

# APOCTHULHU

## SYSTEM REFERENCE DOCUMENT





# ***APOCTHULHU: A Post-Apocalypse Lovecraftian Roleplaying Game***

## ***OGL System Reference Document***

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### **What Is APOCTHULHU?**

*APOCTHULHU* is a tabletop roleplaying game which allows you to play out a broad range of gritty adventures in Post-Apocalyptic versions of our world, as afflicted by the ravages of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos.

There are countless warnings in the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft and other writers about the return of the "Great Old Ones" and their inevitable re-domination of our world. There is also a long history of roleplaying games which put players in the roles of characters faced with the momentous task of halting the insidious plans of otherworldly or extra-dimensional horrors. In those games, it is assumed that the players succeed in halting the "end of the world". *APOCTHULHU* is a game which explores what happens when those same plucky scholars and adventurers *fail*, and the forces of the Cthulhu Mythos alter the world forever.

*APOCTHULHU* doesn't aim to present a single vision of what the Mythos apocalypse and the resulting world look like. Rather it aims to give a group of players the tools to collectively create their *own* version of the "end of the world" – whether that be a zombie-haunted wasteland, or a pitch-black world where sentient shadows hunt the few surviving members of humanity. The rules provided here give you the framework to explore any such dark future you and your friends can imagine.

The only assumptions made by the *APOCTHULHU* rules are that:

- The apocalypse happens (or happened) at a time in earth's history when mankind has some level of technology. That could be today, or in the near-future, or it could be the 1890s.
- Whatever caused the end of the world shattered most of the normal infrastructure of human society, leaving survivors that must scavenge and hide to eke out a basic existence devoid of major technological assistance. You will take on the roles of those survivors.

## PART I: RULES OF THE GAME

This section describes the rules that all players will need to know to play a game of *APOCTHULHU*. It describes:

- How to **create characters** whose roles players will adopt in the shared Post-Apocalypse stories;
- How characters make use of their **skills and attributes** to try to overcome challenges they encounter;
- How **combat** works, when things turn violent;
- How the fragile **sanity** of each player's character may become eroded by encounters with horrors, both mundane and unnatural;
- What player characters can do during the quiet **downtime** between perilous adventures against unnatural entities.

### Core Game Concepts

These rules tell you everything you need to know in order to play *APOCTHULHU*.

As with most tabletop roleplaying games, when playing *APOCTHULHU* one player takes on the responsibility of setting the scene and narrating the events which make up an *APOCTHULHU* adventure. That individual is termed the **Game Moderator**. All other players take on the roles of individual people who have somehow survived the downfall of humanity. These characters are called **Survivors** (with the term capitalized for clarity). Survivors will encounter a multitude of other characters whose roles are *not* being played by other players – those characters are called **Non-Player Characters** (or NPCs) and their actions are controlled by the Game Moderator.

In this book you'll find rules for creating Survivors and a full set of rules for running adventures in a Post-Apocalypse world of your group's choosing or devising.

In addition to this book, you also need pencils to record changes to your character sheet, scratch paper to draw sketches and take notes, and dice.

*APOCTHULHU* uses polyhedral dice common to tabletop role-playing games: four-sided, six-sided, eight-sided, ten-sided, twelve-sided, and twenty-sided. The game plays best when you have a few of each on the table. Or you can find automated dice rollers on the Web and as mobile apps.

### Rolling the Dice

When the rules need you to roll dice, they use a particular nomenclature to save time and space: “#D#,” as in “1D8” or “4D6.” The first number is the number of dice. The “D” stands for “dice with the following number of sides.” The second number is the number of faces on the die. “1D8” means roll one eight-sided die. “4D6” means roll four six-sided dice and add the numbers together. Sometimes you add or subtract a number from the roll. If it says “1D6+2,” that means roll one six-sided die and add two to the result.

### Percentile Dice (“1D100”)

Actions in *APOCTHULHU* are resolved using **percentile dice**. That means you roll two ten-sided dice to get a number from 1 to 100. To do this, you don't add the individual die values together but instead treat each number as a digit (0–9). Before you make the roll, designate one die as the tens digit and the other as the ones digit. A zero (0) on the tens die counts as zero except when the ones die is also 0; then the 0 on the tens die counts as 10. For example:

- The tens die comes up “0” and the ones die comes up “3”: 03, or 3.
- The tens die comes up “3” and the ones die comes up “0”: 30.
- Both dice come up “0”: 100.
- The tens die comes up “6” and the ones die comes up “2”: 62.

## Survivors

Your Survivor represents the fictional persona that you will control in the game. You will spend a lot of time navigating your Survivor through exciting and dangerous situations, so it is worth investing time in creating a character you will enjoy playing.

### What Makes a Survivor

All Survivors are composed of six elements:

**STATISTICS (STATS):** Core capabilities for every Survivor.

**DERIVED ATTRIBUTES:** Ratings that indicate physical and mental resilience, derived from stats.

**ARCHETYPE:** The type of role your Survivor performs in the Post-Apocalypse world, which informs how many skill points and Bonds he or she has.

**SKILLS:** What training and education your Survivor has picked up from being taught, or from life in general.

**RESOURCES:** An abstract rating that reflects your Survivor's access to useful equipment or items.

**BONDS:** The people and communities your Survivor fights to protect.

### Survivor Creation

Follow these steps to create a new Survivor, or see **HOW TO CREATE A SURVIVOR** on page 5 for a quick reference.

#### STEP 0: Establish Harshness of Survivor's Background

Different Post-Apocalyptic settings shape the Survivor's mental and physical development in different ways. In game terms this is dictated by the Harshness Descriptor that the Game Moderator has chosen for the setting. It is important to find out the Harshness of your Survivor's background prior to commencing character creation. The four possible Harshness Descriptors are: **Normal(ish)**, **Harsh**, **Very Harsh**, and **Nightmarish**.

#### STEP 1: Determine Statistics

Statistics are Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Power (POW), and Charisma (CHA). They range from 3 (the worst) to 18 (the best), with an average of 10 for an ordinary adult. Statistics represent core capabilities possessed by all Survivors. All are important. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: STATISTICS** on page 6.)

You can create stats in two ways: rolling them or assigning points. Pick a method.

1. **ROLL STATS:** For each stat roll 4D6, drop the lowest of the four dice, and add up the other three. Place the six rolls in whichever stats you like.
2. **ASSIGN STATS:** Divide 72 points among the six stats however you like, or pick one of the sets from page 6 and assign each score to one statistic.

After the basic values are assigned for each statistic, modify according to the Harshness Descriptor for the setting:

- For Survivors in **Harsh** settings: add 1 to *either* STR *or* CON (player's choice)
- For Survivors in **Very Harsh** settings: add 1 to *both* STR *and* CON
- For Survivors in **Nightmarish** settings: add 2 to *both* STR *and* CON

#### STEP 2: Calculate Derived Attributes

Hit Points, Willpower Points, Sanity Points, and Breaking Point are derived from stats. They represent physical and mental resilience. When your Survivor is hurt, exercises mental fortitude, or is traumatized, those scores can drop. If your Survivor has a STR score that is outside the average range (9–12) he or she also has a modifier to the damage

inflicted from hand-to-hand combat. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: DERIVED ATTRIBUTES & DAMAGE BONUS** on page 7.)

### **STEP 3: Select Archetype**

What does your Survivor do to stay alive in the Post-Apocalypse world? Archetype dictates what skills your Survivor has, his or her basic resource level, and the number of Bonds he or she possesses. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: ARCHETYPE** on page 8.)

### **STEP 4: Calculate Resources Rating**

The Resources rating is a number between 0 and 20 that reflects the Survivor's access to valuable or useful equipment. A Survivor's base Resources rating is dictated by his or her Archetype, however during later steps, you can sacrifice other potential bonus skills in favor of a higher resources score; conversely, you can agree to drop Resources rating of 0 (entirely without access to resources) and receive additional skills. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: RESOURCES** on page 22.)

### **STEP 5: Define Bonds**

Bonds indicate the strength of relationships with the most important people and communities in your Survivor's life — like a spouse, child, a long-time travelling companion, or a local community of survivors holed up somewhere. Bonds help Survivors resist mental trauma—but as your Survivor's life falls apart under the stress of the Post-Apocalypse world, Bonds deteriorate.

There are **two types of Bonds** – bonds with individuals and bonds with an entire community. The latter reflect the Survivor's standing as part of the community and his or her ability to influence the group.

Each Individual Bond has a value that starts equal to your Survivor's Charisma (CHA).

Each Community Bond has a default value equal to half the Survivor's Resources rating, however during creation of the Survivor the player may elect to sacrifice potential skills in favor of a higher value. Conversely, the player may elect to take a Community Bond with a value of 1 (lowest possible social standing) and receive additional skills. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: BONDS** on page 22.)

### **STEP 6: Select Bonus & Adversity Skills**

Skills require special training, and come from schooling, experience, or personal interest. Skills are measured from 0% (no training) to 99% (foremost expert in the world). (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: SKILLS** on page 22.)

### **STEP 7: Determine Mental Damage from Harsh Environments**

Survivors that have grown up in difficult and brutal versions of our world are likely to have picked up some mental scarring along the way. This can leave them hardened to certain types of traumatic stimuli, distant from those around them, or afflicted with mental disorders. (see **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: MENTAL DAMAGE FROM HARSH ENVIRONMENTS**, page 40.)

### **STEP 8: Add the Final Details**

Start filling in the details that make your Survivor interesting.

How old is your Survivor? What does he or she look like? Where did he or she grow up?

What's your Survivor's name? What is your Survivor's role in the community and what's your personal life like?

