

A movie poster for 'Zombie World: Safe Haven'. The background is a white map of the world with black outlines of continents. Several black birds are flying across the sky. The title 'ZOMBIE WORLD' is written in large, bold, red, distressed block letters, with red splatters and blood-like textures. Below the title, there are silhouettes of two people, a man and a woman, standing in the center. They are surrounded by several black, zombie-like hands reaching out from the bottom and sides. The bottom of the poster features a red, blood-splattered area with the words 'SAFE HAVEN' in white, bold, distressed block letters.

# ZOMBIE WORLD

SAFE HAVEN

# SAFE HAVENS

The survivors in a zombie story are almost always striving for survival, first and foremost, followed by some form of stability and safety. Most of them would return the world to the way it was before Z-Day if they had the choice, going back to a reality in which they could mostly count on living to tomorrow, where food was readily available, and where they could make decisions free from the harsh light of life and death.

Enclaves—coalitions of survivors working together to endure the hardships and nightmares around them—are the best that most survivors can find in the post-apocalyptic landscape. But there are always rumors of something more, of genuinely safe places with high walls and armed guards. Places where the rules feel real again, where no one has to go to sleep wondering if they will even wake up the next morning. Safe havens.

If they are real, safe havens are incredibly rare. The amount of resources and work necessary to transform an enclave into a real place of safety precludes the vast majority of survivors from ever achieving that dream. But there might be some out there...and even if you can't find one, you might have the chance to build one yourself.

These rules are designed to allow you to introduce safe havens into your game of **ZOMBIE WORLD**, either as something the PCs themselves can build over the course of a longer campaign, or as a different starting point for a game. PCs might turn an enclave into a safe haven with significant effort, as they genuinely work together and overcome differences, threats, and scarcities to form a safer space to survive—the arc that, in theory, any forward-minded survivor of the zombie apocalypse would seek. Alternatively, you can start your game with a safe haven to give it a different flavor from a normal enclave, where the troubles are not as immediately lethal, and much harder to resolve.

# WHAT DEFINES A SAFE HAVEN

A safe haven is an enclave that has actually managed to make itself sustainably safe, even in the face of a hellish apocalypse. There may be hordes upon hordes of zombies outside the gates, but life is not merely about survival within the confines of a safe haven—it can actually be about living again. In a safe haven, the population always has some idea of where their next meal or drink is coming from, who is in charge and why, and what tomorrow will look like. Safe havens allow people to begin to relax, and in turn to begin to focus on problems that seemed like they were lost in Z-Day.

The nature of **ZOMBIE WORLD** is such that no safe haven is ever truly, unequivocally, unquestionably safe—any concept that such a place could exist went the way of most of the world's population after Z-Day. But in **ZOMBIE WORLD**, an enclave is a place where people struggle every day to remain alive, where tomorrow might bring death just as sure as it brings the new dawn. A safe haven is free from that knife's edge existence. A safe haven has enough security to actually make long-term planning seem like a good idea.

The biggest problem to a safe haven is not the zombies outside—it's people, inside and out. An enclave will never become a safe haven if it doesn't have a way to keep itself safe from zombies, along with standard security practices to prevent the whole safe haven from falling victim to a surprise incursion or someone dying and turning in the night. But that means most young safe havens have fantastic defenses built up against the living dead, without necessarily the same defenses built up to resist willful, dangerous human enemies. Rebellion, unrest, external attack—anything that leads humans to try to poke holes in a safe haven's security is a serious threat. And while a haven must, of necessity, have greater stability in its human population than your average post-apocalyptic survival enclave, like we said before—true, full, untouchable safety is a thing of the past. The living may no longer have to deal with a different monster with a gun seizing control each day, and they may be able to let their guards down to some extent...but they certainly can't afford a total decay of vigilance.

## MAKING A SAFE HAVEN

This section details how to convert an enclave into a safe haven. If you want to design a safe haven from scratch at the start of the campaign, go down to the “Creating a safe haven from scratch” section.

