SAVAGE WORLDS

RIFTS®

Savaging Your Favorite Rifts® Ideas

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From the day we announced the Savage *Rifts®* project as a reality, the most requested companion piece was a "conversion guide," something fans could use to bring their favorite things from the massive library of *Rifts®* books published by Palladium Books, Inc., into *Savage Worlds*.

Though both the *Rifts®* system from Palladium and *Savage Worlds* fulfill similar roles — core rules used to express a vast array of concepts, genres, and stories — they do so in very different ways. Both are powerful and effective, giving their fans a great gaming experience, yet they handle the core tasks of expressing characters and actions so differently creating a strictly mathematical process to convert from one to the other would be an exercise in frustration, without much fun on either end.
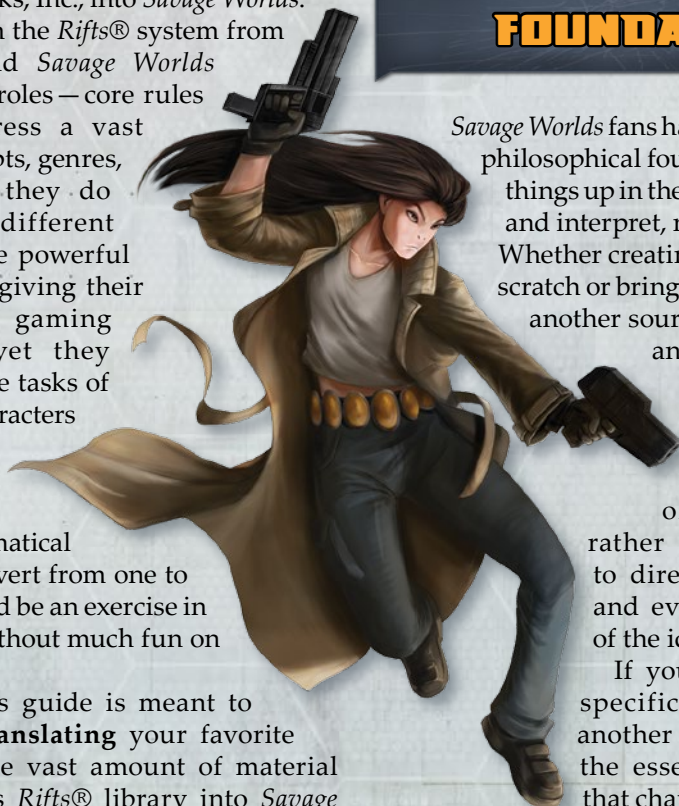
Instead, this guide is meant to aid you in **translating** your favorite ideas from the vast amount of material in Palladium's *Rifts®* library into *Savage Worlds*. You may discover these guidelines help you translate pretty much *any* idea into something you can use in Savage *Rifts®*.

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

Savage Worlds fans have long known the philosophical foundation of writing things up in the system — translate and interpret, rather than convert. Whether creating something from scratch or bringing an idea in from another source (movies, comics, another game setting, etc.), you are best served by trying to recreate the essential aspects of the concept, rather than attempting to directly convert each and every minute detail of the idea.

If you're writing up a specific character from another source, what are the essential qualities of that character? Is she quick-

witted? Brutally strong? A two-guns-blazing acrobat? A strong-willed and hard-boiled detective? When recreating a previously-designed RPG character, you will be better off stepping away from the numbers and figuring out the essential questions and answers about her. Once you've done that, it's a lot easier to go through the *Savage Worlds* material and find the elements which best define her.

For example, if she's a "strong-willed and hard-boiled detective," you can design her to have Edges like Investigator, Nerves of Steel, and (of course) Strong Willed. There may be nothing in her original system write-up which reflects those exact mechanical qualities, but that may be because the original system handles such concepts very differently.

Of course, the game system may have equivalent ideas, in which case your task is to look for roughly similar ways to express the same thing. Regardless, the above mental approach serves you best as you seek to make sure this character *feels* right under *Savage Worlds* rules, rather than reflecting a mathematical approximation of her pure stats from the *Rifts®* system.

This same design philosophy applies to pretty much everything else you'll want to translate to *Savage Worlds* rules, though in the case of things like monsters, vehicles, and character types (Occupational Character Classes, or O.C.C.s, in *Rifts®* terms), you have another very useful tool to wield. The best guide to bringing a creature, piece of equipment, or even O.C.C. over from *Rifts®* to Savage *Rifts®* is to simply look at an existing, similar item in the Savage *Rifts®* books and start from there. In many cases, you can even use that concept's stats as a starting place, varying them to better represent the new concept.

For example, when translating a Northern Gun robot vehicle into Savage *Rifts®,* you'll have a much easier time looking at the NG robots already in *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide* (the Gunwolf, the Behemoth, and the Hunter) and using one of them as a starting framework. The same idea goes for translating O.C.C.s—most of them are readily understood as variations on existing Iconic Frameworks, or at least similar enough in concept and power usage to be relatable.