And why, despite all the terrifying dangers of the Post-Apocalyptic world, does your Survivor venture out to pursue adventure?

## >> How To Create A Survivor

### Determine Harshness of Survivor's Background

- Ask Game Moderator for the setting's Harshness Descriptor – Normal(ish), Harsh, Very Harsh, Nightmarish.

### Stats & Derived Attributes

- Roll **STATISTIC** scores (see page 3) or divide 72 points between the six stats. See page 6 for suggested sets.
- Modify STR and/or CON statistic scores based on Harshness:
  - Harsh add +1 to STR *or* CON (player's choice)
  - Very Harsh add +1 to STR *and* CON
  - Nightmarish add +2 to STR *and* CON
- Calculate **DERIVED ATTRIBUTES** (see page 7).
  - **HP** = (STR + CON) ÷ 2, rounded up.
  - **WP** = POW.
  - **Recovery SAN** is always POW × 5, regardless of setting harshness.
  - Determine Starting **SAN** based on Harshness Descriptor:
    - Normal(ish) **SAN** = POW × 5.
    - Harsh or Very Harsh **SAN** = POW × 4.
    - Nightmarish **SAN** = POW × 3.
  - **BP** = SAN – POW.
- High and low stat scores can tell something about your Survivor's physical description. (See **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES** on page 7.)
- If STR is below 9 or above 12, look up **DAMAGE BONUS** (see page 50).

### Archetype, Skills, Resources & Bonds

- Choose an **ARCHETYPE** from the lists starting on page 9.
- Write down the **ARCHETYPAL SKILLS** for your Survivor's Archetype and record the starting **RESOURCES** rating associated with the Archetype.
- Your Survivor may get **ADVERSITY SKILL POINTS** (see page 22) which can be used to increase the following skills: Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival, or Unnatural. Each pick provides +20 rating to the chosen skill; no single skill can receive more than 2.
  - Harsh 1 pick
  - Very Harsh 2 picks
  - Nightmarish 4 picks
- On a piece of scrap paper, record the Survivor's number of available **BONUS SKILL POINT** picks (see below). This starts at 10.
- **(Optional)** Modify your Survivor's **RESOURCES** rating (see page 22):
  - Increase rating by sacrificing one or more **BONUS SKILL POINT** picks; the first sacrifice gives +5 to **RESOURCES** rating, each subsequent sacrifice gives +2.
  - Alternatively, choose to reset rating to 0 and receive one extra **BONUS SKILL POINT** pick.
- Once the final **RESOURCES** rating has been established, look up the breakdown (see page 24) of "at-hand"/stowed/stored points and number of Resource checkmarks and copy these to Survivor sheet
- Define your Survivor's **BONDS** (see page 22).
  - The Survivor's Archetype determines how many Bonds he or she has.
  - Each Bond is either a Community Bond or an Individual Bond (player's choice).
  - Each **Individual Bond** refers to an individual with special significance and begins with a score equal to your Survivor's **CHA**.
  - Each **Community Bond** refers to a community within which the Survivor has a particular standing and begins with a value equal to half his or her **RESOURCES** rating (see above).
  - **(Optional)** Modify Community Bond Values:

- Improve the rating of any Community Bond by sacrificing BONUS SKILL picks; the first sacrifice for any given Bond gives +5 to its value, each subsequent sacrifice for the same Bond gives +2.
- Alternatively, choose to take a rating of 1 for a Community Bond (reflecting the lowest possible standing in the society) and receive one extra BONUS SKILL POINT pick.
- After resolving any optional spends of **BONUS SKILL POINTS** (page 30) for non-skill benefits, use the remainder to improve ANY skills (except Unnatural). Each pick provides an increase of 20 points.
  - No skill can start higher than 80%

## Mental Damage from Harsh Environment

- If Setting Harshness is anything other than “Normal(ish)”, determine any **MENTAL DAMAGE FROM ENVIRONMENT** (see page 40). This may mean:
  - Survivor begins play with **MENTAL DISORDERS**.
  - Survivor loses points from Bonds due to emotional distance.
  - Survivor begins play **ADAPTED** to Violence or Helplessness.

## Final Details

- Choose **NAME, AGE, SEX, BIRTHPLACE** and Current **HOME**.
- As you play, describe up to five **MOTIVATIONS** that are not Bonds.
- When your Survivor develops a new **MENTAL DISORDER**, it replaces a motivation.

## Detailed Description: Statistics

Every Survivor has six core capabilities: Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Power, and Charisma. These are called his or her statistics (or “stats” for short).

>>Statistics			
Statistic	Abbreviation	Description	Stat Test Examples
Strength	STR	Physical power, size, and musculature.	Drag an innocent to safety. Break down a locked door. Hold a struggling victim down.
Constitution	CON	Health and physical resilience.	Resist illness, exhaustion, or pain. Hold your breath for a long time. Keep running longer than everyone else.
Dexterity	DEX	Agility, coordination, and nimbleness.	Keep balance. React quickly.
Intelligence	INT	How well a Survivor notices, remembers, and connects things. Along with Archetype, it indicates education and overall brilliance.	Recall a detail. Piece together disparate data.
Power	POW	Force of personality, motivation, and psychic resilience.	Keep your head in a crisis. Stand up to pressure.
Charisma	CHA	Charm, leadership, and personal appeal. May indicate physical attractiveness.	Make a good impression. Talk your way into a private club. Look like you belong.

During Survivor creation, you can either roll **STATISTIC** scores (see page 3) or simply divide 72 points between the six stats however you wish. The table nearby gives some examples of possible assignments.

>> Assignable Set of Statistics						
Description	Stat 1	Stat 2	Stat 3	Stat 4	Stat 5	Stat 6
Well-Rounded	13	13	12	12	11	11
Focused	15	14	12	11	10	10
Highly Focused	17	14	12	10	10	9

Each stat has a test score equal to the stat × 5: STR×5, INT×5, POW×5, etc. This means roll five times the stat or less on percentile dice (1D100) to succeed. When your Survivor attempts a difficult action and no skill covers it, the Game Moderator may ask you to roll a stat test for whatever stat is the closest fit.

### Stat Adjustments for Harsh Environments

Survivors who have managed to eke out a living in a harsh environment are physically tougher than average – weaker individuals simply don’t live that long. To reflect this, such Survivors receive a bonus to STR and/or CON as follows:

- **Normal(ish)** setting: no bonus
- **Harsh** setting: +1 to either STR *or* CON (pick one)
- **Very Harsh** setting: +1 to both STR *and* CON
- **Nightmarish** setting: +2 to both STR *and* CON

### Distinguishing Features

A stat below 9 or above 12 is exceptional. Spare a word or two to describe stats outside the average; see the table nearby for some examples. These descriptors help give your Survivor personality.

>> Sample Distinguishing Features					
Statistic	3—4	5—8	9—12	13—16	17—18
Strength	Feeble	Weak	(Average)	Muscular	Huge
Dexterity	Barely Mobile	Clumsy	(Average)	Nimble	Acrobatic
Constitution	Bedridden	Sickly	(Average)	Perfect Health	Indefatigable
Intelligence	Imbecilic	Slow	(Average)	Perceptive	Brilliant
Power	Spineless	Nervous	(Average)	Strong-Willed	Indomitable
Charisma	Unbearable	Awkward	(Average)	Charming	Magnetic

### Detailed Description: Derived Attributes & Damage Bonus

The derived attributes — Hit Points, Willpower Points, Sanity Points, and Breaking Point — represent your Survivor’s physical and mental toughness.

Damage Bonus reflects whether his or her brawn (or lack thereof) will affect damage inflicted through brawling and hand-to-hand weapons.

**HIT POINTS (HP):** Hit Points represent how much damage your Survivor can sustain. When the Survivor is injured, subtract the damage from HP. At 2 HP, your Survivor falls unconscious. At 0 HP, your Survivor dies. Hit Points are regained through rest and medical attention.

***Hit Points equal CON plus STR, divided by two and rounded up.***

**WILLPOWER POINTS (WP):** Willpower Points represent mental fortitude. They fall when your Survivor attempts to suppress the symptoms of mental illness (see **RESISTING INSANITY** on page 67), becomes exhausted (see **EXHAUSTION** on page 45), attempts to resist persuasion, suffers emotional burnout (see **FUMBLE** on page 43), or tries to fuel unnatural phenomena. At 2 WP, your Survivor has a temporary emotional collapse. At 0 WP, your Survivor falls unconscious. Willpower Points are regained with rest. (See **WILLPOWER POINTS** on page 45.)

***Willpower Points equal POW.***

**SANITY POINTS (SAN):** Sanity Points represent mental health: how much mental trauma, or exposure to the unnatural your Survivor can endure before going insane. In moments of mental trauma your Survivor must make a **Sanity test** by rolling SAN or lower on 1D100. If that fails, your Survivor loses SAN. (See **SANITY** on page 58.) Sanity



Points are regained through remedial care or by overcoming unnatural threats. At 0 Sanity Points, your Survivor goes irretrievably insane and becomes an NPC permanently under the control of the Game Moderator.

A Survivor's starting Sanity Points depends on the Harshness of the setting in which he or she has spent most time – the harsher the setting, the more brutality and horror the Survivor has been scarred by.

***Normal(ish) Setting: Sanity Points begin equal to POW×5.***

***Harsh or Very Harsh Setting: Sanity Points begin equal to POW×4.***

***Nightmarish Setting: Sanity Points begin equal to POW×3.***

**BREAKING POINT:** The Breaking Point is the point at which loss of SAN triggers a long-term mental disorder. (See **INSANITY AND DISORDERS** on page 61.)