When you are playing **ZOMBIE WORLD**, if you want to turn your enclave into a safe haven, you must have an answer for each of the following questions. Each answer must be stable and consistent—if it’s dependent upon scarce resources, or is endangered regularly, then it’s not yet a stable and consistent answer for the question. A “stable and consistent answer” will be true tomorrow as much as it is today, and is unlikely to change without some massive catastrophe hitting the safe haven. If the answer to the question is constantly at risk of change, or might buckle under the standard pressures of the post-apocalyptic world, then it isn’t “stable and consistent.”

The questions are:

- **Safety:** How do you keep the zombies at bay?
- **Supplies:** What do you do for food and water?
- **Order:** How is the nascent safe haven led?

When you have a stable and consistent answer to each of these questions, as time passes, the enclave becomes a safe haven. However, every safe haven has an internal conflict—a core problem with how its people exist as a nascent society. When your enclave becomes a safe haven, you will also choose its internal conflict.

## EXAMPLE

*We’ve managed to keep our shopping mall enclave running for a while now, and we’ve taken significant strides to improve its stability. We talk it over with the GM, and agree to look at whether or not our mall would become a safe haven when time passes, examining each of the questions to determine if we have a stable answer.*

## How do you keep the zombies at bay?

A safe haven is, by definition, safe—from zombies, anyway, and only as long as the walls or defenses aren't brought down by human strife. The way to think about it is simple—if the humans never undermined themselves, and weather or other unfortunate, uncontrollable circumstances never brought disaster, then the safe haven would be able to remain free of zombies indefinitely.

Maybe the answer is enormous walls of assembled metal, 30 feet tall and 5 feet thick. Maybe the answer is water—the safe haven is actually an island separated from the mainland by a deep bay. Maybe the answer is a militarized population with significant traps and turrets—the enclave's populace is capable of repelling even massive hordes with armed resistance.

Whatever the case, the safe haven's answer should be both sufficient and consistent. If a safe haven depends upon its walls to keep the zombies at bay, then those walls are strong and well-built—the haven's belief in those walls is reasonable and well-founded. A normal enclave might have walls and believe in them...but it probably should also still hand out guns to the populace, just in case. But a safe haven wouldn't need to hand out guns—those walls would be enough. Similarly, a safe haven that depends on its well-trained and armed populace for safety has a real reason to believe in that populace—every individual member is trained in using a gun, and those guns and ammunition are in ample supply, for example. They might care less about their walls.

The answer here is the thing that the population of the safe haven can and does reasonably count on to keep it safe, day in and day out.

### **EXAMPLE:**

*Our mall has always relied upon a few different defenses—locked and barred gates, snipers on the roof, traps and walls for a few entrances that had trouble in the past. We talk it over and conclude that the static defenses are what really keep the mall safe—the traps, the ditches, the walls, the gates, the locks, etc. So we establish this as the answer for how we keep zombies at bay—myriad static defenses.*

## What do you do for food and water?

A safe haven has some way of consistently providing access to food and water for its people. A place where the people don't know where tomorrow's meal is coming from, or can't be reasonably confident of where next week's or next month's meals are coming from, isn't stable enough to be a safe haven.

The specifics aren't important here—what matters is that the answer is sustainable, believable, and consistent. Saying that the island safe haven has a fleet of fishing trawlers along with a few plant-growing beds for food, and then has a renovated desalination plant for water, would work fine. Saying that the walled-off safe haven has livestock, and entire fields sequestered for crops, as well as a set of groundwater wells, would work fine. As long as the answers are:

- **Sustainable**—they provide resources consistently over long stretches of time.
- **Believable**—they don't seem outlandish, risky, or otherwise strange.
- **Consistent**—everyone in the enclave by and large gets their food and water the same fundamental way.

## EXAMPLE:

*Our mall didn't have a good source for food and water when it started, but over time (and with a lot of trouble) our characters set up a greenhouse and water collection systems on the roof. But we don't believe that those systems would really be consistent. Sustainable maybe, and believable yes, but they wouldn't provide enough food or water for everyone. In the ensuing sessions of play, we set out to expand those systems. We create a much larger rain collection system, along with a reservoir. We even break up the asphalt in the parking lot and clear it out, creating a new field to plant crops—while zombies keep attacking us the whole way! Eventually, when all is said and done and our new field is protected by those static defenses, we agree we have an answer to the question of what we do for food and water.*

## How is the safe haven led?

A safe haven has moved past the kind of ad hoc, inconsistent, chaotic leadership that defines a less-established enclave. A place where the leader changes often or easily, where upheaval is common, isn't really a safe haven. The safe haven might have some kind of government in which individual leaders are elected every year, every six months, or even every three months—but the system is reliable and consistent, and there isn't much question about who or what is the authority at any given time.