MORE VARIETY, NOT MORE POWER

Most gamers know the term "power creep." Newer material comes out for a game of almost any kind, and there is a righteous concern that the new character type, weapon, armor, etc. will be so much better than what's come before it makes the older release obsolete. Designers of all forms of games conscientiously struggle to ensure new material makes the game experience more dynamic and interesting without creating an arms race to acquire the new releases just because it completely overpowers anything else.

This is a concept you should keep in the front of your mind as you go through your own creation process to add things to your Savage *Rifts®* campaign. While the temptation is strong to ensure your personal favorite O.C.C. or power armor is as awesome as you can possibly make it, you will do better by your game and your fellow players by working on making it stand out creatively, rather than in terms of raw power. *Savage Worlds* is a game system which favors a certain amount of balance among roughly equivalent things, and the game works best when honoring this idea.

Look for what makes your favored idea special and interesting, rather than what makes it kick the stuffing out of every other like it in the setting. After all, it's relatively easy to just make something stronger, tougher, and more damaging…but that's hardly exciting or intriguing. It's better to find the elements which make it stand out in more memorable ways.

Herein lies a key idea to internalize: *Savage Worlds* amalgamates a lot of intricate detail into larger, broader "packages." This not only makes for faster and easier game play, it simplifies both the creation and understanding of characters and other builds. Wielding a rapier, punching, and swinging a lamppost all fall under the Fighting skill. Missiles of magic, holy bolts of energy, and a telekinetic punch at a distance are all best interpreted as the *bolt* power. Having a thick hide, reinforced bones, or an incredible pain tolerance all fall under the auspice of possessing a high Toughness.

As you go through the very specific details and ideas of a given character, monster, piece of gear, or whatever, remember to figure out its essential game play quality and find the *Savage Worlds* mechanic that represents it best. Think in broad concepts, then use your descriptions and trappings to elaborate on the details which make the story part of that concept stand out.

ICONIC FRAMEWORKS

Many of you have likely heard the phrase "more art than science" when it comes to game design. This truism applies to what we do with *Savage Worlds*, and it certainly came into play with all the Iconic Frameworks. The numbers are important, yet how those numbers interact in terms of game impact and the player's emotional experience is as much about intuition and narrative understanding as it is about formulas. Nowhere is this more evident than in the crafting of Iconic Frameworks.

THE KITBASH APPROACH

Those who work with miniatures for RPGs and wargaming know the term "kitbash" very well. It's the process of taking existing models and pieces, pulling them apart, and recombining those pieces into a custom result which more exactly fits what the modeler wants. This is exactly the right approach to take in creating new Iconic Frameworks for Savage *Rifts®*.

The idea is pretty simple at its base. The core Iconic Frameworks in *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide* represent the foundation concepts of the *Rifts®* setting, making them the best starting places for translating other, later ideas, or even in creating new ones to play with. Thinking in these terms, your best steps in translating a favorite O.C.C. into an Iconic Framework are:

1. Figure out which existing Iconic Framework most closely resembles the idea of what you want to translate or create.
2. Go through the various abilities and switch out the ones that don't fit your current idea for something that does, keeping it about the same effectiveness and power.
3. For any additional abilities you feel are important to the concept, define them as Iconic Edges the player can choose for the character either at creation or later.

This is the best approach to give you balanced results in keeping with the spirit of Savage *Rifts®*. The devil resides in the details, however, so let's go over these steps a bit more.

CHOOSING A MODEL FRAMEWORK

This is probably the most important part of the process. The right choice means the least amount of serious work you have to put in and establishes the foundation of your build. The wrong choice can set you off on a frustrating path and a lot of re-working.

Again, the temptation may be to make a choice you see as the most powerful. This isn't really the best approach, however, and can lead to a very clunky result more about the power than about representing the best elements of the O.C.C. you are trying to emulate. It's better by far to target the Iconic Framework that exemplifies the same kind of role and capabilities the established O.C.C. represents from the original *Rifts®* sources.

Another thing to watch out for is being *too* literal in your choice of foundation. For example, if you're translating something with a strong set of psionic abilities, you might be automatically drawn to the Mind Melter as your starting place. This

is probably the right choice for many ideas, but if the particular concept you're playing with is less about raw power and more about a variety of special abilities outside of simply using psionics, you *might* be better off looking at the Ley Line Walker.

Yes, the Walker is arcane-based, but realize that much of what you are doing is effectively "re-skinning" an established Iconic Framework so that it looks and feels like what you want. If the Ley Line Walker gives you more options by switching out ley line abilities for specialized psionic abilities (while still giving the character significant raw power), that's probably the better choice. After all, you can simply replace PPE with ISP, and the core power system is essentially the same.

