

STALKER

I said come in, don't just stand there! Privyet and welcome to the Stalker jump. I don't know why you'd choose to go here, ever, but for whatever foolish reason this is where you've ended up and you'd best be prepared to survive for 10 years in such a place. For those unfamiliar, the Zones' origins are a bit fuzzy. Some say they were the sites of alien visitation, others believe they were experiments gone catastrophically wrong, yet others believe that the Zones are alive. The short version is that they are areas that can get you fantastically rich if you can get past all of the anomalies, mutants, psychic storms and your fellow man to reach the valuable artifacts within.



This jump covers the entirety of the mythos from Roadside Picnic to the tabletop RPG to the video games. Certain specifics are left purposely blank to encourage exploration and imagination; just realize that there's probably more to this universe than you might know. You gain **1000 CP** to spend as you please. You're free to choose your gender and age. Call it a consolation prize for being here.

Origins

Tourist (Free)

Waking up with a splitting headache isn't usually a great thing, but here at least you know you're alive. With no history, no friends and no paperwork proving that you ever existed, the artifact trade might be your best shot at making a decent living, if a mite dangerous. You have whatever knowledge of the Zone you had previously with no new memories or background to muddle things.

Native (Free)

When the Zones appeared, it attracted all types. When they were quarantined by the military, it drew those with special interests in close contact with those too poor or otherwise unable to leave. It takes a certain amount of desperation to become a Stalker and the Borderlands have become safe havens for those on the run. That's not to say everyone is a criminal, but the law of man reaches here only by its fingertips. You have your choice of starting as a Bandit or Loner. You gain a local's knowledge of the Borderlands, the Zone proper, and a few good ways into and out of the Zone that won't get you immediately shot.

Factionite (Free)

The Zones represent many different things to many different people, so it's little wonder that so many faction fight over them from criminal syndicates to corporate enterprises. You may start out as low man on the totem pole for your group, but nothing worth having is ever easily obtained. Your choice of Duty, Freedom, Military, Mercenary or Institute. You have official access into and out of the Zone, which will be monitored and recorded.

- Institute: You gain an academic knowledge of the Zone, lectures filled with words like Xenoparasites and Mutagenic Retroviruses. You feel like you understand anomalies better than seasoned stalkers.
- Others: You gain a local's knowledge of the Borderlands and the Zone. While this stems more from debriefings or observation than interaction, you're fairly sure you could make contact without faux pas.

Changed (Free)

You're second-generation stalker, friend. After the first stalkers came back from the Zone, something changed in their genetic code. Their children started coming out a bit... Weird. Mutation, mental retardation, unexplainable phenomena and the Howling. It's not unfair to say that these poor folk, mostly children and refugees, are ostracized by society at large. To stalkers, however, any helping hand is a good one even if it might be webbed. You gain an instinctive knowledge of the Zone; what areas to avoid and which ones are safe to rest in for a while. An idea of what hides over the next hill and which plants are safe to eat or if they'll be eating you. You know many ways into and out of the Zone. Some of them don't exist until you visit them, others only you can use.

Start Location

Roll 1d8 to determine your starting location. You'll start outside that Zone in the nearest border town, unless you've taken the Tethered drawback. In that case, you'll appear just within the border.

1) Zone Canada: Harmont, Canada. The southern parts are city proper, the northern parts are suburbs, farmland and wilderness. Unbroken anomalous area but with rumours of life in the north, including mutated survivors. The Zone was partially formed over the mining town of Harmont. Unlike most borderlands, the remaining part of the town was not abandoned and gets by on slim government subsidies and a little tourism.

2) Zone USA: Klamath Falls, USA. The Zone is on the border of California and Oregon, just south of the town of Klamath Falls. It is mostly wilderness, rural areas and small urban pockets. The western edge climbs up the slopes of the Cascade Mountain Range. The area is swept by large and powerful dynamic anomalies. Some changed life forms have crossed the border and are believed to have come from underground caves. Volcanic activity is frequent.

3) Zone China: Saysu, China. The Zone was formed in a deep valley between two plateaus and reaches over into Mongolia in the northeast. The valley floor was composed of forests and marshland but there is also the city of Saysu and the surrounding farmland. Slopes and highlands are arid steppe and rocky, broken terrain. The Zone is large and poorly known as it is covered by colourful corrosive clouds that often move against the wind. These clouds prevent satellite imaging and make the Zone nearly inaccessible.

4) Zone Japan: Sapporo, Japan. The Zone lies between the cities of Sapporo and Asahikawa. Several smaller towns were caught inside. There are also small woodlands and hills. In satellite pictures, some isolated woodlands are still visible. Anomalous areas are large and sightings of inorganisms are abundant. Distortions of time and space, such as the mingling of night and day, are common and visible as areas of light and shadow.

5) Zone Russia: Derbent, Russia. The Zone breaks up the low, forested coast between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains. It also cuts off the important land connection and oil pipeline from Russia to Azerbaijan. The area is mostly forest, woodland and marsh but on the coast lies the port of Derbent. The Russian Zone is unique: its nature has remained nearly untouched while artificial constructs and vehicles degrade quickly. Anomalies are still lethal, appearing and disappearing daily.

6) Zone France: Toulouse, France. Mostly rural, with some wooded hills the destruction of which has caused erosion effects even beyond the border. The Zone split the city of Toulouse in half and swallowed up several towns, suburbs and industrial areas. It also cut up the highway network of southern France. The anomalous area is reticular and in the holes of the net there are oases where all sorts of twisted life forms have survived. Artefacts are abundant and the Zone is favoured by stalkers.

7) Zone Afghanistan: Central Afghanistan. This Zone is anomalous when compared to the others. Whereas the first six Zones all lie on the Pillman radiant, this one resides far south of the line and has only sprung up recently leading to intense speculation and fear mongering. Sitting between the borders of Bamiyan and Chagcharan, the Zone has swallowed up most of the mountains of Afghanistan and many settlements located within.

8) Free Pick: The Zone shows you favor, stalker. Pick any of the above or the Ukrainian Zone if you prefer.

