

Armada 1 Obscure Game Mechanics

There are some peculiarities of *Star Trek: Armada*, that are not covered by any manual, but are in fact quite reproducible, so they actually are part of the game mechanics (even when most of them certainly were an unintended effect).

Invisible Shroud

When turning off shroud and [fog of war](#), you basically see the entire map. But that does *not* mean, you can place special weapons targets, such as [Transwarp Gates](#), [Transwarp Drive](#) destinations or [Temporal Stasis Fields](#) everywhere by default. In fact the whole map is still covered in shroud, but the shroud was simply turned fully invisible. So you need to scout a place first (or get a visual using [Shrike's Romulan Spy](#) or capturing an opponent's facility). Once you »uncovered« a section of the map, you can use whatever special ability can reach that far. Similar considerations got for building a [station](#). Unscouted parts of the map will be marked as none-buildable, although a specific location may very well allow for construction of stations.

Cloaked But not Invisible

When turning off the fog of war, cloaked ships will still appear visible for an opponent, once inside the already visible map space of him. You will still need to use a [detector](#) to uncover the »invisible« unit, in order to be able to target it. You will however, not need to uncover it in order to beam in...

Discovering Cloaked Ships without a Tachyon Detection Grid

There are several ways to discover cloaked ships without actually having a [detector unit or building](#) uncovering it.

- Some special weapons, like the [Griffin's Sensor Jammer](#), directly affect (if limited in numbers, randomly selected) opposing units, even when cloaked. This in turn usually makes the unit uncloak.
- When using the build command and trying to traverse the screen with the mouse, you might find spots that you can normally build on the map, but for some reason, you cannot at the moment. Send a [detector](#) there, or a unit, that can attack cloaked units, to uncover it. Similarly when building facilities, you are not allowed to build on top of positioned ships. This also goes for opposing cloaked ships... Do not confuse this with the case of section [Placing Buildings Near Nebulae Impossible](#). Also it is known to happen quite frequently, that the [construction ship](#) itself is blocking its own build spot. So when moving it a bit away, you might find that you can indeed build on a position, that the game announced to be blocked from building on.
- When moving your own ships and finding they seem to avoid a specific spot (similarly as when you send them very closely to one of your stations, so they go around it), it is also very likely, that there is a cloaked unit waiting.

Placing Buildings Really Tightly

By default every building and all map items are surrounded by a non-build area, depicted when trying to place a new building site as a yellowish grid. You cannot build a new building inside such an area, not even partially overlapping it. But once you place a [Transwarp Gate](#) destination on such an area, the blocking disappears, once the destination end of the gate is removed (end of special energy or deactivating the Transwarp Gate manually). So you are able to build facilities a lot close together than normally, once this blockade is gone. The lower limit is placing buildings *directly* adjacent. They cannot overlap, but they can be placed right next to each other. Each newly build building will again exhibit the build blocking, normally applied by creating a new building. So you might need to use the Transwarp Gate multiple times, to place more than two stations right next to one another.

Placing Buildings Near Nebulae Impossible

Although there is a depiction of allowed and forbidden areas for building new facilities (yellow grid) this is not entirely accurate. Building inside or close to nebulae is still not possible, even when using the trick from the previous section. As a matter of fact, even the starting grid limitations are not covering the whole range of no-build-areas around nebulae. There is no other way than moving around with your mouse, in order to find the nearest spot to be build next to a nebula.

Raising Shields Will not Stop the Beam-in

By default, your ships cannot beam in crew into opposing ships, that have their shields raised. That's normal behavior. But once you started beaming in, the beaming will only stop, when you run out of crew, the destination ship is full, the source ship gets destroyed or leaves beaming range or you stopped it manually. This also goes for the case, if the opposing ship regains shield generators. The shields may be raised, but the beaming continues.

Firing Stops when Someone Beams in

If your ships are around an opposing ship, engaged in firing at it and one of your ships manages to beam crew over, all your ships and stations stop firing at that ship, until you explicitly tell one of them to do so. Once you attack with one ship or station, *all* ships in firing range and on read alert will continue firing. A similar behavior is seen when using the Borg's [Holding Beam](#).