Some other guiding points to consider as you choose which Iconic Framework works best as your starting point:

- Is your concept driven *heavily* by cybernetics? The Combat Cyborg is probably your best choice to base it on.
- For super-soldier types — especially those for whom some kind of sacrifice for sheer, raw power is part of the build — either the **Crazy** or **Juicer** is the way to go. Note that the Juicer is especially helpful for those wanting to convert any of the variant Juicer concepts.
- Is there a combination of mystical, psionic, or arcane talents with strong combat competence at the heart of what you want to translate? The **Cyber-Knight** is a firm foundation to look at. It's also good for any character with low level powers and lots of variety.
- Does the concept have raw power with a fairly narrow focus? The **Burster** is perfect for such types.
- **Mind Melters** are a good foundation for any O.C.C. oriented around heavy focus on power with a good amount of specialization toward that power.
- Most arcane-focused concepts should start with the **Ley Line Walker** as their foundation, especially those that have lots of special abilities to articulate in order to represent them best.
- The complexities of the **Mystic** make that Iconic Framework an excellent "catch-all" kind of foundation when you're just not sure what else to use. They work especially well for something with lots of power, but also a broad focus.
- One option for a highly-skilled concept with lots of focused capabilities, yet not a lot of massive power (at least to start) is the **Techno-Wizard**. This Iconic Framework fulfills a similar role, in terms of translation foundations, as that of the Cyber-Knight.

One Iconic Framework we'd advise against using as a foundation for translating O.C.C.s and other concepts is the **Glitter Boy**. There is no more archetypical, definitive icon in the *Rifts®* setting than this one, and its design is very specific to what it is and what it does. For O.C.C.s based on the use of Power Armor or even Robot Armor, you're much better off going the **M.A.R.S.** route.

THE TRADE-OFFS

This is easily the most involved part of the process. While the basic idea is pretty simple, you will need to spend some time and serious creative thought on it as you decide what parts of the foundation Iconic Framework to keep, and what parts to replace with something else. Moreover, you'll be coming up with your best estimations of what is roughly equivalent, and in some cases may even be inventing new things.

Your choices may be as easy as trading one Edge or set of Skills for another. You may also take established special abilities and simply tweak to fit the idea you're working on. Honestly, your instinct should be to borrow and re-skin as many established things from existing write-ups as possible, both to make things easier for yourself and to feel more confident in the balance of what's created.

Another great tool to rely on is the **Custom Races** section of *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide*. Those rules will give you a solid sense of what balances against what and the relative value of abilities, Edges, and other talents. In fact, the Race creation rules formed a solid foundation for much of what we created for Savage *Rifts®*.

At some point, however, you're likely to come up with something new, especially if you feel a key concept in an original *Rifts®* O.C.C. isn't represented in the necessary way in anything found in *Savage Worlds* yet. Feel free to run with your inspiration, but understand that you may need to play around with the idea over a few sessions to be sure it really works as well as you intend. If it turns out overpowered, or next-to-useless, you (and the Game Master, if that's not you) need to be willing to go back to the drawing board and rework it.

Also of importance when looking at this process are the Complications associated with a given Iconic Framework. You will need to adapt the ones that exist, or replace them with roughly equivalent issues, if you want to ensure that your final result is effectively in balance with other Iconic Frameworks. As well, take a close look at the Hero's Journey for the base Iconic Framework, and remember to establish a roughly equivalent scheme for your new one.

NEW ICONIC EDGES

There are times when everything simply won't fit into a baseline Iconic Framework, yet these abilities need to be possible for a character of that type. This is where the Iconic Edges come into play. These represent special abilities someone on that particular path can learn over time, or perhaps they are an evolution of an existing power. For example, the Burster's *Flame Blast* represents an advanced technique for her use of pyrokinetics.

FOR EVERYTHING ELSE, THERE'S M.A.R.S.

As many Savage *Rifts®* fans have already discovered, your best bet for many O.C.C. translations is to simply employ the *Mercenaries*, *Adventurers*, *Rogues*, and *Scholars* framework. A large number of concepts are easy to simulate using M.A.R.S., especially via the Personal Concept Option.

This is especially true for any O.C.C. heavily based on use and ownership of Power Armor, Robot Armor, or vehicles. As well, any concept very oriented on combat skills, or best defined as highly skilled and talented, expresses quite well using M.A.R.S. In fact, you probably should start by trying to build your concept with M.A.R.S. first, before resorting to any other foundation described earlier.

Your best guide for creating Iconic Edges is both the core *Savage Worlds* rules and Savage *Rifts®*. The Edges already listed give you a baseline for deciding the required Rank as well as other things like Traits and prerequisite Edges. As a general rule, Rank requirements should reflect how far along a character is on his journey before he develops this particular new technique or talent. Attribute and Skill requirements are best used sparingly, but one or two are often a good idea to ensure that the Iconic Edge isn't just a "gimme" for every character on this Iconic road.