Abilities

General

Stashes (Free): Everybody has a stash in the Zone. What, you think they have banks out here? It's all a barter system and more often than not you won't be able to carry all of your valuables with you. When that happens, you make a stash. With this perk, any stash you make is nigh undetectable by others. Note that stashes are typically small, out of the way containers or crannies. Make your stash too big and this protection fails.

Sure Footing (50): Ever needed to jump from roof to roof to snag a hidden armored suit? How about leaping from a water tower to walk along a chain link fence to get to the roof of a gas station for that stash? Your athletic and acrobatic prowess receive a noticeable boost and your footing and balance are similarly increased.

Sneaky-Beaky Like (50): What was that sound? A prowling blind dog, a stalking bloodsucker... or you? You gain a noticeable increase to your stealth capabilities as your body reflexively offers the smallest profile when crouching or hiding and your footsteps make less noise than they should. It's not perfect, but it'll help keep you breathing.

Б а й с т р ю к (100): You're one mean bastard, aren't you? Instinct has driven home that you're not one to be fucked with. Bandits are less likely to fuck with you and shops will more often give you fair deals due to your aura of breaking their kneecaps if they piss you off.

Marked One (100): Destiny, Fate or some other higher power has marked you for greatness. Well, at least better than average. Your luck receives a noticeable bonus in the way that you are substantially less likely to suffer a 'critical failure'. You can still fail at something, easily enough even, but the result of that failure is usually not life-threatening unless it would be so otherwise (combat, jumping from high places over solid ground, etc.).

Technician (100): Machines speak to you in a tongue more familiar than your native one. Modifications come easy and field cleaning is a breeze even with substandard gear. It's rare that a gun you maintain jams or armor fails to protect you. You'll need tools, but in general if something's broken you're the one they call to fix it.

Zone-Touched (100): Something about the Zone has heightened your senses and in many respects it feels like you've been walking in a haze before this point. You've gained an unerring sense of direction and a perfect mental map of the areas you've explored.

Weapons Systems Expert (200): Through training, trial and error or a stolen manual, you've managed to learn the secrets to exoskeletons and powered armor. Not only can you build and maintain them, should you have the materials, you've figured out how to make them run at speed. Applying this insight to other sets of powered armor, you can increase their movement speed and flexibility by leaps and bounds.

Hi-Tech Expert (200): Sensors can be the difference between life and death in the Zone and you're a master of making and improving them. Integrating advanced night vision goggles into your gear is a cinch and you're able to take it a step further by upgrading it into a hybrid infrared and ultrasonic scanner. In short, regardless of where or how they hide you'll know where they are.

A Wealthy Client (200): Somehow or another, you're always able to find a buyer for whatever you may be selling from artifacts to mutant parts. These buyers will usually give you favorable deals, or at the very least

allow you to break even. Beware when selling things like human organs or drugs, buyers are still people and you might not want to meet the kinds of people who buy those sorts of things for a variety of reasons.

Radiation Sponge (300): While you aren't immune to radiation, this perk allows you to ignore up to a moderate case of radiation poisoning and will filter any remaining isotopes out of your system over time. Also works with worn/held items, effectively allowing you to (over time) sanitize irradiated items with a touch.

Tourist

One of Ours (100, Free Tourist): Everybody hates a tourist, except for you oddly enough. You find friends fast in unfamiliar surroundings and can generally count on a shared meal or bit of worthwhile gossip.

Light Sleeper (200, Discount Tourist): Your travels have given you an appreciation for catching sleep when you can. You're able to sleep just about anywhere without developing aches, pains or any of the assorted downsides to sleeping on improper or no bedding. In addition, four hours of sleep counts as a full night's rest for you and you can wake up at the slightest sound should you choose.

Sixth Sense (400, Discount Tourist): Whether it's a gut feeling, aching joints or the hair on your neck standing up, you have the useful ability to detect nearby or incoming danger or calamity. Everything from a stalking Chimera to unsafe footing can trigger it, and you have a vague sense of what is causing it. Over time, you're able to learn common patterns and guess with fair accuracy what's headed your way.

Mutant Whisperer (600, Discount Tourist): You've got this vibe going that mutants just can't help but like. Lower grades of mutants like blind dogs and boars will ignore you unless provoked while the higher iterations will target you last when engaging in combat. With some it might even be possible to talk or barter with them, but it's not guaranteed. In future jumps this can also apply to magical creatures.

Native

Scavenger (100, Free Native): Where most see nothing of value you see endless opportunity. You're very adept at picking over salvage and finding the diamonds in the rough, whether they be actual diamonds or a forgotten roll of bandages and some food.

Seasoned Stalker (200, Discount Native): In the Zone knowledge is a poor substitute for experience. Like in life, it's more about who you know and how to think on your feet. Both of which you excel at now. You know who to talk to, which palms to grease and who to take out to get your way. It might not always work out as intended, but you'll never be left in a bad position unless you do something truly stupid.

Artifact Hunter (400, Discount Native): You're not sure what everyone's freaking out over, anomaly fields aren't that bad once you know their tricks. You're able to navigate hazardous terrain and anomalies with little hassle though careless movement can get even the best killed. In addition, there's a noticeable improvement in the quality of the loot you find. Just don't let the bandits find out, yeah?

A Heap to Call Your Own (600, Discount Native): Sure the factions might be better equipped, but you're adept at carving out your own little slice of hell. Whenever you clear out a sufficiently intact building, derelict ship, underground tunnel or the like you can designate it as your own personal 'safe zone'. Pests like rats, insects and blind dogs instinctively steer clear and things like hostile stalkers and dangerous mutants have a way of overlooking safe zones on a routine basis. The coverage varies, but you can generally count on it concealing up to a moderate two story house.

Factionite

Basic Training (100, Free Factionite): You can shoot and field strip most gun with practiced ease and accuracy, run for several miles without tiring and are in general considered competent in most military aspects. In addition, you have a good head for tactics, land navigation and survival techniques.

A Friend of X (200, Discount Factionite): Not only are you a part of your faction, but you're a pretty important and liked guy. You'll receive a 20% discount when dealing with merchant from your faction and have access to high end gear and faction exclusives. In addition, most medical treatments from faction doctors/medics are free. After this jump, you can count on a faction similar in ideology and rough purpose to treat you as one of their own.