The AI Cheats

The AI is actually not that smart, no matter the difficulty. The difficulty level changes the likelihood of using special weapons and cloak as well as the size of fleets. But in general, it is not really adaptive. It makes up for that lack of skill by simply cheating a lot:

- When playing against a medium or hard AI, you can notice that the build time and resources are considerably lower. For the hard AI it's only 40%, for the medium AI 80% of the normal cost of time and materials.
- All AIs cheat in the way that they disregard the tech tree altogether. That's advantageous and disadvantageous at the same time. While it allows the AI to build [mining freighters](#) before even having a [mining station](#), it also makes it waste resources on not required buildings, such as research stations and special weapon research, when playing with *Free Tech* techtree.

- Also the AI *always* knows where your ships are, even when they are cloaked (similar how using no fog of war and no shroud works for humans). So when placing a sensor station remotely, where the AI cannot have seen it, it will still head straight for that spot and attack it.

What the AI will *not* do however, is cheating itself more resources. So it is possible to starve the AI out. As the AI never deconstructs ships or stations, it has no way of recovering, once it has no freighters and less than 160 Dilithium left (to build a new freighter).

Cloaking Uses Energy

Although not explicitly mentioned, when cloaking ships, an amount of 100 special weapon energy is used up at the moment of cloaking. Very often that does not really make a (big) difference, but for some units (e.g. the [Raptor class](#) of the Romulan faction) this means after decloaking they will not be able to use their [special weapon](#) right away, as the energy is too low.

Phoenix Bug

The [Rift Creator](#) of the [Phoenix](#) has a control key definition bug. By default, all normal [cloaks](#) are used with the F5 key. This also goes for the Phoenix, which actually has a cloak. But as its special weapons F-key slot is also activated by F5, the cloak is not usable for human players. It is neither visible as a button nor can it be used with the F-key. Instead, the [super weapon](#) is triggered. The AI on the other hand can use both functions independently, which leaves the AI with the advantage of being able to send the Phoenix into battle cloaked.

Beaming in Uncovers Parts of the Map

Although not stated explicitly, when taking over an opponent's facility by beaming in (or using a special weapon that does the same), there is a very high chance, that for a short period of time the opponents facilities and units are uncovered on the entire map. It's similar to the [Shrike's Romulan Spy](#), but will last a lot shorter.

Corbomite Reflector Works Only Partially

Not all weapons are affected by the Corbomite Reflector. See [Corbomite Reflector](#) for more details.

Torpedoes and Pulse Weapons Can Miss

While Phasers and Pulse Turret Cannons will never miss (unless the ship traverses through a [Wormhole](#) after the weapon fired), torpedoes can and will miss to a certain fraction. This is why the effective damage rate of them is actually lower than what the theoretical damage value states. Torpedoes are however, in general still dealing more effective damage than any other conventional weapon. In fact, one torpedo station will deal more damage per time than an entire starbase. Similarly the pulse weapons of [destroyers](#) and [scouts](#) have a chance of missing their targets, reducing their nominal damage rate as well.

Units Vanish From Control Groups

When grouping your ships into control groups (CTRL + *digit-key*), selecting them is supposed to make you get in control of the ships designated to be part of that group. However, once under the effect of the [Holo-Emitter](#) or [Temporal Stasis Field](#) or the [Computer Override](#), units will no longer be marked when using that digit key. This will return to normal, once the effect of the special weapon wears off.

Cloaked Phoenix

The AI can cloak [Phoenix class ships](#), but human players cannot. See section [Phoenix Bug](#) on the matter.

Klingons Will Fire Faster When Low on Crew

Something that's not mentioned in the manual is the tendency of the [Klingon faction](#), to actually *increase* their firing rate, when *really* low on crew (red state) by 33%. All other factions will decrease their weapons firing rate once dropping below a certain number of crew.

Controls

Armada itself has quite an efficient control if you know how to use it. Almost everything in the game is accessible via shortcuts. All special weapons can be triggered via the F keys. Units can be combined with CTRL + <number key> to control groups of up to 8 units and then directly selected as a squad by pressing the corresponding number keys. Saves a lot of time, especially since you often lose track of single units in the heat of the battle, because all ships of the same class are (optically) indistinguishable. This also gives you an option to quickly unmark whatever unit or building you are currently using. Just use a group number not assigned any units. Group 0 seems to be an appropriate one. Buildings can also be assigned a control group number (but only one building at a time can be selected, so only one building per group is possible).

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