MAKING AN ICONIC FRAMEWORK—THE SHIFTER

For something this involved, a good example serves to illustrate the process for more clarity. Let's take a look at the **Shifter**, an Iconic Framework many *Rifts®* fans want to see as part of the *Savage Rifts®* offerings.

Choosing a Model Framework. Anyone who's read through *Savage Foes of North America* can readily tell we used the **Ley Line Walker** as the foundation for the Shifter in that book. While their narrative components are a bit different, the effective reality is their skills and abilities run to very similar end results. They are both adept at manipulating Rifts and ley line energy, and they are both powerful arcane casters.

The Trade-Offs. Let's start by taking a look at the various **Ley Line Walker Abilities and Bonuses**. We won't list all the information here (it's available in the *Player's Guide*), but the list follows for ease of evaluation:

- Arcane Background (Magic). Obviously, the Shifter needs this. The established starting number of powers, starting PPE, and Spellcasting skill could work as is.
- **Expanded Awareness.** Shifters also have strong arcane senses, so this should stay.
- **Ley Line Magic Mastery.** Though the original O.C.C. uses different terminology the translation is much easier when you realize that the essential effect is the same. The Shifter enjoys a great deal of extra power when interfacing with ley lines, so this is

an ability they should have access to. However, it probably serves better as an Iconic Edge, rather than a core Iconic Framework ability…

- **Ley Line Rejuvenation.** Another indication of strength gained when dealing with Rift energies, also in keeping with how Shifters work. Again, this may serve better as an Iconic Edge.
- **Ley Line Sense.** Like Walkers, Shifters are very attuned to the power of Rifts and ley lines. The original O.C.C. may describe this sensory mastery in different terms, but in *Savage Rifts®*, it's a lot easier to just go with the same core rules.
- **Ley Line Transmission.** This is one of those abilities that is more firmly in the wheelhouse of the Ley Line Walker, but the overall theme of the Shifter makes this a good candidate for an available Iconic Edge.
- **Ley Line Walking.** This is one ability of the Walker that doesn't warrant carry-over to the Shifter; it's very definitively a Ley Line Walker kind of thing.
- **Master of Magic.** Both Walkers and Shifters should start out as mega-powered casters, so this is needed for the core Framework. However, with the focus on PPE Manipulation (see below), we'll remove the Rapid Recharge part of that entry.

Now let's look at the special abilities we know a Shifter needs.

- **Bind the Summoned.** This is one of those special Iconic Framework abilities we designed to reflect the very specific nature of the Shifter. It goes outside the bounds of the *summon ally* power, so it needed a bit of tweaking to make it work effectively and—more importantly—easily with the way *Savage Worlds* works. We ultimately designed it to work directly with the *summon ally* power. This is a definitive Shifter ability, so it may need to be in the core Iconic Framework.
- **Dimension Sense.** Shifters are true experts on sensing and understanding the various dimensions that can be

seen and sensed through Rifts. This is another core ability all Shifters should likely start with.

- **Master Summoner.** Shifters summon things. No matter what else we give them, they *must* have this. We felt it important to modify their use of the *summon ally* power to reflect their true expertise with it.
- **PPE Manipulation.** Another core concept—one that leans heavily on the trope that Shifters tend toward corruption more easily than most—that needs reflection in the core Iconic Framework.
- **Rift Mastery.** Another definitive aspect of Shifters, per the original O.C.C.. In fact, one might argue this is the *most* important capability of the Shifter.

Now it's time to mix and match until we get the right set of starting abilities. First, we look at the core Ley Line Walker abilities that are absolutes to keep—**Arcane Background**, **Expanded Awareness**, and **Master of Magic**. For the first one, we drop the number of starting powers to three (especially since we're planning on the Shifter starting with *drain Power Points* and *summon ally* in addition to any other powers he begins with), and we leave the starting PPE at 15 and the Spellcasting skill at d8.

Why do we make the Shifter version of this entry less? Because we know some of what we're giving the Shifter in other areas may be a bit more powerful than what we're removing. This is also why we take the Rapid Recharge edge away from the Master of Magic part of the Walker entry. That's where the "art over science" of this process comes into play. Not everything has to be *exactly* the same, especially if it gives you some building room elsewhere. As well, variety between the two types *is* important.

Looking at the list of things we feel the Shifter needs which are specifically "Shifter" in nature, we determine **Dimension Sense**, **Master Summoner**, and **Rift Mastery** are essential to the concept as we see things. To "fit them in," we take out (in order of what we think is roughly equivalent) **Ley Line Sense**, **Ley Line Transmission**, and **Ley Line Magic Mastery**. Since we know for

sure we're taking **Ley Line Walking** out, we decide to replace that with the **Bind the Summoned** ability. Finally, we swap out **Ley Line Rejuvenation** with **PPE Manipulation**.