Xenotechnology (400, Discount Factionite): You have a very technical mind and you've been able to apply your theoretical degree in physics to good use. You're able to incorporate artifacts and pieces of artifacts into any technological devices you may know how to build with a lot less spontaneous death and irradiation than you normally would. This allows you to build things like featherlight power armor, accelerated gauss rifles and other technological marvels.

Last Gasp (600, Discount Factionite): Well shit, this isn't how you're going out. Not to some no-name bandit who blew out your chest with a sawn off. This perk allows you to function after taking potentially fatal damage. Enough to kill the bastard who shot you, apply lifesaving first aid and crawl to safety before passing out. At which point you'll enter a healing coma and slowly regenerate over the course of 8 hours, at the end of which you'll be fully healed. You're only able to benefit from the healing trance once per month, however. You are still vulnerable while in trance.

Changed

Night Vision (100, Free Changed): To you, it's never really dark. When the lights dim your eyes seem to refocus and you're able to see in the dark as well as if it were high noon. You don't retain the ability to distinguish color but it's not that bad.

Anomalous (200, Discount Changed): Due to your unusual physiology you're able to replicate the effects of a minor artifact. Choose one from the following: chemical, electrical, fire, psychotropic, or stamina. The first four provide moderate resistances to their damage type while stamina noticeably increases your stamina regeneration. Can be bought multiple times.

Mutation (400, Changed): For some of the changed, the influence of their birth is more pronounced. Pick one power from this list: active camouflage, kinetic shield, natural weapons, pyrokinesis, super strength, or telekinesis. Whatever you pick will start off at the minimum ability possible, but with practice will transform into a terrifying power; from spontaneous infernos to claws/teeth that can slice through hardened steel. Can be bought multiple times.

Marked by the Zone (600, Discount Changed): There's a quiet stillness to your mind that would unnerve any psychic. Reading your mind is like trying to speak in color; ultimately impossible for all but the most unhinged. You're able to survive emissions as if you had taken a dose of anabiotics. In addition, this ability also confers a substantial resistance to psychic influence and damage of all types.

Gear

Basics

Bag of Bolts (free): An infinite pouch of bolts of varying size. Conductive and non-irradiated, they're a great multipurpose tool for any stalker worth their salt. Use it to test anomalies, distract enemies or just throw them at people who annoy you.

Echo Detector (free): This dated anomalous activity detector produces an alarm signal when anomalous particles enter a special chamber as you approach an anomaly. It can also register the presence of artifacts and measure the distance to the nearest one. The distance is indicated by the frequency of the sound the detector emits. Due to its simple design, Echo can only be used to locate the most common artifacts.

Makarov Sidearm (Free): This Soviet legacy is the most common pistol in the Zone and is one of the best compact self-defense handguns available. It is small, highly reliable, easy to use and maintain in working order. It also suffers from several drawbacks, including its short range, low firing accuracy and poor stopping power, while also losing out to modern pistols in its class in terms of weight and magazine size.

Rookie Armor (Free): Known in the Zone as rookie armor or 'bandit jackets', this outfit consists of a either a tan or black leather parka with kevlar patches sewn into it, a beige hoodie worn underneath, and blue tracksuit pants tucked into hiking boots. This outfit offers little protection from gunfire or claws and is useless against radiation or anomalies. Gives you an authentic feeling of hopelessness and ennui when you don it.

Survival Gear (free): A simple backpack is filled with everything a burgeoning stalker could need. Well, the basics at least. The kit includes a bedroll, mess kit, fixed blade knife, flashlight, a small pack of batteries, flint and steel, and a cyanide pill. Huh, that got dark.

Weapons and Armor

Helmet (50): Your choice of gas mask or steel helmet. Made out of rubberized fabric, the gas mask features two round visors and detachable filters. It's simplicity and low price make it an extremely popular choice among stalkers of all factions. The steel helmet is a desperately outdated army model without any additions. Provides no protection against anomalies or radiation, but can deflect bullets.

Improved Sidearm (50): You have your choice of any revolver or semi-automatic pistol currently available. Anything from an old cap-and-ball Colt to the newest model of Glock is up for grabs. As a bonus, no matter how obscure the ammunition, you'll always be able to find small amounts to reload with from time to time.

Main Weapon (100): Your choice of break or pump action shotgun (sawn-off optional), bolt action or semiautomatic hunting rifle, or light caliber submachine gun or automatic pistol.

Stalker Armor (100): Your choice of Merc Suit or Sunrise Suit. The mercenary suit consists of a navy blue or urban camouflage pattern jumpsuit, a European-pattern tactical vest and a belt-mounted pistol holster and carrying pouch. Also comes with your choice of balaclava or bandana. Great for shootouts with the local bandits. The sunrise suit is an effective combination of a light military bulletproof vest and a jumpsuit made out of rubberized fabric. It is reinforced with inserted kevlar plates and provides lower levels of protection against gunfire than the Merc suit, but is lighter and protects a bit better against most anomalies.

Veteran Armor (150): Your choice of Berill Armored Suit or SSP-99m Ecologist Suit. The Berill Armored Suit is an official suit used by the Ukrainian Military, modified for the Zone. It includes a PSZ-9a military bulletproof vest with beryllium coating and a Sphere-08 tactical helmet. It features a European woodland camouflage pattern. The helmet has a special copper wire mesh installed to help protect the wearer from background psionic emanations of the Zone and a second generation night vision device. Feel like a bullet sponge with one of the better armors available in the Zone.

The SSP-99m suit has an integrated air-filtering and air-conditioning system with the main body of the suit made out of materials that are heat and electricity resistant, providing high resistances to radiation and anomalies. For additional protection, the suits are treated with a special substance obtained from Urchin artifacts. It also includes a first generation night vision device. However, since this suit was designed to protect the wearer from hazardous and toxic elements it could encounter and not from firearms, it has very low protection against firearms and explosives.

Veteran Weapon (150): Your choice of automatic rifle, automatic shotgun, sniper rifle or other military-grade weapon. Dedicated grenade or missile launchers not included. Local laws and human greed still apply, mind.

