

HOSTAGE!!!!

...is a multipart action game in which the player must rescue four hostages held captive by a gang of ruthless terrorists. The game contains three stages, each requiring a different strategy.

STAGE ONE:

During the first stage, the player must guide the team's three marksmen to specially designated points on the game map, avoiding the roving terrorist spotlights. In this stage it is important to take note of the searchlight pattern. Since the pattern does not change, it can be memorized to help you determine the proper moves to make while avoiding being spotted. For instance, if a searchlight travels straight towards the gunner at waist level, use a duck-and-roll technique to maneuver under it. If they are traveling across the floor there are two options: Either wait until they head upwards, which they usually do at the end of the pattern, then simply run under them; or jump into an open window, if there is one available, when the light approaches, then jump back out when the light passes.

If a light cannot be totally avoided, which is the case with a couple of them, run through it with a fall-and-roll maneuver. This will get the man through quicker, with a much lower chance of being hit by enemy gunfire. Team members can take a couple of shots before dying, so don't panic if an on-screen counterpart gets hit once during this maneuver.

STAGE TWO:

Once the snipers are positioned, the player must control the three man intervention team and safely move them into the building. The men rappel down the side of the building and must be maneuvered carefully as they can fall or be shot from an embassy window.

The trick is to survey the windows with a sniper before sending the team down. It is best to pick a third story window as an entry point as there always seems to be fewer terrorists hanging around up there; this lowers the chance of a surprise attack. Have the marksman check the appropriate window for at least five seconds before sending a man down. If all is clear, crawl down slowly.

The trick to rappelling is to drop down in small jumps of no more than half a body length. Stop when the man is directly above the desired window, then jump once more and bring the man down directly above the desired window. If done correctly, the man will break the glass and enter the building safely.

The instruction manual suggests the player bring all three men inside and says the player 'must successfully maneuver the three throughout the building' in order to win. Here, I must disagree. A better move is to rappel the men down and control them one at a time through the embassy. This allows the player to concentrate more on one man and avoid jumping

between team members when they get in trouble. Having all three men in there at once is not only frustrating, it's downright dangerous.

STAGE THREE:

The real fun begins once a team member successfully gains entrance to the embassy. The player must now traverse the three-story building, killing any terrorists he spots, in the effort to rescue the hostages.

Once inside, survey the area using the map. If any terrorists are nearby, immediately turn in the appropriate direction and fire the instant they appear. Even a one-second delay will be enough to give the terrorist the chance to attack.

If a terrorist is in a room and against the wall, it is best not to try to enter, turn and fire. The time it takes to turn the man could prove fatal. Instead switch control to the sniper positioned outside the room housing the terrorist; bring the sight to the window and fire if the terrorist is in range. If he isn't, fire anyway! This usually scares him and he'll run past the window. When he does, blast him.

Another thing to ascertain is whether a hostage is moving, because hostages don't move by themselves. If one is stirring, there is a terrorist hiding behind him. Quickly aim over the hostage's right shoulder and wait until the terrorist shows his ugly face. Fire away, but be careful not to blow away the poor hostage.

There are two ways to win at 'Hostage'. Either place all the hostages in the safety room on the third floor or blow away all the terrorists. The key to a successful game is to use the snipers whenever possible. If the snipers aren't utilized properly, you're likely to get someone inadvertently killed. If that happens you can bet the press won't hesitate to badmouth the entire operation.