

Offworld Station Booster Pack

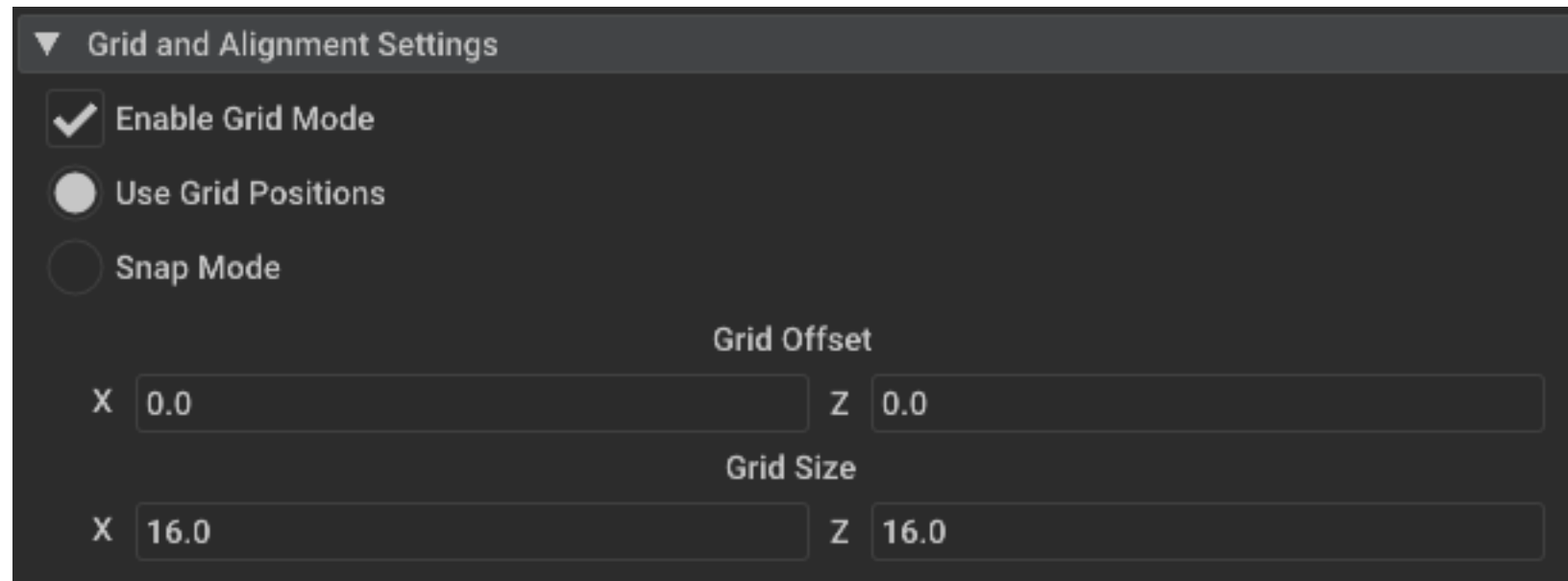
GameGuru
MAX



Using Offworld Station Booster Pack Objects in MAX:

Now that you have the ***Offworld Station Booster Pack*** installed, you'll probably want to get right to using it! If you're familiar with MAX, then you know that you can just open MAX's *Object Library*, locate the objects you're looking for, and drag-n-drop them right into your scene. However, before you do that with the ***Offworld Station Booster Pack***, here are a few instructions that should make your life easier.

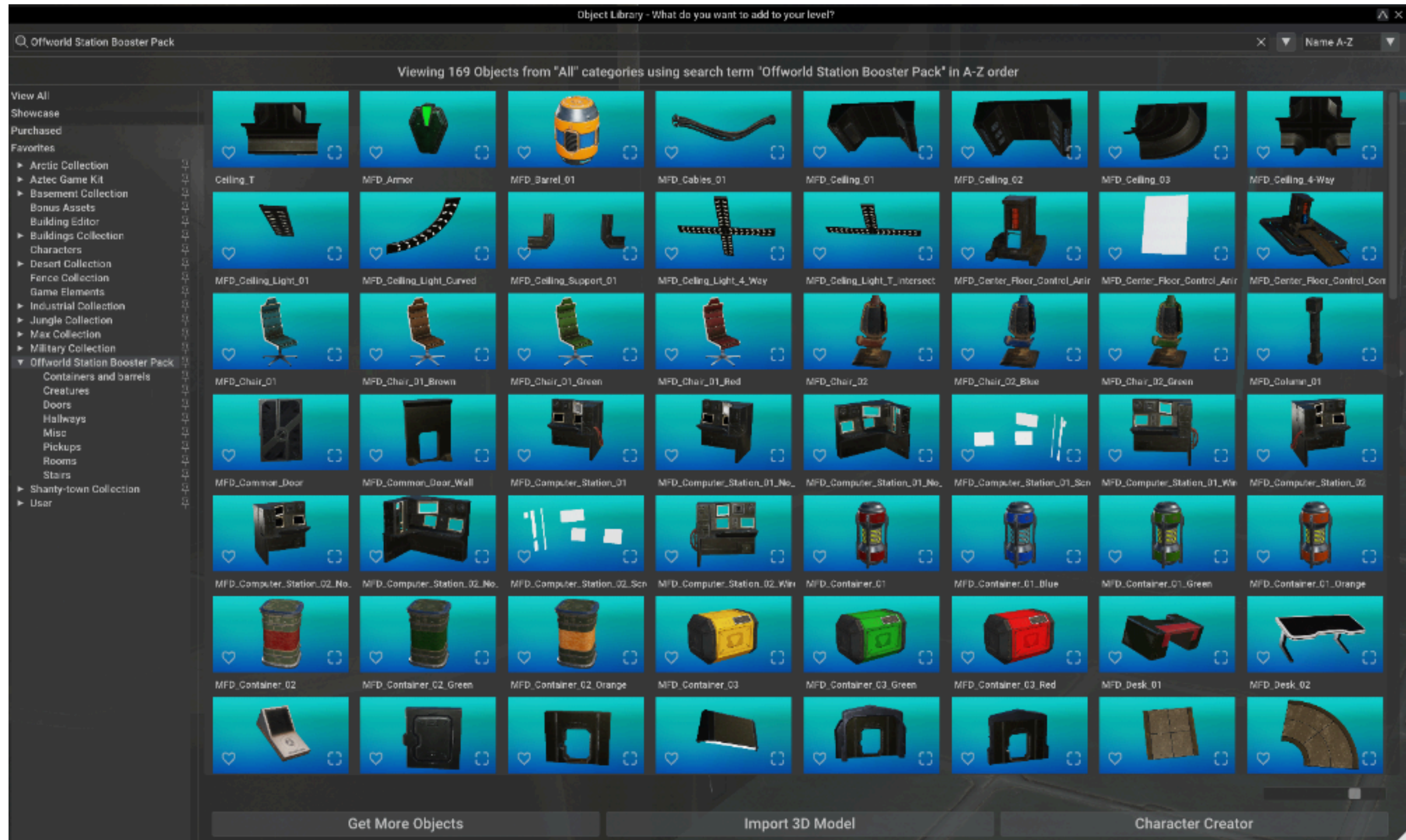
The ***Offworld Station Booster Pack*** is made up of modular pieces that were designed to work together. They allow you to piece them together in order to create something much larger. Because of this, each piece was designed according to a grid. Therefore, in order to more easily use the objects included in the ***Offworld Station Booster Pack***, it is recommended that you first set up your grid in MAX. The grid can be found on the right-side under *Grid and Alignment Settings*:



