# BOMB SQUAD

**DAN KELTNER** ✸ **DAVID SHORT**

## A Cooperative, Real-time Game
by Dan Keltner and David Short

## RULEBOOK

Version 9

| | |
|---|---|
| **Age Range:** | **10+** |
| **Time:** | **30m** |
| **Players:** | **2 - 6** |

# Bomb Squad

*The sergeant hangs the phone up. "Multiple hostages, numerous bombs. We're up." We grab our gear, prep the robot and load the van. It's go time...*

*An unknown terrorist organization is on the rise, looking to spread fear while profiting from the chaos they create. You, your fellow members of the Retro City Bomb Squad, and your trusty Bomb Squad Robot are the only barriers in the way between these dastardly villains and the innocent civilians of Retro City.*

*Lives are at stake... and time is ticking... Let's go!*

Bomb Squad is a cooperative game where 2-6 players are a members of a team, operating a disposal robot with the mission to disarm bombs and save hostages. The players work together, racing against the clock to provide the appropriate instructions for the robot to achieve their mission objectives.

## Components

**Modular Building Tiles: (4 double-sided)** Used to create the building layout for each mission the Bomb Squad team will undertake.
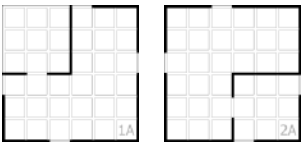


**Control Frame: (1)** Frame is placed around the modular building tiles for the mission and is used to keep track of the instructions cards that have been programmed by the Bomb Squad team and the battery meter for the robot.
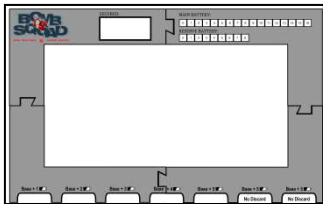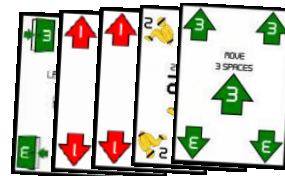


**Timer:** Used to count down the time for before each bomb detonates.



**Tokens: (40)** Tokens are placed on the building to indicate the location of doors, hostages, and bombs.



**Instruction Cards: (54)** Used to give the robot instructions on what actions to take, such as moving, opening doors, saving hostages, and disarming bombs.



**Battery Level Markers: (2)** Used to indicate the current level of the robot's main battery and reserve battery. Battery cell levels are reduced when the robot is activated and performs the actions listed on the Instruction Cards.



