

CHAPTER FOUR: CHARACTER WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS

Weapons appear in nearly every adventure story. A character with a such a device almost always becomes more dangerous, and it usually increases his Power score.

A weapon is assumed to be **Hand-to-Hand** (HTH) or **Ranged**. HTH weapons can only be used in close range combat, while Ranged weapons can attack from a distance.

Each weapon is described with a **Might Rating** (also simply called the weapon's Might). If a character is using such a weapon, his Power score increases to match the weapon's Might Rating, if the character's Power score was less than that of the weapon's Might.



If the character has a Power that is greater than or equal to that of a HTH weapon's Might, the character's Power remains the same in most cases when using the weapon. Most extremely powerful characters, such as super-heroes, almost never use weapons in Hand-To-Hand combat if they possess super-strength and durability. They can do more damage with their fists than with a bat or sword!

When a Hand-to-hand weapon has a Might less than the character's Power score, the character may add +1 to his Power score when using such a weapon. For example, if a character was using a knife (Might 6) and his own Power was an 8, the Power score of the character would be a 9 (the character's Power +1). This does not apply to characters with a Power score of 11 or above. Characters with superhuman Power levels use their regular Power score if using a hand weapon with a lesser Might Score than their Power score.

If the character is using a Ranged weapon, his Power is assumed to be equal to the weapon's Might when attacking his foe. Some Ranged weapon's Might Ratings are based on the character's Power, but such weapons are normally listed with a **Might Limit**. Such Limits are the maximum Might that can be achieved with a weapon of that sort. A character can, for example, use a Bow, but no matter how strong he is, the arrow will never have a Might greater than 8. Page 24 has a listing of example Weapons and explains some of their special abilities.

Automatic Weapons (Optional Rule)

Automatic Weapons are Ranged weapons that have the ability to attack in rapid succession. Spraying a few dozen bullets each second is much more dangerous than firing one round from a revolver. In such cases, each Automatic Weapon has a **Attack#** that indicates how many Actions the character can make in one turn while using the weapon, normally 4. When attacked by such an implement of combat, the victim must defend himself against the remaining number of Actions, each remaining roll counting as another attack. However, the character only has to spend 1 Survival Point for each successful strike after the first Action succeeds. If the first Action misses, all of the attacks miss. For example, Cray fires his automatic weapon (ATT# 4) at Simon. The first attack hits for 4 Result Points. Out of the remaining 3 attacks, 2 are successful. Simon needs to come up with 6 Survival Points to keep fighting.

ARMOR

In some campaigns, armor is worn by characters to help protect them from damage. In EPICS, armor does this by lessening Survival Point loss, simulating protection.

If the attack could not possibly get by the armor (like someone throwing a rock at a character in futuristic power-armor), the Director should simply state that the attack has caused no Survival Point loss, unless he desires otherwise. If he does decide differently, the director should come up with a good reason that the defending character was in danger even though his defenses were formidable. For example, a rock might have hit the defending character with power armor in the visor, blinding him for a moment, giving the attacker time enough to push his victim into power lines that were nearby. The character was able to harm the victim in the power armor with the electricity from the outlet, not the rock. The victim would then have to pay Survival Points lost from the attack.

If the attack has a possibility of bypassing the armor, then the defending character has to spend less Survival Points to avoid the effects of the attack. "Minor" armor, such as leather or chain mail, lessens the loss taken by 1 Survival Point. "Heavy" armor, such as fictional force screens lessens Survival Point loss by 2 points. In no case will the Survival Point loss be less than 1 point if any Survival Point loss has been taken.

Of course, armor should be detailed during character creation or during game play before combat begins. Hidden armor can appear during game play, such as a bulletproof vest, as long as the Director agrees that the character might have had a reason to wear such a piece of equipment.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Characters often have equipment. Cell-phones, a wallet, a scabbard for his sword or an extending rope on his utility belt are all great examples of other items that the character might possess.

Most role-play games would have the character's objects exactly detailed. However, the idea of EPICS is quick character generation and good stories. If a piece of equipment would make the story more interesting, and it makes sense for the character to possess it, then the character should have it. Just like Facets, Actors should write down belongings that their character have as they make them up.

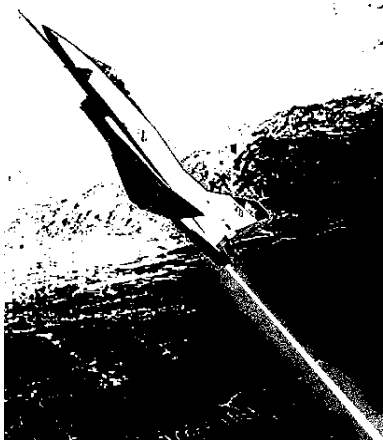
Equipment that becomes "part" of the character may add a Facet to the character and be the subject of a Survival Point award, and possibly Repeat Awards (see page 9) if the Actor describes the equipment from time to time when using it. A wizard that always appears with his black staff with a carved golden dragon on the tip is a good example.