I recommend you use the grid settings you see in the image above. They will allow you to snap together floor pieces, hall segments, and other objects in the pack with very little effort. Almost all the pieces in this set will easily snap together with an X and Z setting of 16 (most even with a setting of 32!). If you find an exception, then dial down snapping on the X and Z to 8. Using these grid settings should help you to easily snap individual pieces together to create your ***Off-World Station*** levels.

The ***Offworld Station Booster Pack*** is meant to primarily be used for interior spaces. Therefore, I recommend that you create an *Empty* level to begin with. After all, this is a station that is off-world and we didn't include any spacesuits ... this time.

The Off-World Station Booster Kit Structure:



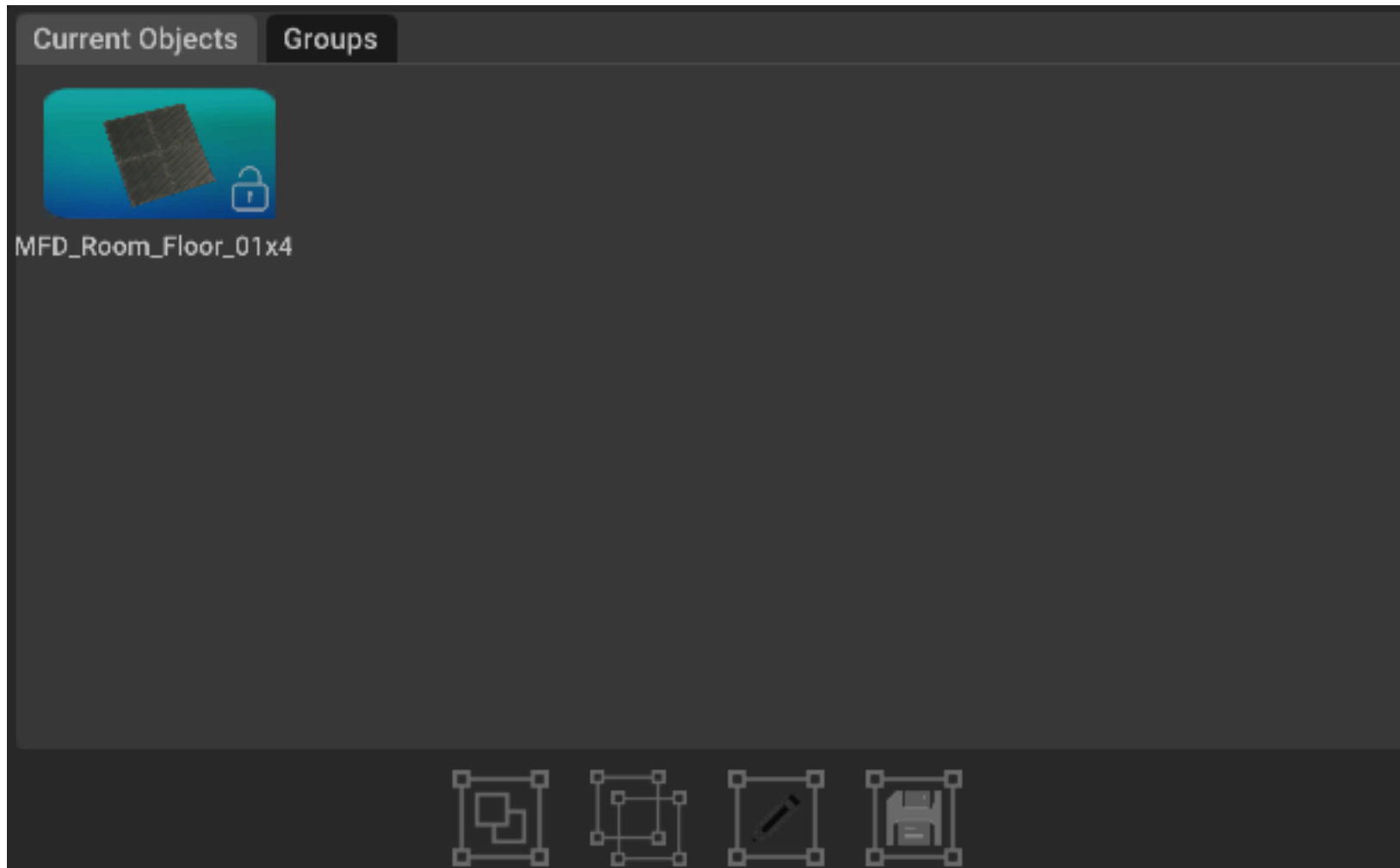
The **Offworld Station Booster Pack** has a lot of objects - more than 150! To help you easily locate what you're looking for, the pack's objects are placed in individual folders. Pickups, such as health, can be found in the Pickups folder, hallway parts and pieces can be found in the Hallway folder. Of course, you can simply click on the **Offworld Station Booster Pack** folder to access all of the objects in the pack at once.