**Rulebook and Missions:** This rulebook, plus a list of missions for the players to complete in Campaign mode, as they combat the growing terrorist threat spreading across the city.
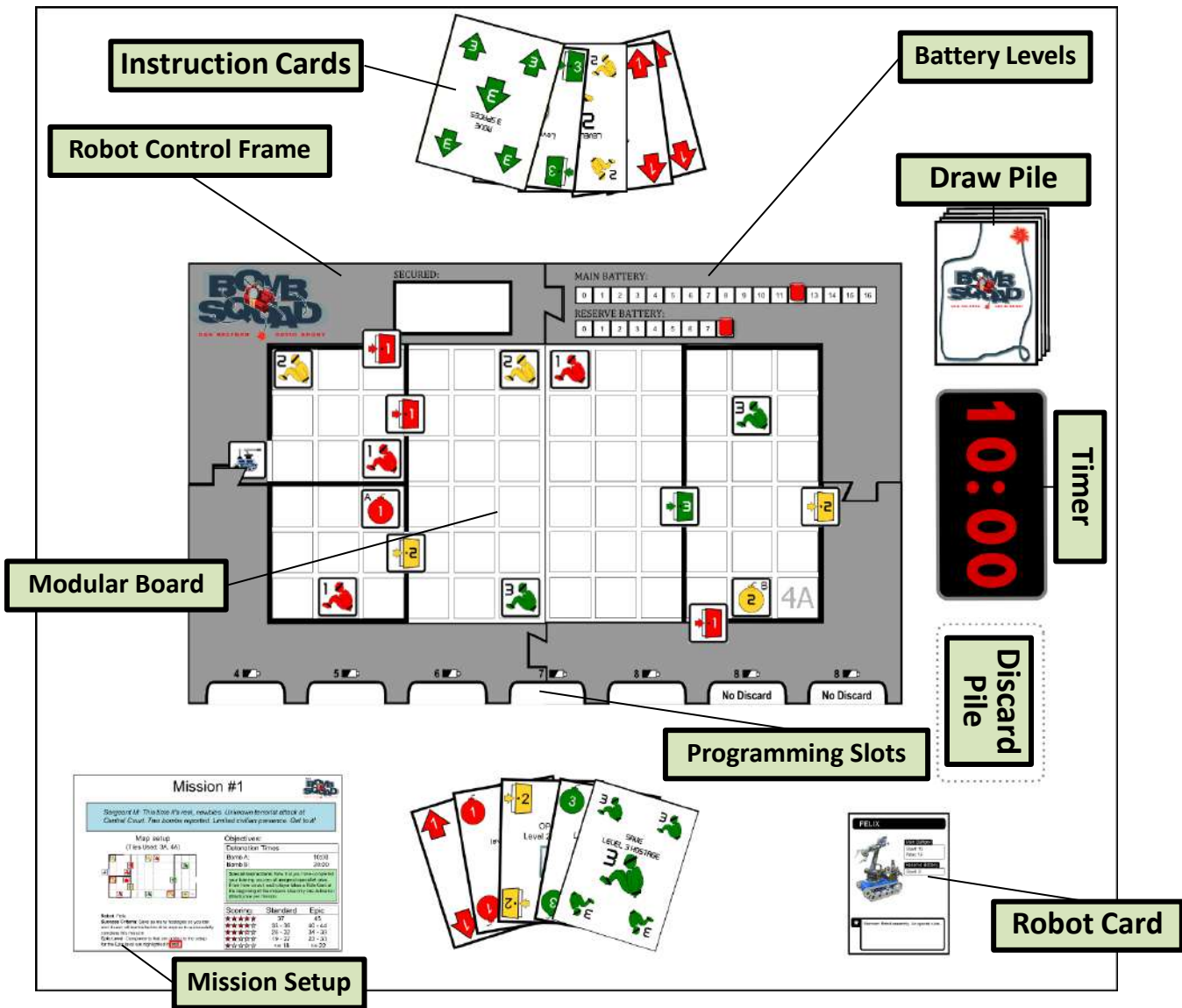
**Robot Cards (1):** Robot cards are used to select the robot type that will be used in a mission. The Robot card indicates the starting, maximum, and reserve battery levels for Felix. In the full game there will be additional robots with different battery levels as well as special rules.
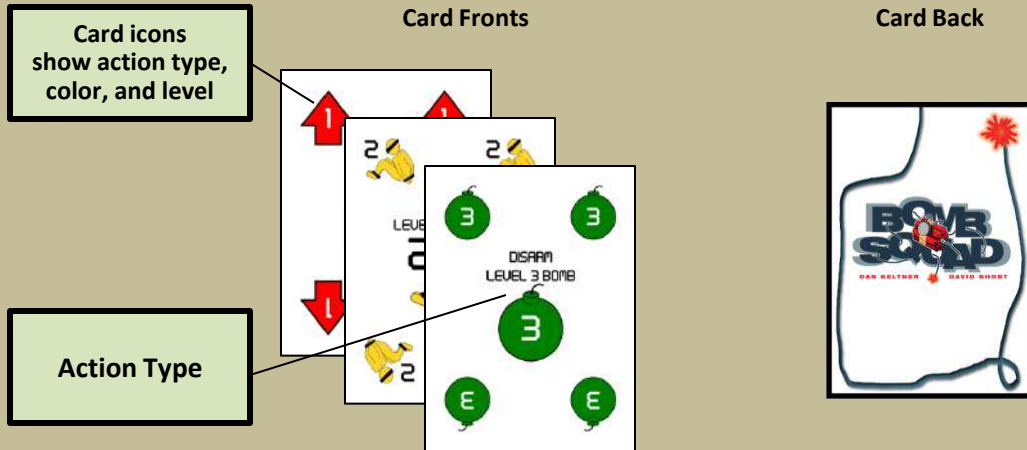
**Role Cards (9):** Role cards are assigned to each player in the game, giving them special abilities that are unique to their role. There are 3 types : Blue (Standard), Black (Activation), and Purple (Advanced.)