Exoskeleton (400): An experimental sample of a military exoskeleton, initially designed for hazardous excursions into the Zone, but the cost made mass production and utilization unfeasible. Comprised of two pieces; a radiation suit laden with military-grade kevlar and composite plating, and an external frame comprised of synthetic muscle fibers and servomotors. While wearing the suit, your strength is increased to the point where an average man could kill someone with a single punch. Your carrying capacity is similarly increased as the suit will assume a majority of the burden. While you won't be able to run in this (without some tinkering), you won't find a more protective suit of armor anywhere else.

Detectors

Bear Detector (100): The last generation of anomalous activity detector can be used to locate anomalous formations and has a color diode panel, which not only indicates the direction of artifacts, but also measures the distance to them. To switch to artifact search mode, open the device's front cover. Unfortunately the device is programmed with a somewhat outdated list of detectable artifacts.

Veles Detector (200): A next generation scientific detection scanner. Thanks to three modernized detection chambers, the position of artifacts is shown on a special display screen. When closed, the device registers only radiation and anomalies. To switch to artifact search mode, open the front LED display. When in search mode, the detector is capable of locating all artifacts known to science.

Svarog Detector (400): A prototype of an expanded functionality anomalous frequency scanner. This device comes with a program used to identify static areas of anomalous activity stored in its database, while retaining the ability to locate artifacts. The position of anomalous areas and artifacts is displayed on a special screen. The artifact search mode, which can be activated by opening the front LED display, has been modified to detect anomalous formations currently unknown to science.

Medicines

Antidote (50): The IP2 antitoxin is a complex drug used to inject a range of antibiotics to neutralize natural poisons, together with synthetic poison absorbers, into the bloodstream. Less popular in the Zone than other medications, it still has a place in more experienced stalker's kits. Refills daily and can cure most forms of poisoning. Less effective on supernatural or esoteric poisons.

Medical Kit (50): A pocket-sized emergency kit for any occasion. This kit will fix most any physical malady; gunshot wounds, a broken leg, missing a finger... well maybe not that, but it can patch you up enough to get you to a real doctor. Refills after use.

Party Pack (50): Drugs are bad, m'kay? That said, *these* drugs are *awesome*. You have a small fanny pack of a variety of illicit substances that refills over time. The pack contains a Whitman's sampler of drugs and paraphernalia ranging from ecstasy to heroin to help you forget about being in the Zone for a while. In addition, some drugs have very useful side effects (marijuana and downers can be used as mild Psy protectants, etc.). Refills weekly.

Anabiotics (100): A single capsule that, when consumed, confers a massive resistance against psychic damage and influence of all types. It is strong enough to allow you to survive an emission outside of protection. Another dose appears one month after the last dose was used. It is a fantastic last-ditch defense.

Army Medical Kit (100): For the real emergencies. This high-quality medkit is filled with enough advanced medicines and painkillers to make a sucking chest wound feel like a mild irritant. Doesn't do anything for irradiation or things like poisoning, otherwise it'd be perfect. Refills after use.

Hercules (100): Artificial steroids, similar in chemical composition to testosterone, often used by stalkers during long raids to reduce muscle fatigue. Significantly increases weight-carrying capacity over a long period of time. This CP-bought formula avoids certain unwelcome side effects of extended steroid use and comes with the formula to produce more.

Scientific Medical Kit (100): Is your third eye getting irritated? Well, look no further than this medical marvel! Packed with enough anti-radiation and experimental drugs to keep you standing at ground zero for at least triple the time any other poor bastard could. They had to ditch a few of the health restoratives offered by the army kit, but it remains on par with the standard kit. Refills after use.

Miscellaneous

Binoculars (50): These high-tech binoculars are almost cartoonishly advanced for the time period. In addition to having an adjustable 15x digital zoom, these goggles also have the capability of recognizing and marking living creatures in their field of view. They ignore anything less than full cover and are able to distinguish the general attitude towards the observer after a few seconds of tracking. Green for friendly, yellow for neutral and red for hostile. They're guaranteed to never break.

Cossacks Vodka (50): "The first sip burned a lot, irritating my gums and leaving my mouth slightly numb, with a greasy, charcoal-like aftertaste. At 96 percent alcohol, this "potable" drink is a favorite of silver miners (who rarely live past their thirties) and said to fall somewhere between industrial and consumer grades." If it's any consolation, you now have an ever full bottle of the stuff. Plus, it'll help offset the horrors of radiation sickness and being sober in the Zone! Pairs well with bloodsucker goulash or boar chops.

Diet Sausage (50): A few link of kolbasa made from a mix of chicken and soy. This sausage is so named because it is usually a stalker's breakfast, lunch and dinner for a lack of other options. Contained in a sealable plastic container, there's enough here to get you through the day and it refills at dawn.

Guitar (50): This well-worn acoustic guitar is always perfectly tuned and seems to guide the fingers of its user when attempting to play songs on it. Comes with sheet music for many popular folk songs and campfire music.

PDA/Smartphone (50): An indestructible smartphone or PDA of your preferred brand. Can connect to any universes' cellular and internet networks should they be available. Includes satellite photos of your surroundings, GPS, and all the functionality of a normal smartphone. Never runs out of battery.

Radiation-Proof Backpack (50): Most artifacts give off high levels of radiation which can lead to severe health complications sooner or later. To assuage that, lead-lined backpacks are the go-to for many stalkers in the Zone. This one, however, is special. In addition to upgrading your standard backpack to a large ALICE pack (with LBE), the backpack will neutralize all radiation of anything placed within it. Note that you cannot use/gain the benefits of artifacts when they are stored in such a way.

Basic Tools (100): A complete set of basic tools for weapon, armor, gear and machinery modifications contained in a compact toolbox that is bigger on the inside. It carries a limited selection of power tools, but you'll find everything you need for maintenance, general repairs and basic modifications. There are two more tool kits, Fine and Calibration tools, that are required for more high tech upgrades and repairs that can be found in the Zones. Typically in industrial areas that haven't been picked over nearing the middle.

