

This document expands upon the implementation of the Equipment System as presented in the Frontiers Overview.

It also offers a few Variants and Alternatives for those who want a different version or different resolution system entirely.

Equipment is more modular in Frontiers than most other aspects due to the fact that it is setting-adjacent on a fundamental level. So while this engine defines structural rules and basis; individual systems define specific item lists, damage values, armor formulas, and special properties.

Like the core Release document for this version of Frontiers, this Expansion is modular by design. Designers may adopt, modify, restructure, or discard sections as needed to serve their intended genre, tone, and balance goals.

What Equipment Is

Equipment represents physical items that a character:

- Carries
- Wears
- Wields
- Activates
- Consumes

Equipment may:

- Modify derived statistics
- Grant new Actions
- Require Competency
- Interact with $\nearrow$ Energy
- Have a Level

Equipment does not automatically scale. Scaling must be explicitly written into the item.

Equipment Categories

Equipment generally falls into three structural categories:

1. **Passive Equipped Items**

(Armor, weapons, accessories, worn gear)

2. Activated Items

(Devices, foci, tools with triggered effects)

3. Consumables

(Single-use items)

Each category interacts with $\nearrow$ Energy differently.

Equipment Level

Equipment may have a Level that determines its relative power and interaction with other Level-based mechanics.

If no Level is listed, the equipment is treated as Level 0.

Level 0 equipment does not generate Energy interaction due to Level difference and is considered baseline gear.

Level Interaction — Equipped Items

If a character equips an item whose Level exceeds their Character Level:

- Their **maximum $\nearrow$ Energy is reduced** by the difference.

Example: - Level 3 character equips Level 5 armor. - Difference = 2. - Maximum $\nearrow$ Energy is reduced by 2 while equipped.

This reduction:

- Applies immediately upon equipping.
- Persists while the item remains equipped.
- Is recalculated if the character Levels up.
- Is restored when the item is unequipped.

This reduction does **not** cause Overspend. It adjusts the maximum pool.

If equipping multiple above-Level items: - Reductions stack.

If maximum $\nearrow$ Energy would be reduced below 0: - The item cannot be equipped.

Level Interaction — Activated or Consumable Items

If a character uses an Activated or Consumable item whose Level exceeds their Character Level:

- They pay $\nearrow$ Energy equal to the Level difference at time of use.

Example: - Level 3 character uses Level 5 medkit. - Pay 2 $\nearrow$ Energy when activating.

If insufficient $\nearrow$ Energy is available: - Overspend rules apply.

Unlike equipped items, this does **not** reduce maximum $\nearrow$ Energy. It is a per-use cost.

Competencies and Equipment

Some Equipment requires a **Competency**.

If a character lacks required Competency:

The item may:

- Be unusable
- Function at Disfavor
- Increase Difficulty
- Provide reduced benefit

System designers define the penalty.

Competency determines permission. Skill determines execution. Equipment determines mechanical capability.

📦 Carrying Capacity

Frontiers uses a slot-based carrying structure rather than pure weight.

Each character has a 📦Carrying Capacity derived from:

Base Capacity + $\blacklozenge$ Vigor Modifier

(The Base Capacity is defined in the Vigor section of the core document.)

This value determines total slot space available.

Equipment Sizes

Each item occupies slots based on size category.

Default recommended categories:

- Small (minor tools, daggers, kits)
- Medium (one-handed weapons, light armor pieces)
- Large (two-handed weapons, heavy armor)

- Massive (GM-defined, rare)

Example slot guideline (modifiable by system):

- Small = 1 slot
- Medium = 2 slots
- Large = 3-4 slots
- Massive = 5+

Items marked Negligible do not consume slots.

System designers may redefine slot values.

Exceeding Carrying Capacity

If total slots exceed capacity:

The character becomes **Overburdened**.

Default Overburdened effects:

- -1  Unit movement
- Disfavor on physical Resolution Rolls

If capacity is exceeded significantly: - GM may restrict movement entirely.

Overburdened penalties persist until inventory is adjusted.

Equipped vs Carried Items

Equipment may be:

- Equipped (actively worn or wielded)
- Carried (accessible but not readied)
- Stored (not immediately accessible)

Only Equipped items:

- Apply passive bonuses
- May be used without additional draw cost

Drawing or readying a Carried item typically costs 1  AP unless system overrides.

Swapping Equipped items may cost 1  AP.

The engine does not define equipment slot limits (weapon slots, accessory slots). Systems may add those.