3
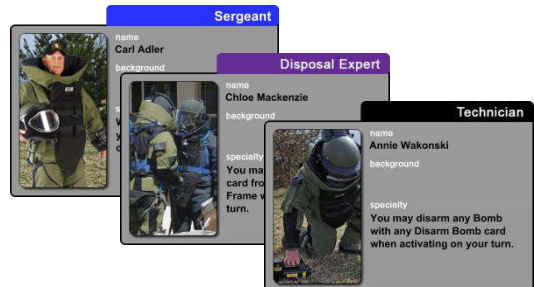
## ANATOMY of an INSTRUCTION CARD

❑ Instruction Cards in Bomb Squad can be uniquely identified by their Level (which is indicated by color and number), and by Action Type – which indicates what action the robot will perform when the instruction on the card is executed.

**Card Fronts**                    **Card Back**

Card icons show action type, color, and level

Action Type

DISARM
LEVEL 3 BOMB

BOMB SQUAD
DAN KELTNER · DAVID SHORT

## Game Features

Bomb Squad has several key features that are important to keep in mind throughout the subsequent rules:

❑ **Real time play:** Each player takes a turn in clockwise order, and is free to take as long as they want on their turn. However, there is a timer counting down in real time until the bombs will detonate, so players will want to be as quick as possible with their turns.

❑ **Hidden card information:** Players hold their cards so **the fronts are facing the other players**, which requires that players give each other **Intel** to figure out which cards they have in their hands.

❑ **Limited Communication**: Players are only allowed to communicate via the **Intel** they give each other, which provides hints about the cards in their hands. Players can also state public information, such as how much time is left on the timer or what the battery level is.

**Card Icons:**

Disarm Bomb

Open Door

Save Hostage

Move Robot

❑ **Cooperative game play**: The players are all working together, winning or losing collectively as a team.

# Setup

1. **Select a Mission:** Decide which mission the team will undertake and the desired difficulty level. This example will use Mission #1 from the Campaign scenarios as listed in the Mission book.

2. **Set up the building tiles:** The selected Mission will show the layout of the building for this mission. Find the necessary building tiles (they are marked in the lower right corner by number and letter) and lay them out in the middle of the table as shown on the mission.

3. **Set up the Control Frame:** Place the Control Frame around the building tiles. Later missions have larger (2x2) layouts. For those missions, use the included frame extension pieces.

4. **Place Tokens:** The Mission will also show the locations of the bombs, hostages, and doors in the building. Place the corresponding tokens on the spaces indicated in the building. If playing the **Epic** level, also place the tokens highlighted by a **Red** border. Place the robot at the starting location as indicated by the Mission description.

## Example Setup



Mission #1

Sergeant M: This time it's real, newbies. Unknown terrorist attack at Central Court. Two bombs reported. Limited civilian presence. Get to it!

**Map setup** (Tiles Used: 3A, 4A)

**Objectives:**

| Detonation Times | |
|---|---|
| Bomb A: | 10:00 |
| Bomb B: | 20:00 |

**Special Instructions:** Now that you have completed your training, you are all assigned specialist roles. From here on out, each player takes a Role Card at the beginning of the mission. Use only one Activation (Black) role per mission.

**Robot:** Felix
**Success Criteria:** Save as many hostages as you can and disarm all bombs before time expires to successfully complete this mission.
**Epic Level:** Components that are added to the setup for the Epic level are highlighted in red.

| Scoring: | Standard | Epic |
|---|---|---|
| ★★★★★ | 37 | 45 |
| ★★★★☆ | 33 - 36 | 40 - 44 |
| ★★★☆☆ | 28 - 32 | 34 - 39 |
| ★★☆☆☆ | 19 - 27 | 23 - 33 |
| ★☆☆☆☆ | <= 18 | <= 22 |

*Ethan and Kaia have selected Mission #1 to play. After looking at the Mission Card, they found Building Tiles 3A and 4A, and placed them as shown on the Mission card's Map Setup. Next they placed the door, hostage, bomb, and robot tokens as indicated. Then they set the timer for 10 minutes, the time allotted before Bomb A will detonate, and selected the Felix Robot Card.*

# Setup - Continued

5. **Select Robot Card:** Select which robot you would like to use for the mission. Place the robot card next to the Control Frame. (A suggested robot is shown on each Mission description.)