Tips on Using the Offworld Station Booster Pack:

As said above, the objects in the ***Offworld Station Booster Pack*** are created using a grid system to make it easy to snap objects, like hallway segments, together, allowing you to quickly and easily create your game levels. As long as you use the recommended grid settings, things should snap together quite nicely. However, there are a few other tricks that can help make your experience putting together your level in MAX even smoother.

Placing Duplicate Objects:

Method One: There may be times when you'll want to use several of the same piece, snapping them together, one after the other. There are a few good ways to do this in MAX that are pretty fast. One is to select the current object you've already placed in your level and then drag a copy out from the *Current Object* area:



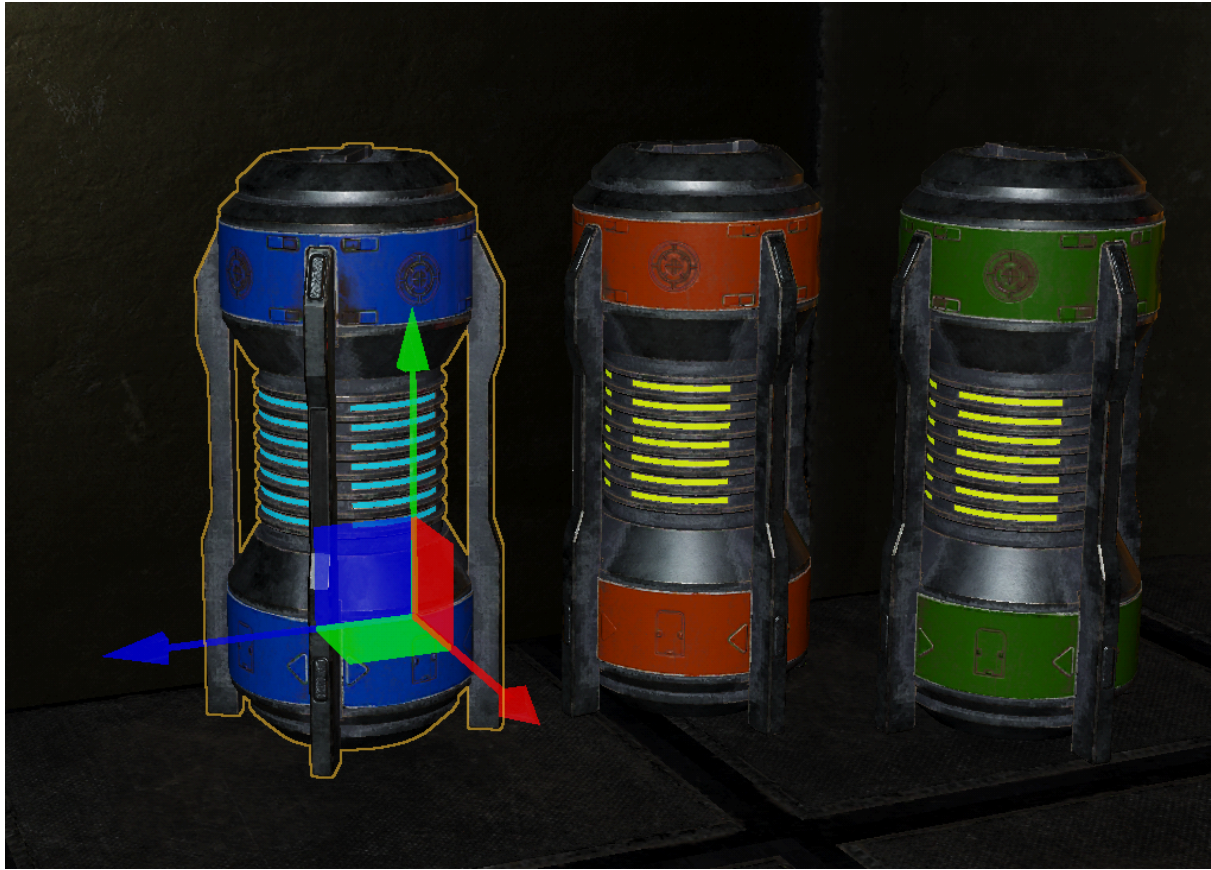
Not only will this allow you to drag in a duplicate to place, but it will keep the same orientation as the selected object in your level. For example, lets say you had placed a hall segment and rotated it 90 degrees. With that hall segment selected, if you then go to the *Current Objects* area and drag in a copy from there, not only will you get a duplicate of the object you had selected, but it will come into the level rotated to the same 90 degree angle. I often will populate a level by selecting an object already placed that's facing in the direction I want and then dragging the duplicate from the *Current Objects* area. It's fast and ensures I get the piece I want facing in the direction I want.

