LONE WOLVES IN THE ZONE
Rules for Solo and Co-op missions in *Zona Alfa*

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The Exclusion Zone: a landscape marred by extreme weather, intense radiation, mutated wildlife, bizarre creatures, and strange micro-distortions in the flow of space and time. It's a place of ghost towns and hideouts, Cold War bunkers and secret labs; a region where the laws of man and nature are bent and broken.

The most heavily quarantined area on the planet, the Zone is home to scavengers and treasure-hunters, criminals and rogue scientists, mercenaries and fugitives. It's the last stop for the mad and the last chance for the desperate.

Mysterious, dangerous, and infinitely alluring, the Zone is a tough place to get to and certainly a bad place to go it alone.

Yet here you are.

Whether you're a determined loner or working with a small crew of trusted comrades, know that very few have succeeded in working the Zone on their own.

However, those that did gained far more than temporal wealth; they became legends, men and women whose names were spoken in hushed tones – a rare breed of individuals who have looked directly at the Zone's terrible beauty and didn't flinch.

Two Challenges, Two Options

Lone Wolves in the Zone offers guidelines for *Zone Alfa* players to control lone characters or work together as a small crew to reap the rewards of salvage and survival in the Exclusion Zone.

The first challenge is to adhere to the core rules and maintain streamlined game play that doesn't bog down the mission or the story behind it.

The second is common to all solo and co-op rule sets: to create parameters and incentive for players to game intelligently, relentlessly, and aggressively against their own crew of carefully maintained and equipped characters.

Regardless of any A.I. rules or game mechanics, the burden and responsibility in this will always rest primarily on the players themselves.

Option One

The first obvious option is simply to tweak the existing rules. Here are seven suggestions:

1. Limit the Mission area to 3'x 3' max – a small space forces the crew to interact with the environment, Hot Spots, and Hostiles.
2. Recommended Crew of 1–4 members of Veteran Quality – Hardened and Green crew members generally lack the skills to survive in such a precarious situation.
3. Increase the number of Hot Spots to **Threat Level x2 + 1** – One additional Hot Spot in the small mission areas ratchets the tension by increasing both the potential number of enemies and the possibility of valuable salvage. *For example, at Threat Level 2, Hot Spots would increase to 5.*
4. Start the Mission with one Hot Spot triggered, its Zone Hostiles deployed on the board – pick one that works with your scenario and place them on the table per the deployment rules. They provide an immediate threat that must be countered or avoided.

5. Split your Mission Objective – this may or may not work with your play style or scenario, but consider making the main objective two steps. For example, your Loner or crew has to retrieve a can of gasoline before it can start a generator. Or they need to locate a Key Card in order to unlock a door. Or they have to escort a scientist through the mission area, but not before they take readings at a specific location.
6. Increase the Salvage Values – up the Risk, up the Reward. Add 25% to the salvage value and a second roll on any Equipment Table, if applicable.
7. Bump the Turn Limit by One – particularly in the Deep Zone, that one extra turn gives your crew a fighting chance to accomplish the mission should things go sideways, which, in the Exclusion Zone, is nearly all the time.

These adjustments don't change the essential order of the existing rules and tend to a more careful, methodical game.

Option Two

The following Solo/Co-op ideas come courtesy of Søren over at [Bloodbeard's Garage](#). (An excellent place for painted figs, reviews, Battle Reports, terrain tutorials, and assorted hobby coolness.)

Not content with the already dangerous possibilities, Søren decided to take it up a notch by changing the behavior of the Zone Hostiles in three ways:

1. Take off the leash – Zone Hostiles are no longer bound to 12" limit from their particular Hot Spot. They will attack and pursue you wherever you go.
2. Attack on sight – Zone Hostiles will attack player models as soon as they get Line-of-Sight. Add that to the above and you have much more serious adversaries, even in Threat Level 1 areas.
3. Introduce a little anarchy – during the activation sequence, Zone Hostiles can interrupt the player's turn. After the first player model has taken its actions, roll a d10. On a 10, all spawned creatures/enemies will take their turn. After the second player model, if nothing happened earlier, all enemies will act on a 9+. After the third, it drops to 8+, and so on, decreasing until all player models have gone. Once the crew has finished activating, all remaining un-activated Hostiles act as normal.

This makes for a more involved game that modifies the activation sequence, but the increased threat from actively roaming Hostiles leads to more unpredictable, dangerous missions.

There you have two quick options for Solo and Co-op missions into the Exclusion Zone. Feel free to use one or the other, mix and match elements from both, or make up your own variations. It's your Zone, your game.

Thanks for your time. As always, good hunting Stalkers!