6. **Set the timer:** The Mission description shows the detonation time for each bomb. Set the timer to the time indicated for 'Bomb A'.

7. **Set starting Battery Levels:** Place Battery Cell Markers on the starting level spots for the main and reserve batteries on the Robot Tile.

8. **Select Role Cards (optional):** Players may choose to select a role card if desired or directed by the Mission.

9. **Determine the start player**.

10. **Shuffle the Instruction Cards**.

11. **Deal Instruction Cards:** Deal each player their initial cards, with the hand size based on the number of players as indicated to the right. (*Reminder: Face your cards away from you!)*

12. **Start the timer to begin**.
    *And good luck!*

## Hand Sizes

| # of players | Hand Size |
|---|---|
| 2 | 6 cards |
| 3 – 4 | 5 cards |
| 5 – 6 | 4 cards |

## ANATOMY of a ROBOT TILE

FELIX

Main Battery:
Start: 12
Max: 16

Reserve Battery:
Start: 8

**The maximum and starting levels for the main battery.**

**Starting level for the reserve battery.**

**Some robots have unique abilities.**

✱ Standard Robot assembly. No special rules.

# Game Play

Beginning with the start player and moving clockwise, each player must perform exactly one of the following actions on their turn:

- ❖ **Give Intel to one other player.**
- ❖ **Discard a card to recharge battery.**
- ❖ **Play a card.**
- ❖ **Activate the robot.**

Each of the actions are described further below:

- ❑ **Give Intel to one other player** to provide them with information about cards in their hand.
    - ▪ When giving **Intel**, pick an attribute from one of the two types: Level (Color) or Action Type. Point at all cards in the other player's hand that have that attribute. *Ex. These cards, here and here, are Red.*

**Giving Intel:**
When giving Intel to another player, it is often helpful to physically touch the cards in their hand that you are giving information about.

### Example Intel actions



**Ethan's Hand**

**Moves**

**2**

**Bombs**

**3**

**Kaia's Hand**

**1**

**Reds**
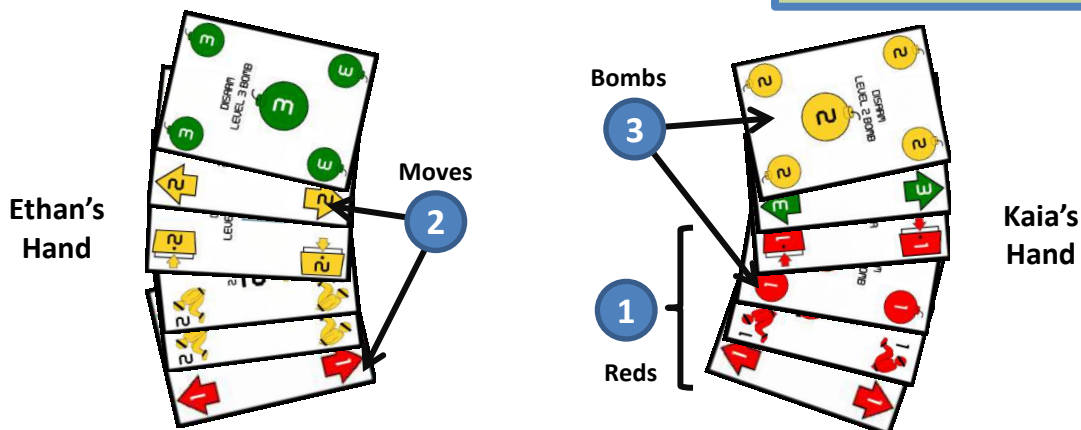
**1** *Ethan gives Intel to Kaia about her Red cards.*

**2** *Kaia gives Ethan Intel that the 1st and 5th cards are Move cards.*

**3** *Ethan then gives Kaia Intel that the 1st and 4th cards are Disarm Bomb cards. Now Kaia knows that the 4th card is a Red Disarm Bomb card!*

# Game Play - Continued

(Player action descriptions are continued below)

☐ **Discard a card to recharge battery**

- The player states they are discarding a card, and then calls out one or two card attributes (Color, and/or Action Type) for the card the player is discarding. (*Ex. "Discarding Red Bomb"*)

- Discard the card **face up** into the discard pile. It is helpful to keep the discard pile tidy. When the draw pile runs out, flip the discard pile over WITHOUT SHUFFLING to make a new draw pile.