***A Survivor's Breaking Point equals SAN minus POW.***

The instant the Survivor's SAN reaches the Breaking Point, he or she gains a disorder. Reset the Breaking Point to equal the new SAN score minus POW.

**MAXIMUM SAN:** This is the absolute maximum number of Sanity Points your Survivor can EVER reach, by any means. Learning more about the true nature of the Cthulhu Mythos (represented by the Unnatural skill) reduces this number.

***A Survivor's Maximum SAN always equals 99 minus skill rating in the Unnatural Skill.***

**RECOVERY SAN:** This is the highest Sanity Point total that your Survivor can possibly achieve through mundane methods – relaxation, personal pursuits, caring for loved ones, and seeking help for mental illness. See **RECOVERING SANITY** on page 68.

***A Survivor's Recovery SAN equals POW×5, regardless of the harshness of the setting.  
If this number would be higher than Max SAN, Recovery SAN equals Max SAN.***

**DAMAGE BONUS:** High or low Strength modifies the **DAMAGE** the Survivor inflicts through successful unarmed and hand-to-hand weapon attacks (see page 50). This modifier to damage should be recorded on the Survivor sheet for later reference.

>> Damage Bonus from STR Score				
1–4	5–8	9–12	13–16	17–18
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

## Detailed Description: Archetypes

Each Survivor is a representative of a broad category of character types suited to the conditions prevalent in the Post-Apocalyptic world. He or she might be one of those familiar characters obsessed with scrounging and hoarding scraps of broken technology, or might be someone who serves as a spiritual leader to a community of survivors. Each such category is called an **Archetype**.

An Archetype says a lot about a Survivor. It grants a “kit” of appropriate skills. It also determines the number of Bonds your Survivor has when the game begins, and his or her starting Resource level.

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** Some Archetypes require people who are particularly fit, stable, or smart. This means the recommended stats should be 10 or higher — or at least they were when your Survivor first took on the Archetype.

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:** Each Archetype has a predefined kit of skills with scores that replace the default skill ratings. This represents the baseline training, experience, and education for that Archetype. See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: SKILLS** on page 22 for their uses.

**RESOURCES:** Each Archetype dictates a base value for the Resources rating.

**BONDS:** Each Archetype dictates the number of Bonds your Survivor begins with. Difficult and trying Archetypes mean fewer Bonds but more skills. The player can decide whether each of these Bonds refers to:

- a relationship to an individual (Individual Bonds) or
- standing within a community in the Post-Apocalyptic setting (Community Bonds).

### Customizing Your Survivor With Other Skills

Don't worry if your Survivor at this point looks like a generic representative of his or her chosen Archetype. While the Archetype defines a core set of abilities, those skills and ratings don't represent the full range of everything your Survivor can do.

Later in the character generation process you will have opportunities to pick other skills they are also good at. There are two different types of skill picks:

- **ADVERSITY SKILL POINT PICKS** (see page 22) represent abilities your Survivor has because of the harsh world that he or she grew up in. These picks can only be used to enhance a few specific skills, and cannot be traded in for other benefits.
- **BONUS SKILL POINT PICKS** (see page 30) represent hobbies and general experience he or she learned above and beyond the basics associated with the Archetype. You start with ten such bonus picks to use later in the Survivor generation process. These picks *can* be traded in for other advantages like increased availability of resources-at-hand or standing in a community.

### List of Archetypes

When the Apocalypse came, vast numbers of people were killed. Those few that survived came from all walks of life, but suddenly everyone needed to adapt to a world vastly altered.

The set of available Archetypes for your Survivors will depend on whether the *APOCTHULHU* game is set in the **early days** after the Apocalypse happened, or **long afterwards**. If the End of the World was a recent occurrence most Survivors will be former members of some Pre-Apocalypse job, slowly coming to terms with life in the new world. If your game is set generations (or even millennia) after the Apocalypse, Survivors will be hardy folk born into the ravaged Post-Apocalypse world and already somewhat skilled at surviving its capriciousness.

## Recent Apocalypse Archetypes

The following Archetypes are appropriate for games set shortly after the Apocalypse.

### *Former Criminal*

You were a law breaker before the world ended and have found that those same skills serve you well in infiltrating societies of the Post-Apocalypse world. Where there isn't any written 'law', the whole concept of crime is one big moral gray area that you happily inhabit.

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** DEX

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Alertness 40%
- Appraise 40%
- Craft (Locksmith) 40%
- Law (choose one) 30%
- Persuade 40%
- Stealth 50%
- Search 40%
- Unarmed Combat 60%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Athletics 70%
- Demolitions 40%
- Disguise 50%
- Dodge 70%
- Firearms 50%
- Insight 50%
- Melee Weapons 70%
- Technology Use 40%

**STARTING RESOURCES:** 6

**BONDS:** 4

### *Former Doctor*

In the world before the Apocalypse you were a medical doctor, either a paramedic, general practitioner or surgeon. Since the world ended, there has been an abundant and ongoing need for medical aid, although there's a distinct lack of suitable equipment and facilities. So, you have learned to improvise, scavenging what you can to patch up the sick and wounded.

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** INT

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- First Aid 60%
- Medicine 60%
- Pharmacy 50%
- Scavenge 50%
- Search 50%

- Surgery 50%
- Survival (choose one) 30%
- Technology Use 30%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Reassure 50%
- Research 50%
- Science (Biology) 40%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 5**

**BONDS: 3**

### *Former Law Enforcer*

You were a cop (of some description) in the world before the Apocalypse. There is no law as such in the new world, but there is still a need for justice. You strive to enforce some kind of moral right and wrong, either as part of a larger society or as a travelling 'enforcer' keeping the highways safe.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: CON, CHA**

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Alertness 50%
- Athletics 60%
- Dodge 50%
- Drive 50%
- Firearms 60%
- Insight 50%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Melee Weapons 60%
- Persuade 50%
- Search 60%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Disguise 50%
- First Aid 50%
- Forensics 40%
- Reassure 50%
- Stealth 50%
- Technology Use 40%
- Unarmed Combat 80%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 4**

**BONDS: 3**



### *Former Military*

You trained as a soldier, naval officer, or marine back before the world ended. Turns out a lot of the training for war is quite useful in a world where everyone is fighting every day to survive. Unfortunately, you don't have access to all the impressive items of technology that you used to, but a weapon is a weapon – and a dead enemy looks the same.

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** STR, CON

#### **ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Athletics 50%
- Drive 40%
- Firearms 60%
- First Aid 40%
- Heavy Weapons 40%
- Law (choose one) 30%
- Military Science 60%
- Survival (choose one) 40%
- Technology Use 40%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Artillery 40%
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Demolitions 40%
- Medicine 40%
- Navigate 50%
- Pilot (choose one) 40%
- Scavenge 50%
- Stealth 50%

**STARTING RESOURCES:** 4

**BONDS:** 3

### *Former Scientist / Technician*

Back before the Apocalypse you were a scientist or technical specialist. Perhaps you were a researcher or University egghead, or perhaps you just repaired broken computers. In the days after the end of the world you questioned how relevant your skills were to the altered world. Turns out that the practical application of your understanding of the physical world is quite handy in efforts to re-establish a semblance of society, or even just to understand what caused the old world to end. Perhaps such humble endeavors might even allow humanity to rebuild a better future?

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** INT

#### **ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Dodge 50%
- Research 50%
- Search 60%
- Science (choose one) 60%
- Science (choose another one) 40%

- Technology Use 60%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Anthropology 40%
- Archeology 40%
- Craft (choose another one) 40%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Forensics 40%
- Heavy Machinery 50%
- Melee Weapons 70%
- Pharmacy 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Scavenge 50%
- Unarmed Combat 50%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 7**

**BONDS: 2**

#### *Former Student*

You were still at college or school when the Apocalypse struck, or maybe you'd just graduated and were still looking for meaningful employment. Either way, you were a lot more about 'book smarts' than practical skills – shame that most of that theoretical knowledge is worth nothing much now. Still, having some understanding of how the world used to work is not without its benefits.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: INT**

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Art or Craft (choose one) 50%
- History 50%
- Persuade 60%
- Research 50%
- Scavenge 50%
- Technology Use 60%

Choose any 6 of these that you don't already have:

- Anthropology 40%
- Archeology 40%
- Art or Craft (choose another one) 40%
- Athletics 70%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Insight 50%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Medicine 40%
- Military Science 40%
- Occult 40%
- Pharmacy 40%

- Reassure 50%
- Science (choose one) 40%
- Science (choose another one) 40%
- Surgery 40%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 2**

**BONDS: 5**

*Former Survivalist*

Back before the Apocalypse came, everyone thought you were crazy. Building a bunker in the back yard and stockpiling weapons and canned goods – sure it seemed a bit ‘out there’ when society was functioning. But who’s laughing now? The self-sufficiency skills you taught yourself back then are now the backbone of your success in the Post-Apocalypse world.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: CON, POW**

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Craft (Farming) 50%
- Firearms 50%
- First Aid 40%
- Heavy Machinery 30%
- Insight 50%
- Navigate 40%
- Scavenge 50%
- Survival (choose one) 60%
- Survival (choose another one) 40%

Choose any 3 of these that you don’t already have:

- Artillery 40%
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Drive 60%
- Heavy Weapons 40%
- Military Science 40%
- Pharmacy 40%
- Ride 50%
- Unarmed Combat 80%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 5**

**BONDS: 2**

*Former Tradesperson*

You were always told that learning a trade would pay off. I guess nobody figured that the practical skills they taught you would be what kept you alive in a world where polite society no longer exists. Your talents are now in high demand; it’s a shame that most of the tools that you learned with all rely on technology that doesn’t work anymore.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: DEX**

