-Player Game section on page 14.

## SETUP

To set up a 2-player game of Guardians, complete the following steps in order:

1. Randomly determine a player to be the first player. The first player will then choose a "Loyalist" or "Renegade" faction card and place it in her play area. The second player will place the other faction card in her play area.
2. Deal 8 random hero cards into the center play area. Starting with the SECOND player, each player will alternate in choosing one hero at a time until both players have chosen 3 heroes. The remaining 2 heroes will not be used in this game.
3. Each player collects the power deck for each of her heroes as well as a basic power deck (2 x Barrier, 2 x Intel and 2 x Reposition) and shuffles all 4 decks together to form a single 24 card draw deck. Each player also collects the 3 Ultimate cards that correspond to her heroes and places them face up in her play area.
4. Shuffle the location cards together to form a location deck. Deal 4 location cards face up to the center of the play area in a row. There cannot be more than two locations in the play area with the same point value during this step. If a third location with the same point value would be dealt into the play area, instead set it aside and replace it with a new card from the location deck. Once 4 location cards are in the play area, shuffle all set aside location cards back into the location deck. Place a control token on the center space of each location's control track.
5. Place the damage and condition tokens in separate piles within reach of all players.
6. Starting with the FIRST player, each player will alternate placing 1 hero card at a time at a location of her choice until all players have placed all 3 of their heroes.  
**Note:** Location effects do not apply during this placement.
7. Each player will draw a starting hand of 5 cards. Either player may choose to shuffle this hand back into her deck and draw a new starting hand of 5 cards, but she MUST keep the second hand.
8. The first player will take the first turn. During the first player's first Action Phase, she may only perform up to 2 actions instead of 3.

### *First Game*

For your first game of Guardians, it is recommended that players make the following two changes, intended to grant new players a more accessible way to learn the game.

**Hero Draft:** Rather than drafting (step 2 of Setup), the first player should choose Astra, Valkyrie and Whiplash and the second player should choose Grave, Mauler and Ronin as their heroes.

**Location Effects:** Ignore all text on location cards during this game.



## TAKING A TURN

Each player's turn is broken up into 5 phases that must be completed in order:

1. Control Phase
2. Ready Phase
3. Action Phase
4. Score Phase
5. Draw Phase

### 1. Control Phase

Move the control token 1 space at each location where you control a readied hero and your opponent does not.



### 2. Ready Phase

Ready all exhausted heroes you control. An exhausted hero is a hero turned on its side. To ready an exhausted hero, stand it up. Return each knocked out hero to play by placing it in the ready position at a location of your choosing.



**Note:** Placing heroes does not trigger "Move" effects.

### 3. Action Phase

Perform up to 3 of the following actions. You can perform the same action more than once.

- › **Attack:** Attack with a readied hero you control.
- › **Move:** Move a readied hero you control.
- › **Draw:** Draw a card from your deck.
- › **Pay an  Cost:** Pay the action cost of a card, ability or location.

### Exhaust Abilities

Certain heroes have abilities that can be performed by exhausting that readied hero. These abilities can only be used during the controlling player's Action Phase. Exhaust abilities are not considered actions and cannot interrupt actions, effects or abilities.

## 4. Score Phase

Score each location where the control token is on your faction space. To score a location, perform the following steps:

1. Check for and resolve any "Score" effects at that location.
2. Place that location card face up in your faction's score area. (If you ever have 9 or more points worth of locations in your score area, you immediately win.)
3. Deal out a new location in place of the scored location and place a control token on the center space of its control track. (All heroes that were at the old location will now be at the new location.)



## 5. Draw Phase

Draw 1 card from your draw deck, then discard down to 8 cards in hand. Hand limit is only checked during the Draw Phase. If at any point in the game a player needs to draw a card but her draw deck is empty, that player shuffles her discard pile to form a new draw deck.



## ACTIONS

### Attack

To perform an attack action, do the following in order:

1. Choose a readied hero you control to attack with.
2. Target an enemy hero that shares a location with the attacking hero.
3. Place a number of damage tokens on the target hero equal to the attack value of the attacking hero.
4. If the target hero has a number of damage tokens on it equal to or greater than its life value, it has been knocked out. See Getting Knocked Out.
5. Exhaust the attacking hero by placing it on its side.

