# Faction warfare strategy and tactics

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In **Factional Warfare** you can fight for one of the four empires against its enemies for control over areas of low-sec. This page gives tips on how to make the most of the PvE and PvP opportunities in Factional Warfare (FW); for a more detailed look at the FW mechanics see Factional Warfare. Additionally, there detailed pages on running missions in Factional Warfare and the impact of Factional Warfare on your standings.

## Contents

# Before joining

## Skills

Before joining Factional Warfare, you should at be able to fly a frigate with the "holy trinity" of midslot PvP modules (a microwarpdrive, a scram or warp disruptor, and a web). This will allow you to start looking for and getting into fights.

A good knowledge of the overview and some practice with the directional scanner (D-Scan) is also helpful. FW provides plenty of PvP opportunities for both solo players and fleets; if you want to try flying in fleets, then it may be worth refreshing your memory of basic fleet operations (see The Rookie's Guide To Fleet Ops or attend the class Fleets 101).

## Ships, items and ISK

While it's possible to make a decent income from FW, it's recommended that you stock up on a few ships (including fittings, ammunition), and have enough ISK (or other ways of making ISK) to cover your losses while you get your bearings. Also, it's a lot less frustrating to just jump into a new ship and keep flying if you

lose a fight (rather than have to go back to a trade hub and first buy and then fit a new one). Start by bringing smaller ships (frigates and destroyers), and decide later if you want to start flying larger ships.

Keep in mind that, once you join FW, about half of empire space (including two of the four trade hubs) will be awkward to get to; this means that you won't be able to run missions in the "enemy" half of empire space, and that any ships or items you have stored in enemy empire stations will be hard to get to. Therefore, move all the ships and modules you think you want to use out of enemy empire space. Additionally, in the medium term, it may be worth having a trading or hauling alt to keep your FW character supplied.

## Choosing a militia

Which militia (Amarr, Caldari, Gallente or Minmatar) you choose is very much up to you. Some players choose it purely on role-playing grounds, while others look at the current state of each war zone (such each faction's tier or how active the enemy militia is) and try to maximize their profit, PvP opportunities, or fun - although keep in mind that Factional Warfare is highly dynamic, and while a faction may control most of their war zone one month, the picture could look very different the next.

Additionally, there is no limitation on which race' ships you can fly - you could fight for the Minmatar while flying a ship built by their hated enemies, the Amarr. Deciding which parts of empire space you would like to continue accessing can also be a factor - so don't enlist with the Gallente if you want to continue going to Jita (which is a Caldari system)!

Once you have chosen a militia to fight for, move yourself and your ships to a staging system. You can ask in militia chat what the common staging systems for your militia are, or, to start off, you can pick a high-sec system on your faction's border with the war zone (this keeps you reasonably safe from enemy militia, while still being only a jump or two away from the war zone). It may be helpful to pick a station owned by your militia's NPC corporation (e.g. State Protectorate if fighting for the Caldari), as this gives you easy access to your militia's LP store and agent(s) for running missions.

# Navigation

When starting out, it's very helpful to familiarize yourself with the layout of each war zone:

- main entrances from high-sec
- chokepoints and dead-end clusters of star systems
- currently contested and active systems

Both the in-game star map and out-of-game maps (such as Dotlan (https://evemaps.dotlan.net/factionwarfare)) are very helpful in this regard. Especially Dotlan and the in-game map can give you up-to-date information on what system is currently held by which faction, and where a lot of traffic and fighting is taking place (filter by "number of jumps" and "number of ships destroyed"). Additionally, your militia's chat channel can be a useful source of intel.

Factional Warfare takes place in low-sec, so there will be the occasional gatecamp on well-traveled routes (although fast frigates should be able to escape these, as there are no bubbles in low-sec). Also, roaming gangs of ships are a fairly common sight.

The directional scanner is an invaluable tool to either scout for threats ahead of you (eg use it to scan a stargate before approaching it to see if there are ships camping it) or to look for PvP targets.

## Neutral players

The war zones are not just populated with players enlisted in one of the FW militias, but also plenty of "neutral" players. Many of these are pirates who prey on members of both militias; therefore, as in other areas of low-sec, it's generally a good idea to treat neutral ships as potentially hostile. For a more thorough check,

you can look up a pilot's combat history on killboards such as zKillboard (https://zkillboard.com/) to see what ships (s)he normally flies and kills. Additionally, if a neutral pilot has a negative security status, it's a good indication that they are likely a pirate.