Flashdrive (100): This simple memory stick contains thousands of weapon and armor modification schematics that range from mundane handgrip adjustments to early artifact test notes. Sifting through the data will take time, but the diligent will be rewarded. After the jump this becomes a high-infinite storage device, albeit unmodifiable.

Grenade Pack (100): This belt of five grenades is particularly useful. While wearing it, explosives you carry cannot be accidentally detonated (including ones not on the belt) and every day at dawn, one grenade will appear on the belt if there are less than five. It can be your choice of frag, smoke, flash bang or high explosive.

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Energy Drink (100): Often used by stalkers on long trips, it contains easily digestible carbohydrates as well as drugs that stimulate the release of adrenaline into the bloodstream. Might or might not be off-brand Jaguar Ultra. One can will see your endurance skyrocketing. Just watch out for the crash.

X-Lab Keycard (150): A near-featureless red metal keycard with a simple magnetic strip running across the back. Impossible to acquire otherwise, you've somehow managed to acquire a 'master' keycard for the secretive labs hidden in the Zone. While it's not all-access it'll get you in the front door at least. What's on the other side is your problem. Keep in mind C-Consciousness wasn't the only group with hidden labs and many were sealed for good reason. After the jump, becomes akin to a skeleton key for electronic locks.

Artifacts

Born of the Zone, the origins of artifacts are as mysterious as the origin of the Zone itself. Some say they are regular items exposed to the Zone's mutagenic anomalies. Others say they're the discarded refuse of aliens. The truth is unknown, but what is known is that there are many people who would pay a king's ransom for these objects. With their fantastic properties comes a hidden blade, however. Most artifacts release enough radiation to kill a person in minutes without some way to treat or counter its effects. **Ones bought here, however, are miracles in the fact that they do not emit any radiation.** Guard them close and let not even your closest companions know of them, for greed eats at the heart of all men in the Zone.

The artifacts below are categorized by their rarity and effects. Burn, chemical, electric, and psy all give resistances to their respective damage types. Endurance gives bonuses to stamina, Health boosts a person's overall health, Radiation actively draws radioactive contaminants out of the wearer and their equipment, and Healing boosts a person's regeneration. Higher tier artifacts provide an exponential benefit over previous tiers.

Tier One (100)

Artifacts of this level are fairly common as far as artifacts go. Which is to say that while artifacts are very rare and dangerous to acquire, these are the ones you are most likely to find.

Droplets (burn): From the exterior looks like a tear-like shade compound with a glossy surface, covered in cracks. Keeping in contact with the artifact can prevent burns, heat stroke and many similar conditions.

Slug (chemical): Slug is an amorphous semi-solid mass of ooze that, while in contact with the skin, helps neutralize negative chemical reactions and protects against most forms of acids.

Spring (electric): According to some researchers, this artifact is a hybrid between Battery and Shell, utilizing its unique molecular structure to insulate the nervous system from electrical overload.

Battery (endurance): The composition of this artifact includes electrostatic elements, but scientists have yet to identify the exact conditions required for its formation. The artifact is valued for its energizing properties.

Soul (health): An organic artifact with properties just as unique. It increases the body's overall recovery rate from damage of any kind without accelerating the accumulation of toxins.

Jellyfish (radiation): This gravitational artifact attracts and absorbs radioactive particles, reducing the effects of radiation on the body. Used outside the Zone for treating acute radiation sickness in exceptional circumstances.

Crystal Thorn (psy): This artifact always pokes the body of its user, no matter what, while in use. It causes a constant low-grade hum in the user's mind that helps fend off psychic disturbances.

Night Star (weight): This glowing artifact can generate a local directed low-gravity field. Widely used by stalkers along with Gravi, a similar artifact, to increase maximum load.

Mama's Beads (healing): One of the most noticeable effects of this artifact is the increased speed of healing. Emissions produced by pulses in its thicker sections force blood in open wounds to clot quicker, forming a protective scab.

Tier Two (200)

Rarer still are these. With noticeably stronger effects, these artifacts are what most veteran stalkers tend to collect and use in their excursions.

Crystal (burn): This artifact is formed in anomalous zones with intense thermal activity. Actively consumes excessive heat, remaining cool to the touch throughout.

Stone Blood (chemical): A reddish formation of compressed and fossilized plants, soil and animal debris. Can partially neutralize chemical poisons.

Sparkler (electric): A bright representative of the electrostatic family of artifacts, this artifact can smooth fluctuations in electric field density.

Shell (endurance): This artifact used to be considered trash, devoid of any useful properties. Recently, it was discovered that if kept in constant contact with the body, it has a stimulating effect on the nervous system.

Kolobok (health): A relatively rare artifact which forms in areas contaminated with chemicals, Kolobok is highly valued for its ability to heal wounds of any kind in mere minutes.

Wrenched (radiation): Acting as a kind of sponge that absorbs radioactive elements, this provides protection from outside radiation as well as from radioactive particles that have already made their way into the body.

Stone Flower (psy): This artifact is made up of a granite-like stone deformed by an extreme gravitational force, resulting in a crystallized formation that has not been explained by science.

Gravi (weight): Gravi is formed from metallic substances exposed to prolonged gravitation. This makes it capable of sustaining an antigravitational field, and many stalkers use it to reduce the weight of their backpacks.

Eye (healing): This artifact, which resembles the human eye, considerably increases the body's metabolism, helping wounds heal quicker. Experienced stalkers say that the Eye also brings luck.

Tier Three (300)

The most powerful artifacts that most stalkers ever encounter. Each one alone is worth more than the GDP of small countries. These are the paydays that most stalkers dream of finding.

So-so: A round black stick (also called Batteries) that produced endless energy and can be used to power vehicles instead of an engine. Small, easily portable, and able to replicate through a process similar to cell division. Its power to propel vehicles appears to last indefinitely.

Fireball (burn): Even though it is a thermal artifact, it can be handled without fear of being burned. Fireball maintains a temperature of 75 degrees Fahrenheit within a small radius, virtually regardless of its surroundings.

Meat Chunk (chemical): This organic artifact consists of deformed, mutated animal tissue. When placed in a chemically contaminated area, Meat Chunk transforms the airborne chemicals into a mucous fluid.