Method Two: MAX has a very cool feature that allows you to easily stack objects on top of one another. It's a great feature, but sometimes it can get in the way. When you drag an object in using the *Current Objects* panel, you may find that your object has jumped up a bit due to having moved over another object. For example, the floor tiles are made to be placed directly on the ground, so they should all come in at zero. But each floor piece is 2 in height. That means if I drag one floor piece over another, it can jump up from 0 to 2, causing the newly placed floor piece to not be aligned with the others. This is easy enough to fix. You can simply go to the *Positioning, Rotating, and Scaling* panel at the top-right and set the Y position back to zero. But there's another way to make a duplicate you can place precisely without it jumping around.

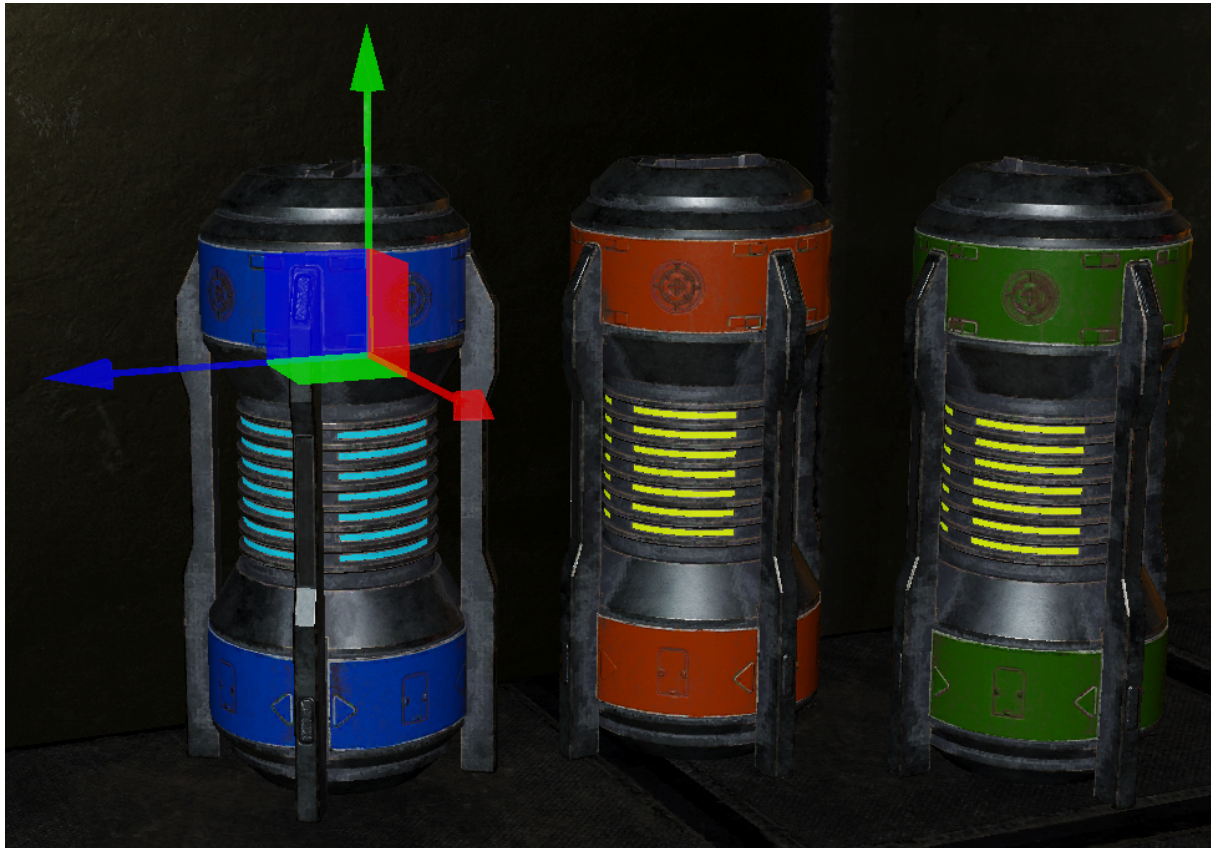
Instead of selecting your object and dragging in a duplicate from the *Current Objects* panel, hold down **SHIFT** and click on the object already in the scene once. This will create a duplicate in place. You have to be careful because the duplicate and the original will perfectly overlap each other when you do this. After you've **SHIFT+Clicked** the object, release **SHIFT** and click the object a second time. The movement gizmo should appear. Then you can use any of the axis handles on the gizmo to drag the new duplicate into place. Because you are using the gizmo handles, the object will not jump up in an attempt to be placed on top of other objects.

Because duplicates made this way can be difficult to detect due to being perfectly overlapped, there is a little trick that can help you out.

When you select any object in MAX, it has a yellow outline indicating it is selected:



When you use **SHIFT+Click** to create a duplicate, then click on the object again to select it, the gizmo appears, but the yellow outline is absent:

