

# SCP: ACQUISITIONS

AN ANOMALY RESEARCH PLAY-BY-MAIL RPG

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## Introduction

*SCP: Acquisitions* is a roleplaying game about making a story in a world much like our own. The setting is equivalent to the one you currently inhabit with one small difference: all the strange and unbelievable stories you hear whispers of are real, but hidden. The reason they are only stories and not fact is because in this world there is an organization dedicated to keeping the subjects of those strange stories in check across the world.

In this game, those strange people, places, things, and events are called *anomalies*. They are the things which do not conform to humanity's structure of reality, breaking the rules of physics or even rational thought itself. It is the duty of the SCP Foundation to protect the population of our world from letting these anomalies subvert our perception of reality and dismantle logical expectation. It's similar to the concept of the Illuminati in that it's world-encompassing and all powerful, just without trying to take over the world.

If not for the SCP Foundation, anomalies would be commonplace, and one could never rely on rationale to predict the next moment of your life. If you placed your keys in a drawer, you would not be able to say with confidence that they will still be there when next you look, or even that they will still be keys and not have been transformed or disfigured. That is the reality that the SCP Foundation protects us from. It identifies anomalies that do not adhere to the *Consensus Reality* and either contains or neutralizes them before anyone is affected. If anyone is affected, they clean up the mess.

Players are each directors of the SCP Foundation. Guided by the Game Master, together they create a narrative about events in this world and their efforts to protect it.

## Quick Start

Most of the players take the role of Directors for the SCP Foundation's Acquisitions Department. Their job is to direct the operations of their subordinates for the purposes of seeking out and containing potential anomalies. Directors in the SCP foundation are each given a Designated Mediator (DM) who manages correspondence between the Directors and their personnel. In this game, the DM is played by a single player who takes the orders of the Director players and applies them to the game world.

To start, the DM will send the Directors 5 Mobile Task Force cards, 5 Anterior Research Team cards, and 5 Anomaly cards. Each Director will pick 3 of each and return the remainder along with a brief summary of their Director character (name, morality, flavor text, etc).

Once the Directors are established, the DM will send each Director their first report. Directors will respond by doing any number of the following:

- Coordinating with other Directors (by sending letters and/or cards to them)
- Sending Mobile Task Forces to deal with reports which that they deem anomalous and in need of intervention (by sending Mission Order forms to the DM along with the intended Mobile Task Force card(s))
- Ordering Research Teams to investigate contained anomalies (by sending a Research Order form to the DM along with the appropriate Anterior Research Team card(s))

Play continues in real time with new reports and results of previous missions being sent from the Designated Mediator about every week or two. Your goal is to keep the world safe by containing or neutralizing all anomalies you can find. There will be people who will not make that simple or easy.

## Needed to Play

Players will need to gather the following items in order to facilitate play:

- This handbook
- Envelopes
- Postage stamps
- Paperclips
- Printouts of the following forms (or just blank paper if you'd prefer):
  - Mission Order form
  - Research Order form
  - Recruitment Order form
- A printer or pen and paper

Optionally, the following items should be considered as they may be fun to improve the roleplaying experience:

- Printed director customized letterhead
- Date stamper
- Custom "from the desk of..." stamper
- Wax seals (note: unprotected wax seals are not recommended in the US postal system. It is recommended to put any letter sealed with a wax stamp inside another envelope for its protection)
- A cool signature

## Director Player Inventories

At the beginning of the game, the DM will mail you a packet of cards of various types. There should be 5 Mobile Task Force cards, 5 Anterior Research Team cards, and 2 Anomaly cards. You are to pick 2 of the Mobile Task Force cards and 2 of the Anterior Research Team cards to keep along with the Anomaly cards. The remaining cards should be sent back to the DM.

Over the course of the game each Director will accumulate an inventory of the following:

- Mobile Task Force cards
- Anterior Research Team cards
- Anomaly cards
- Evidence cards

These cards represent your personnel, contained anomalies, and scraps of information you have discovered. Each card has a brief description of the thing they represent and can change over the course of a game.

Each Director is also assigned a number of territories in the world referred to as Districts. Directors are only capable of operating within their district, and districts cannot be transferred.

## Mobile Task Force Cards

Mobile Task Forces are teams of agents trained to carry out missions as ordered by the Directors. Each Mobile Task Force has a set of skills acquired through training as well as some gained from missions. Mobile Task Forces are generally capable of doing anything asked of them by their Director including combat, espionage, scouting, etc. They are trained to get the job done and not leave a trace.

## Anterior Research Team Cards

Researchers are agents who are educated in certain aspects of both natural science and anomalous science. Each research team has a particular knowledge background and can offer unique perspectives on acquired anomalies when ordered.