**Note:** Some effects allow a hero to attack without using an action. That hero must still be readied in order to attack.

### Move

To perform a move action, move 1 readied hero you control to an adjacent location. Only locations directly next to one another are considered to be adjacent and a hero can never move to a location it is currently at. There is no limit to the number of heroes you can have at any location.

**Note:** Some effects or abilities allow a hero to move without using an action. That hero does NOT need to be readied in order to move in this way.

**Note:** Harbinger can never be moved by any means. There are some effects or abilities, however, that can place Harbinger at a new location.

### Draw

To perform a draw action, draw 1 card from your draw deck. If at any point in the game a player needs to draw a card but her draw deck is empty, that player shuffles her discard pile to form a new draw deck.

### Pay an Cost

If the  symbol appears as part of a card's play cost or as part of a hero's ability cost, playing that card or activating that ability takes up 1 of your 3 actions for the turn. This includes playing Ultimate cards that correspond to the heroes you control.

### Locations

Certain locations have effects denoted with an action cost. To use these effects, a player must spend an action during their Action Phase while they control a readied hero at that location.

## GETTING KNOCKED OUT

Whenever an opponent's hero is knocked out, whether due to an attack or other effect, follow these steps:

1. You move the control token at that hero's location 2 spaces.
2. Your opponent removes all tokens from the knocked out hero and removes that hero from play.

**Note:** Knocked out heroes will re-enter play during their owner's next Ready Phase.

## Example: Attack & Knock Out



1

The Loyalist player chooses to attack Venger with Whiplash at the Detention Facility location. Whiplash has an attack value of 3, so Venger adds 3 damage to the 6 that he already had.

2

Venger's total damage is now 9, which is equal to his health value. He is immediately removed from play and the Loyalist player moves the control token 2 spaces. Whiplash is exhausted from attacking.

## Example: Move



1

Astra can move to either location directly on her right or left.

## PLAYING A POWER OR ULTIMATE CARD

### Card Types

Each hero has a unique 6-card deck of power cards. Players can only play power cards from their hand (or Ultimate cards) if the corresponding hero is not powerlocked or knocked out. Some cards have a charge point located in the middle of the card. This means that before the card is resolved, place a charge token on ANY of your Ultimate cards (even if it is face down or its corresponding hero is knocked out).



**There are 4 different card types:**

### Action



An action card can only be played during your Action Phase. To play an action card, do the following in order:

1. Pay all of the card's costs.
2. If the card has a charge point, place a charge token on one of your Ultimate cards.  
**Note:** You may place this charge token on ANY of your Ultimate cards.
3. Resolve the card's effect.
4. Discard the card.

### Reaction



A reaction card can only be played as directed by the card. A player may only play a single reaction card in response to any action, card or ability. If both players would choose to

play a reaction card in response to the same action, card or ability, the player whose turn it is chooses in which order the reaction cards resolve. Note that a player can play a reaction card in response to her own action, card or ability. To play a reaction card, do the following in order:

1. Pay all of the card's costs.
2. If the card has a charge point, place a charge token on one of your Ultimate cards.

**Note:** You may place this charge token on ANY of your Ultimate cards.

3. Resolve the card's effect.
4. Discard the card.

**Note:** The single reaction card limit applies only to reaction cards. Kosi's "Spirit Strike" ability has the same timing as a reaction card, but can be used in addition to a reaction card.

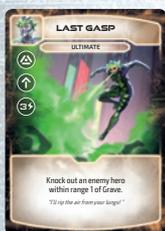
## Utility Cards



Each hero has a single utility card in its power deck. Utility cards have no cost to play and can be played in the specified phase of your turn. Utility cards are not considered

actions and cannot interrupt actions, effects or abilities.

## Ultimate Cards



An Ultimate card works just like an action card except that players begin the game with all three Ultimate cards for their heroes in their play area. These cards can only be played once

per game and are flipped face down after resolving. Most Ultimate cards also have a charge cost that shows the number of charge tokens that must be discarded from that card in order to be used.