Flash (electric): This electrostatic artifact is a powerful absorbent of electricity, which it later discharges. Flash is capable of protecting its bearer from electric shocks of up to 5,000 volts.

Snowflake (endurance): Some claim that it actually is a Kolobok, its properties reinforced by exposure to a powerful electric field. Thanks to its unique properties, the artifact significantly increases muscle tone.

Firefly (health): Firefly interacts with fields unknown to science, considerably speeding up regeneration of tissue and organs in living beings, as well as normalizing metabolic processes. This artifact can literally get a badly wounded stalker back on his feet in seconds.

Bubble (radiation): A compound of several hollow organic formations, it emits a gaseous substance that can neutralize radioactive particles inside the body without harming it. Because of its effectiveness, this artifact is in great demand.

Moonlight (psy): This unique electrostatic artifact can resonate under the influence of psy-waves. Stalkers have learned to fine-tune the artifact so that it resonates in opposite phase to the main source of emissions, thus fully or significantly neutralizing their effects.

Goldfish (weight): The result of an interaction between a large number of gravitational fields, Goldfish produces its own powerful internally directed gravitational field, which renders items within its range almost weightless. This artifact is most effective for reducing carried weight, which explains why it is always in great demand.

Flame (healing): This artifact forms in areas of high thermal activity. Produces powerful infrared emissions, which intensify metabolic processes, healing wounds before its bearer's very eyes. As this artifact is very rare, it is extremely valuable.

Tier Four (400)

Now we get into the realm of myths and legends. These artifacts are so rare as to have never been seen by more than a handful of people. Less so after they've been murdered for such priceless objects. Buy with caution, friends.

Compass: A rare artifact – it's been several years since one was found. The artifact can locate gaps in anomaly fields, effectively acting as a compass. It is believed that it can help one traverse the most complex anomaly fields completely unharmed. In addition, it confers significant resistances against burns, chemical, electricity and psychic damage.

Death Lamp: Perhaps the most feared of the super-artifacts, is the Death Lamp. Nobody knows exactly what it looks like. Greenish light flashes briefly, perhaps for only a second and it may take several minutes before the user can produce another flash. It will reach at least ten metres away and will affect its targets through translucent surfaces such as clear glass. Everything living in that light will die. If it hits the bare skin of a human, the results are fatal and resuscitation is impossible. The body will not even rot properly because all the bacteria in it are dead. Thick clothing is enough protection, however, if bare skin is not exposed. The light would merely disinfect the clothes.

Heart of the Oasis: A truly mythical artifact from the fabled Oasis of the Zone. Grown from the healing waters of the Oasis, the Heart looks like a ripe apple encased in crystal. While carrying this artifact you will never go hungry and your health, stamina and regeneration are all boosted significantly. It can also lead you towards the Oasis with small psychic tugs, though you will still need to overcome the obstacles to access the Oasis.

Companions

All companions have access to all freebies listed in the jump. Companions may not take other companions or drawbacks, but are affected by drawbacks you take.

The Bandit (100): A hardened criminal who escaped into the Zone to avoid going to jail and has managed to carve out a reputation for themselves. Quick to laugh and even quicker on the draw. Comes with Б а й с т р ю к , A Wealthy Client, Scavenger, Seasoned Stalker, and an MP5 lovingly named 'Viper'.

The Changed (100): A second generation stalker who's started to show signs of their altered physiology. They're prone to silence and speak with a bit of a bit of slowness, as if their first language is not their primary one. Tends to howl at seemingly nothing at times. Comes with Zone-Touched, Night Vision, Mutation: Telekinesis and Mutation: Kinetic Shield.

The Free Spirit (100): Deadly at a distance, the Free Spirit is a friend to everyone especially those allied with Freedom (or closest equivalent). Spends most of their time high as a kite and is always willing to share the love. Comes with Sure Footing, Basic Training, A Friend of Freedom, an SA Avalanche, a Sunrise Suit, a Party Pack and a bottle of Cossacks Vodka.

The Guide (100): An experienced stalker who has learned that they have a better chance of surviving leading others to dangerous places rather than going in themselves. Well-liked and almost unerring in their directions. Comes with Sure Footing, One of Ours, Sixth Sense, Seasoned Stalker, and Gas Mask.

The Scientist (100): An ex-Institute scientist specializing in the newly evolving field of Xenology. Listed as AWOL, they've journeyed into the Zone for the promise of adventure outside the lab and the chance to put their knowledge to practical use. Comes with Technician, Basic Training, Xenotechnology, an SSP-99 Ecologist Suit, and a Medical Kit.

The Soldier (100): A deserter from the military guarding the perimeter of the Zone, they've decided to follow you for an unknown reason they're keeping close to the vest. Mumbles soviet choir songs under their breath when travelling or distracted. Comes with Basic Training, a scoped LR-300, a Berill Armored Suit, an Army Medkit, Binoculars and a Guitar.

Canon Companion (200): Did someone here make an impression on you? The mind-addled Strelok? The gruff Scar? Maybe you wanted to take someone from outside the games like Dr. Valentine Pilman or Redrick Schuhart? In any case, this is the option to do so.

Psy-pup (200): This cute little mutant is part of one of the most feared creatures you can encounter when traveling alone. Known as a psy-dog, this creature has the ability to create copies of themselves in the mind of it's prey. Where a distant observer sees only one dog attacking a stalker, the stalker sees a huge pack of dogs closing in from all sides to shred him to pieces. In this case, however, the psydog is still only a puppy; but if you can't think of a use for a hoard of (possibly killer) puppies, I don't think you're trying hard enough.

The Slav (200): This man is the definition of slavic stereotypes. Almost perpetually drunk, always willing to fight over petty slights and screams incoherently in alternating broken English and Russian. Possibly named Ivan or Boris, blin. Comes with Sure Footing, One of Ours, Sixth Sense, Artifact Hunter, and a bottle of Cossacks Vodka.

Friends in Hell (200): It always helps to have friends in the Zone. You can import or create up to 8 companions and have them join you in your suffering. Each companion receives a background, freebies and 500 points to spend.