Like Mobile Task Forces, Research Teams can occasionally gain useful knowledge through exposure to anomalies and successful research. This knowledge will affect how well they can research particular anomalies. Directors should consider the experience of each research team when picking one to research newly acquired anomalies.

## Anomaly Cards

Anomaly cards represent an anomalous person, place, or thing which has been acquired by a Mobile Task Force and contained at a Foundation facility.. They can be sent off to be researched, sent to be used by Mobile Task Forces, destroyed, or sent to other Directors. They have a variety of effects, so make sure they are thoroughly researched.

## Evidence Cards

Evidence cards are pieces of information discovered during missions or research. They have the potential to lead you to places of interest or anomalies or unlock information about important people or anomalies in your possession. What they pertain to may not always be immediately clear, and sometimes the information may be more useful to another player. You can always send Evidence cards to other players if you suspect that's the case. However, many Evidence cards are just text, so you should consider transcribing their contents into your letter instead so you can maintain a copy.

Evidence cards on their own cannot be sent to research, as research teams are intentionally kept in the dark in regards to the SCP Foundation's actions for compartmentalized safety. As a result, a piece of Evidence will lack necessary context. Evidence can however be researched with Anomalies if you suspect they are related, though typically if you cannot figure out how they go together then neither will they.

## How to Play

The game is intended to be played by at least 2 people over ye olde postage systems in real time. One player is designated the Game Master and orchestrates the events of the world while the rest are Acquisition Directors. Each Director holds jurisdiction over an equal number of countries. They each have a roster of deployable Mobile Task Forces, a roster of Anterior Research Teams, and an inventory of contained anomalies. The DM player meanwhile takes the role of the Directors' secretaries. They send the Directors reports received from agents and personnel and receive orders sent out by the Directors. The game itself is played out rather simply as such:

- The DM sends letters to each player containing a list of reported anomalies observed in countries within their jurisdiction, as well as any worldwide news
- The Directors read these reports and make decisions about which reports they want to act on and how. They can take any number of the following actions:
  - Order a Mobile Task Force to mobilize on a location by mailing the DM a Mission Order form
  - Order an Anterior Research Team to investigate a contained anomaly by mailing the DM a Research Order form
  - Recruit new personnel or train existing personnel by mailing the DM a Recruitment Order form or Training Order form
  - Coordinate with other Directors by mailing them directly
- The DM reads your order forms and responds accordingly. This can take a number of days both for mail travel and for the orders to complete

## Reports

Reports are sent by the DM to the Directors. They are the observations of all the sleeper agents residing in the countries within the Directors domain. As such, each Director will get their own report.

The report sheet will have a list of locations along with suspected anomalous activity. It is important to note that not every report will turn out to be an anomaly. Directors need to pick carefully when deciding which reports to respond to.

A worthwhile note to all players, DM and Director: ***SAVE A COPY OF ALL CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND SENT***. You will very likely forget what you wrote 2 weeks ago.

## Mission Orders

Missions are operations performed by Mobile Task Forces to get something done. Directors fill out the Mission Order form and attach the Mobile Task Force(s) they want to have execute the mission. Missions can be for nearly anything. Some examples include:

- Containing an anomaly based on a report
- Cleaning up and concealing an anomalous event
- Investigating a location
- Re-containing an escaped anomaly
- Buying coffee in Madrid
- Fetching dry-cleaning downtown

It is important that Directors include as much detailed instruction as they can. Mobile Task Force members do not receive the reports you do for security reasons, so Directors must make sure that they are briefed with the info they need. Once that's written, the Director points them at a location and sends them off. They will do their best to complete the job as ordered with the tools and information you provide. If they fail, however, they may end up wounded and out of commission for a time or even outright killed. If they are put out of commission, they will be immediately sent to infirmary facilities where they will be treated as quickly as possible. But that will occupy them for a while.

Whether they succeed or fail, they are trained to ensure their findings are reported back as much as is possible. Upon return they will be debriefed and the report will be included. If they fail to return, the communication team that assisted the mission will make a report on what happened before the team was lost. Use this information to better inform the next team.

Optionally, Acquisition Directors can send Mobile Task Forces with anomalous artifacts that you have contained if they think its properties would be useful. There is a risk, of course, if the anomaly has not been thoroughly researched beforehand. It can always backfire. So Directors must take care to include as much info about the situation as they can to help keep their teams safe. To send an anomaly with a Mobile Task Force on their mission, they should be attached to the order form along with the Mobile Task Force card.

## **Mission Failure**

Occasionally, a mission may fail. This can happen if the team was not prepared for the situation they faced, something changed unexpectedly, or the team did not have the necessary skills for the job. This can be mitigated with preparatory investigations of course, but sometimes you just don't know what you don't know, you know?