- If the player is fully correct, increase the Main Battery level by one for <u>each correct attribute</u>. If you are not correct with <u>all</u> called attributes, no batteries are recharged.

- If the Main Battery is full, players may discard cards without increasing battery level.

- Reserve batteries can never be recharged.

- After discarding, draw a card from the draw pile to refill the player's hand.

☐ **Play a card.**

**Note:** For Training Missions, refer to the specific rules on the Mission description for how Instruction Cards should be played. The standard rules for playing cards after the Training Missions are described below.

- A player selects a card from their hand and places the card **face down** in the next available programming slot (from left to right) on the Control Frame.

- If this fills the last available programming slot, then the player who played the card automatically activates the robot. (See Activation section on page 10.)

- Draw a card from the draw pile to fill the player's hand back up to the hand limit.

## Player Actions:

☐ Give Intel
- Point out all cards in one other player's hand that are the same color or action type

☐ Discard a card
- Call out 1 or 2 attribute(s) of the card before discarding it.
- Regain battery if you are <u>fully</u> correct .

☐ Play a card
- Play face down in the next available programming slot

■ Activate the robot
- Reveal programmed cards, put them in order, perform the instructions, and use battery.

**Playing cards :** Keeping track of face-down cards on the Control Frame can be challenging for some players. For an easier difficulty level, players can always play any mission using the "Face up" programming rules in Training Mission Alpha.

**Note:** When drawing a card, if you accidentally see the front side, simply place it in the discard pile and draw a new card.

# Game Play - Continued

## ☐ Activate the robot

- When activating the robot, the current player turns the programmed cards face up and may rearrange them in any order.

- Follow the guidelines in the Activation section on page 10 for full details on how to activate the robot.
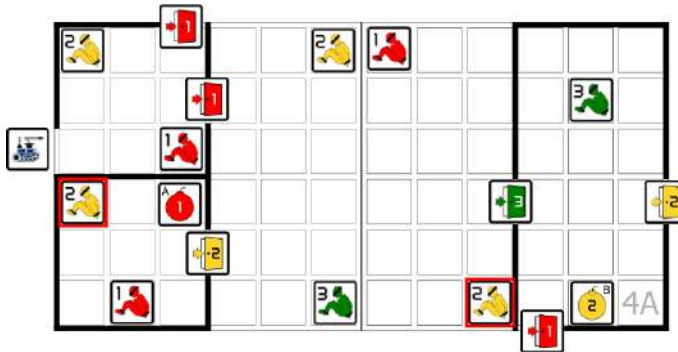
## Example actions

*Ethan and Kaia need to move the robot to the first bomb before it detonates, trying to save as many hostages as they can along the way.*



1. *Looking at the board, they see that they ideally need the robot to move Right two spaces, save a Red Hostage, move Up, move Right, and Open a Red Door.*
2. *Ethan and Kaia take turns giving each other Intel, discarding cards to gain more battery, and playing cards onto the Control Frame.*
3. *Throughout the course of their turns, they have played the following cards face down on the Control Frame.*
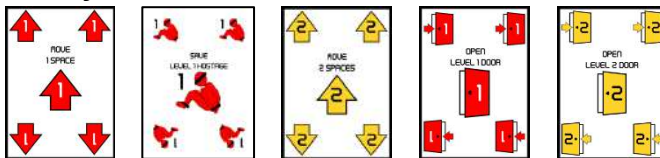


4. *Kaia becomes concerned that they might have played a card in error, so she decides to activate on her turn, even though there is space for more program cards.*

   *(How do our heroes fare during Activation? Check page 12 to see the results.)*

# Activation

- **Activating the robot can occur in one of two ways:**
  - A player decides to activate the robot by choosing this as their action on their turn (as described in the Game Play section on pg. 9.)
  - The robot is "auto-activated" by the current player if they play a card on the 7th programming slot on the Control Frame.
  - In either case, the current player becomes the robot operator.