# Participating in FW mechanics

Factional Warfare provides formal mechanics (eg capturing complexes and star systems, running missions), however, there is no obligation for you to participate in these activities. Especially if you are worried about your standings, it's perfectly viable to completely ignore complexes and missions, and only hunt other players. You can also use the complexes tactically to improve the odds in PvP, but warp out before the capture is complete (to avoid affecting your standings).

# Plexing

Capturing complexes ("plexes") as a solo player is a straightforward affair - enter the plex, kill the defending NPC (if plexing in an enemy-held system), and then stay inside the plex' capture radius until the timer has counted down to 0, killing the NPCs as they respawn occasionally. The NPCs do little damage (so as not to interfere too much in any PvP combat which might occur in the plex) and use no electronic warfare, but have fairly rapid HP regeneration, so you're unlikely to be able to kill them in ships much smaller than them. For instance, a solo pilot in a frigate should be able to kill the destroyer NPC in a small complex, but will likely have trouble against the cruiser NPC in a medium complex.

As the rewards you gain from capturing a plex are split between all the friendly pilots in the plex (yet the timer does not count down any faster), there is little incentive to capture plexes in groups (except when you want to deter attacks in very active star systems). This mechanism of reward sharing can be used in a somewhat shady tactic called "plex sniping": a pilot will warp to a plex that's currently being captured by a friendly pilot. They will note how much time is left on the timer, then leave the plex, only to return a few seconds before the timer finishes counting down. This way, they get half the reward with almost none of the effort (but since they also deprive the pilot who has spent all the time in the plex of half of their reward, they are unlikely to make friends!).

All plexes show up on the system scanner; plexes which have been warped to (even if the warp was cancelled immediately) show up on the Overview. Naturally, the assumption is that if a plex appears on the overview, then a pilot will be in the process of capturing it. You can use this to your advantage, by either masking your trail (opening a large number of plexes in a star system before capturing one) or by hunting for targets which you have spotted in the Local channel in opened plexes.

## PvP tactics in complexes

D-Scan and knowledge of the layout and mechanics of complexes can make a big difference when fighting in and around complexes.

All but the largest complexes have acceleration gates (which only let certain classes of ships pass). The most obvious advantage is that you can use a complex' size to pick what kind of ships you want to fight: if you're inside a novice-sized complex, you will only be fighting Tech 1 and faction frigates (and will not have to go up against, say, destroyers or cruisers).

The distance from the complex to its gate is always the same (about 1 million km), and so you can use D-Scan to watch for enemies coming into your complex, or to look for targets inside complexes.

- When defending a complex, set your D-Scan range to about 1.5 million km with a 360° angle, and scan every few seconds. Any ship which wants to enter your complex first has to drop out of warp at the acceleration gate, at which point you will spot it on your D-Scan, giving you a few seconds' warning to

either prepare for a fight or flee. Additionally, since cloaked ships cannot use acceleration gates while remaining cloaked, you will be able to spot these as well.
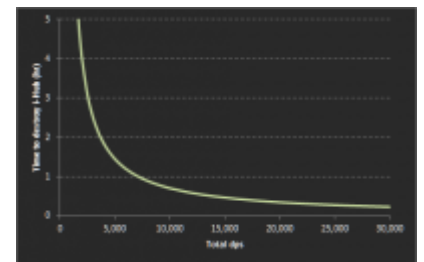
- When looking for targets, you can use D-Scan with a narrow angle to scan the immediate surroundings of a complex' beacon (visible on the Overview) to see what ships are inside the complex. Note that you'll also pick up ships sitting at the complex' acceleration gate with this method.

After activating the acceleration gate, all ships entering the complex will land at its beacon. If you're defending a complex you can use this to your advantage - if you're flying a brawling ship (which fights best when close to the enemy), you can sit right on the beacon and blast incoming ships before they have a chance to pull out of your range. Conversely, kiting or sniping ships will want to stay far away from the beacon to hit incoming enemies with long-range fire.

# Infrastructure hubs

Attacking a system's infrastructure hub ("i-Hub") is the final stage in capturing a star system for your faction. However, this is not something a solo player can do - the i-Hub has 25 million hit points (HP), and you need to do at least 1700 dps (damage per second) to break through its shield recharge rate.



Time to destroy an i-Hub.

As illustrated by the graph on the right, a fleet will need to do about 4000 dps to destroy the i-Hub in under two hours (keeping in mind that's two hours of non-stop bombardment), 7500 dps to do it in an hour, and 14,000 dps to do it in half an hour. To make these numbers more concrete, a stealth bomber does about 300-400 dps, and a battleship (or a tier 3 battlecruiser) does about 600-800 dps. Therefore, you would need over twenty stealth bombers (or ten battleships) firing non-stop for an hour to destroy an i-Hub.