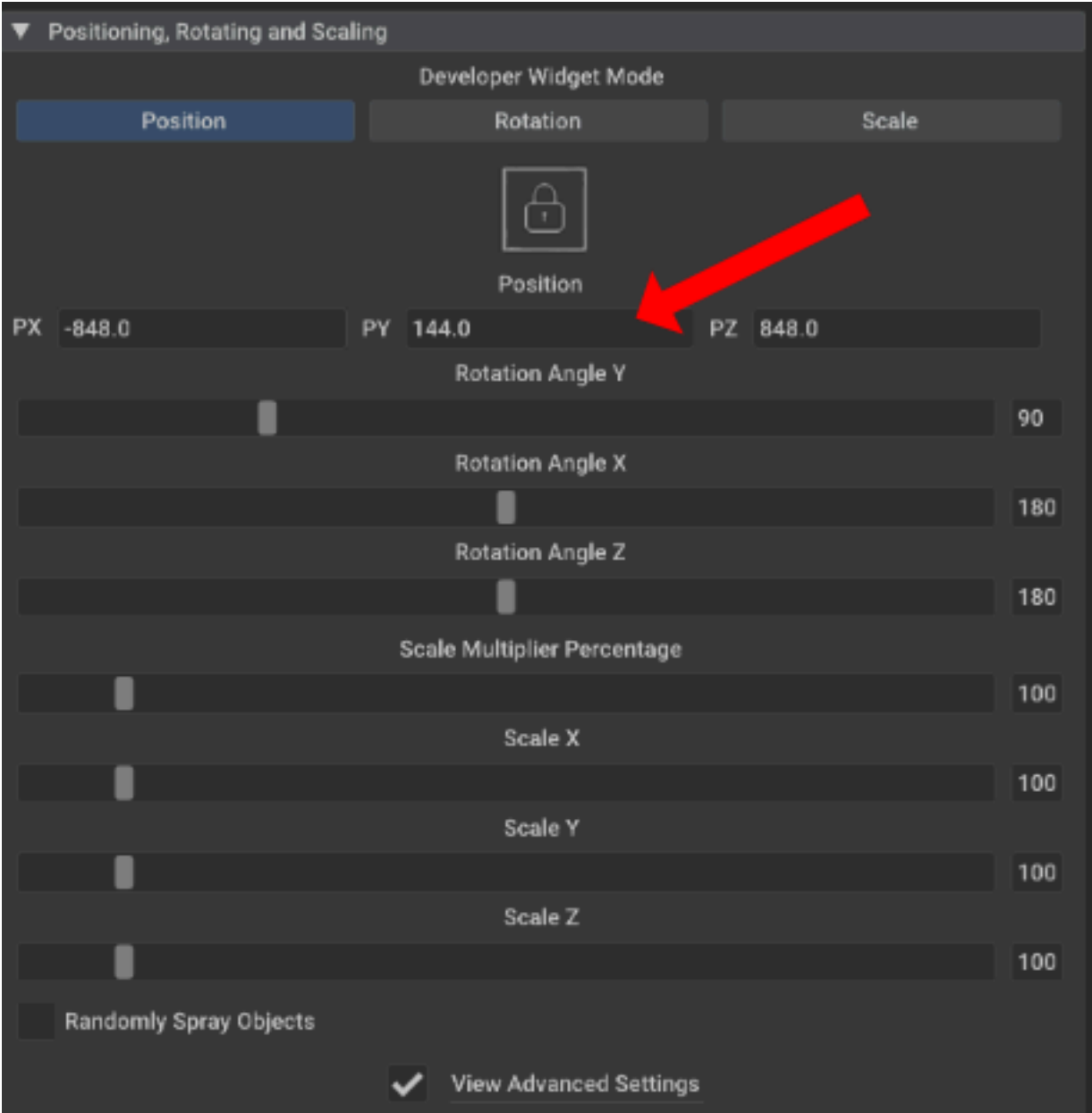


This is one sure way to know that you have two objects perfectly overlapping each other. If you select it and you get the yellow outline, it's just the one object. If the yellow outline does not appear after selecting, it indicates there's a duplicate there. You can then use the gizmo to move it where you'd like.

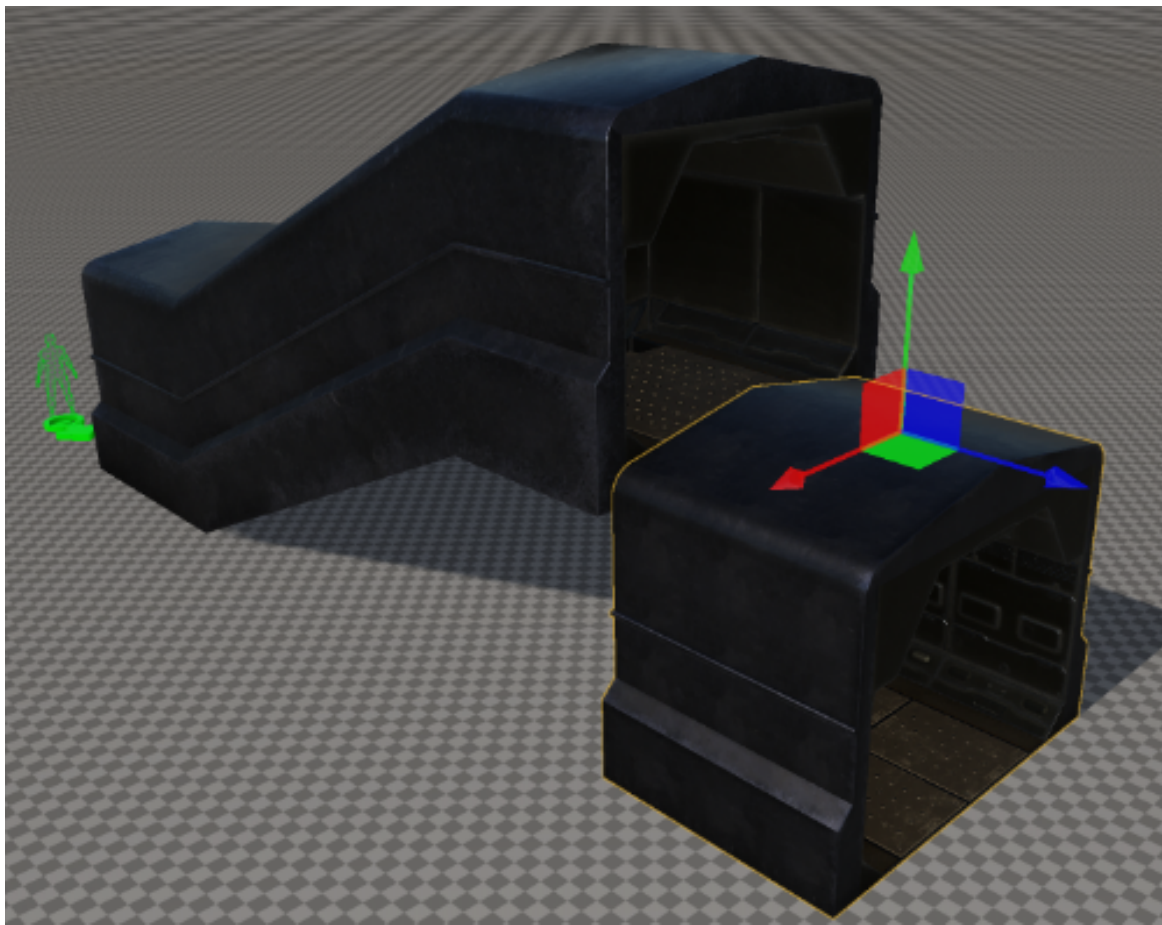
Method Three: There's one last way that I like to work with MAX when it comes to placing objects and ensuring they don't jump up on top of other pieces. I will often use the above method of dragging out a copy from the *Current Objects* panel, but will drag the object to a blank area where no other pieces are placed and release it. Then I will click it again to select it, bringing the gizmo into play. When dragging the object with the gizmo, it will obey your snapping setup, but will not attempt to jump up or down in an attempt to align to other objects.