- **Adjusting Programming: The robot operator receives and processes all the programming instructions (cards) that have been played by the team.**

The operator has an opportunity to modify those instructions before they are sent to the robot, by performing the following steps:

- The operator turns all the programmed cards face up, and can rearrange them in any order before having the robot perform the instructions. During this phase, all players are allowed to talk freely and provide suggestions, but it is the operator's decision on the final order of the cards.

- **NOTE:** If the robot has been activated before 6 cards were programmed, then the operator has the option to discard any one of the programmed cards. If 6 or more cards are programmed, then no cards can be discarded.

- Once the programming has been adjusted, reduce the battery level based on the total amount of battery usage shown above the last programmed card on the control frame.

- Programmed cards that cannot be performed by the robot are errors. Each error costs 2 more battery cells in addition to the programming costs stated above.

## Activation Summary:
1. Flip over the programmed cards and rearrange as desired.
2. If 5 or fewer cards were programmed, one card may be discarded before sending the instructions to the robot.
3. Reduce the Main Battery level based on the cost of the programmed cards. (Reduce the Reserve Battery level if necessary.)

## Battery Usage

| Event | # of Battery Cells Used |
|---|---|
| Robot Activation | As indicated on the Robot Control Frame based on the number of programmed cards |
| Programmed cards that cannot be performed (errors) | 2 additional battery cells per error |

# Operating the Robot

- After adjusting the programming and paying the battery costs, the team then operates the robot.
- The operator has the robot perform the action on each card in order from left to right.
- The Robot must be adjacent (not diagonal) to an object to perform an action (Open Door, Save Hostage, or Disarm Bomb) on that object.
- Robots **cannot** move onto any space where an object or token is located.
- The **exact** card must be used to perform an action. (i.e. a Green Open Door card will not open a Red door, and a Yellow bomb requires a Yellow Disarm Bomb card, nothing else will do.)
- Move actions from an individual card must be executed **in a straight line** (no diagonals.) For example, a Green Move 3 card can not be used to move two steps to the right and then one step up.
- If the robot cannot move the full distance of a Move card in a straight line, then the card action is not performed at all and the robot uses up 2 additional battery for the error.
- Before the robot can open a door of a specific level / color, **they must have saved at least 1 hostage already in this mission of that same level / color**. If not done, the Open Door action fails as an Error.
- When performing an Open Door, Save Hostage, or Disarm Bomb action, remove the token for that object from the board.
- After all the instructions have been performed, the programmed cards are discarded, and play continues with the next player in clockwise order.

## Robot Operation Steps:

1. Have the Robot perform the action on each instruction card in sequence.
2. If an action cannot be performed, reduce the main battery level by 2 for that error (reduce Reserve Battery Level if needed)
3. Discard the programmed cards.
4. Continue play with the next player in turn order.

## Activation Guidelines:

- Robot must be orthogonally adjacent (not diagonally) to objects to activate them.
- Card type and color must be an exact match.
- Move cards are straight-line only, no diagonals.
- Can only open doors of a level after saving at least one hostage of the same level
- Door, Hostage, and Bomb tokens are placed in the Secured area on the Control Frame.
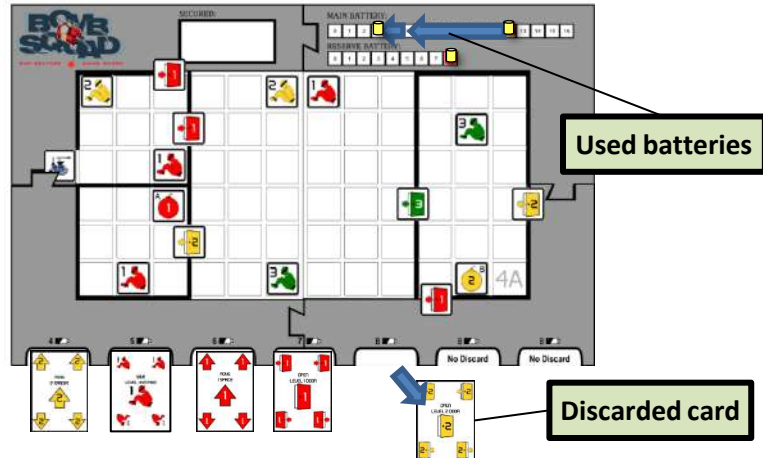
**Note:**
The robot <u>must</u> save at least one hostage of a color before it is able to open doors of that same color.