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Appraise 40%
- Craft (choose one) 60%
- Craft (choose another one) 40%
- First Aid 40%
- Heavy Machinery 40%
- Insight 40%
- Persuade 50%
- Technology Use 40%
- Unarmed Combat 70%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Alertness 60%
- Archeology 40%
- Athletics 70%
- Craft (choose yet another one) 40%
- Demolitions 40%
- Dodge 70%
- Melee Weapons 70%
- Science (choose one) 40%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 5**

**BONDS: 3**

#### *Former White-Collar Worker*

Back before the Apocalypse you worked in an office. Maybe you were a highly paid city lawyer, maybe you just made the coffee. It doesn't really matter now, since all those office skills add up to squat in a world where technology has all gone kaput and surviving each day is a hand-to-mouth affair. To say that this has been a big learning curve would be an understatement ... but you've survived somehow. So far, at least.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: INT, CHA**

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Art or Science (choose one) 50%
- Art or Science (choose another one) 30%
- Dodge 50%
- Insight 50%
- Law (choose one), or Research (pick one) 60%
- Search 50%
- Technology Use 60%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Anthropology 40%
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Firearms 60%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Forensics 40%



- History 50%
- Occult 50%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Reassure 50%

**STARTING RESOURCES:** 5

**BONDS:** 3

### *Spiritual Guide (Priest / Reverend / Guru)*

Back before the End of the World you ministered to a flock whose biggest concerns were how to pay the credit card bill or whether their spouse was cheating on them. Now, the world truly is in a terrible state and people's lives are as close to your vision of Hell as you can imagine. But people need reassurance and spiritual guidance now more than ever – so, despite having thought many times about giving up on religion altogether, you keep on. One day at a time.

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** CHA, POW

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Anthropology 50%
- History 50%
- Insight 60%
- Persuade 60%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one religion) 50%
- Reassure 70%

Choose any 4 of these that you don't already have:

- Archeology 40%
- Art (choose one) 40%
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Occult 50%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one other) 40%
- Stealth 50%
- Survival (choose one) 50%

**STARTING RESOURCES:** 3

**BONDS:** 4 (including one Community Bond **with a starting score of 12**)

### **Post-Apocalypse-Born Archetypes**

The following Archetypes are appropriate for games set decades, centuries, or millenia after the Apocalypse.

#### *Deceiver*

Life after the Apocalypse is a 'dog eat dog' affair, and the only sensible strategy is to look out for yourself at all costs. Even if it means 'liberating' food or equipment from other people who are likewise scavenging to survive. Of course, there's also benefit to living within a community or society – even if those usually have rules of 'laws' against the kind of subterfuge which comes naturally to you. That's alright, you can work within (or around) any restrictions to get the best of both worlds; isn't that what a sneak does?

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** DEX

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Alertness 40%
- Appraise 40%
- Disguise 40%
- Insight 40%
- Law (choose one) 30%
- Persuade 60%
- Search 50%
- Stealth 70%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Athletics 70%
- Firearms 60% or Ranged Weapons 60%
- Forensics 40%
- Scavenge 50%
- Survival (choose one) 50%
- Technology Use 40%
- Unarmed Combat 80%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 6****BONDS: 2***Explorer*

The Apocalypse not only shattered the world, but it also destroyed most people's ability to access reliable and current information about their own world. Not that any of the Pre-Apocalypse maps would be much use anyway. You have made it your mission to explore the new world that has arisen, to help others navigate its dangers.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: CON, STR****ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Athletics 60%
- First Aid 40%
- Melee Weapons 50%
- Navigate 60%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one region) 50%
- Ride 30%
- Scavenge 40%
- Survival (choose one) 50%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Drive 60%
- Firearms 60%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Pilot (choose one) 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose another one) 40%

- Ranged Weapons 60%
- Survival (choose another one) 50%
- Swim 60%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 6**

**BONDS: 3**

### *Healer*

Despite there being no hospitals or doctors anymore, people keep getting sick or injured. So, there is always a job for someone with the ability to guide or augment the natural healing process. You have made this your mission, even though supplies of Pre-Apocalypse medicines ran out long ago. There are still the old ways, herbs and poultices. It's the best that anyone can do ... and using those crude tools you still save lives.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: INT**

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- First Aid 50%
- Medicine 60%
- Melee Weapons 50%
- Pharmacy 50%
- Scavenge 40%
- Surgery 40%
- Survival (choose one) 40%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Dodge 70%
- Forensics 40%
- Persuade 60%
- Reassure 50%
- Science (Biology) 40% or Science (Botany) 40%
- Technology Use 40%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 5**

**BONDS: 4**

### *Leader / Law Giver*

There is no official law in the Post-Apocalypse world, but you are determined that there will still be order. Your order. Whether you are the leader of a large community or just the boss of a rag-tag bunch of travelers, you have taken on the responsibility to direct and protect the group. Someone must do it; after all, where would the world be without order?

**RECOMMENDED STATS: CHA, INT**

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Insight 50%
- Law (choose one) 40%

- Persuade 60%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Technology Use 40%

Choose any 1 of these that you don't already have:

- Anthropology 40%
- Art (choose one) 40%
- Firearms 60%
- Military Science 40%
- Ranged Weapons 60%
- Reassure 50%
- Search 60%
- Stealth 50%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 10**

**BONDS: 3 (including one Community Bond with a starting score of 14)**

### *Muscle*

You grew up knowing that you were never the brainiest kid in the compound or the fastest runner. But you could whomp anybody else who crossed you – and that has proven a pretty valuable skill. Turns out that every society of human beings needs someone who can help enforce the law of the land or scare off any rival groups through display of brute force. And you are that force.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: STR**

### **ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Alertness 60%
- Athletics 60%
- Dodge 60%
- Firearms 60% or Ranged Weapons 60% (choose one)
- Melee Combat 70%
- Persuade 50%
- Unarmed Combat 70%

Choose any 4 of these that you don't already have:

- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Demolitions 40%
- Drive 60%
- Heavy Weapons 40%
- Military Science 40%
- Pilot (choose one) 40%
- Survival (choose one) 50%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 5**

**BONDS: 3**



### *Outcast*

Something bad happened which led to you being banished from the society you grew up in. Maybe it was your fault, maybe it was all just a big misunderstanding. Doesn't really matter, since either way you were turfed-out into the wasteland to die. But you didn't die. You learned to adapt and make use of whatever resources you could scrounge up.

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** DEX, INT, POW

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Appraise 40%
- Craft (Locksmith) 50%
- Disguise 50%
- Insight 50%
- Navigate 70%
- Scavenge 70%
- Stealth 60%
- Survival (choose one) 70%
- Unarmed Combat 60%

Choose any 6 of these that you don't already have:

- Craft (chosed one other) 40%
- Drive 60%
- Firearms 60%
- First Aid 50%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Persuade 60%
- Pharmacy 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Ranged Weapons 60%
- Search 60%
- Technology Use 40%

**STARTING RESOURCES:** 1

**BONDS:** 2

### *Protector*

Those who run the scattered societies of the Post-Apocalypse world – whether it's the fleeting secure compounds where people survive until the walls fall down, or the curious neo-religious orders that have sprung up – all need the same thing. To be protected from those who would do them harm. You have carved yourself a niche as someone who can provide that protection, using a combination of military know-how, cunning, and subterfuge.

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** STR

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Drive 50%
- Firearms 50% or Ranged Weapons 50% (choose one)
- Insight 50%

- Military Science 50%
- Stealth 60%
- Technology Use 30%
- Unarmed Combat 50%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Disguise 50%
- Dodge 70%
- Navigate 50%
- Persuade 60%
- Pilot (choose one) 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Reassure 50%
- Ride 50%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 5**

**BONDS: 4**

### *Technology Salvager*

The world is scattered with technological junk. Broken items that lie everywhere discarded. To most people they are nothing but refuse – but not to you. You understand enough about the old Pre-Apocalypse sciences and technologies that you can salvage items and create lash-ups which (for a while at least) solve some of the problems of everyday life. Because of that, folks like having you around. Still, it would be better if your things didn't keep breaking down again. Can't have everything though.

**RECOMMENDED STATS: INT**

**ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:**

- Appraise 30%
- Craft (Mechanical) 40% or Craft (Electronics) 40%
- Heavy Machinery 30%
- Scavenge 60%
- Search 40%
- Survival (choose one) 30%
- Technology Use 40%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Drive 60%
- Firearms 60%
- Heavy Weapons 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Ranged Weapons 60%

**STARTING RESOURCES: 7**

**BONDS: 2**

### Wise One

In the societies that have sprung up after the Apocalypse most people's day-to-day life is consumed with the struggle to survive. But there are a scant few who aspire to keep the wisdom and learning from the past alive, in the hope that one day that may prove helpful to rebuilding a society. You're one of those 'wise persons' who acts as a kind of time capsule for old knowledge and a repository for new learning about the broken world.

**RECOMMENDED STATS:** INT, POW

#### ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Art (choose one) 30%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- History 40%
- Medicine 40%
- Pharmacy 20%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Reassure 40%
- Science (choose one) 50%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Forensics 40%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Occult 50%
- Research 40%
- Science (choose another one) 40%

**STARTING RESOURCES:** 5

**BONDS:** 4

### Detailed Description: Adversity Skill Points

Depending on the harshness of the environment where your Survivor grew up, he or she may gain **Adversity Skill Point Picks**. Each such pick provides a 20-point increase in rating for one skill from a pre-defined list.