Aligning Objects Along the Up or Y Axis:

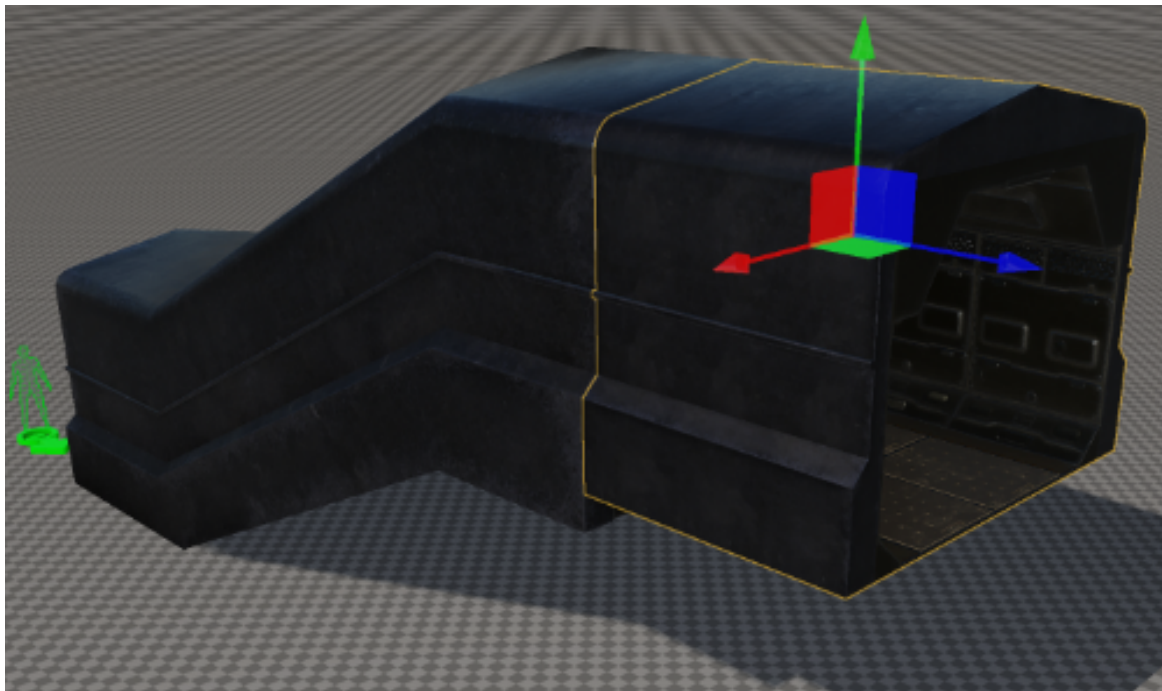
The **Offworld Station Booster Pack** has stairs so you can create higher areas in your levels. Currently, MAX does not offer snapping in the Up or Y direction, so precisely placing pieces at the top of stairs can seem tricky at first. If you try to use MAX's snapping features to carefully position a floor piece at the edge of the upper stairway, you may find it sliding up along the walls instead of perfectly snapping in place. The best solution I've found is to use the *Positioning, Rotating, and Scaling* panel to the right, and precisely entering the height you need:



The proper height for objects placed at the top of stairs is **144**. This will precisely align a floor piece, for example, to the top platform area of the stairs. If you use two sets of stairwells to go up two levels, then the number to use to align the floor to the top of that would be **288**. As you can see, you would just keep going by adding another 144 to the mix. 0 is the first floor, 144 the second, and 288 would be used for the third.