Looking at the Complications part of things, we replace the **Disconnected** entry with something that is more in line with the rather negative reputation Shifters have among folks, especially those in the magic-wielding community. We can tweak the Enemies entry to better reflect the specifics as applied to Shifters, as well. For the Hero's Journey, we decide to leave the entry exactly the same; it works as well for the Shifter concept as it does for the Ley Line Walker.

ICONIC FRAMEWORK: THE SHIFTER

Similar to Ley Line Walkers in that they master the understanding of ley lines and Rifts, Shifters focus more on manipulating the energies of these phenomena to call forth beings from other dimensions to serve them. They also weave arcane energies into patterns meant to control Rifts and dimensional forces, often in highly overt and sometimes catastrophic ways. If the Ley Line Walker is the subtle cajoler of Rift-driven arcane energies, the Shifter is the brute force agitator who demands the ley lines obey his commands.

Shifters suffer from a negative reputation, even among other practitioners of magic. While they are not universally evil, most face the constant threat of corruption due to their practices. Most of the creatures and entities a Shifter might summon come from dark, infernal, or otherwise dangerous realms, and they tend to demand exchanges from Shifters that lead to ever-darker pacts and actions. The very act of calling a sentient being into one's direct service—some would say slavery—begins with a question of ethics. Summoning like this can lead down very dark roads.

HERO'S JOURNEY (FIVE ROLLS)

Shifters gain three rolls on any of the following tables: **Enchanted Items & Mystic Gadgets**, **Education**, **Experience & Wisdom**, and **Magic & Mysticism**.

They also get two rolls on *any* table of their choice, except **Psionics**.

SHIFTING TIME AND SPACE

The keys to the Shifter's power are his natural gifts with manipulating Rifts and ley line energy, especially when it comes to opening a portal to another realm and bringing forth entities to serve his will. Shifters have the power to control Rifts, unequaled by any other arcane practitioner, and they have an inherent sense of dimensions—the one they are in and any they might perceive through a Rift.

The most important and well-known power of the Shifter is his capability with summoning magic, and his gift for controlling that which he summons for extended periods of time. Shifters were in high demand during the War of Tolkeen, especially when the leaders of that doomed nation determined to bring forth whatever it might take to defeat the Coalition. Shifters are also well-received in Dunscon's Federation of Magic, for he sees the great power in a nigh-limitless source of immensely powerful soldiers from beyond.

MAGIC MASTERY

The study of the arcane is essential to a Shifter's success, and all Shifters are powerful spellcasters. While they don't possess the same variety of spell knowledge their counterparts among other disciplines might, they don't hurt for essential power, either. Shifters train in techniques for both diminishing the power of their opponents and turning that power against them.

Shifters are Masters of Magic, have the Arcane Background (Magic), and choose from the following list of powers: *armor, banish, barrier, blast, bolt, burrow, burst, conceal arcana, damage field, darksight, deflection, dispel, drain Power Points, entangle, environmental protection, farsight, fear, intangibility, invisibility, light/obscure, quickness, slow, smite, speak language, speed, stun, summon ally, teleport,* and *warrior's gift*. They can choose any Trappings available for their powers.

SHIFTER ABILITIES AND BONUSES

Shifters possess exceptional arcane knowledge and the power to master Rifts, summon creatures from beyond our reality, and exert tremendous will and control over them.

- **Arcane Background (Magic):** Shifters are mighty spellcasters, starting with three powers of their choice (as well as specific ones, listed below). They begin with a Spellcasting skill of d8 and 15 PPE.
- **Bind the Summoned:** A Shifter can bind one or more summoned beings to his service for an extended period of time. He does this by reducing his maximum PPE by the amount needed to originally summon the creature. The creature remains bound to his service until he releases it or the summoned entity is Incapacitated (in either case, returning the creature to its home dimension). Shifters may only have one bound entity per Rank (one at Novice, two at Seasoned). For example, a Seasoned Shifter could have two summoned allies, each costing 4 PPE to summon, bound to him; his maximum PPE is reduced by 8 until he releases the entities or they are Incapacitated. At that point, he recovers his PPE normally. Bound allies are treated as though they were summoned with a raise, which grants them the Hardy ability.
- **Dimension Sense:** With a successful Notice roll, a Shifter can determine relevant information about a dimension he is in or one he views through a Rift. This includes hostile environmental conditions, how closely related the dimension is to Rifts Earth, and whether or not it's a temporal shift.
- **Expanded Awareness:** Shifters can use *detect arcana* at will, with no PPE cost, as a free action.
- **Master of Magic:** A Shifter has all the Mega Powers for his spells per the Edge Master of Magic.
- **Master Summoner:** All Shifters gain the *summon ally* power automatically, and the duration for them is 5 minutes (1/5 minutes). This duration extends to the Mega Power version, *force multiplication*.
- **PPE Manipulation:** All Shifters have the *drain Power Points* power (and the *PPE thief* Mega Power) automatically.
- **Rift Mastery:** Shifters gain a +4 on all efforts to open and manipulate Rifts

(see **Characters, Ley Lines, and Rifts** in the *Savage Rifts® Game Master's Handbook*). They also gain +2 when using the *banish* Power.