Keep in mind that while your fleet is busy destroying the i-Hub, you also have to prevent enemy militia pilots from not only attacking your fleet, but also from capturing complexes in the system (as if they capture enough complexes to bring the system from "vulnerable" to "contested", any damage you have done to the i-Hub is reset). Medium-sized corporations will usually swarm an i-Hub with stealth bombers, while larger corporations can afford to send in a fleet of battleships (supported by smaller vessels, as battleships on their own are very vulnerable). Some corporations will attack i-Hubs with dreadnoughts - while this is the quickest way to destroy them (a dreadnought in siege mode can do about 5000 dps), it requires a large supporting fleet to protect the valuable capital ships (not to mention the resources to even field multiple dreadnoughts!).

Therefore, as destroying i-Hubs requires a non-trivial amount of resources and organizations, star systems will often be left "vulnerable" until a large force can be mustered, which will then usually destroy a number of i-Hubs in the course of a few hours.

# Making money

Even though blowing up enemy player's ships and running missions rewards you will small amounts of ISK, the bulk of the income from Factional Warfare comes from earning loyalty points (LP) with your militia corporation, using it to buy items from the corporation's LP store, and then selling those items for ISK.

## Earning loyalty points

Your main sources of loyalty points are capturing complexes, killing enemy player ships, and running missions. Your current faction tier heavily influences how much LP you receive from these activities (the higher the tier, the more LP you get for the same activity).

Keep in mind that FW was primarily designed to be an enabler for PvP, therefore, unlike (for instance) high-sec mission running, you will probably lose a number of ships while flying in FW space. Therefore, it is a good idea to have a reasonable number of ships ready to go at your "home" base, so that if you do get blown up, you can quickly jump into a new ship and continue making LP and having fun.

You get LP for killing enemy ships depending on the value of the ship, including its fitted modules and the contents of its cargo bay. Making money from missions is covered in Factional Warfare missions.

**Complexes**

Capturing complexes ("plexes") in friendly-held systems (so-called "defensive plexing") is a good entry point for low-skilled pilots who want to pad their wallet a little. While it doesn't pay a lot (try to find a highly-contested system, as the more a system is contested, the better this pays), it can be done with a very cheap ship, provided you keep a close eye on the Local chat channel and your D-Scanner for incoming enemy ships. Some players even go so far as to do it in weaponless ships (often Ventures) filled with warp core stabilizers, who run at the first sign of trouble - although this will get boring very quickly.
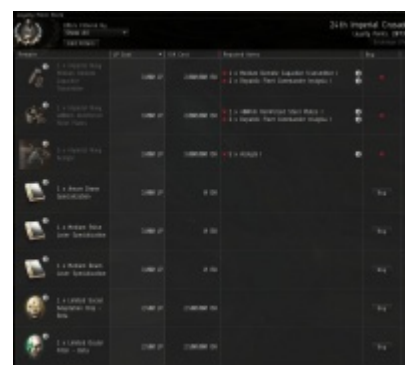
Capturing plexes in enemy-held systems ("offensive plexing") pays better than defensive plexing, but needs a modicum of combat prowess (at the very least to destroy the defending NPCs without losing too much time). At high faction tiers this can be a good income source for experienced beginners. For example, a decently-fit combat frigate can tackle small plexes, which, at (say) faction tier 3, pay 30k LP each. You can probably run about three of these per hour, earning you about 90 million ISK worth of LP per hour, easily paying for a dozen of your combat frigates. Additionally, you can fight enemy players who come into your plex - although keep in mind that since you're essentially passive, it will be up to the enemy whether to enter your plex, and they will only do so if they think they have a better-than-even chance of beating you.

In general, if you're only capturing complexes for the rewards, it will soon get very dull (as you're basically orbiting a structure, shooting the occasional NPC, and refreshing your D-Scan every few seconds). Therefore, it's up to you to find the right balance between PvP excitement and LP income. You can use maps (look at the number of jumps and the number of ships killed) to find systems or areas with the right level of activity - not so hot that you get swatted from space by a blob of enemy ships every few minutes, but not so quiet that you get bored.

## Converting loyalty points (into cold hard cash)

When you buy items from your militia's LP store, you pay with LP, and usually with either ISK or additional items (or both).



An LP store.