Missions can fail in a number of ways. Sometimes the target sees you coming and flees, in which case your team will simply return with whatever they learned, if anything. Sometimes the target fights back. If they do, your team will obviously retaliate, but there's always a chance that they can be overpowered if they do not have the appropriate tools or knowledge. If this is the case, the team will be rescued and marked incapacitated. They will be sent directly to our medical facilities for rehabilitation. This will typically take about 2 weeks but can take longer depending on the circumstances. The report you receive back will be from the Mobile Task Force's communication team, and they will provide a transcript of the team's communication. You will also receive a report from the medical team which will give you an indication of how long they will be out of commission.

Rarely, a team may go totally missing. There are always unexpected situations which prevent rescue. Directors should hope that this does not happen, but if it does, they'd better find a way to combat what took them so that it doesn't take more in the future. If a team is considered totally lost, the owning Director will be prompted to choose a new team to replace them.

## **Tips for a Successful Mission Order**

A successful mission order should typically include details on 3 major components of the mission:

### ***Identify***

Identify the anomaly. Find what it is, where it is, and how it can be acquired.

### ***Secure***

Secure the anomaly, bring it into Foundation custody. If it can be moved, bring it to one of our facilities. Otherwise, secure the location. Consider obstacles. No authority is to be aware of our existence. Lie if you must, laws do not apply.

### ***Cover***

No one can know. If someone does know, interrogate them then apply amnestics to make them forget. Remove any trace of Foundation activity.

## Research Orders

When a Mobile Task Force returns with a contained anomaly, they will immediately contain it in one of your facilities. Typically containment will be basic though if the Mobile Task Force discovers something relevant during procurement they may pass that info onto the containment staff to adjust their procedures.

Once an anomaly is in Foundation custody, Directors can send it to a research team to have it be investigated. Foundation researchers are trained to rigorously examine anomalies and test them in as much of an empirical manner as the anomaly allows.

The Research Order Form should be sent to the DM with the anomaly asset card in question and a research team card believed to be best equipped for the job both attached. Each research team accumulates skills during their studies in various fields, so better results may be found by sending a research team with a skill set more relevant to the anomaly meant to be researched.

In the order form, the Director should consider including a list of the procedures the researchers need to attempt. An example would be “submerge the anomaly in a bath of holy water and note any changes over 24 hours.” They will do so to the best of their ability and report back their findings. Directors may also ask general questions such as “what anomalous qualities does this anomaly possess?” And the research team will do their best to answer.

However, the less rigid information provided, the less the research team has to work with. They do not have access to the same evidence that Directors have. So if a Director comes across a piece of information that may pertain to an anomaly and they want to verify it, they should be sure to describe to their researchers how they want the research to be performed so that the researchers can verify it.

### Tips for a Productive Research Order

Research should be done to better understand anomalous phenomenon for the following purposes:

- To ensure safe and lasting containment
- To explore potential applications
- To make connections with groups of interest and other related anomalies

Research orders can include general observational investigations, such as broad cursory descriptions of anomalous effects, as well as specific tests and questions. Research teams are well equipped to accommodate any requested procedures, up to and including human test subjects if needed.

## Director Coordination

Directors are encouraged to keep up a constant stream of communication between each other. Since you are limited to operations within your districts, should you find evidence that points you to a location outside your jurisdiction, it should be forwarded to the appropriate Director.

Letters can be sent between Directors at any time. They are the only safe means of communication. Directors are free to attach any cards they have obtained to aid in their fellow Director's operations except Research teams, as they cannot leave their assigned facilities. Mobile Task Force cards will be returned to their original Director upon completing a mission or training, but Anomalies and Evidence cards will return to whoever sent them to the DM. So don't be greedy, return cards when you're done with them.

## Training Personnel

Directors can order their agents to go train new skills at any time. This will, of course, take some amount of time. The Foundation has the resources to train your personnel in nearly any non-anomalous subject that they may encounter. If a Director wants to have a team spend time training a new skill, they can send a letter to the DM listing out what skills they want their personnel to train with the card of the aforementioned personnel attached. The training will begin at the start of the next round of reports and continue until the training is complete, at which time the card will be returned. Different skills can take varying amounts of time to train, so if a Director player is curious about how long certain training would take, they should send a message to their DM (This message may be made out-of-character via instant messengers if the DM allows it, otherwise it should be sent via post).

Occasionally, your personnel may discover information about anomalous phenomena which can be used for training, either in the field by MTFs or in the labs by ARTs. This information can be used to improve the skills of your personnel or sometimes outright give them anomalous abilities.

## Hiring New Personnel

Each branch of the Acquisitions Department has a set budget for salaried positions. This means that each Acquisition Director can only have a certain number of Mobile Task Forces and Anterior Research Teams at a time. If either of them are lost for any reason, they will be prompted to select from a set of available recruits.

Should the Acquisitions Department get approved for a higher headcount, your Designated Mediarly will similarly prompt you to select new teams from available recruits.