## Costs

There are 3 different types of costs:

-  **Action:** Paying this cost counts as performing 1 of your 3 actions for your turn.
-  **Ready:** This card's hero must be readied in order to play this card.
-  **Charge:** To pay this cost, discard the listed number of charge tokens from this card.

## Example: Reaction Card



1. *The Loyalist player chooses to play "Split Shot" to deal 2 damage to each enemy hero.*
2. *After fully resolving "Split Shot," the Renegade player chooses to play "Rapid Response" to move Paladin to another hero's location and deal 3 damage. Even though the Renegade player had two copies of "Rapid Response" in hand, she could only play a single copy in response to the effect of "Split Shot."*

## WINNING THE GAME

If a player ever has 9 or more points, she immediately wins.

## CONDITION TOKENS

Some game effects cause certain condition tokens to be placed on heroes. If an effect or ability instructs you to ,  or  a hero, place the corresponding token on that hero's card. If a second condition token of the same type would be placed on a hero, prevent that second token instead. The tokens have the following effects:



**Shield:** Prevent all damage that would be dealt to this hero. At the START of your Action Phase, discard this token.



**Immobilize:** This hero cannot be moved by any means. It can still be placed. At the END of your Action Phase, discard this token.



**Powerlock:** You cannot play power or Ultimate cards for this hero. This hero may still attack or move. At the END of your Action Phase, discard this token.

## CARD EFFECTS & TIMING

When a card effect contradicts the rulebook, the card effect takes precedence. If any game effects would ever seem to trigger simultaneously, the player whose turn it is decides in which order they will resolve. The effects of a card, ability or attack must be resolved entirely before a reaction can be activated in response. Effects cannot interrupt one another. When performing card effects, a player must perform as much of the card's effect as possible, in the order presented on the card.

Some power cards target a player and give that player a choice. That player must choose an option that she can completely resolve. If she cannot completely resolve any of the choices, that portion of the card is skipped.



## Example: Card Effects & Timing

1



2



3



4



1. The Renegade player controls Mauler and Valkyrie at a location. The Loyalist player controls Ronin at range 1 and Kosi at range 2 from that location. Valkyrie and Ronin are immobilized.
2. The Renegade player uses "Guttersnare" to "Move an enemy hero within range 1 of Mauler to Mauler's location. Deal 3 damage to that hero."
3. The Renegade player chooses Ronin, but since Ronin is immobilized, Ronin cannot and does not move. "Guttersnare" still deals 3 damage to Ronin. The Renegade player could not have chosen Kosi because Kosi is not in range.
4. On her turn, the Loyalist player uses "Lotus Blade" to force the Renegade player to move or powerlock Valkyrie. Because Valkyrie is immobilized, the Renegade player must choose to powerlock Valkyrie.

## 4-PLAYER GAME

To play a 4-player game follow all of the rules for the 2-player game with the following changes.

**Setup:** Group players into two separate teams and each team drafts heroes as normal until each team has drafted 4 heroes. Heroes are assigned to either player as they are drafted, to a maximum of 2 per player. Each player collects the power deck for each of her heroes as well as a basic power deck and shuffles all 3 decks together to form a single 18 card draw deck. Teams alternate placing any of their 4 heroes at locations, 1 at a time.

**Starting Hand:** Players will draw 4 cards each instead of 5 to start the game (players may choose to take a single mulligan to 4 cards again.)

**Play proceeds as normal with the following changes:**

**Team Turns:** Instead of each player taking a turn, teams will take their turns together.

**Control Phase:** During the Control Phase, if there are more friendly readied heroes at your location than enemy readied heroes, move the control token 1 space.

**Knocked Out Hero Bonus:** Knocking out an enemy hero only moves the control token 1 space instead of 2.

**Action Phase:** Players now take 2 actions each on their Action Phase. Both players may take up to 2 actions during their team's turn, and these actions may be done in any order. The number of actions taken does not change for the first team's turn (Both players take two actions.)

**Charge:** Before resolving the effects of a card with a charge point, the player who played the card places a charge token on an Ultimate card corresponding to one of her heroes (but not her teammate's).