The leadership of the safe haven doesn't have to be fair, or good, but the haven's people know:

- **Who's in charge**—specifically, they can always name the person or people who are communally agreed upon to be “in charge.”
- **Who to turn to if there is a problem**—if food or drinking water are an issue, then the people of the safe haven know who can help them. If safety is an issue, the people know who can help them. If there's an internal dispute, they know who they can turn to for resolution (even if it's not fair).

## EXAMPLE:

*Our mall has always had trouble saying who its leaders were—not least because most of the characters who said they were our leaders wound up getting themselves killed, sometimes even by the people they “led”! So when we thought about our answer to this question, we realized we didn't have one. Our characters argued, and even had one or two actual fights, before we finally agreed that the mall would be led by a council of elected leaders. We'd elect leaders once a year, with every member of the enclave getting a vote, and we'd have only five on the council. Yet even though our PCs largely agreed with this plan, our NPCs still dissented, so we had to take some time to bring them around or...deal with them. Afterward, the issue was settled, and with that we had the answer to our last question!*

## What is the safe haven's internal conflict?

A safe haven always has an internal conflict at its heart, a central dispute that lives among its people. A place where there is no internal conflict is dangerous in other ways; for example, its people might externalize any conflicts and aim them at other enclaves to unite its population. Such a place is not a safe haven.

This internal conflict is different from the petty conflicts that might exist between any two of the safe haven's inhabitants. This internal conflict is a tension in the very nature of the safe haven, one whose balance defines the safe haven. If the balance tipped too far in either direction, the safe haven wouldn't be safe anymore—it would be one kind of nightmare or another.

People in the safe haven likely do not refer to the internal conflict with such direct terminology, but they can almost always identify in some way:

- What the most important sides of the conflict are.
- Who the leaders on each side of the conflict are.
- How each side of the conflict would reshape the safe haven if they won.

The internal conflict is used to help identify the kinds of conflicts and problems the safe haven can and should encounter. Most importantly, **the GM privately identifies on which side of the internal conflict each NPC falls.** Both sides will be trying to pull the safe haven further towards their own side—so the GM can use an NPC's conflict-side as a kind of drive to portray each NPC.

## EXAMPLE:

*After we had answers to the three questions, time passed, and our enclave became a safe haven. Hooray! But then the GM made us pick the safe haven's internal conflict. We looked at the examples from the list for creating a safe haven from scratch to see if one of them matched our mall. We settled on "meritocratic vs. egalitarian." Our mall was always troubled by some characters being incompetent or more trouble than they were worth, while others were hyper-competent. We figured that those issues would carry over, especially with elected leaders, and raise concerns about whether everyone should get a share of the food no matter what, or if people should only get as much as they earned.*



# CREATING A SAFE HAVEN FROM SCRATCH

If you are creating a safe haven from scratch, choose one set of enclave cards to build on. Create the enclave normally—this was the state of the enclave when it began, before it was a safe haven.

Then, erase the scarcities, choose another two advantages (they can be any advantages from any enclave), deal out four more population cards, and choose two more options for inhabitants to help flesh out the important inhabitants.

Finally, use the options below to select the characteristics of the safe haven.

## **Safety (choose 1)**

- Nigh-impregnable walls
- Copious static defenses
- Automatic defenses
- Inaccessible location
- Expert soldiery

## **Food & Water (choose 1)**

- A secure and protected makeshift food-growing/water-collection area
- Access to pre-Z-Day resources and facilities
- Vehicles and equipment to consistently secure resources from surrounding areas
- A giant hoard of survival supplies
- An array of other options and redundancies

## **Leadership (choose 1)**

- A single, accepted, supported autocrat
- A council of elected leaders
- A council of self-appointed leaders
- A ruling family
- A ruling trade

## **Internal Conflict (choose 1)**

- Xenophobic vs. welcoming
- Authoritarian vs. democratic
- Faithful vs. iconoclastic
- Militaristic vs. peaceful
- Meritocratic vs. egalitarian

# TRAITS OF A SAFE HAVEN

Here, you'll find information on a safe haven's advantages and enclave moves (both ported over from the enclave), stress, and shortages instead of scarcities.