The number of Adversity Skill Point Picks your Survivor receives depends on the Harshness Descriptor for the setting:

- **Normal(ish)** setting: no Adversity Skill Point Picks
- **Harsh** setting: 1 Adversity Skill Point Pick
- **Very Harsh** setting: 2 Adversity Skill Point Picks
- **Nightmarish** setting: 4 Adversity Skill Point Picks

Adversity Skill Point Picks can *ONLY* be spent to increase ratings in the following skills:

- Any **Post-Apocalypse Lore** skill specialization
- **Scavenge**
- Any **Survival** skill specialization
- **Unnatural**

You can pick the same skill more than once, but no skill or specialization can benefit more than *twice* from Adversity Skill Point Picks.

## Detailed Description: Resources

Every Survivor has a Resources rating between 0 and 20. This number is an abstraction that represents the size, value, and utility of the **personal pool of resources** to which he or she has ready access. In the Post-Apocalypse world, access to pieces of half-functioning technology, or rare ammunition is often scarce. In some cases, access to essentials such as food and clean drinking water may be similarly hard to come by. A Survivor with greater access to such resources is “wealthy” (by the Post-Apocalypse definition of the word).

The Resources rating represents a pool of previously unspecified items *in addition to* any named pieces of equipment that appears on the Survivor’s character sheet.

There are two ways in which Resources ratings can become important during a game of *APOCTHULHU*:

1. The rating can be used as a measure of status and wealth which dictates how Non-Player Characters react to the Survivors; a Survivor who has a sizeable cache of resources might find NPCs more willing to listen to what he or she has to say ... or alternatively more likely to want to take some of those resources away.
2. Game encounters may involve challenges which can be overcome through possession of particular – possibly obscure – items or resources; a Survivor who flossicks through his or her trove of (unnamed) personal items may locate just the thing that is needed. Usually this requires a successful **Resources test** (a 1D100 roll against **Resources × 5**).

A Survivor’s Resources rating may change during play as especially significant items are pulled from the “bag of tricks”, items are destroyed, or new equipment caches are picked over for useful additions.

### Determining the Starting Resources rating

Your Survivor’s Archetype determines the starting value for his or her Resources rating; it is a number listed as part of the Archetype description.

If you would prefer this value to be higher, you have the option to “trade-in” one or more **BONUS SKILL POINT** picks (see page 30). For the first such skill pick traded-in, your Survivor receives a +5 boost to Resources rating. Each additional pick you trade in beyond the first, grants your Survivor a further +2 boost to Resources. You may sacrifice as many skill picks as you wish, although each will reduce your opportunities to round-out your Survivor with extra skills during a later step of Survivor creation.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to play a Survivor who is entirely bereft of resources (i.e., has a Resources rating of 0), you can choose to do so and in return receive one extra Bonus Skill Point Pick for later use.

Rating	What the Rating Represents
0	No ownership of any item of value or function. Penury. Near starvation.
1-4	Owns only basic and valueless items; barely enough to eke out a basic life. Always hungry.
5-8	Owns a sparse collection of valuable or useful items, some in terrible condition. Sometimes hungry.
9-12	Owns a modest cache of valuable, useful items. Usually has basic food.
13-16	Owns a fair stock of low-grade valuable items. Occasional access to superior food.
17-18	Owns an impressive collection of useful gear; considered wealthy / well-resourced. Regular access to superior food
19	The envy of most Survivors; owns numerous sought-after items of impressive function. Access to the best food and beverages.
20+	Access to unparalleled quantities of valuable or useful items. A stockpile of wealth. Choice of any available food, in any quantity.



## Permanent Resources, Resources At-Hand, and Resource Checks

The full value established above is called the Survivor's **Permanent Resources** rating, since it measures the sum total of everything he or she owns – regardless of where it is kept.

Carrying around a lot of bulky equipment everywhere is usually not practical, so Survivors with significant Resources ratings (7+ points) will usually need to **stow** some of their junk in a vehicle or conveyance. Those with even more resources will need to **store** the overflow in a fixed 'home base' location.

The table nearby shows a breakdown of 'at hand' vs 'stowed' vs 'in storage' Resource rating points. There is space on the Survivor sheet to record this breakdown of the total Permanent Resource rating into the three categories. The three numbers ('at-hand', 'stowed', and 'in storage') must always add up to the Permanent Resources rating.

The Permanent Resources rating measures both the quantity of items your Survivor has dedicated access to, and their usefulness. This in turn governs *how many times* per mission or expedition the Survivor can successfully pull out useful items before the pool is temporarily exhausted.

In game terms this is represented by the number of **Resource Check boxes** the Survivor has available – these are explained further below. The number of check boxes available to your Survivor is also indicated on the table nearby: record it on the Survivor Sheet by blacking out but those boxes available to the Survivor (e.g., for a Survivor with only one checkbox available, fill in all but one of the available boxes with solid black – use pencil since your Survivor may open up more boxes later).

### <box>Resources Breakdown & Check Boxes

Permanent Resource Rating	"At Hand" / "Stowed" / "In Storage"	Check Boxes
0	0 / 0 / 0	0
1	1 / 0 / 0	1
2	2 / 0 / 0	1
3	3 / 0 / 0	1
4	4 / 0 / 0	1
5	5 / 0 / 0	1
6	6 / 0 / 0	1
7	6 / 1 / 0	2
8	6 / 2 / 0	2
9	6 / 3 / 0	2
10	6 / 4 / 0	2
11	6 / 5 / 0	2
12	6 / 6 / 0	2
13	6 / 6 / 1	3
14	6 / 6 / 2	3
15	6 / 6 / 3	3
16	6 / 6 / 4	3
17	6 / 6 / 5	3
18	6 / 6 / 6	3
19	6 / 6 / 7	3
20+	6 / 6 / 8+	3

</box>

### Pushing the Limits

As indicated in the table, it is typically only possible for your Survivor to keep 6 points of Resources on their person ('at-hand') and another 6 points 'stowed' in a handy vehicle. These aren't hard and fast limits, but represent what

can comfortably be carried/transported without impacting travel speed and convenience. If situations arise where the Survivor really needs to carry more (e.g., carry the entire 10 points of Permanent Resources by hand while fleeing a burning building), it is up to the Game Moderator to decide what is possible and what impacts might arise from your Survivor or vehicle being 'overloaded'. The Game Moderator might rule this has an impact on the rate of travel, or require an **Athletics, Ride** or **Drive** test to keep moving forward under excess load.

Generally, stretching the limits beyond 12 points carried 'at hand' or 12 points stowed in a vehicle is impossible.

There is no limit to the amount of Resources rating points that can be 'in storage' at a fixed location (e.g., a home base or workshop).

### *Which Rating for a Test?*

Any time your Survivor's Resources rating is the subject of a test, the effective rating number that is used should reflect the situation. It should be determined by the amount of Resources available to your Survivor at that moment. If he or she is at home base, that will probably be the full Permanent Resources amount; if your Survivor is close to his or her vehicle that might be the 'at-hand' value PLUS the stowed value. If your Survivor is far away from both home base and vehicle, the number is likely to be just the 'at-hand' number.

### *Which Rating for NPC Reactions?*

When using Resources as a means of determining Non-Player Character reactions, the rating that is used also depends on the situation. Does the NPC in question know all about your Survivor's reputation as a 'wealthy' sort? If so, maybe the full Permanent Resources score can be used even if only some of that wealth is currently on display. Alternatively, if the NPC is suspicious of your Survivor, it might be hard to get him or her to believe in the existence of any resources beyond what they can see for themselves.

### **The Bag of Tricks**

The higher your Survivor's effective Resources rating, the higher the likelihood that his or her accessible personal cache of items may contain something helpful to a situation or problem.

- In situations where **non-specialist resources or items** are needed, simply make a test of your Survivor's Resources  $\times 5$ . Success means that something helpful was found.
- In cases where a situation requires a **very specialized** resource or item, the Game Moderator might rule it is too rare to find in your Survivor's pool of gear. Alternatively, the GM *may* still permit a test of Resources  $\times 5$  roll to locate the rare equipment – *but* rule that success will **permanently reduce** your Survivor's Resources rating by a few points (the number being at the Game Moderator's discretion).

Depending on the specific Post-Apocalypse setting, the difficulty of Resources tests and the quality of the items unearthed through successful rolls may vary. See **A WORLD IN DISORDER** starting page 74.

Rules of Thumb:

- Tests to find items or resource types that are considered *Hard to Get* in the setting are made at HALF the Survivor's effective Resources rating
- Tests to find items or resource types that are considered *Very Hard to Get* or *Impossible to Get* in the setting are made at QUARTER the Survivor's effective Resources rating
- A test that is a standard success, but which is only just under the target number might yield a sub-standard version of the item or resource. A critical success will always yield the best possible quality available.

### **Checkboxes and Per-Adventure Limits**

While your Survivor's personal Resources can prove helpful during an adventure, there are practical limits to the number of times that items can be pulled from it during a single adventure or expedition.

After each Resources test resulting in success, place a check mark in one of the Resource Check boxes on the Survivor's character sheet. When all the boxes are full, the Survivor's resources pool is temporarily exhausted and can't contribute anything more until he or she has some downtime to replenish or reorganize it (see **REPLENISHING RESOURCES, REMOVING CHECKMARKS**, page 27).

### Pooling Resources

Sometimes, it may be appropriate for two or more Survivors to pool their personal caches of salvaged junk to improve the likelihood of finding a rare but crucial component. Any Survivor can contribute items to the pool, as long as he or she hasn't temporarily exhausted their resource pool (by filling all check boxes).

When making a roll to search such a **combined** resource pool, the effective Resources rating of the collection is equal to the **highest** individual Resources rating included in the collection **plus ONE FIFTH** of the Resources rating of every additional individual stockpile added to the heap (round fractions up). This reflects duplication of items or functions.