Properties and Addons

Sidorovich's Bunker (200): Everyone's favorite price-gouging bastard, Sidorovich, has decided to come along on your journey. Not as a companion, but as a sort of travelling merchant. He and his bunker can be dropped into future jumps as you like and a door in your warehouse allows for quick access to him should you ever need to sell something. Sidorovich will buy most anything that has value and is not overly concerned about things like ethics or morals. As a note, what you sell him won't just sit on his shelves. Somehow, he'll find a way to sell the things in his shop to the denizens of the world you're currently in. Read again on his morals and ethics.

Mobile Laboratory (200): This above-ground bunker is perfect for the scientist on the go as it has been designed to be picked up and relocated with the use of a helicopter. Past its in-built decontamination chamber lies a bevy of high-quality research gear for the experimentations of your choice as well as a small living quarters. Research the Zone, its artifacts or even its mutants from the safety and comfort of your reinforced concrete station. Proves highly defensible from both internal and external threats.

Familiar Station (200): Home is where the heart is, or so they say. For stalkers, that usually translates into two places. The first is their favorite station. The 100 Rads Bar, Skadovsk, even Yanov Station; these are places that make stalkers gather to meet, share vodka and rumors and get a chance to feel ever so slightly human in the dismal wasteland of the Zone. Though they may shoot each other tomorrow for an artifact or crust of bread, here they celebrate as only survivors can. You may choose to bring along any station you choose with you in your travels. It will always be inhabited by a disparate but tight-knit group of explorers, treasure-seekers and criminals native to the universe you're in.

Stalker Hideout (200): This is what most stalkers call their true homes, at least while they're in the Zone. Cast out by normal society, stalkers fight for their right to exist and carve out their own demesne. For some it is an abandoned train car, a fortified floor of a dilapidated hotel, or even the end of a collapsed train tunnel. For most Jumpers, however, this usually means their Warehouse. In that spirit, you gain ownership of a mostly-empty industrial warehouse, a portion of which has been turned into rough living quarters with jury-rigged water and power. From the outside it doesn't seem like much, and that is to its credit as scavengers and those generally nosey will simply pass it over unless given a reason to investigate. As a bonus, you can redecorate your warehouse and properties in Stalker chic; I.E. eastern european, industrial or abandoned aesthetics.

Artifact Field (400): The dream of every stalker; a secret artifact field to farm for sweet, sweet rubles. Usually an impossibility to find, given the transitory nature of the fields, but you've managed to find one. In this jump, you'll have to trek to and from the field to benefit from it, but afterwards a door will appear in your warehouse that will take you right to the field. The anomalies, artifacts and field will change on a weekly basis and no more than three can be found in a week with most being low-grade artifacts. Higher grades will spawn, but much more rarely. The fields are largely up to your discretion; electrical fields in a bunker, gravity anomalies in an open field, etc. The limitations being you cannot leave or store items in the fields and some degree of platforming or exploration is required to acquire the artifacts.

Drawbacks

You can take any number of drawbacks, but your bonus point total cannot exceed 800 CP. Drawbacks override abilities. Should you take drawbacks that work exclusively in the Zone and proceed to spend the next ten years nowhere close to it, the drawbacks will follow you as the Zone expands to consume the world. The Zone claims its own...

Hello. Hello. (+0): ALLLLOOOOOHAAAAAAAAA! Regardless of wherever you end up, everyone you meet will speak a broken mess of terribly-butchered English while everyone else in the background will either be speaking that or Russian. Also, everyone is named things like Kostik Glue, Lenka Arsonist and Syoma Corpse.

I Want To Be Rich (+100/200): Hoarding supplies isn't necessarily a bad idea, but you've taken it to extremes. Food, medicine, ammo, guns; you want it all but want to pay as little as possible. To you, repairs aren't worth the money and if a piece of gear breaks, you'd rather pull a weapon off a corpse than buy a new one. For an extra 100, the thought of leaving a scrap of loot behind physically pains you, manifesting as intense migraines and spontaneous bleeding from the eyes, nose and ears. You'll always take everything you can carry (and stash what you can't) to the detriment of speed, safety and common sense.

Tethered (+100): For some reason, you just can't bring yourself to leave the Zones. If ever taken outside the border, willingly or otherwise, it will be treated as a loss condition.

Get Out of Here Stalker (+100): Something about you just pisses people off. It might be your mannerism, attitude or just something ephemeral that makes people want to smash your teeth in with a bat. Don't expect to ever be welcome wherever you go. They might not be outright hostile, but any interaction you have with others will be cold at best. This does not affect your companions.

Veteran Difficulty (+100/200): So you feel like a big fish in a small pond coming here, huh? Well, I can help put some excitement back in your life. For the duration of the jump any perks or items that increase your health, regeneration, or stamina simply don't function here. It won't weaken you beyond an average human, but it will bring you down to their level (at least physically). For an additional 100 points, enemies receive a noticeable increase in their accuracy and seem to deal disabling shots with more regularity.

Scarred (+200): Well, for whatever reason someone wants you dead and they're sparing little expense. The one they've sent is a seasoned stalker with resources to spare and great personal skill at tracking and killing intelligent game. Ambushes are frequent and traps wait for you at every turn as he feels out your capabilities before moving in for the kill. He's nearly impossible to kill, but if you somehow manage it the client will send a better hunter immediately.

Memetic Susceptibility (+200): For some reason, either through a weak will or abnormal brain chemistry, you're very suggestible and prone to influence. It becomes easier to trick and control you, even with something as simple as a hypnotist's pendulum. You take greatly increased damage from psychic and psychotropic sources and hot spot areas have the potential to fry your brain in seconds. Better hope you're never more than a minute from shelter.

The Dark Road (+200): You wake up in the middle of the Zone with a wicked, ringing headache on the second floor of a destroyed building. It's midnight and all you have is your combat knife and a veritable horde of armed zombies directly below you. All of your purchased gear is safely located in a stash that you vaguely remember

(not anywhere close to where you spawn) and be careful when trying to escape; these zombies have twitchy trigger fingers. This also applies to any companions you have. Out of jump powers, the warehouse and the like are disabled until you find and open the stash containing your gear.