## ADVANTAGES

Advantages are additional benefits not required for the functioning of the safe haven. A haven might have a helipad, but that helipad is only an advantage when the haven's safety, food and water, or leadership doesn't depend upon it.

As such, keep an eye on what advantages the safe haven has, and whether or not they're truly advantages. If your haven depends upon a heavily militarized guard to keep it safe, then having Gates might be a real advantage—it's something additional to the main way you keep the place safe. If your haven depends upon a large well, however, maybe the Water Source advantage doesn't really make sense—at least, not until you have an extra water source.

A safe haven retains any advantages from when it was an enclave, unless those advantages are integral to the safe haven's existence—in that case, the safe haven loses the special move that represents an extra capability, but the feature remains real in the fiction. If you are creating a safe haven from scratch, then the GM and players work together to select three appropriate advantages.

## ENCLAVE MOVES

If you are turning an enclave into a safe haven, you retain the core special moves for the safe haven's underlying enclave. For example, if your haven is based in a mall, it would still have the mall enclave's Plenty of Plenty and Beacon of Capitalism moves. It may mean some of the options make less sense than others—for example, in the farm's move Fertile Fields, the haven won't have a food scarcity to clear, so you should always choose to hold 3.

If you are building a safe haven from scratch, then you should still select the underlying enclave the safe haven originated from, and give it the appropriate enclave moves.

# HAVEN STRESS

The safety of a safe haven helps all characters better weather the horrors of the world post-Z-Day. But that safety isn't ironclad, and when put under too much pressure, the safe haven can snap—along with all the people in it.

A safe haven comes with 10 boxes of stress. These represent the overall zone's tolerance for tension, conflict, and danger. Enclaves are always living on a razor's edge, so all stress is inflicted directly on the people who live in them—but in a safe haven, the overall society can help relieve that pressure for a time.

Whenever any resident of the safe haven (PC or NPC) would mark stress, they can instead choose to mark the same amount of stress on the safe haven's stress boxes. For PCs, if they do so, then all other move results or effects treat the situation as if the PC had marked stress on their own stress track. For NPCs, by marking stress on the safe haven's track they do not endure pressure and act wildly—instead, they will remain (generally) calmer and more collected.

When time passes and the GM draws a Fate card, clear 5 boxes of haven stress. The GM marks stress on the haven's stress track whenever:

- A new shortage arises.
- The haven experiences a significant internal conflict, involving either open conflict between haven leaders; conflict between about half of the haven's population; or open, violent, and potentially lethal conflict.
- An external threat attacks the safe haven.

If the safe haven's stress track is ever full, then, at the GM's discretion, it spills out. When it spills out, its internal conflict comes to a moment of crisis at the same time that the haven's inhabitants feel the danger—every PC in the safe haven must mark two stress immediately, and every NPC must mark one. When and if the crisis around the haven's internal conflict is resolved, the haven's stress track clears entirely, but it loses one box of stress permanently.

A safe haven can regain a permanent box of its stress track when:

- Time passes and the GM draws a Fate card without the stress track ever having been full since the last Fate card.
- The safe haven secures a new advantage.
- The safe haven integrates another enclave into its fold.

# SHORTAGES

Safe havens do not have scarcities—they have shortages. A scarcity is something enclaves suffer from, indicating an absence of a resource that threatens the whole enclave. A shortage is something safe havens routinely endure, indicating a dearth of a useful resource without the immediate threat and pressure to the haven's continued existence. Should a haven's shortage become dangerously acute—become a scarcity—then the safe haven would no longer be safe, and it would become an enclave again, defined by a constant struggle with its own scarcities.

But a shortage can only become a scarcity after being left alone for a long time, or because of catastrophic damage or loss in the safe haven.