Activated Items

Activated items:

- Require declaration
- Typically cost 1 ♦AP unless specified
- May require Resolution Roll
- May have Duration

If above-Level: - Pay $\nearrow$ Energy equal to Level difference at activation.

If item defines its own $\nearrow$ Energy cost: - Pay that cost in addition to any Level difference cost.

Weapons — Engine Structure

Weapons:

- Require a Resolution Roll
- Deal defined damage on success
- May interact with Gradient

Weapons do not inherently cost $\nearrow$ Energy.

$\nearrow$ Energy interaction only occurs if: - Weapon Level exceeds user Level (maximum reduction while equipped) - Weapon has activated feature

Damage scaling is system-defined.

Armor — Engine Structure

Armor:

- Modifies Defense values
- May impose movement penalties
- May require Competency

Armor does not inherently cost $\nearrow$ Energy.

If above-Level: - Reduces maximum $\nearrow$ Energy while equipped.

Armor stacking must be explicitly defined by the system.

Consumables

Consumables:

- Are single-use
- Are removed after activation
- Typically cost 1 ♦AP to use

If above-Level: - Pay ⚡Energy equal to Level difference at time of use.

Consumables do not reduce maximum ⚡Energy.

Iron Longsword (Level 2, Medium)

Slots: 2

Competency: Martial Weapons

Effect: Roll ♦Vigor vs □Physical Defense

Deal 4 damage on success.

If equipped by Level 1 character: - Maximum ⚡Energy reduced by 1 while equipped.

No activation cost.

Reinforced Plate (Level 5, Large)

Slots: 3

Competency: Heavy Armor

Effect: +3 □Physical Defense

-1 □Unit movement

If equipped by Level 3 character: - Maximum ⚡Energy reduced by 2 while worn.

Arc Conduit Focus (Level 8, Small)

Slots: 1

Competency: Arcane Focus

Activation: 1 ♦AP

Effect: Gain Favor on next Ability Resolution Roll this Turn.

If user is below Level 8: - Pay ⚡Energy equal to Level difference at activation.

Advanced Medkit (Level 6, Small, Consumable)

Slots: 1

Activation: 1 ♦AP

Effect: Restore 6 ⚔HP.

If user is Level 4: - Pay 2 ⚡Energy when used.

Item is consumed after use.

The following rulings clarify ambiguous Equipment interactions.

These apply unless explicitly overridden by a system built on Frontiers.

1. Multiple Above-Level Equipped Items

If a character equips multiple items above their Level:

- Each item reduces maximum ⚡Energy by its individual Level difference.
- Reductions stack.

If total reduction would reduce maximum ⚡Energy below 0: - The most recently equipped item cannot be equipped.

Reduction is recalculated immediately if any such item is unequipped.

2. Level Increase While Equipped

If a character Levels up while wearing above-Level Equipment:

- Recalculate maximum ⚡Energy immediately.
- Remove any reduction that no longer applies.

No Action cost is required for recalculation.

3. Unequipping Above-Level Items Mid-Encounter

If an above-Level item is unequipped during Encounter Play:

- Maximum $\nearrow$ Energy increases immediately.
- Current $\nearrow$ Energy does not increase unless it was previously suppressed by maximum reduction.

Example: If maximum was reduced from 8 to 6 and current Energy is 4, Upon unequipping: - Maximum returns to 8. - Current remains 4.

Unequipping typically costs 1 $\blacklozenge$ AP unless system overrides.

4. Equipping Items Mid-Encounter

Equipping an item mid-Encounter:

- Typically costs 1 $\blacklozenge$ AP.
- Applies maximum $\nearrow$ Energy reduction immediately if applicable.

If equipping would reduce maximum below current $\nearrow$ Energy: - Current $\nearrow$ Energy is reduced to the new maximum. - No Overspend occurs.

5. Carrying Capacity Changes Mid-Encounter

If $\blacklozenge$ Vigor changes:

-  Carrying Capacity recalculates immediately.
- If now Overburdened, penalties apply immediately.
- No forced item drop occurs automatically.

Inventory adjustments must occur via normal Action economy.

6. Dropping Equipment

Dropping a Carried item:

- Requires no $\blacklozenge$ AP.
- Occurs immediately.

Dropping an Equipped item:

- Requires 1 $\blacklozenge$ AP unless system overrides.

Dropped items remain in the Encounter space.