Success on a combined test causes a check mark to be placed on the sheet of the Survivor whose FULL Resources rating was used. Others who contributed a smaller amount to the total do not receive a check mark.

### Losing Resources

A Survivor's Resources rating may decrease due to events that occur during play:

- As described above, producing a highly specialized item as the result of a Resources test may cause the Permanent Resources rating to be reduced by one or more.
- If the Survivor is robbed or otherwise loses control of a significant amount of his or her personal equipment, the Game Moderator may decide this warrants a loss of a proportional amount of Resources rating.
- If a proportion of the Survivor's resources are stowed in a vehicle, the theft or destruction of the vehicle is likely to cause some or all to be lost, the exact proportion decided by the Game Moderator.
- If a proportion of the Survivor's resources are stored in a fixed location, a disaster that outright destroys or significantly damages the location will likewise cause a reduction to permanent Resources. The points lost are based on the number of 'in storage' rating points stored at the location (i.e., not carried or stowed in a vehicle). The same loss may occur if the permanent location becomes invaded or overtaken by a hostile party – although in that situation the loss might be temporary, assuming the Survivors can win back their former stronghold at some future date.

Whenever Resource rating decreases, the player should recalculate the "at-hand"/stowed/stored breakdown of points as well as the number of check boxes available to the Survivor.

### Increasing the Resources Rating During Play

During an *APOCTHULHU* adventure your Survivor may gain access to a cache of items ripe for the taking. When this occurs, the Game Moderator will decide the number of Resources rating points each Survivor might potentially plunder. For a small find this might be modest (1 point or 1D2 points), but for a massive discovery it could be a healthy improvement (1D6 or higher).

Increasing your Survivor's Permanent Resources rating requires a die roll. With percentile dice, attempt to roll above **Permanent Resources rating × 5**. This reflects the fact that the more your Survivor already owns, the harder it is to acquire additional new items he or she does not already have. If the test is successful, increase the Resources rating by the amount or die roll indicated by the GM.

Whenever Resource rating increases, the player should recalculate the "at-hand"/stowed/stored breakdown of points as well as the number of check boxes available to the Survivor.

## Replenishing Resources, Removing Checkmarks

The Game Moderator will determine when your Survivor group can take the time to replenish or reorganize their Resources pools. Usually this happens between missions, expeditions, or adventures (see **DOWNTIME**, page 70). Once the Survivors have invested an appropriate period of downtime all check marks can be erased from the character sheet.

## Detailed Description: Bonds

Bonds measure your Survivor's relationships with the vital people and societies in his or her life: loved ones, family members, and wider communities. A Bond can protect your Survivor from SAN loss (see **PROJECTING ONTO A BOND** on page 67) or offer a chance to repress the effects of a disorder or temporary insanity (see **REPRESSING INSANITY** on page 67).

Bonds are not merely motivations or things your Survivor likes. They are your Survivor's connection to humanity and its social structures. A Survivor with no Bonds is more susceptible to psychological trauma than one who has people waiting back home.

Your Survivor's Archetype determines how many Bonds your Survivor begins with. The more trying and time-consuming the Archetype, the fewer Bonds your Survivor is able to maintain.

There are two distinct types of Bonds, each handled slightly differently – they are **Individual Bonds** and **Community Bonds**. When creating a Survivor, you are free to choose which of his or her starting bonds is of each type.

### Individual Bonds

An Individual Bond is an emotional connection to a single person. It could be familial or marital, or it could just be a close friendship or association. To qualify as an Individual Bond the person must be someone the Survivor believes (hopes?) to be still alive.

Each Individual Bond begins with a score equal to your Survivor's CHA. It cannot typically go above this value.

#### Sample Individual Bonds

- Spouse or ex-spouse
- Son or daughter
- Parent or grandparent
- Best friend
- Members of the same scavenging crew (see **BONDS FORMED THROUGH SHARED ADVERSITY**, below)
- Spiritual counsellor

#### *Changes to Individual Bonds During Play*

Bonds' scores often deteriorate because of your Survivor's experiences of the horrors of the Post-Apocalypse world. A Bond increases if it is cultivated between adventures (see **DOWNTIME** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). An Individual Bond can never have a score higher than your Survivor's CHA. Any time CHA drops, each Individual Bond drops by the same amount.

Individual Bonds are vulnerable. If the Survivor learns that the individual has died or gone permanently insane, the Bond is destroyed. The Bond is also permanently broken when its score drops to 0 (see **BROKEN BONDS**, nearby).

### Community Bonds

A Community Bond is a relationship between the Survivor and a broader community of individuals; it reflects the Survivor's status within that community, and the likelihood of other people following his or her instructions or desires.

A community may be a geographical association of people (e.g., ‘The Survivors of Compound N’) or it may be a society of like-minded individuals (e.g., ‘The Church of the Silver Sentinel’). A Survivor can have more than one Community Bond, each describing his or her status within the hierarchy of a different societal structure.

Community Bonds are measured on a scale of 1 to 20, with an indicative meaning shown below:

Rating	What the Rating Represents
1	Disgraced member; on the verge of being banished from the society.
2-4	Shunned member of the community; someone who is actively looked down on by most
5-8	Standard member of the community; one of the pack, whose opinion is unlikely to matter
9-12	Well-regarded member of the community; favorably viewed by many other members
13-16	Important member of the community; respected by most other members
17-18	Influential member of community, involved in most decision-making; liked by most
19	An extremely influential member of the community, looked up to by virtually everyone
20	Top-tier of leadership in the community; the head honcho.

If a Community Bond is chosen during the creation of your Survivor, it begins with a default rating of half the Survivor’s Permanent Resources rating, rounded up (see **RESOURCES** on page 22). In a few cases, a Survivor’s Archetype indicates that he or she has a Community Bond with a certain fixed rating – the final rating should be either that value or half the Permanent Resources rating, whichever is higher.

This value can be optionally increased during the creation of your Survivor by sacrificing one or more **BONUS SKILL POINT** picks (see page 30); the first skill pick sacrificed in this manner gives a bonus of +5 to the Community Bond’s rating; each subsequent sacrifice adds +2 (to a maximum of 20).

It is also possible to elect for your Survivor to take a Community Bond with a rating of 1 (and suffer the social effects of being a pariah to fellow members) and receive one extra Bonus Skill Point Pick to use on purchasing skills later in the process.

#### Sample Community Bonds

- Group which shelters in the same compound
- Church or support group
- Craft or trade guild
- Secret society

#### *Changes to Community Bonds During Play*

The rating for a Community Bond applies individually to every member of that community, and to the community as a whole. If a Community Bond decreases in value, the relationship with each member of the community deteriorates. A Community Bond is permanently broken when its score drops to 0 (and the Survivor is likely cast out of the nominated community).

If the community itself is entirely destroyed (e.g., every member killed or sent insane), or if the Survivor permanently leaves it (e.g., by relocating to live in a new compound) the bond is destroyed.

If a Community Bond is broken by either means, the Survivor will likely suffer negative impacts (see **BROKEN BONDS**, nearby).

During play, events may arise where the reactions of NPCs from the Survivor’s bonded community (or the community as a whole) have an impact. In some cases, the Survivor may instigate such situations (e.g., by requesting aid from the community or trying to convince them of impending danger). In such situations the Game Moderator may ask for a test against **Community Bond Rating × 5**. Success means that the NPC or the community reacts favorably.

## Describing Bonds

Identify each Individual and Community Bond: “My Wife.” “My Husband and Kids.” “The Survivors of Compound N.” “My Ex-Partner in the Wasteland Dogs.”

An Individual Bond must be a real person or group of people who the Survivor believes to be alive, and with which there is some (potential) opportunity to interact.

A Community Bond must be a real group who recognizes the Survivor as a member.

## Broken Bonds

When a Bond deteriorates, that relationship becomes strained. Exactly what shape that takes in play is up to you and the Game Moderator (playing the NPCs).

Bonds often fall apart because of events beyond your Survivor’s control. An example for Individual Bonds: your Survivor’s husband might leave for another woman. An example for Community Bonds: a new leader might ascend to power who is actively antagonistic towards your Survivor.

If such a disaster harms the subject of a Bond, that reduces the Bond’s value by 1D4. If that disaster permanently removes the subject of the Bond, that Bond is gone. Cross it off the sheet.

When damage to a Bond reduces it to 0, the relationship is damaged beyond repair. Cross it off the sheet. The only way to regain a Bond with that character or community is to build it from scratch as if it had never existed (see **DOWNTIME** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for details on creating new Bonds).

The breaking of any Bond is almost certainly traumatic and is likely to trigger a Sanity test due to Helplessness (see page 59).

When you cross a Bond off your Survivor’s character sheet, don’t erase it. After all, there’s no forgetting a vital relationship that went bad.

## Bonds Forged Through Shared Adversity

Survivors often band together into small tight-knit groups, to enhance their chances. This is true when the group is alone in the wasteland; it’s often also true even when they are outsiders in a larger settlement of survivors. If those tight-knit groups go through terrifying ordeals together, there is a strong chance that they will become psychologically bound together through that shared experience.

In game terms, groups of Survivors tend to form individual bonds to one another when they spend most of their time fighting the forces of the Mythos. Whenever your Survivor is part of a team that completes a harrowing adventure, there’s a chance of such trauma-generated bonds forming or deepening. This is the case if the scenario played out in a way where:

- One or more members of the team suffered temporary insanity, or
- One or more members of the team gained a new psychological disorder, or
- One or more members of the team died or was incapacitated by physical injuries, or
- Any other event occurred that the Game Moderator thinks was shocking enough to constitute severe trauma.