If a shortage isn't resolved before time passes and the GM draws a new Fate card, then it becomes urgent—its effects begin to grate on the whole haven. While a shortage continues to be urgent, every character starts each session with at least one stress marked.

If an urgent shortage still remains unresolved by the time the GM draws another Fate card, then it becomes a scarcity, and the safe haven becomes an enclave again.

If circumstances come to threaten the safe haven's resources—say, a rebellion purposefully setting a fire in the haven's crops, or careless use of explosives weakens the haven's walls—then the GM follows the fiction with regard to shortages, taking whatever move is appropriate, from identifying a shortage, to making a shortage “urgent,” to making an urgent shortage a scarcity and ending the safe haven.

While the safe haven remains a safe haven, reinterpret all references to scarcities as being about shortages. For example, a Fate card that says “A scarcity becomes acute” would mean either a new shortage comes into existence, an existing shortage becomes urgent, or an urgent shortage becomes a scarcity.

# GMING FOR SAFE HAVEN

If you are the GM, the safe haven changes some of the parameters for the kinds of decisions and moves you'd make during the game.

First and foremost, when you're being true to the world in a normal game of **ZOMBIE WORLD**, the enclave should be constantly under threat from scarcities, internal tensions, and external threats. With a safe haven, however, you will instead focus on only the internal tensions and the external threats, the latter of which only matter when they are especially significant. A safe haven has no scarcities—it may have additional materials and supplies that its people and leaders want to acquire, but it doesn't have anything that it desperately needs to survive. If it did have such scarcities, it wouldn't be a safe haven!

As a result, you can no longer lean on scarcities to create tension. In standard **ZOMBIE WORLD**, on a PC's miss, you might say that an accidental explosion causes a water shortage, spurring all manner of new difficulties. For a safe haven, however, don't emphasize the water shortage; the safe haven has enough stored supplies to survive, has the means to repair the damage, and ultimately won't be threatened quite so easily. Instead, as the GM, make moves that emphasize internal conflicts—after all, if a random explosion blows up a water tower, then there's probably someone to blame!

Significant external threats are also an appropriate source of tension, but make sure they're really significant. An enclave might be threatened by a crowd of zombies outside the wall. A safe haven would require a horde the size of which has never been seen before to really be an appropriate threat to its stability. Similarly, another enclave, unstable and barely surviving, is unlikely to be a real threat to a safe haven. But another safe haven itself? Or an enclave that has successfully united its people based on waging war against other humans? Those might pose a real danger to the safe haven.

## FATE CARDS

If and when you use Fate cards when time passes, be ready to reinterpret cards that mention scarcities in a way that emphasizes internal conflicts or major external threats, or make sure to remove those cards. The other cards will still function, although your emphasis should always be on building up to an explosion of the internal conflict of the haven, or to significant external threats.

## DEFENDING THE POPULATION

A safe haven is never perfectly safe, and people will still die, especially if they range outside. But as a GM, you shouldn't be quite so brutal in the choices you make concerning if and when characters die. In a safe haven, truly nightmarish violent conflicts are less likely to crop up—especially thanks to the safe haven's stress track—but when they do, they will be even worse than what a normal enclave might expect. Instead of constantly bringing death to the PCs' doors, pace it so that if things turn bad—if that stress track fills—they turn hellish.

## HONOR THE SAFETY

Building an enclave into a safe haven is a real accomplishment for the characters of the game, and likely for the players too. Honor that accomplishment. A safe haven isn't just another enclave, ready to go down in flames at a moment's notice. It must feel safer than a normal game of **ZOMBIE WORLD...** with the caveat that the internal tensions are still present, albeit mostly restrained from outright violence. Don't destroy the safe haven idly. Never should a single PC's miss lead to the destruction of the haven's safety.

Part of honoring the safety of the safe haven is realizing how the overall campaign of **ZOMBIE WORLD** might come to a close. If you're playing with a safe haven, then the end point of the larger game shifts out appropriately—likely to either the final collapse of the safe haven as its internal conflict overwhelms its safety, or to its transition into a place that spans multiple enclaves or safe havens in its control and jurisdiction. If the safe haven becomes the head of a nascent nation...that's a good sign that your game is ready to come to an end.

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