

## NEED TO KNOW

RELEASE  
SummerDEVELOPER  
Cold Iron StudiosPUBLISHER  
In-houseLINK  
aliensfireteam.com

## ALIENS: FIRETEAM

It's *Left 4 Dead* but with xenomorphs, basically

**I**n this new co-op survival shooter you create your own Colonial Marine, team up with three friends online (or bots), and battle xenomorphs, rogue androids, and other Alien-themed enemies across four campaigns. Set 23 years after the movies, you've been sent to protect colonies from xenomorph attacks, which have become a regular occurrence.

Developer Cold Iron makes it clear that the inspiration here is *Aliens*, not *Alien*. And I can't help but think, "Haven't we done this already?". So many shooters have riffed on James Cameron's 1986 sequel that it's become a cliché. And after *Alien: Isolation*, *Fireteam* feels like a step backwards.

From how the developer describes *Fireteam's* campaigns, *Left 4 Dead* seems to be a big inspiration. There are 11 species of xenomorph, each with different abilities and behaviors. Zinkievich talks about "an algorithm running behind the scenes" changing things on the fly as you play, which recalls *Left 4 Dead's* AI director. And the story-driven campaigns are being designed to be dynamic and unpredictable, encouraging repeat plays.

Zinkievich says a lot of work has gone into the xenomorphs' AI and how they move, describing the game as a "3D shooter experience". This means the xenos will be, in theory, extremely mobile, able to crawl along ceilings, scale walls, and skulk through air vents.

In a hands-off demo I see a four-player squad fend off waves of xenomorphs, and

FIRST  
LOOK

they really do seem relentless, crawling from every corner of the screen. Players are frequently downed by the creatures, forcing allies to rush in and revive them, which again is very *Left 4 Dead*. Zinkievich also says that the xenos' acid blood will be a major concern on higher difficulties.

In action, *Fireteam* looks fine. The third-person combat reminds me a lot of *The Division*, with deployable gadgets such as portable turrets to help you in battle. But overall, I was a little underwhelmed. It looks like a perfectly serviceable shooter, but lacks a certain spark. It didn't excite me.

## GAME OVER, MAN

As I watch one squad member insta-kill a dozen drones in a row with a shotgun, bad memories of Gearbox's dismal *Colonial Marines* come drifting back. This could be a better game, but I guess I've just been spoiled by *Isolation*. In that game, Creative Assembly made the xenomorph, finally, feel like more than just cannon fodder.

Between missions you'll hang out on a warship, the Endeavor, where you can talk to characters and find lore items. While there will be some connections to the movies other Alien media, Zinkievich stresses that this is an original story. He says it's "not a tourism game", which honestly strikes me as a missed opportunity. I'd love to blast my way through the Nostromo, Hadley's Hope, and Fury 161.

*Fireteam* will have an RPG-style progression system. Your marine will level up, getting access to better gear, cosmetic items, and weapons that can be customized. You'll also be able to apply modifiers called Challenge Cards to each run through a campaign to mix things up, and switch between classes mid-game. Cold Iron didn't go into much depth about the classes, but their names—gunner, demolisher, technician, doc, and recon—are pretty self explanatory.

*Fireteam* has potential, but the concept hasn't blown me away. There's so much that could be done with the Alien IP, and a co-op shooter based on *Aliens* feels like the lowest hanging fruit. *Aliens* is well-trodden ground for videogames, so it remains to be seen whether Cold Iron can make its own mark on the franchise.

Andy Kelly

If all else fails, whip out the flamethrower.



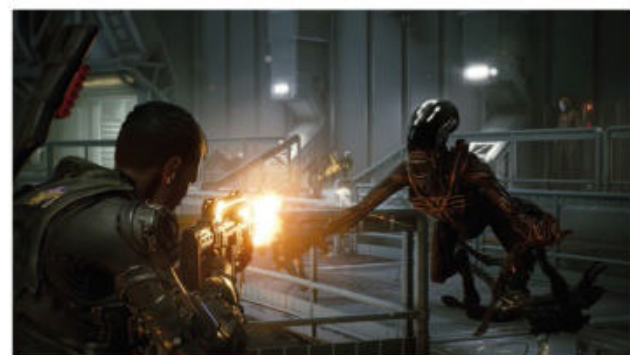
Never seen these glowing head xenos before.

THE STORY-DRIVEN CAMPAIGNS ARE BEING DESIGNED TO BE DYNAMIC AND UNPREDICTABLE





It wouldn't be an Alien game without a gross hive.



More hot (literally) flamethrower action.