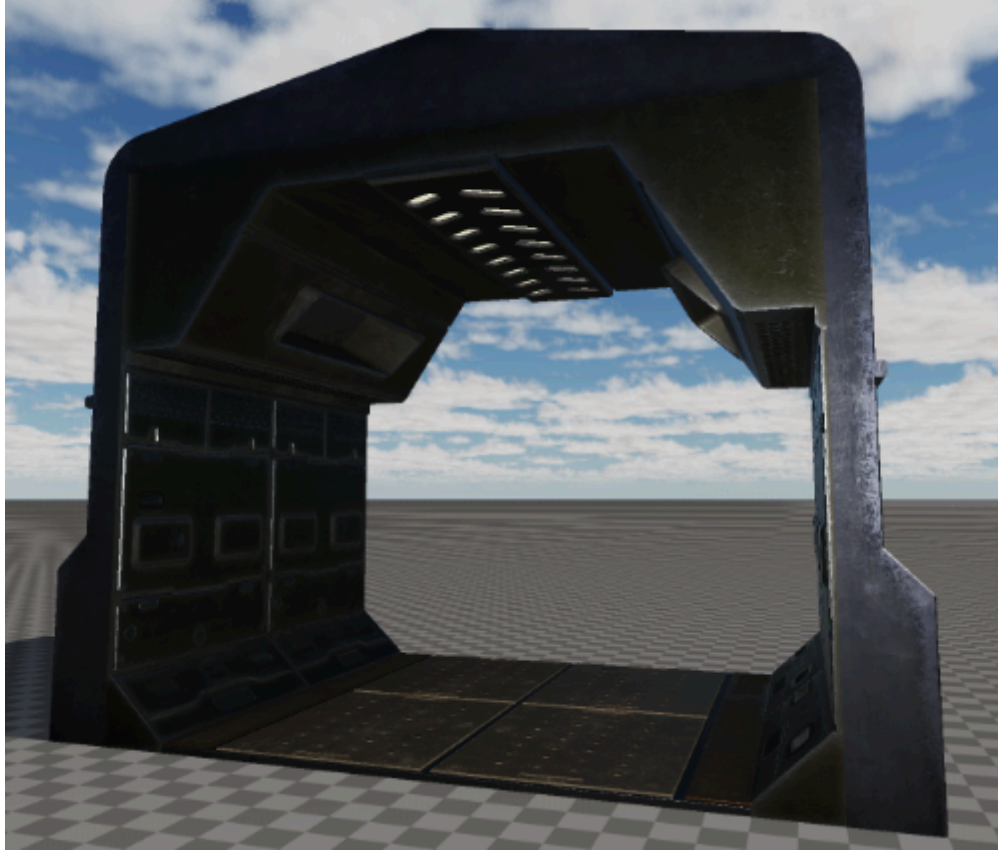


Stair and hall segment on ground ($Y = 0$)

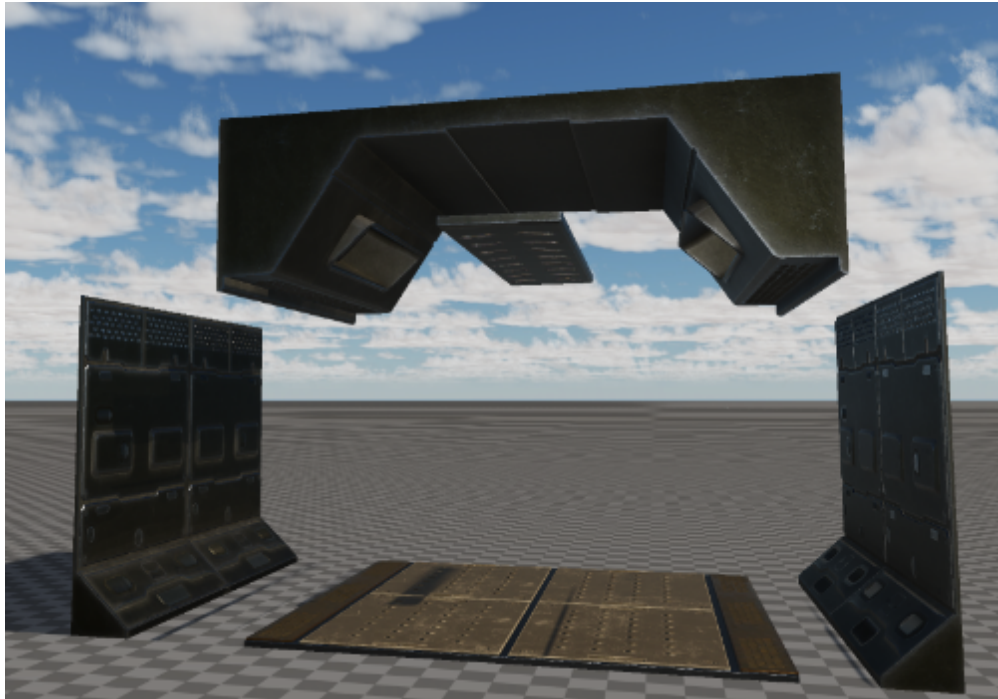


Hall segment aligned to top of stairs ($Y = 144$)

The ***Offworld Station Booster Pack*** contains both complete units as well as parts and pieces. Complete units would include hall segments and rooms. With hall segments, you get the floor piece, both walls, the ceiling, and a ceiling light. All you have to do is drag them into place.