If you want to buy a Federation Navy 1MN Microwarpdrive module from the Gallente Federal Defense Union LP store (https://www.ellatha.com/eve/LPIndex-101), you would have to pay 27,000 LP, 10.8 million ISK, a regular 1MN Microwarpdrive module, and several hundred Caldari Navy tags (looted from destroyed Caldari Navy NPC ships, such as the ones defending Caldari complexes). Or, if you want to buy a blueprint for a Vexor Navy Issue, you would pay 45,000 LP and either 5 million ISK or a tag looted from certain Serpentis NPC pirate ships.

If you want to buy something but don't have all the necessary items, you can of course buy these from other players (through the regular Eve market). If you're purchasing items from the LP store to then sell them for ISK on the market, you would want to purchase items which sell for as much ISK as possible (relative to the amount of LP they cost), including the cost of any items you would need to buy them in the first place. The salient value is the amount of ISK you can expect to receive per LP spent; as a guide, you can expect to get around 1000 ISK per LP for most items.

As you can see from the example above, this calculation can get complicated, especially as prices on the markets fluctuate constantly. Also keep in mind that less common items will sell only very slowly (or, if you need to buy them, they may not always be available), and that all transactions on the market cost sales tax and broker fees. Additionally, it can be quite a hassle to buy all the required items from the market and ship them to your FW base.

A website like Fuzzworks (https://www.fuzzwork.co.uk/lpstore/) can help you choose which items to buy from the LP store to get good return on your LP; when starting out, it's recommended that you buy items which trade in high volumes and which require a minimum number of inputs (even though they may not make you the absolutely highest amount of money). Once you get the hang of it, you can diversify into more lucrative items which give you a higher ISK payout per LP, but which may also need more work.

At this point, it may be beneficial to have a trading and hauling alt, who can access all the trade hubs in empire space and can fly without the danger of being attacked by enemy militia members.

## Upgrading systems and faction tier

Instead of spending the LP you have earned at the LP store, you can donate it the i-Hub of any system your faction controls in its war zone to "upgrade" that system. This offers direct benefits for that systems (lower fees for trading and more slots for industry activities), however, unless your "home base" is in that system, these benefits are rarely worth it.

System upgrades also contribute to the overall "tier" of your faction, which increases the amount of LP you get from participating in FW activities. This, on the other hand, is very much worth it, but raising your faction tier generally takes a concerted effort from a number of people in a militia.

# Militias and fleets

All players enlisted with a particular militia (whether they joined as a solo player or as part of a corporation) can communicate via the in-game "Militia" chat channel (which works similarly to the "Alliance" chat channel). This channel is used as the most basic tool for coordinating FW activities within a militia, such as inviting for fleets or sharing intel on enemy pilots. As with most semi-open channels in the game, there are almost certainly spies for the opposing militia listening in, so it shouldn't be used for sensitive information (such as the location of a friendly fleet).

All players who are members of the militia NPC corporation (ie all those who joined FW as solo players) also have a "Corporation" chat channel, although it's rarely used.

Most militias also communicate via voice (particularly when in a fleet), be it through the in-game Eve Voice system, or through third-party services like Ventrilo (https://www.ventrilo.com) or TeamSpeak (https://www.teamspeak.com/). Ask in the Militia chat channel for details.

# Overview settings

*Main article: Overview settings*

It's recommended that you create additional new overview settings for Factional Warfare, particularly one which show clearly enemy militia members (similarly to how the default Eve University overview settings highlight war targets), as well as showing FW structures (plexes and i-Hubs). It may be helpful to have an overview setting for showing neutral ships, as these can be pirates or out-of-militia spies.

## Enemy high-sec and the faction navies

Once you enlist in Factional Warfare, you will be at war with two of the four NPC empires, and if you try to enter a high-sec system of an enemy empire, you will be attacked by their NPC faction navy ships. As you get some warning before being attacked, and as the NPCs will not use warp scramblers or warp disruptors on you, you can escape them easily. Once they engage you they do a moderate amount of damage (depending on the security rating of the system); whilst a frigate will not last long once attacked, larger ships can tank the damage they do for a while. However, even if you destroy the initial wave of NPC ships, more will warp in, and they will continue to chase you as long as you're in any of their high-sec systems, so at best you can speed through their systems with a ship that either aligns and enters warp quickly (before the faction navy attacks), or one with enough tank to survive until it can enter warp.

Therefore, it's certainly possible to fly through enemy high-sec systems (as long as you don't use the autopilot!), but staying there in space for longer (to e.g. run missions or mine) is not feasible. Note that being at war with an NPC faction doesn't prevent you from docking at stations in their high-sec systems, and that the faction navies will not attack pods.

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