**Score Phase:** When scoring a location with a "Score" effect, both players separately resolve that effect.

**Draw Phase:** Both players draw 1 card from their own deck.

**Shared Information:** Players are allowed to share information with other players on their team but may not show cards from their hand to their teammate.

**Team Score and Victory:** A faction scores points together. If a faction ever has 9 or more points, that team immediately wins.



## CHARACTER PROFILES



### ASTRA

Trained as an assassin since she was a teenager, Astra's superhuman marksman abilities have made her one of the deadliest mercenaries in the world. With the use of her modified sniper rifle, Astra can curve and alter the course of shots after they've left the barrel, making her attacks extremely accurate. Although she's worked alongside other heroes in the past, she prefers to keep her distance from targets and teammates alike.



### GRAVE

Milena Castro had made quite a reputation for herself as a soldier of fortune, until an assignment to infiltrate a remote research facility in the jungles of Colombia ended with her demise. In the ensuing destruction of the facility, Castro's body was exposed to a highly toxic cloud of chemical gas that somehow revived her, and imbued her with noxious abilities. Now Milena operates under the codename "Grave," as a mercenary specializing in chemical weaponry.



### WHIPLASH

Zoe Nadir has been an exemplary officer of the Beacon City Police Department for several years, and was the first choice for the Aegis Initiative, a program designed to foster a closer relationship between the BCPD and InterGov's stable of heroes. Officer Nadir's high-powered magnetic grapples give her unparalleled mobility, not to mention the ability to restrain and dispatch threats with ease.



### VALKYRIE

Sona Zakaryan was born to a region ravaged by a generation of war. From the ashes of her homeland, she was inspired to take retribution against those who would hurt the innocents in their quest for war. Taking on the title of Valkyrie, one of the original Guardians who helped establish peace for InterGov, Sona makes use of her powerful mechanical exoskeleton to traverse the battlefield with ease and rain down judgment on any who cross her path.



### **HARBINGER**

In an attempt to bring peace to the most destabilized regions, InterGov spearheaded a variety of initiatives, including Project Harbinger. The program was designed to rapidly deploy a single-pilot heavy armor unit, capable of engaging and pacifying multiple enemies. When the cost of the project proved to be too high for more widespread implementation, the Harbinger armor was decommissioned and placed in storage, where it disappeared under mysterious circumstances. The identity of the pilot called Harbinger or how the armor was reactivated remains unknown.



### **MAULER**

Rajesh Khatri served as a mercenary for several years before he was imprisoned by InterGov after being captured by Darius Colt. Despite his unquestionable skill in combat, Rajesh is known for his erratic behavior and his inability to play well with others. The recent threat to InterGov has given Rajesh the opportunity to earn his freedom if he can keep his behavior in check.



### **PALADIN**

Lieutenant Darius Colt served in InterGov's standing military for several years, where he consistently demonstrated his abilities as a leader. Although Colt has made his living as a soldier, his ultimate goal is peace, and to that end he's willing to do whatever it takes to achieve it. The recent conflict finds Paladin fighting alongside many of the mercenaries and vigilantes he's spent the last few years fighting, and it remains to be seen if he can set aside his old rivalries and lead these heroes to victory.



### **KOSI**

Kosi Siriboe is a fierce warrior trained extensively in the use of the Kikabii Dagger, a weapon capable of moving its wielder at impossible speeds. In service of InterGov, Kosi has quickly demonstrated her considerable skill and her unflinching dedication to upholding the law. Kosi now finds herself caught in the recent conflict, and it remains to be seen if she will put her loyalty before her duty.



## VENGER

Jacob Krask grew up on the streets of Beacon City, forced to do what he needed to in order to survive. A job gone wrong left Krask robbed of his sight and rotting in lockup. Shortly after his injury, Jacob was approached by SHADO, a group claiming they could return his sight with the use of an experimental new visor implant. This device allows Jacob to see through obstacles and track his shots with pinpoint accuracy. SHADO armed Jacob with the most advanced weaponry available such as his Hammerlock pistols and the Shadow Bolt cannon. Like others, Jacob worked as a mercenary for SHADO after his enhancements, but once SHADO was disbanded by InterGov, he's worked as a freelancer ever since.