## Game Play - Continued

### Example Activation

*Kaia has just activated the robot as the action on her turn and is ready to operate the robot.*



**Used batteries**

**Discarded card**

- *After looking at the cards they have played, Kaia has a sinking feeling that this activation phase isn't going to go so well!*
- *Kaia rearranges the cards as best she can (as shown above), realizing that they have not played the right cards to complete their objectives. She discards the Yellow Open Door card to save 1 battery cell from activation of that card, which also saves 2 more battery cells by avoiding the robot trying to perform that action in error.*
- *Ethan reduces the Main Battery level by 7 (since 4 cards ended up being programmed),while Kaia executes the actions from each card in sequence from left to right (as shown below).*



**Activation Sequence:**
1. Move right 2 spaces
2. Save Level 1 Hostage
3. Move up 1 space
4. Open Red Door (can't perform)

- *The robot is able to perform the actions on the first three cards, but cannot perform the Open Red Door action since it is not adjacent to a Red Door token at that point, so Ethan reduces the Main Battery level by 2 more for the Error.*
- *The cards are discarded and play continues.*
- ***Don't give up hope! There is still time to disarm that bomb!***

# Battery Life

- Each Robot has a Main Battery and Reserve battery. The starting and maximum levels are indicated on the robot cards.
- Reserve batteries cannot be recharged.
- If the Main Battery runs out when activating the robot, the Reserve Battery level is reduced to make up the difference.
- Each empty (used) Reserve Battery cell counts against the players' final score at the end of the mission.
- If the Reserve Battery level goes below zero, the robot runs out of energy, powers down, and **the mission is ended.**

# Bomb Detonation

- Each bomb is set up to destroy the entire building.
- If any bomb goes off, then the mission is ended. The players will move on to Scoring to rate how the team performed.
- Usually, the mission will require that all bombs must be disarmed to successfully complete the mission objectives.

# Completing Mission Objectives

- For training missions, your objectives will be to save all the hostages and disarm all the bombs before time expires. Some missions have different objectives that are stated in their mission description.
- **Note:** The final activation ends immediately when the Disarm Bomb action for the last bomb is performed. No remaining instructions cards that have been programmed are performed.

Battery Life:
- Main Battery – starting level indicated on Robot Tile. Rechargeable.
- Reserve Battery – not rechargeable.
- Reduce Reserve Battery level as needed if the robot runs out of main battery cells.
- Each reserve battery cell used counts against the team's final score.

Bomb Detonation
When detonation occurs:
- The entire building blows up.
- The mission ends and players move on to Scoring.

Completing Mission Objectives:
- Move saved hostages and disarmed bombs to the Secured area on the Control Frame.

# Game End Conditions

- ❑ The mission ends when:
  - ▪ A bomb detonates and the building explodes. -OR-
  - ▪ The robot has disarmed the last bomb. –OR-
  - ▪ Usage of the Reserve Battery makes it fall below zero.

# Scoring

- ❑ Each mission has a perfect score, which is possible if all hostages are saved and bombs disarmed without using Reserve batteries.
- ❑ The team's score is rated against a 5 Star scale, based on how well the mission objectives were met:

| Criteria | Points |
|----------|--------|
| Each hostage and bomb token in the Secured area | 2 x Face value of the token. |
| If all bombs were disarmed, score each hostage token remaining on the board. | 1 point |
| All bombs disarmed | 5 points |
| Penalties for using Reserve Batteries | -1 point per reserve battery cell used |

## Game End Conditions:

End when any of the following conditions occur:
- ▪ Any bomb detonates
- ▪ The last bomb has been disarmed.
- ▪ The robot needs more battery and none is available (main and reserve batteries are at 0)

## Scoring:

The team is trying to get a perfect score: saving all hostages and disarming all bombs.
- ▪ 2x face value for each hostage and bomb in Secured area.
- ▪ 1 point for each hostages remaining on the board. (all bombs must be disarmed)
- ▪ 5 points for disarming all bombs
- ▪ -1 point per Reserve Battery Cell used.