Other equipment can "appear" at any time,

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including small weapons, such as the classic hidden knife or gun. However, the Director can over-rule any weapon, armor, or other equipment that he feels hinders the dramatic element of the story.

For example, Harry is captured by two thugs and his weapons are taken from him. Later, the Actor wants to have a hidden gun strapped to his leg. The Director rules that since Harry was searched well, the character does not have another weapon. Harry checks for his other gun and finds an empty holster.



VEHICLES

In most Settings, characters will have access to different types of transportation devices, some of which will have armor and weaponry. Cars, tanks, jets, helicopters and boats are just a few examples. These rules simulate *small* vehicles.

Vehicle Scores

Vehicles have scores similar to characters. Each has a Name, Role, Trademark, Specialty, and Power. When attacked, the pilot of the vehicle uses his own Influence and Survival Points to avoid damage to the craft. A vehicle does not have a Personality, Motivation or Influence unless it has an intelligence of it's own, such as an AI computer. In such case the device will have a number of Survival Points and is treated as a SCC when the vehicle is piloting itself.

A craft will have a list of Forces as well, and a list of weapons and equipment. The Director can make the descriptions of vehicles as detailed as he likes, or, just as in the case of characters, add details when needed for game play.

Vehicles in Combat

When a vehicle is attacked, the Director must decide whether or not the weapon used could harm the craft. If he feels it would not be possible to damage the vehicle, he is free to not allow the Action to take place at all, unless the Actor can give him a suitable reason for there to be Survival Point loss to the subject (see armor, page 14, for more detail). The pilot, not the vehicle, will suffer Survival Point loss from successful attacks. A vehicle's own Power is used for defense purposes only in non-combat situations (see Performance Actions, page 11.)

Vehicles and Survival Point Loss

Characters who take Survival Point loss while piloting a vehicle may chose to have the transport Wounded, just like a character might be. This simulates damage to the craft. Survival Points are rewarded to the pilot who chooses to have the vehicle Wounded, and at the normal amounts.

If any character in the craft makes any Action related to piloting the vehicle or using any of it's systems while the transport is damaged, their rolls become harder, just as if it were the characters in the vehicle that were Wounded. If

both the transport and the character within it are wounded, use the worse of the two Wounds as the modifier to Actions.

When a character piloting is reduced to 0 Survival Points, he may choose to have the vehicle take the Severe Wound that normally applies to the character (see page 12), or the character and the craft may both take a Serious Wound. If the pilot or the transport have already taken a Wound, the Serious Wound becomes a Severe Wound.

If a character in a vehicle takes enough Survival Point loss to reduce him below 0, he is assumed to have perished. Unless another character with an Influence of at least 1 is aboard that tries to pilot the Severely wounded vehicle, it is destroyed.

Damage to Characters in Vehicles

Any character in a vehicle may choose to be Wounded, even if the craft has not been damaged, whenever there is a chance of Survival Point loss, including characters other than the pilot.

Once a character leaves a vehicle, he uses his own Influence and Power scores, and any Wound modifiers to his character.

Crashes

When a character is in a vehicle, the Director should keep track of how fast the transport is moving. This can be important if the craft crashes!

Any damage causes the vehicle to become dangerous to pilot. Each combat or adventure turn, the pilot must make a Skill Check (usually using Pilot Skills), against a difficulty of Easy (for a light Wound), Difficult (for a serious Wound), or Near Impossible (for a severe Wound). If he succeeds at the check, he has maintained control of the vehicle. If he does not, he has crashed!

Characters who crash a flying craft take double the Survival Points from falling the same distance (see page 27). If crashing a ground vehicle, divide the transport's movement, in MPH, by 5. This is the amount of Survival Point damage from the crash. If a ground-based vehicle has safety devices, the occupants take double damage if they were not worn.

Vehicle Repairs

When vehicles are damaged (Wounded), the Director must decide if they can be fixed, and how long such repairs will take. Vehicles that crash may be destroyed, or they may be able to be repaired as well. Sometimes parts may be required that the characters do not have and will have to find.

Sample Vehicles

Car (average): Role: Transportation, Trademark: Good gas mileage, Specialty: None Power: 20*, Forces: Speed (100 mph), Weapons and Equipment: Lights

(* As strength - when taking damage, count Power as 12

Tank: Role: War vehicle, Trademark: Cannon, Specialty: Knocking things down, Power: 250*, Forces: Armor (damage Resistance) 4, Weapons and Equipment: Cannon (Might 25, explosive)

(* As strength - when running over objects or taking damage, count Power as 40

Combat Helicopter: Role: Combat vehicle, Trademark: Flying low, Specialty: Low-flight maneuvers, Power: 60*, Forces: Flight (100 mph), Weapons and Equipment: Machine Guns (Might 20, Automatic), Missiles (Might 30, explosive)

(* Lifting Capability. It's ability to take damage is Power 12

Combat Jet: Role: War craft, Trademark: Speed and Missiles, Specialty: Missile Attacks, Power: 30*, Forces: Flight (Mach 2), Weapons and Equipment: Missiles (Might 30, explosive)

(* Lifting Capability. It's ability to take damage is Power 15.