7. Simultaneous Equipment Effects

If multiple Equipment items modify the same statistic:

- Additive bonuses stack unless explicitly stated otherwise.
- Identical named effects do not stack unless stated.

If two items both grant Favor: - Only one instance applies unless system specifies stacking.

8. Equipment and Ability Interaction

If Equipment modifies an Ability:

- Apply Equipment modification after Ability base effect unless explicitly stated otherwise.

If Equipment grants an Ability: - That Ability follows normal Level and Energy interaction rules.

9. Capacity and Negligible Items

Items marked Negligible:

- Do not consume slots.
- May still require Competency.
- May still have Level interaction.

Negligible does not imply powerless.

Variants adjust how Equipment behaves while preserving the core engine assumptions:

- Equipment may have Levels.
- Equipped above-Level items reduce maximum $\nearrow$ Energy.
- Activated items may cost $\nearrow$ Energy.
-  Carrying Capacity exists in some form.

Strict Equip Slot Variant

Replace open equipping with fixed equip categories:

- 1 Primary Weapon
- 1 Secondary Weapon
- 1 Armor

- 2 Accessories
- X Utility slots

Items outside these slots may be carried but not equipped.

☼ Carrying Capacity still applies to total inventory.

Impact: - Reduces stacking exploits. - Clarifies build identity. - Simplifies adjudication in combat-heavy systems.

Expanded Size Tier Variant

Refine slot categories into more granular sizes:

- Negligible (0 slots)
- Light (1 slot)
- Standard (2 slots)
- Heavy (3 slots)
- Massive (5+ slots)

This allows more nuanced inventory control.

Impact: - Increases tactical inventory decisions. - Encourages loadout specialization. - Slightly increases bookkeeping.

Attunement Variant

Limit the number of Level-based items that may apply effects simultaneously.

Example: - Maximum attuned items = 2 + $\lceil$ Resolve Modifier.

Only attuned items:

- Apply passive bonuses.
- Reduce maximum $\nearrow$ Energy (if above-Level).
- May be activated.

Impact: - Prevents high-Level gear stacking. - Encourages strategic equipment selection. - Adds build-planning layer without altering core math.

Delayed Energy Reduction Variant

Instead of reducing maximum $\nearrow$ Energy immediately when equipping above-Level gear:

- Apply reduction at the start of the next Turn.
- Or apply reduction only during Encounter Play.

Impact: - Softens mid-Encounter equip penalties. - Makes tactical swaps more viable. - Slightly reduces immediate consequence tension.

Heavy Load Consequence Variant

Instead of a simple Overburdened penalty:

Define Load States:

- Light Load ($\leq$ 50% capacity)
- Moderate Load ($>$ 50%)
- Heavy Load (at capacity)
- Overloaded ($>$ capacity)

Each state imposes escalating penalties to:

- Movement
- Initiative ($\nearrow$ Momentum)
- Physical rolls

Impact: - Encourages lighter builds. - Makes carrying decisions tactically meaningful.

Alternatives significantly restructure Equipment's role in the engine. Adopting these requires recalibration of pacing and balance.

No Level Interaction Alternative

Remove Level-based $\nearrow$ Energy interaction entirely.

Equipment:

- Never reduces maximum $\nearrow$ Energy.
- Never requires $\nearrow$ Energy due to Level difference.

Balance must rely on:

- Rarity
- Narrative gating
- Gold or acquisition limits

Impact: - Simplifies math. - Removes progression tension from gear. - Shifts balance pressure to economy or narrative access.

Narrative Inventory Alternative

Remove slot tracking entirely.

Inventory is handled narratively.

The GM determines plausibility of carried items.

No numeric 🎲 Carrying Capacity exists.

Impact: - Eliminates bookkeeping. - Supports narrative-heavy systems. - Reduces tactical logistics gameplay.

Gear-as-Ability Alternative

Equipment does not grant passive modifiers.

Instead:

- Each item grants a defined Ability.
- Unequipping removes that Ability.

No static bonuses. All mechanical effects are expressed through Ability structure.

Impact: - Unifies mechanical language. - Reduces stacking math. - Increases modularity and clarity.

Minimalist Gear Alternative

Remove weapon and armor statistics entirely.

- Damage derives from Attributes.
- Defense derives from Attributes and Abilities.
- Equipment provides only narrative tags.

Example: Instead of "+2 Defense," armor grants: "Resistant to environmental cold."

Impact: - Removes gear math complexity. - Emphasizes character over equipment. - Best suited for rules-light systems.