

Carrier Bay (R2 Civilian or R3 Milspec):

A starship may be fitted with a Carrier Bay to house subordinate vessels. In most cases these are “Support Vessels” such as atmospheric shuttles to transport supplies and personnel to and from the surface of a planet. Military Carrier Bays are built to carry small spacecraft like Gladius fighters or Yoshi Dropships and deploy them in Hot Zones.

Carrier Bays are different from cargo holds in that they include navigation electronics, docking hardware, resupply and maintenance capacity.

Only one Carrier Bay may be fitted to a single vessel. This is not necessarily that the vessel has only one discrete hangar that

all vessels fit in to (though that is common) but rather that the system represents the total ability of that vessel to house subordinate vessels. Use the table

Carrier Size	Size Class of Carried Vehicles						
	Z	Y	X	V	T	S	Q
Z	0						
Y	1 – 4	0					
X	5 – 6	1 – 4	0				
V	7 – 15	5 – 6	1 – 4	0			
T	16 – 24	7 – 15	5 – 6	1 – 4	0		
S	25 – 45	16 – 24	7 – 15	5 – 6	1 – 4	0	
Q	45 +	25 – 45	16 – 24	7 – 15	5 – 6	1 – 4	0

to determine how many subordinate craft the main ship can act as a base for. A bay that can only carry half the number of subordinate vessels drops 1 Resource from the cost of the bay. A half Sized Carrier Bay may be combined with a Half Sized Assault Dock. Full Sized Assault Boat Docks may not be combined with any size or type of Carrier Bay.

Opening or closing a Starship Bay is a free action, but takes a full turn to complete. Civilian Ship Bays and Sally Ports effectively open a hole in the ship's armor. While these systems are open any straight rolled by an attacker on the to-hit ignores the ship's armor. Milspec Ship Bays and Hot Deployment Bays don't suffer this penalty as they include armor on the interior of the bay since they're expected to be opened while under fire, take aboard heavily damaged and possibly volatile fighter-craft, and/or be full of grunts with explosive armaments and more adrenaline than good sense.

Matryoshka Carrier Rule: Any vehicle with a Starship Bay is effectively two size-classes larger than one without it. This isn't necessarily that the ship is larger in any particular dimension, but that the ability to service and repair a subordinate carrier requires the subordinate carrier to be able to empty its vehicle bays so they can be serviced. (Effectively a carrier carrying a carrier needs to be able to carry both the sub-carrier -and- the sub-carrier's subordinate vessels). Increasing subordinate vehicle size is an effective and much simpler way to calculate capacity required than individually calculating the capacity required for the total carried ships.

Sample Carrier: Aguirre Galactic Ballista Class

The Ballista is described as the smallest vessels to act as a true carrier. As a Size V class ship, fitted with Carrier Bay equipment the Ballista can carry 15 Gladius Fighters (A Fighter wing traditional of Sol Air Force organizations), or 12 Gladius fighters (an Air Wing typical of Sol Naval organizations) leaving 20% of it's capacity remaining for a Pilus Class Longboat for cargo or personnel transport duties.

Design Notes:

Notes on Carrier Bay origins:

Not only does Planet Mercenary include vessels that the terms they're designated by (Fighter, Dropship) imply that they are carried by other vehicles, but many times in the Schlock Mercenary universe large ships routinely dock and carry smaller vessels.

Why have a rule, Why not just let the Game Chief determine how many fighters a ship can carry?

Mostly to set expectations and maintain consistency. Players may want to carry fighter craft, or deploy to a planet in dropships rather than attempt to land their ship, or use subordinate craft to position troops/weapons strategically. Having a relatively set capacity for subordinate craft keeps ship capacities consistent and allows players to budget their character's equipment and resources accordingly.

Based on the Assault Boat Docks table P.115 Each classification higher than a subordinate ship is, reduce carrying capacity of carrier by one step. IE: a V-class vessel can carry as many Y classed vessels as an X-class vessel can carry Z-class vessels.

Assault Docks Vs. Carrier Bays:

So why chose one or the other system?

Assault Boat Docks operate slightly differently in that Assault Boats aren't housed in cavernous bays, but in dedicated "Launch Tubes" or similar structures, and are effectively Armor Piercing Missiles with a Grunt payload. Assault Boats are entered by their boarding parties through dedicated hatchways in the launch tube that mate directly to access hatches on the Assault Boat. This allows the Assault Boat Docks to not require massive bay doors and be immediately launch ready.

Assault Boats are designed to weather fire from ship defense batteries, as well as aggressively attach themselves to a target vessel and automatically cut an access hole for the carried troops. This is reflected in that Assault Boats don't have stats like Hit Points or Armor (they're generally assumed to make it to their targets, GC intervention notwithstanding), balanced with the fact that they have relatively small personnel capacities compared to an equivalently sized complement of dropships.

Carrier bays offer flexibility in use and utility, you can mix and match vessel types, deploy and retrieve, and generally be useful in noncombat situations where you just need to move personnel or cargo. This flexibility comes at a cost of speed and protection.

What about Fighter launch tubes?

If your GC allows it an Assault Boat Dock could be designed as an Assault Launch Dock to launch fighters or similar Class Z small craft. However keep in mind:

- 1) Assault Launch Docks don't have combat retrieval capacity. Getting those fighters back in the launch tubes requires precision maneuvering that is, on a good day, hazardous to undertake under fire. They can be re-loaded in the tubes, but only after combat has ended. If you have to retreat you're likely to be leaving those fighters and their pilots behind.
- 2) Assault Launch Docks don't have Maintenance facilities. After a heavy combat, assuming your fighters can be fit back in their tubes, there's no room for technicians to work on them. They might be re-fueled/re-charged through a standard refueling link, but expended missile tubes will remain empty and damaged armor or structure will remain that way until the fighter receives attention at a proper service facility.
- 3) Assault Launch Docks are custom designed for a specific type and loadout of ship. Buy new fighters and unless they're exactly the same make and model as the ones you had before they won't fit in the launch tubes. That means no upgrades or changes to Ship Systems on those

fighters, and if you're replacing ones lost in battle you'd better hope the ones you get aren't knockoffs from another manufacturer with slightly different dimensions.

Notes on Matryoshka Carrier Rule:

Why this rule? Without it it becomes possible for relatively small carriers to carry vastly more fighter craft than they should be able to by carrying large numbers of subordinate carriers (IE: a class X vessel carrying 4 Class Y vessels each carrying 4 Class Z fighters carries 16 class Z fighters compared to the same Class X carrier holding at most 6 Class Z fighters.)

Some players may be tempted to argue on certain missions that they're only holding subordinate vessels in the short term, and should be allowed to carry the larger number of fighters this way. Game Chiefs should resist any urge to give in to this as it vastly increases the number of ships that are involved in combat and will make combats drag out longer.