## Example Final Scoring
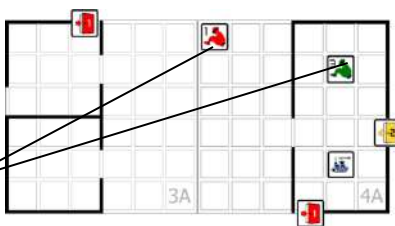


Hostages left in the building

| Scoring: | Standard | Epic |
|----------|----------|------|
| ★★★★★ | 37 | 45 |
| ★★★★☆ | 33 - 36 | 40 - 44 |
| ★★★☆☆ | 28 - 32 | 34 - 39 |
| ★★☆☆☆ | 19 - 27 | 23 - 33 |
| ★☆☆☆☆ | <= 18 | <= 22 |

*Ethan and Kaia have completed the mission. Let's see how well they scored…*

| 2x Hostage and Bomb tokens in Secured Area: **24** | + | Hostages remaining in the building: **2** | + | All Bombs disarmed: **5** | + | Reserve battery cells used: (2) **-2** | = | **29** (3 stars) |

# Variants

## Fog of War

- ❑ All Bomb and Hostage tokens from a mission are placed face down and shuffled, then randomly placed at each of the bomb and hostage token locations from the Map Setup.
- ❑ Saving hostages is not required prior to opening doors.
- ❑ Tokens are flipped over when the robot moves adjacent to the token.

## No Programming

- ❑ For a variant with more forgiving memory requirements, play any mission by immediately activating the robot and performing the action on each Instruction Card as it is played.
- ❑ Each card activation cost 2 battery.

## Multiple Robots

- ❑ Select two Robot cards and robot tokens. Add them to the board during setup.
- ❑ Indicate which robot is currently selected by placing another robot token on the first Robot Tile.
- ❑ Include a 5th action for players' turns: **Switching the current robot**, which is performed by moving the token to the other Robot Card.
- ❑ All actions (discarding for battery, activating the robot) are performed by the robot that is currently selected.

# Reference Sheet

## Player Actions:
(perform <u>one</u> of the following on your turn:)

❖ **Give Intel to one other player**
  ▪ All cards of one color or action type

❖ **Play a card**
  ▪ Face up, face down based on programming difficulty level from Mission description

❖ **Discard a card**
  ▪ Recharge 1 Main battery cell for each correctly named attribute, as long as ALL named attributes are correct.

❖ **Activate the robot**
  ▪ Rearrange cards
  ▪ Optionally discard a card if 5 or fewer cards are programmed
  ▪ Use battery and move robot

| Card Types | Quantity |
|---|---|
| **Red (Level 1)** | **27 total** |
| Move 1 Space | 11 |
| Open Level 1 Door | 6 |
| Save Level 1 Hostage | 6 |
| Disable Level 1 Bomb | 4 |
| **Yellow (Level 2)** | **18 total** |
| Move 2 Spaces | 6 |
| Open Level 2 Door | 4 |
| Save Level 2 Hostage | 4 |
| Disable Level 2 Bomb | 4 |
| **Green (Level 3)** | **9 total** |
| Move 3 Spaces | 2 |
| Open Level 3 Door | 2 |
| Save Level 3 Hostage | 2 |
| Disable Level 3 Bomb | 3 |

| Role | Description |
|---|---|
| Sergeant | When you take a Play Action, you may do so using the top card of the Discard Pile |
| Technician | You may disarm any Bomb with any Bomb card when Activating on your turn. |
| Recon Specialist | Gain 1 additional Battery Marker Cell when you recharge a Robot's battery on your turn. |
| Operator | You may look at hidden programmed cards at any time. |
| Negotiator | You may save any Hostage with any Hostage card when Activating on your turn. |
| Field Agent | You may play cards **Face Up** when playing a card to the Robot Control Frame. |
| Disposal Expert | You may discard 1 additional card from the Robot Control Frame when activating on your turn. |
| Security Expert | You may open any Door with any Door card when Activating on your turn. |
| Analyst | After performing a Discard Action, you may pay 1 Battery to put that same card back into your hand. |