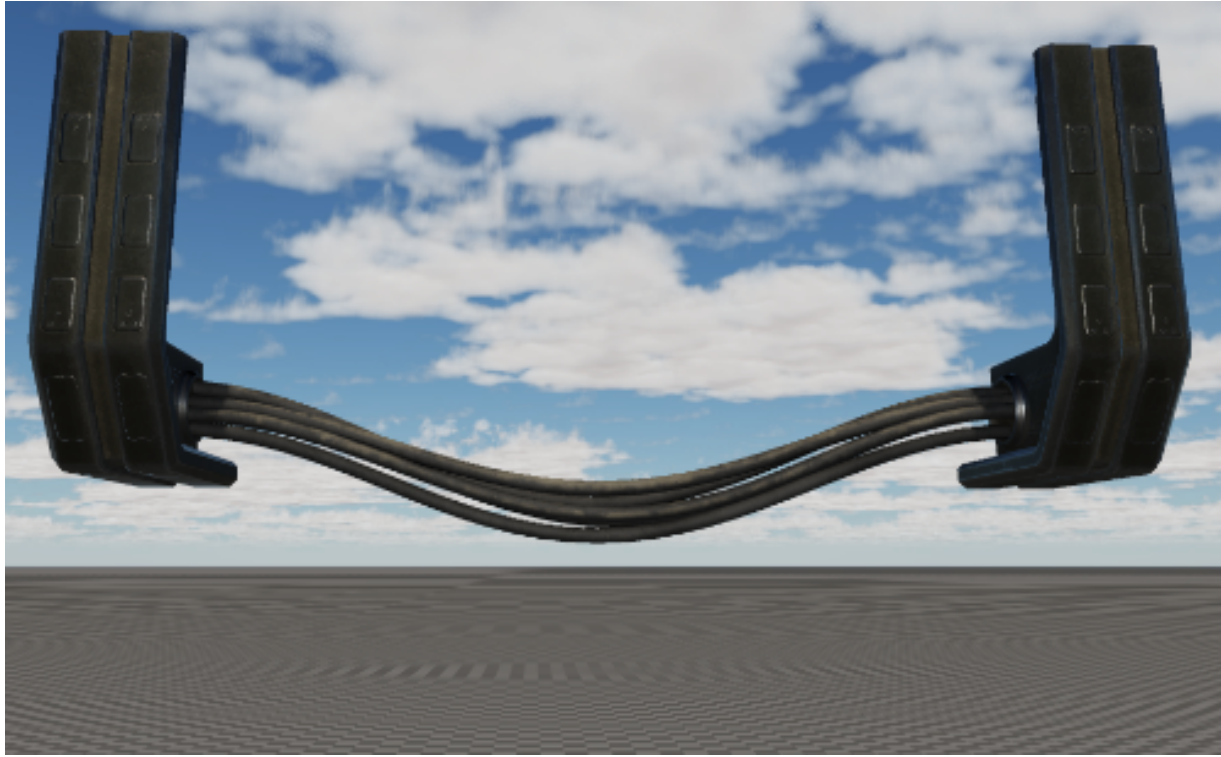


Parts and pieces are used to build your own unique areas.



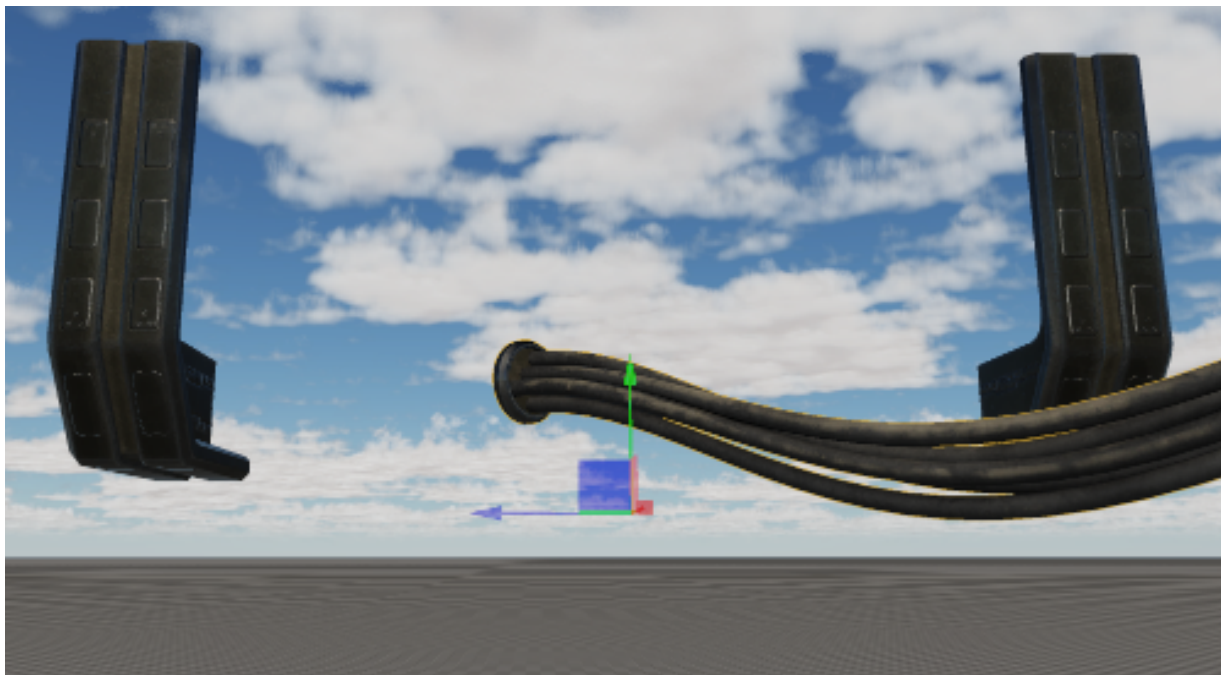
You may find that many parts don't have their object centers located, well, in their centers. You would discover this when you use R to rotate and find that the object is not rotating about the center of it's mass. There is a reason for this. All the pivot points, or object centers, are made to help you properly snap elements into place. For example the ceiling light does not have a it's center set on the actual object, but on the floor, well below it. The reason is so the ceiling light will snap perfectly into it's slot in the hall ceiling it was made for. If you ensure the height is set to 0 (or 144 for the second floor or 244 for the third), then it should fit perfectly.

Another example would be the cables that are made to hang between the hall support structures:



When those cables are brought into the level, they will be well off the ground. That is because their object center is well below it, on the ground. Again, this is to ensure that the cables are at the correct height for the supports they are made to go between. If you set their height to 0 for the ground floor (or 144 for the second floor, etc.) then the cables will be at the exact height to hang between the support structures.

If you press R to rotate the cables, you will note that they don't rotate about what you would assume would be it's center:



That is because the cable's object center is not only on the ground for precise height placement, it is also positioned where the floor center would be in a hall segment, so the cables will

go up against the wall as they should instead of you having to eyeball it. Of course, you can always turn off snapping and position these cables as you like.

I hope these tips, tricks, and helps are useful to you and that you have a lot of fun working with the ***Offworld Station Booster Pack***!

Thank You!!!

I truly appreciate you getting this the ***Offworld Station Booster Pack***. I hope you enjoy it and it helps you create awesome games! If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at:

contact@monkeyfrogstudio.com