CHAPTER FIVE: INHUMAN FORCES



WHAT ARE INHUMAN FORCES?

In many game Settings, characters possess special powers that make them more than human. These powers, called Forces, should be briefly described before the hero is put into play.

Some Inhuman Forces have a Force Rating that replaces the Power score when the Director decides it is appropriate. For example, if a character has a Force that allows him to shoot flame from his hands, the Director would allow the character to use his Flame's Force Rating (instead of the character's normal Power score) at a distance to simulate his flame-shooting ability. The Director could also allow the character to be able to set things on fire, similar to a flame thrower (see page 24).

Remember, the normal Power score of a character indicates how tough a he is and the level of danger he poses to other characters in general. An Inhuman Force that a character has may have a higher Force than his ability to fight. For example, a character may have super-tough skin with a Force Rating of 14, while his own Power score is an 8. When someone hits the character, the 14 is used instead of his normal Power score when determining the Result Number of successful physical Actions taken against him, such as attacks from fists, swords, or guns.

In some Settings (see below), Forces may be set or limited in some fashion. Most Settings will have Force Rating limits. For example, in a game world where most characters are Vampires, the Director may make Actors pick from certain Inhuman Forces and divide a set amount of points into them. In another Setting where characters are super-powered heroes, the limits of Forces may be up to the Actor, with limitations on those Forces chosen by the Director (the character is immune to harm, but the Director decides that his mind can still be controlled, for example).

In other Settings, Inhuman Forces may be designed at character creation, but new Forces may not be added by the Actor freely, as is the regular case. The Actor is "stuck" with the super-abilities he has chosen unless changed by the Director.

As EPICS is designed to make use of quick character generation, Inhuman Forces should be given a brief description during character creation, and then developed during play. Limiting Forces and using them for the focus of great character development and conversation should be the subject of Survival Point awards.

If an Inhuman Force has an effect that is basically physical, use the normal rules for Actions taken with that Force. If the Force has an effect that is not physical, such as Mental Blast or Emotion Control, and the victim does not have enough Survival Points to negate the effect, the victim is reduced to 0 Survival Points, and takes the full consequence of the Inhuman Force. Characters reduced to 0 Survival Points in this manner do not suffer the normal Severe Wound that comes with being reduced to 0 Survival Points (see page 12).

COMMON INHUMAN FORCES

While no Force has to have the same game mechanic in the EPICS system, the Director may want an idea about how to go about handling a few of them. The Inhuman Forces that might be the most confusing are given here with examples.

ALTER

Description: The character can turn anything into anything else.

Game Mechanic: The Inhuman Force has a Force Rating. The Actor makes a roll using this Force Rating vs. the Influence of the change, as chosen by the Director. For example, changing sea water into drinking water might have an Influence of 1, while changing air into a helicopter might have an Influence of 20!

If this Force is used on living creatures, the opposing Influence is equal to the Influence of the victim. If the victim does not have enough Survival Points to negate the Result Points from the Action, he is killed from shock to his system!

ATTACK FORCE

Description: The character has some type of hand-to-hand or ranged attack ability other than his normal punch and kick, such as claws, horns, the ability to throw fireballs or to emit lasers from his eyes.

Game Mechanic: The attack has a Force Rating. The Force Rating is used instead of the character's normal Power score when he uses the attack.

CAPTURE, STUN, OR KNOCKOUT FORCES

Description: Many characters, and some weapons and equipment, allow a character to attempt to stop a foe instantly by wrapping him up, stunning him, or knocking him unconscious. A bola is a weapon designed to wrap around a victim, holding him in place, for example. A super-hero character might have the power to place his hand on the forehead of a victim, knocking him out. Regardless of the attack form, if the assault succeeds the victim is considered *Defeated* (see page 12).

Game Mechanic: The Inhuman Force has a Force Rating. If the attacker succeeds in a normal Action Check roll, the victim has the opportunity to spend Survival Points to avoid the effect. For example, Smoke, a super-villain, has the Force to emit a knockout gas from his hands that he is immune to. If he causes Mr. Smith 3 Survival Points from the smoke, Mr. Smith can pay the 3 Survival Points to ignore the effect (he coughs and his eyes water, but he doesn't pass out, or maybe he had a hidden gas mask. Try to explain the Force's failure without being silly). Of course, Smoke can attack again with his knockout gas next turn.

CONTROL

Description: The ability to control another human, or possibly animals, making them obey the character.

Game Mechanic: The character makes a roll using his Influence vs. the Influence of the opposing character. If the character attempting the control wins, he has gained dominance over the victim. The target is allowed to pay a number of Survival Points equal to the Influence of the character that has gained control over him to break the effect. The Director might only allow the controlled character to pay Survival Points to break the effect when he is in a situation that endangers his life or the life of those he is unwilling to kill.