## RONIN

Yoshida Kenzo spent his youth as a member of the Sato Syndicate, a powerful criminal organization. After losing both of his hands in a brutal attack by a rival gang, Yoshida was approached by SHADO and offered an opportunity to take part in an experimental procedure to replace his injured hands with advanced robotic prostheses. The operation was a success, but Yoshida then found himself at SHADO's disposal, where his combat abilities were sold to the highest bidder. After SHADO was disbanded and its members arrested by InterGov, Yoshida saw an opportunity to start a new life using his skills alongside other heroes to help those in need.



## GLOSSARY

**Adjacent:** Locations that are directly next to one another are considered to be adjacent.

**Attack Value:** A hero's attack value is equal to the printed value on its hero card plus any adjustments due to card abilities or effects.

**Basic:** Power cards from the basic set are always added to a player's deck when constructing a deck for play. A basic power deck always includes 2 Barrier, 2 Intel, and 2 Reposition cards.

**Charge:** Power cards with a charge point located in the middle of the card allow players to place a charge token on one of their Ultimate cards. These tokens can be discarded to play those cards.

**Control (hero):** A player controls the three heroes she drafted in a 2-player game and both heroes assigned to her in a 4-player game, while those heroes are in play at a location.

**Control (location):** During a player's Control Phase, she checks each location to see if she has control. A player has control at a location if she has at least one readied hero at that location and the opposing player does not. In a 4-player game, a team has control at a location if it has more readied heroes at that location than the opposing team.

**Control Token Movement:** When players are instructed to move a control token, it must always be towards their faction space, if able. A player cannot move a control token past her own faction space.

**Damaged:** A hero with 1 or more damage tokens on its card is considered to be damaged.

**Draw:** When drawing a card it comes from the top of the drawing player's draw deck. If at any point in the game a player needs to draw a card but her draw deck is empty, that player shuffles her discard pile to form a new draw deck.

**Exhausted:** An exhausted hero is denoted by the hero's card being turned on its side. Exhausted heroes cannot move or attack, and they do not contribute to the Control Phase. You cannot exhaust an exhausted hero.

**Friendly:** Friendly heroes include all heroes a player controls and all heroes her teammate controls in the 4-player game.

**Knocked Out:** Knocked out heroes cannot be targeted by attacks or effects, are not under any player's control, and are not considered to be at any location.

**Life Value:** A hero's life value is equal to the printed value on its hero card plus any adjustments due to card abilities or effects.

**Place:** During setup, the Ready Phase and through certain card effects (particularly Harbinger's power and Ultimate cards), players are instructed to place heroes at locations. Placement is not considered movement for the purposes of conditions or card effects, and placing a hero does not trigger "Move" effects.

**Prevent:** If a card, ability or attack is prevented in part or in whole, any portion that is not prevented is still resolved as normal. The prevented portion is also considered resolved. For example, you can play a card or choose an option that would immobilize Mauler, but no condition token is placed. Also, you can play a card or choose an option that would deal damage to a shielded hero, but no damage is dealt.

**Range:** A hero's actions, effects or abilities with range 0 can only target heroes at its location. Actions with range 1 can target heroes in the same location or an adjacent location. Actions with range 2 can target heroes up to 2 locations away, etc.

**Ready:** Readied heroes can attack and move, as well as contribute to the Control Phase. Additionally, certain power and Ultimate cards require that the corresponding hero be readied in order to be played.

**Reduced:** When a card instructs a player to damage a hero until their remaining life is reduced to a certain amount, damage is added to that hero until their remaining life matches that amount. If the hero has a shield token or if its remaining life is already less than or equal to that amount, no damage is added.

**Remaining Life:** A hero's remaining life is equal to its life value minus the amount of damage on that hero.

**Ultimate:** Each hero has an Ultimate card, which begins the game set aside and face up. Players may only play each Ultimate card once per game. After an Ultimate card is used, flip it face down. Charge tokens may be placed on a face down Ultimate card.

**Undamaged:** A hero with no damage on its card is considered to be undamaged.



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