SHIFTER COMPLICATIONS

The Shifter is the living epitome of what the Coalition States hate and fear about magic, making him Target Number One for all who hate the arcane arts. He also dances a fine line between arcane mastery and corruption from the very forces he wields.

- **Corruption:** Many of the entities a Shifter might bring forth (with *summon ally* or *force multiplication*) have strong wills and a desire to corrupt the being who summons them. Each time the Shifter uses either power with a being the Game Master feels is evil or corrupt in nature, she might call for an opposed Spirit check between the being and the Shifter. If the being wins, the Shifter gains a point of Corruption. Future Spirit contests with other evil summoned beings suffer a penalty equal to the Shifter's current Corruption; when a Shifter gains a number of Corruption points equal to half his Spirit die type, he's become a slave to darker external powers (and no longer a playable character).
- **Cybernetics:** Such technology creates havoc for the flow of energy a Shifter relies upon, imposing −1 to the Spellcasting skill for each point of Strain.
- **Enemies:** Shifters are automatically enemies of the Coalition States and shot on sight. Even those CS soldiers who might have less zealous attitudes toward most casters will likely open fire if they know they're dealing with a Shifter. As with all arcane wielders, those Shifters who refuse to swear fealty to Lord Dunscon may well be enemies of the Federation, too.

SHIFTER STARTING GEAR

Adventure Survival Armor, NG-33 Laser Pistol, NG-S2 Survival Pack, 1d4 × 1000 credits.

SHIFTER ICONIC EDGES

Shifters can acquire a number of special abilities similar to those of Ley Line Walkers, using the Iconic Edge approach. They work the same way, but are acquired through advancement rather than being part of the core Iconic Framework. Treat the following as Iconic Edges for Shifters (see **Ley Line Walker Abilities and Bonuses** in *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide*), with the indicated requirements to add them:

- **Ley Line Magic Mastery**: A Shifter dedicated to her arcane craft must be Seasoned and have a Spellcasting die of d10 to take this as an Iconic Edge.
- **Ley Line Rejuvenation**: Like Ley Line Walkers, it seems entirely reasonable that Shifters could call upon the energies of ley lines and Rifts to restore themselves. Shifters can obtain this as an Iconic Edge at Seasoned.
- **Ley Line Sense**: This should be a fairly easy one for a Shifter to pick up, should the player decide to expand the character's sensory abilities. The Rank requirement is Novice and the Shifter must have Knowledge (Arcana) at d6; Shifters with a less scholarly approach won't be as likely to study the ley lines.
- **Ley Line Transmission**: This is more commonly associated with the Ley Line Walker, but Shifters understand much of the same magic. Veteran Rank is the only requirement.

In addition to these, Shifters may also take the Ley Line Phasing and Ley Line Gate Iconic Edges from *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide*.

The *Rifts®* series of books contains many hundreds (likely thousands) of guns, suits of armor, and vehicles. Fans have their favorites, so it's likely they'll want to translate those into their *Savage Rifts®* games. Taking as simple an approach as possible is best in each case, with the technique described in **The Kitbash Approach** for Iconic Frameworks remaining as the guiding principle.

ARMOR

With all protective devices, the scale differences between *Rifts®* and *Savage Worlds* are significant. This needs to be understood and firmly in mind as you go forward with any translations. A single point of Armor in *Savage Rifts®* is much more than it might appear. It's a threshold, rather than something you have to "chip away" as is the case in *Rifts®*.

With Body Armor, Power Armor, and Robot Armor, simply find the suit in *Savage Rifts®* that is closest to what you want to write up. If you have the appropriate *Rifts®* source for the *Savage Rifts®* armor, compare those mechanics and stats to the *Rifts®* armor you're translating. This should give you a decent sense of which one might have more or less total Armor, as well as other factors.

Resist the temptation to constantly escalate the Armor values of newer suits and systems. While this was a popular option in the original *Rifts®* series, for *Savage Rifts®*, you'll be better served keeping everything in the same general ranges. This ensures *Savage Rifts®* remains valid and effective in your campaigns for some time to come.