In the downtime after the adventure (see **DOWNTIME** on page 69), all Survivors that made it back must make a SAN test. If the roll succeeds, nothing changes. If your Survivor fails the SAN roll, he or she gains or strengthens an individual bond with EACH fellow Survivor who also made it through the same trauma (up to a maximum of five fellow Survivors).

For each such fellow trauma-sufferer,

- If your Survivor has **no previous bond** with that person, he or she gains a brand-new individual Bond to that person at a rating equal to half your Survivor's CHA. Add the new Bond to your Survivor's character sheet. This focusing of attention comes at a detrimental cost to other pre-existing Bonds – you must lose 1D4 points from one other bond of your choice (either an Individual or Community Bond).
- If your Survivor **already has an Individual Bond** with that person, the bond is increased by 1D4 points (up to a maximum value equal to CHA); at the same time 1 point must be subtracted from another bond of the player's choice (either an Individual or Community Bond). Note that even if all your Survivor's existing bonds are already at the maximum score (and hence can't increase), you still need to pick a bond to weaken by 1.

Remember that if a Bond is ever reduced to 0 or less it is broken, as per the previous section.

When choosing an Bond to weaken during this process you CANNOT pick a bond to an individual who was with your Survivor on the recently completed adventure. You MAY, however, pick an Individual Bond gained from an earlier shared traumatic encounter.

Rather than treating this as a mechanical process, you and your Game Moderator are encouraged to work together to describe the changed dynamic between your Survivor and those around them. If points have been gained with fellow adventurers, does that mean they are beginning to feel comfort that their colleagues will always have their back? Or has the shared experience kindled a romance of sorts? Conversely, if a bond has been weakened, does that mean the Survivor has been neglecting a member of their circle of friends and both are now feeling their friendship is slipping away?

If a community bond has weakened does it mean that the excessive time spent socializing with the tight-knit group has alienated others in the community to the point that they have lost confidence in the Survivor? Or has he or she just missed so many gatherings that their standing as a high-status member of society has eroded?

### Detailed Description: Bonus Skill Points

The skill package associated with your Survivor's Archetype coupled with the Adversity skills from the harshness of the world, represent his or her core proficiencies. But they certainly aren't the full story about everything the Survivor is good at.

Each Survivor **begins with ten Bonus Skill Point Picks**. Each pick provides a boost of 20 points to whichever skill it is applied. Alternatively, some of these skill picks can be **traded-in** for non-skill benefits instead (see box nearby).

When applying a skill pick to a skill which has NOT been set by the Survivor's Archetype or increased through Adversity Skill Picks, then add the 20 to its **base rating**. Otherwise, add 20 to its **current score**. This allows your Survivor to specialize in certain Archetypal skills or to learn a little about skills not included in his or her Archetype. You can even boost a single skill more than once, adding +20 each time.

Unless the Game Moderator says otherwise, you can't raise a skill higher than 80% during Survivor creation. You must assign (or trade-in) all bonus points to skills before play begins.

### <box>Trading-in Skill Point Picks

As described in previous sections on **RESOURCES** (page 23) and **BONDS** (page 27), you have the option during Survivor creation to trade-in one or more Bonus Skill Picks in return for non-skill advantages. Alternatively, your Survivor can earn an *extra* Bonus Skill Pick or two if you are willing to sacrifice some of the normal benefits of those other starting ratings.



### Trading Skill Point Picks for Resources Rating

You may elect to sacrifice one or more Bonus Skill Point Picks to improve your Survivor's starting rating in Permanent Resources:

- Sacrificing one Bonus Skill Point Pick grants a +5 increase to Permanent Resources.
- Sacrificing further Bonus Picks grants +2 for each extra pick sacrificed.
- There is no limit to how high the Permanent Resources rating can go.
- Note that boosting Permanent Resources rating will also increase the starting value of all Community Bonds (which start equal to half this value).

As an alternative, if you are willing for your Survivor to have a Resources rating of 0 (absolutely without any worldly goods), that sacrifice earns one EXTRA Bonus Skill Point Pick.

### Trading Skill Point Picks for Community Bond Rating

You can elect to sacrifice one or more Bonus Skill Point Picks to improve the starting rating of your Survivor's Community Bonds.

- Sacrificing one Bonus Skill Point Pick grants a +5 increase to the value of **one** Community Bond.
- Sacrificing further Bonus Picks to the **same Bond** grants +2 for each extra pick sacrificed. Sacrificing a pick towards a different Bond achieves the full increase stated above.
- Community Bond strengths can only be increased to a maximum of 20 (at which point your Survivor is the community's top leader).

As an alternative, if you are willing for your Survivor to set a Community Bond to a value of 1 (ready to break at the slightest provocation, with possibly disastrous social outcome), that sacrifice earns one EXTRA Bonus Skill Point Pick. You can claim this reward multiple times if you wish to set several Community Bonds to 1.

</box>

## Detailed Description: Skills

A skill represents expertise gained with intensive training or study. If you make a skill roll, your Survivor is doing something that would leave untrained people lost. Anyone can attempt a DEX×5 test to keep from falling over in an out-of-control wasteland truck; only someone who's been trained in the Drive skill can steer the battered vehicle away from the grasping, howling *thing* tearing at its cabin.

Roll your Survivor's skill or lower on 1D100 to succeed at using the skill under dire circumstances. Skills improve through practice and experience.

### Base Rating

Every skill lists its base rating. If a skill has a base rating of 1% or greater, anyone can attempt to use it. A skill at 0% can't be used at all. No skill can be higher than 99%.

Rating	What the Rating Represents
01% to 19%	Dabbler.
20% to 29%	A dedicated hobbyist; with a foreign language you can have rudimentary conversations.
30% to 39%	Equivalent of a pre-Apocalypse College minor or basic training.
40% to 59%	Equivalent of a pre-Apocalypse College major or years of experience; with 50% in a foreign language you have native fluency.
60% to 79%	Decades of experience, or equivalent of a pre-Apocalypse graduate or doctoral degree.
80% to 99%	A lifetime's pursuit or equivalent of multiple related pre-Apocalypse doctorates.

## <box>Base Ratings for Skills

>> Skills and Base Ratings	
Alertness 20%	Melee Weapons 30%
Anthropology 0%	Military Science 0%
Appraise 10%	Navigate 10%
Archeology 0%	Occult 10%
Art (Type) 0%	Persuade 20%
Artillery 0%	Pharmacy 0%
Athletics 30%	Pilot (Type) 0%
Craft (Type) 0%	Post-Apocalypse Lore (Type) 0%
Demolitions 0%	Ranged Weapons 20%
Disguise 10%	Reassure 10%
Dodge 30%	Research 10%
Drive 20%	Ride 10%
Firearms 20%	Scavenge 10%
First Aid 10%	Science (Type) 0%
Foreign Language (Type) 0%	Search 20%
Forensics 0%	Stealth 10%
Heavy Machinery 10%	Surgery 0%
Heavy Weapons 0%	Survival (Type) 10%
History 10%	Swim 20%
Insight 10%	Technology Use 0%
Law (Type) 0%	Unarmed Combat 40%
Medicine 0%	Unnatural 0%

</box>

### How Skills Work

For details of specific skills, see the listing in **SKILL DESCRIPTIONS** starting on page 33.

When your Survivor uses a skill, sometimes you roll dice and sometimes you don't.

**USING A SKILL WITHOUT A ROLL:** When circumstances are calm and controlled, you don't roll dice to have your Survivor use a skill; the Game Moderator just needs to know how high your Survivor's rating is. Driving a truck when things are calm simply requires a certain amount in the Drive skill. Using a skill without rolling means randomness is not a factor. It's about having the right skill, looking in the right place, and asking the right questions. The more subtle the clue, the higher the skill your Survivor must have to figure it out.

**USING A SKILL WITH A ROLL:** Roll skill dice only when the outcome is in doubt. That usually means there's a crisis or the circumstances are not under your Survivor's control. The higher the skill rating, the better your Survivor's chance of success. For details, see **USING SKILLS** on page 41.

### Common Knowledge

Most Survivors picked up some basic knowledge as they grew up in the horrors of the Post-Apocalypse world (or lived through the Apocalypse). Because of this, they have some basic understanding of common things like the nature of the terrors that stalk the land; and some basic abilities like how to flee danger. These don't require specific skills. Skills represents deep, specialized training or education, but Survivors can sometimes get by on common knowledge. Calling on common knowledge requires an **INT×5** test or having a certain level of INT. Charming someone with unskilled art is usually a **CHA** or **DEX** test. Other efforts use other stats. The Game Moderator decides whether a task requires the general ability of a stat or the specialization of a skill.

### Improving Skills

We learn from failure. If your Survivor has at least 1% in a skill (any except Unnatural), it can improve when your Survivors attempts to use it and *fails*. Gaining an entirely new skill requires special training (see **DOWNTIME** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

On the character sheet, next to every skill except Unnatural, there is a check box. When your Survivor tries to use a skill and fails, put a checkmark in that skill's box. At the end of each game session, add 1 percentage point to every skill that has a check next to it and erase the check.

**FAILING WITHOUT ROLLING:** If your Survivor attempts a challenging task that requires a certain level of skill but not a roll, and fails because the task requires more skill than your Survivor has, put a check in the box.

## Skill Descriptions

### *Alertness*

Base Rating: 20%

Alertness detects danger. Use it to hear a safety being switched off, to understand the mumbling on the other side of a wall, to spot the bulge of a flare gun hidden under a jacket, or to catch someone who is trying to escape notice using Stealth.

