

SETTING SUPPLEMENT: DRESS CODES (OR, ARMOR & WEAPONS ETIQUETTE)

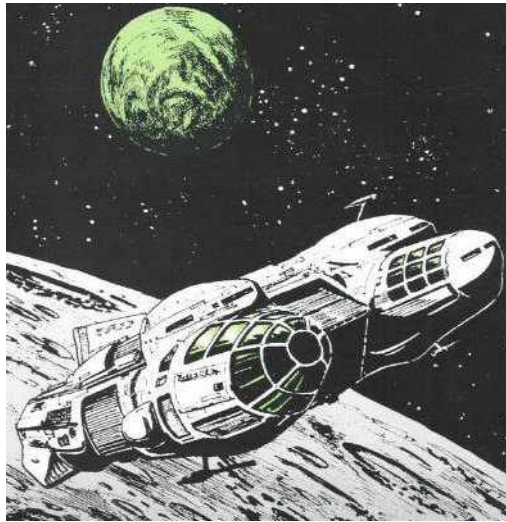
Starfinder is a setting that often puts highly-civilized and technological society, bristling with rules and laws and scanning devices or arcana, alongside Wild Zones of Danger. It can sometimes be hard to anticipate when you'll be asked to check your weapons and when you won't. This guide is meant to help with planning, both for equipment and clothing purchases and for what you take where. The basic guidelines break down as follows...

Free Zones: Warzones, The Wilderness, the Depths of Space, Your Own Ship

Wear what armour and weapons you like, as need and mood takes you. I may rule from time to time that trying to sleep at all times in full armour will hamper your ability to take full rests; armour is protective but not necessarily comfortable. This will depend on the type of armor and the circumstances; generally speaking, Second Skin would rarely present difficulties like this, but any armour that imposes an Armor Check Penalty on you is probably not something you'll want to be living in around the clock, as you'll get awfully ripe at the very least and it will probably chafe.

Edge Cases: First Contact with Unknown Aliens, Invited on Another Ship & c.

There will be times out in the unknown expanses of space when it will be hard to know if the "Free Zone" rules apply, like if you've been invited aboard a strange vessel to exchange news and pleasantries or if you're meeting unknown aliens for the first time. A lot will depend on both your social and tactical judgement here: is the situation suspicious or tense or totally random? What have you been able to ascertain about the beings you're meeting? Would carrying weapons antagonize them and provoke a fight where there didn't need to be one, or is it just a sensible precaution? This will vary a lot depending on the situation; the main thing is to be alert and have your thinking-cap on.



Minimal Restrictions: Frontier Settlements, Wretched Hives of Scum & Villainy

Frontier asteroid settlements or dusty little Akitonian towns in the middle of nowhere will have looser rules about armour and weaponry. The basic dictates would be:

- *Is it something that could plausibly be a tool for daily life?* If you're in a place where you routinely have to bull's-eye womp rats to keep the crops alive, the odd scattergun won't go amiss, and people who live in proximity to dangerous wildlife or gangs won't bat an eye at basic sorts of armor.
- *Is it something that's within social and situational norms?* A frontier settlement on a dangerous border zone where enemies could come pouring over the horizon or dropping from the sky at any moment will not begrudge your various guns, blades and plasma doshkos. The militia might need every hand come sunrise. On the other hand, a frontier town in a relatively peaceful region might well have specific ordinances – albeit loosely enforced – against carrying guns around. Think the town of Big Whiskey in *Unforgiven*.

Generally speaking, what's most likely to be frowned upon or forbidden in places like this is really over-the-top hardware. Massive suits of powered armour, artillery-grade weaponry, melee weapons as tall as an adult human and the like. Even then it will vary from place to place, but it's probably a good idea to be cautious and do as the locals do.



Be doubly cautious if it's a part of a large city essentially “governed” by a gang, as they'll sometimes be even more draconian about people other than themselves going armed than police in lawful societies might be.

“Dress Code” Restrictions: Urban Night-Spots, Poor-But-Trendy 'Hoods, Gambling Dens, Spacer Bars & Space Bazaars

In places where you're likely to routinely encounter a very mixed population, some rougher than others, or where people live in the grayer zones of the law, the general rule is likely to be “*protect yourself, but don't be provocative.*” Most such settings will understand your wearing armor – especially because most armor is also an environmental protection and you might well be a whisker away from the void of space – and won't begrudge you carrying *discreet* “defensive measures.”