Once you have the suit of *Savage Rifts®* armor which best compares to what you want to translate, just make the tweaks necessary to give it the particulars that make it special to you. This includes some of those trade-offs that feature in **The Kitbash Approach** translations earlier. Of course, the ending cost of a suit may be effective in establishing the balance between it and something more or less expensive, based on final features. We've chosen to keep the same costs as listed in original *Rifts®* sources.

BODY ARMOR

It will be helpful to know *Savage Rifts®* has a top limit of +8 Armor and +2 embedded Toughness for Body Armor. This should be limited to the heaviest, most protective armor available. You should also keep in mind the Strength Minimum listed for suits, as this also serves as a balancing factor. Better designed (and more expensive) suits, even heavier ones, will have lower minimums than cheaper suits of similar ratings.

POWER ARMOR

When constructing new iterations of Power Armor, you should keep the Armor Values at 8 for the lowest end and 12 at the maximum, but go with a standard of +3 embedded Toughness. However, note that you *can* trade a +1 Toughness to raise the Armor of a suit by +2 to create some variances in the builds. All Armor for these suits is M.D.C..

As Power Armor can come in different Sizes, you should go with the following guidelines for scale. The lowest end of Power Armor should be Size +. Once you get into an Armor value of 10 or higher, raise the Size to 2, while the suits at Armor 12 are Size 3.
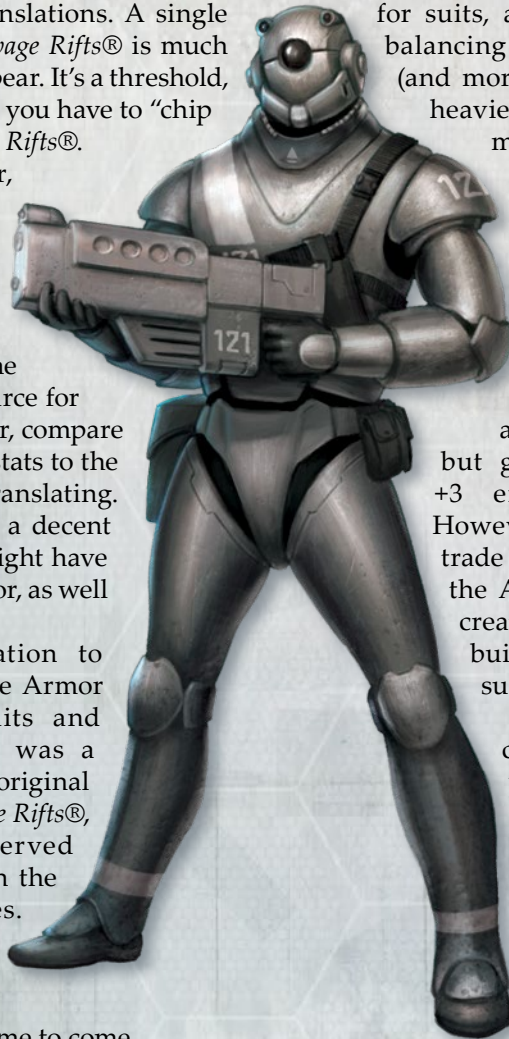
One thing we feel will be helpful to you as you decide how best to stat things up is to have a sense of relative heights and bulk in regards to the Size ratings. The following should help you with a sense of general comparison, at least for characters, Power Armor, and Robot Armor with a humanoid shape. Keep in mind that allowances are often made for other factors—something being longer, wider, more or less bulky than other things of its relative height—especially at the higher end of the spectrum.

- **Size 1:** Anywhere from more than six feet to seven and a half feet tall, something like a classic heroic fantasy orc or a full conversion `Borg.
- **Size 2:** Humanoids up to nine feet in height, such as the mighty Grackle Tooth.
- **Size 3:** Beings of this height can just reach 12 feet. Ogres are rather famous examples of this category as is Glitter Boy armor, of course.
- **Size 4:** Truly large human-shaped beings up to 15' in height fall in this Size grouping, including the Triax X-535 Hunter Robot Armor.

This should give you a fair sense of beings and their sizes at the low end of the "bigger than humans" scale. For larger ones, note the top height for Size 4 is double that of Size 1; extrapolating from there is easy (note creatures smaller than Size 0 don't scale at the same rate).

When establishing the total load-out of weapons for a suit of Power Armor, realize that the Size of the suit also represents the total Mods of vehicle scale weapons the suit can bear. This goes to Size+1 if one of the weapons is handheld (such as the SAMAS and its rail gun). Note that this set of limits on such weapons is pretty much ignored for setting Mods for Robot Armor.

ROBOT ARMOR

For Robot Armor vehicles, use the following to set the core Toughness, and also to know what the maximum Armor for that frame should be:

- **Size 4:** Toughness 13, max Armor 12.
- **Size 5:** Toughness 15, max Armor 14.
- **Size 6:** Toughness 18, max Armor 17.
- **Size 7:** Toughness 20, max Armor 19.
- **Size 8:** Toughness 22, max Armor 22.