Snorkbait (+200): Don't let the title fool you, for this increases the number and viciousness of all mutants exponentially. Packs of blind dogs are the norm and even bloodsuckers now work in groups. In addition, every cut monster from the games is now included and phenomena like the Burning Man, Jolly Ghosts and Gorgons will show up with regularity now too. Safe zones will be precious few and far between if you don't stick around to keep them that way.

Zone Economy (+200): So I might have mentioned that you could easily get rich selling artifacts to the outsider world. Why, again, do only criminals and those with nothing left to lose do it? Because there's more money (and less death) in being a middle man. Unfortunately for you, you're on the losing side of this bargain. Most artifacts will only sell for a couple hundred dollars, max, and even the rarest won't bring in more than a thousand. Prices across the board have all been jacked up as well to account for 'difficult importation' and 'where else are you going to get this shit'? Trying to circumvent this by trying to buy or sell directly to outside scientists, collectors or corporations will result in, at best, not wanting to deal with an illegal (unknown) stalker. At worst, it'll have you actively hunted by the proper authorities who won't enter the Zone. Better start pinching Rubles.

Blowout Soon, Fellow Stalker (+300): Blowouts are not something the average stalker ever willingly wants to experience; massive psychic storms that fry your brain inside your skull are usually something you want to avoid. Thankfully, they're not too common... Well, they weren't. Blowouts will become almost commonplace, though they'll have a habit of striking at the worst times. Overburdened and far away from civilization? Easily. Being attacked by mutants? Obviously. In addition, the storms have gotten more violent. Whereas before you could have found shelter in a dilapidated barn or a scrap hut, those will no longer provide adequate protection. You'll need something reinforced; a concrete bunker, a deep fissure or an underground lab will work.

The Dreams (+300): In a place where your surroundings can be accurately described as psychotropic, you're bound to have difficulties sleeping. With this, however, your every dream is vivid to the point of being quasi-real. Nightmares are frequent and can leave you waking up in sweat and blood from new wounds sustained by a dreamed mutant attack. Every so often you get a prophetic dream about your own death and while the dream won't kill you, the situation you've foreseen likely will. Destiny doesn't like to be subverted, so don't think avoiding the area/situation will save you for long. You're almost guaranteed to never have a good night's rest while you're here and beware the side effects of chronic sleep deprivation.

Misery (+300): You're either a masochist or have a death wish and I respect you for it. Like a cartoonish rock DJ, you've turned it up to 11 and ripped the knob off. Anomalies are now legitimate hell on earth that you'll need full top of the line hazmat protection to enter longer than seconds. Enemy stalkers are now bullet sponges and aimbots, and mutants have had their relevant powers at least doubled. Maintenance becomes more of a concern as weapons and armor degrade at accelerated rates and repairs become exponentially more expensive.

Master Difficulty (+300): For the duration of this jump all of your powers and abilities from other jumps will be suppressed. In addition, you will have no access to your Warehouse, gear or tech knowledge from previous jumps.

The Meat Grinder (+600): Many who have walked the Zone liken it to one of two things: a paradise of endless possibility or hell on earth. What many forget is that people have ways of making even hell worse. At some point during your time here, you will knowingly and purposefully lead your favorite companion to their permanent death. No respawn, no macguffins, no clones, do not pass go. If doing this does not leave you an emotional wreck, you haven't sacrificed someone dear enough for your greed.

Bonus Missions

These missions, while not necessary to complete, offer valuable rewards for those who wish to pursue action, adventure and an early untimely death.

The Big Score

Objective: Follow the clues to find the prototype gauss gun.

Reward: Project 62 Prototype.

Legendary

Objective: Become known as a master stalker even outside the Zone.

Reward: Reputation bonus.

Monolithic

Objective:

Reward: Telepathy and relays.

The Oasis

Objective: Find the Oasis.

Reward: Oasis Add-On

The Truth

Objective: Explore and collect the documents from all X Labs.

Reward: X-J Laboratory

Endings

Head Home: After all you've seen and done here, you might feel a sense of longing and homesickness. You return home with all that you've gained.

Stay Here: The Zone calls to you and you've answered the call in kind, deciding to remain here. What happens then is up to you.

Next Jump: It was fun, but there are always more world to explore and secrets to unearth.

Notes and Clarifications

- You will not be able to find or access the wish granter while you are here.
- If you do not require sleep and take The Dreams drawback, it transforms to frequent acid trip-like hallucinations with the same effects. You also suffer effects similar to sleep deprivation if you don't rest at periodic intervals.
- Taking three anabiotics will not give you the Marked by the Zone ability.
- Purchased weapons and armor start off with a higher durability and, once the jump is complete, weapons no longer require maintenance and armor slowly regenerates from damage.

Changelog

v1.4.2

- Reduced prices for all artifacts.
- Added Danger Sense, Exoskeleton, Sneaky Beaky Like, and Veteran Difficulty.
- Updated the wording on Anomalous, Mutation, and the Dark Road.
- Monolithic bonus mission added.

v1.4 (feat. Bonus Missions)

- Adjusted formatting.
- Added bonus missions.
- Added Army Medkit, Canon Companion, Flashdrives, Meat Grinder drawback, Radioprotectant, Scientific Medkit, So-so artifact, S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Energy Drink, Sure Footing ability, Vinca, X-Lab Keycard.
- Changed Zone-Touched, A Wealthy Client, Radiation Sponge, Sidearm to Makarov Sidearm, Improved Main Weapon to Veteran Weapon, Rookie Difficulty to Master Difficulty, Party Pack wording.
- Removed Supplied, old Veteran Weapon, old Master Difficulty drawback.
- Reduced prices for A Friend of X, Anomalous, Bag of Bolts, Friends in Hell, Hi-Tech Expert, Improved Sidearm, Marakov Sidearm, Medical Kit, Night Vision, Rookie Armor, Seasoned Stalker, Technician, Weapons Systems Expert.
- Reduced drawback limit to adjust for pricing reductions.

Special thanks to Sol, Falldown, and the community for their contributions.

-Pax/StalkerAnon