On the other hand, the proprietors of an underworld casino or arms dealer or the Freemarkets of Absalom Station would be nuts to let you walk around better-armed than they are, and they'll be more squirrely about this the likelier they are to be targeted for robbery or intimidation. Generally, hidden armour and small weapons will probably pass muster, but walking around in obvious armor carrying longarms, scatterguns and big plasma doshkos will not. Anything provocative is likely to provoke.

Think of this the way Frank Costello puts it in *The Departed*:

“I'm concerned about a [*mild racial epithet*] who thinks it's wise to come to a business transaction with automatic weapons. For his own good, tell [*disparaging and kinda racist pop culture reference*] none of us are carrying automatic weapons. Because here... it don't add inches to your dick.”

Respectable Society: Middle-Class Neighbourhoods & Businesses

Wherever society is “respectable,” the rules of “not being provocative” get a lot stricter. Hidden armour might still not be frowned upon, but it would have to be *well*-hidden, and anything that looks even a bit like overt armor will be treated as inherently suspicious. “Open carrying” any form of weapon will be seen as a blatant attempt to intimidate if not downright illegal, and being found to be concealing a weapon might well be bad news of the “we're calling the law” kind.

You can basically compare this to the state of play in your own society in a developed modern country: could you go to your local Dairy Queen or Arby's wearing body armour without attracting the odd hairy eyeball? Would the local KFC throw you out or call the cops on you for flashing a pistol or walking in with a gun over your shoulder? Whatever rules would apply in your daily life likely also apply here. It will also apply to big concert venues and public gatherings in civilized settings. That local eyebite-rocker concert might have edgelords in fake armour onstage, but that security *will* be scanning everyone at the venue for weapons and demanding they be either checked or confiscated if they find anything.



Official & Highbrow Settings: High-End Restaurants, Government Buildings or Offices, Toney Districts of Town

You should definitely always at least *look* like you're wearing normal clothing, and weapons of any kind are an absolute no-no. If you're in a “good” neighbourhood, it might well be a place where noble houses have their own security enforcing their standards of propriety in “public” places, and you can expect to be heavily scrutinized – and quite possibly detained or outright attacked – if you look to be the slightest bit outside the norm. You are expected to be attired and equipped as befits doing completely un-adventurous things, whether or not that's true. If you're visiting the Lorespire or checking into a four-star hotel, this is the basic standard.

This also applies to places that might be simply hostile to Your Sort of Person. For example, the Olensa neighbourhood in the Ring on Absalom Station is basically middle-class... but it's also heavily infested with human supremacists who enforce, and can get away with enforcing, far stricter standards on non-humans.

High Security, Hyper-Formal or Sacred Spaces: Temples, Formal Dinners, Noble Residences & Luxury Businesses

The biggest difference between the universe of Starfinder and most science-fiction universes is that there are gods. They are present, they are *objectively real* in ways that have shaped fundamental aspects of the world, they communicate with their worshipers, and they are (to varying degrees) attentive. They notice actions, they grant boons, and they have the capacity to punish not in the next or a future life, but in this one. This is what makes religion a major cultural unifier in the Pact Worlds and elsewhere. This is the sense in which Starfinder societies are utterly different and alien from the modern, secularized societies we know, from our lives and from science fiction alike.



Unless you worship one of the darker deities or a god of war or piracy, there is very little chance that you can walk into one of their sacred spaces wearing weapons or armor. Worship requires your whole heart and soul and your whole intention to be real, as the gods are real. You must be fully present, not trying to game out the tactics of your situation. To disrespect a deity can have real consequences.



There aren't many places in the Starfinder universe that will demand you relinquish your armour entirely. But temples are a likely candidate, for the above reasons.

They are not alone. There are other temples: houses that worship status, or luxury, or avarice, or tradition, or creativity. A hyper-traditional, high-end Kasathan restaurant might demand not only that you remove your armor, but also your shoes, so you can walk barefoot into the sandy interior of their premises the way their ancestors trod the sands of their lost homeworld. If you're invited to dinner in a noble house, you would be expected to wear a suit (or other suitable attire) and *nothing* else. If you're invited to a performance art show where everyone is expected to attend in a state of nature because being naked to your emotions is part of the art, your Second Skin will not be permissible. And if you're invited into the Plenara – the Pact Worlds senate and congress, essentially – you would be expected to attend wearing no trappings of force or militarism whatever, and punished severely if you disobeyed that rule.

Of course this is not to say that you couldn't figure out a way of circumventing such rules. Just that it would require a lot of planning.

SO LONG, AND GOOD SHOOTING!