Of course, the Armor on any Robot Armor vehicle is automatically M.D.C..

VEHICLES

There's a great deal more variance with vehicles, but using an established, statted, vehicle as a foundation for designing or translating one of your desire should be the starting point. As a general rule, anything built for mostly civilian purpose probably has regular Armor, while something designed for combat and related dangerous situations will have M.D.C. Armor. For the more robust vehicles—those intended for combat—the rules and guidelines for translating Robot Armor apply to vehicles just as easily.

WEAPONS

The vast array of weapons from *Rifts®* is impressive. Outside of look-and-feel, however, there comes a point of mostly diminishing returns when trying to translate *all* of them over into *Savage Rifts®* terms. Once again, your best bet is to pick the weapon already written in *Savage Rifts®* terms that most closely parallels what you wish to translate, then switch around the stats in whatever way most meaningfully gets you the final result you want.

Avoid adding more damage. You'll note that most of the laser pistols, for example, stay relatively in the same span of damage types, while laser rifles fall into their own category of damage dice. Remember that other defining factors — such as Range, Rate of Fire, Armor Piercing (AP) value, etc.— can help create variances between one kind of laser rifle and another.

Also be careful about adding flat "+x" bonuses to dice damage; it's a great way to represent a particularly powerful entry in a particular category, but those flat bonuses are *very* powerful and should be used sparingly.

Another thing to pay attention to is the differences we created between *kinds* of weapons. Plasma weapons have big damage dice, but shorter ranges than lasers, and have a peculiar way they do damage (especially against anything not in a fully sealed system). We used *Savage Worlds'* "Shotgun Rules" to make ion weapons interesting in their own right, so keep that in mind.

Vehicle weapons are essentially the same on a much bigger scale. Using the established weapon systems to translate other ones is your best guide. One very important note here is that we decided to go more generic with the vehicle weapons, as this fits the essentials found in original *Rifts®*. At this scale, one specific brand of missile launcher over another has less meaning, so we went with generic versions. This makes it much easier to create things like Robot Armor or tanks.

FOES AND MONSTERS

These provide the most variety and widest array of possibilities. At the same time, they're probably the easiest to translate, at least in terms of flexibility for the person doing the work. The standing rule for creating any character or monster in *Savage Worlds* has been to simply give the entity whatever it needs, never mind normal character building rules.

For most things you may wish to translate, there's a good chance you'll find an example of something similar in one of many *Savage* sources. Of course, *Savage Foes of North America* should be your first place to look, as it contains many things crafted specifically for the *Savage Rifts®* gaming experience. The core *Savage Worlds* book also has a lot of solid foundation monsters to choose as a starting place; to make them more of a challenge for *Savage Rifts®* characters, however, you'll likely want to tinker with them considerably.

Of particular note in the *Savage Worlds* core book is the section just before the list of monsters and creatures, where you'll find all of the **Monstrous Abilities**. Not only is this a great list to look at for building or translating your favorite creatures, but what's found there should give you a solid set of guidelines for crafting any special abilities you feel your entity needs.

Of course, the **Custom Races** rules in *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide* are also a set of powerful tools for you to use. Full of special abilities and helpful packages oriented towards different types and roles, the **It Came from a Rift** section of *Savage Foes* has a lot of great, useful information to mine.

Finally, there are many dozens of *Savage Worlds* sources out there, both those published by Pinnacle and third party publishers, that give you a vast treasure trove of characters and monsters to use in your efforts to populate your *Savage Rifts®* campaign.

FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE

With a few exceptions, most of what this document provides is more about how to think when translating your favorite ideas than it is about the specific numbers to use. Once again, this is intentional, because the process is ultimately better for you if you worry less about exacting mathematical formulas and more about getting the *feel* of what you want to create right for your campaign.

After all, what's fun for you and your group is the most important factor.

To that effect, don't be afraid to try something and have it not work. What looks good on paper or screen is rarely the best it can be in practice. Be willing to go back and re-design things that seem either next-to-useless or too-powerful. If you're not the Game Master, be willing to work with her to make sure you're not bringing something broken to the table. Good communication about these things goes a long way to better creations and more fun down the road.

You also have a rather large and impressive community in the fans of *Savage Worlds*, worldwide, to call upon for help and advice. The fans of this system are among the best in gaming, always willing to provide friendly conversation about any topic without judgment or predispositions. They know a great deal about what does and doesn't work in *Savage* terms, and can be a great resource for you as the creative process goes forward.

Here's hoping this document helps you bring over your favorite *Rifts®* ideas into *Savage Rifts®*, and may the Megaverse® be richer for what you bring into it!