### *Anthropology*

Base Rating: 0%

The study of living human cultures. Use it to understand morals, religious beliefs, customs, and mores, and to identify (but not translate) obscure languages. Where History is about the distant past and Archeology studies physical artifacts, Anthropology is about the behaviors of living cultures and how they relate to each other and the past.

### *Appraise*

Base Rating: 10%

The ability to quickly determine the true value of an item, in the context of the Post-Apocalypse world (where value is not defined by money but by utility or aesthetic value). This is an important skill in ensuring that bartering exchange deals are favorable to you. It is also helpful in know what items or resources others might be willing to trade to obtain.

### *Archeology*

Base Rating: 0%

The study of physical remains of human cultures. In a world where mass cataclysms have demolished vast swathes of the old cities and structures, there is no shortage of things to dig up. Use it to analyze a ruined structure to determine useful information about its purpose before the Apocalypse or the circumstances of its destruction. Where Anthropology is about living cultures and History is a broad study of the past, Archeology discerns meaning from the artifacts left behind by the Apocalypse.

### *Art (Type)*

Base Rating: 0%

Expertise at creating or performing a work that sways emotions and opinions. It also encompasses knowledge of techniques and trends in your field, and the ability tell a particular creator's real work from a fake. Anyone can draw a rough sketch; the Art skill reflects knowledge, practice, and talent. Each type of Art is a separate skill: Acting, Creative Writing, Dance, Flute, Forgery, Guitar, Painting, Poetry, Scriptwriting, Sculpture, Singing, Violin, etc.

### *Artillery*

Base Rating: 0%

Safe and accurate use of mortars, missiles, howitzers, tank cannons, and other heavy gunnery. Use it to destroy troops or a hard target in battle.

## *Athletics*

Base Rating: 30%

Your Survivor trains to get the most out of his or her strength and agility. Strength and Dexterity cover raw physical power and manual dexterity; the Athletics skill represents long practice doing things like running, jumping, climbing, and throwing.

Use Athletics to:

- Outrun someone (see **OPPOSED TESTS** on page 44).
- Jump an intimidating gap.
- Climb in a crisis.
- Land safely in a fall of up to three yards.
- Hit a target with a thrown knife or put a grenade exactly on target.
- Catch something without warning, such as intercepting a thrown grenade.

## *Craft (Type)*

Base Rating: 0%

Making and repairing sophisticated tools and structures. A job that most people could figure out does not require the Craft skill, only an INT or DEX test. Use Craft for specialized work that needs training: Craft (Mechanic) to get a broken engine working — or to sabotage one beyond repair; Craft (Locksmith) to open a lock without a key; Craft (Gunsmith) to repair a broken firearm, and so on.

A common specialization is Craft (Jury-Rigging) which represents an ability to create lash-ups of equipment to perform a function when the proper tool for the job is unavailable.

The Game Moderator decides whether a task requires Craft. Each Craft type is a separate skill: Blacksmith, Carpenter, Farmer, Gunsmith, Jury-Rigging, Locksmith, Mechanic, etc.

## *Demolitions*

Base Rating: 0%

Safe handling of explosives in a crisis. Use it to disarm a bomb, set a charge to destroy a target remotely, create home-made explosives from supplies at the hardware store, or analyze a blast to determine exactly what caused it. Failure when handling a bomb means your Survivor needs more time. If it's a crisis that requires a roll, a fumble means an accidental explosion.

## *Disguise*

Base Rating: 10%

Alter your Survivor's appearance, voice, posture, body language, and mannerisms to avoid recognition without drawing attention.

## *Dodge*

Base Rating: 30%

Evading danger through instinct and reflexes. Use Dodge to avoid an attack. Against firearms and explosives, Dodge is only useful to get to cover (see **DODGING RANGED ATTACKS** on page 50).

## *Drive*

Base Rating: 20%

Handling any ground-based vehicle (e.g., automobile, wagon, motorcycle) safely in a crisis. Unless the Game Moderator says otherwise, every Survivor can drive a vehicle safely in normal conditions. Use this skill to keep a vehicle safe in a high-speed pursuit or on dangerous terrain.

### *Firearms*

Base Rating: 20%

Safe and accurate shooting with small arms in combat. Use it to hit a target despite the adrenaline, panic, and shock of violence interfering with hand-eye coordination.

### *First Aid*

Base Rating: 10%

The initial treatment and stabilization of injuries. Use it to help a character recover lost Hit Points. By comparison, Surgery corrects a severe wound and Medicine ensures long-term recovery. (See **HEALING** on page 51.)

### *Foreign Language (Type)*

Base Rating: 0%

Fluency in another language. Each foreign language is a distinct skill. Having 20% allows halting conversations; at 50% your Survivor speaks and reads like a native. The greater the skill, the greater the complexity of the information your Survivor comprehends and the less time it takes. You don't need to roll a Foreign Language skill unless the Game Moderator says the situation is exceptionally difficult.

### *Forensics*

Base Rating: 0%

Gathering detailed information and evidence based on an assessment of human remains. Use it to hypothesize about the cause of a fire, trace the trajectory that a bullet followed, or determine whether a pool of blood is consistent with a major or minor injury.

Most of the technology that helped forensic scientists before the Apocalypse is not generally available or functional, so this skill is more focused on things that can be deduced from a knowledge of the human body and common modes of injury.

### *Heavy Machinery*

Base Rating: 10%

Safe operation of a tractor, crane, bulldozer, tank, heavy truck, or other big machine in a crisis.

### *Heavy Weapons*

Base Rating: 0%

Safe and accurate use of man-portable heavy ordnance such as machine guns and rocket launchers. Use Heavy Weapons to suppress enemies or destroy a vehicle in combat.

### *History*

Base Rating: 10%

Uncovering facts and theories about the past including life prior to the Apocalypse, the circumstances which caused the 'end of the world', and (where appropriate) the events that have shaped the world since the Apocalypse. Use it to remember or find a key fact about ancient civilizations or human society just before the Apocalypse. While Anthropology is about living cultures and Archeology studies the meaning of ancient relics, History is a broad study of humanity.

### *Insight*

Base Rating: 10%

Insight obtains information about a subject — especially information the subject would rather conceal — through observation, conversation, or examining patterns of behavior and relationships. Use Insight to recognize signs of dishonesty from verbal cues and body language, gauge attitude and intentions, cultivate sources of information about a subject, determine what it would take to get a subject to cooperate, or recognize clues of what a subject wants to conceal.

Insight can notice signs of mental illness but Reassure would be needed to assist with a specific malady. A subject who deliberately tries to deceive your Survivor can attempt an opposed test comparing their Persuade against your Survivor's Insight (see **OPPOSED TESTS** on page 44).

### *Law (Type)*

Base Rating: 0%

In the world after the Apocalypse, few formal 'laws' are still observed. However, that doesn't mean there isn't an order to how society functions. Use this skill to understand and manipulate the power structures that exist within society, to either influence outcomes or bullshit your Survivor's way out of trouble.

Different societies in the Post-Apocalyptic world have their own systems of law — the understanding of each is a separate skill. Because all societies are based on common human behavior, you can attempt to use your Law skill at *half* chance to navigate the vagaries of an entirely new and unfamiliar social order.

### *Medicine*

Base Rating: 0%

The study and treatment of injury and illness. Use it to diagnose the cause of an injury, disease, or poisoning, identify abnormalities such as toxins or diseases, identify the cause and approximate time of death, identify a dead person's last meal, or prescribe proper long-term care. By comparison, First Aid keeps a patient alive until surgery is possible, and Surgery corrects a severe wound. (See **HEALING** on page 51).

### *Melee Weapons*

Base Rating: 30%

Lethal use of melee weapons in combat. Use it to hurt or kill an opponent with a knife, axe, club, or other hand-held weapon.

### *Military Science*

Base Rating: 0%

Knowledge of military culture, techniques, and regulations. Use it to identify threats in a battlefield, find accurate ranges, recognize weaknesses in a fortification, deduce the training level of a soldier or unit, reconstruct the events of a battle, or deploy forces advantageously in combat.

### *Navigate*

Base Rating: 10%

Finding your way quickly with maps, charts and tables, orienteering, compass, or dead reckoning.

### *Occult*

Base Rating: 10%

The study of the supernatural as understood by human traditions, including things like conspiracy theories, folklore, and cryptozoology. Use Occult to examine and deduce the intent of a ritual, or to identify occult traditions, groups, grimoires, tools, symbols, or legends. Occult can never tell a Survivor what's genuinely unnatural and what's just superstition or mythology. That's the province of the Unnatural skill.

### *Persuade*

Base Rating: 20%

Changing another's deeply held decision or desire. Use Persuade to get your Survivor's way when the subject is so stubborn, what your Survivor wants is so valuable, or the deception is so flagrant that Charisma isn't enough.

With Persuade, your Survivor might convince a witness that what she saw was innocuous and not unnatural, talk a compound leader into helping you cover up an outbreak to avoid a mass panic, or draw useful information out of an unwilling subject. This skill also allows your Survivor to resist persuasion and interrogation in opposed Persuade rolls (see **OPPOSED TESTS** on page 44).

### *Pharmacy*

Base Rating: 0%

Knowledge of drugs and herbal remedies, from their ingredients and creation, to their effects, uses, and misuses. Use it to identify and produce medicines and antidotes — as well as poisons.

Identifying a drug or medicinal herb requires at least 20% skill. Preparing a particularly powerful treatment safely, such as one with psychoactive effects, requires at least 40% skill or a successful roll. Misusing Pharmacy is a quick way to kill a patient (see **POISON AND DISEASE** on page 56).

### *Post-Apocalypse Lore (Type)*

Base Rating: 0%

When the Apocalypse came, thousands of years of human culture and society was swept away in an instant. Civilizations shattered; religions were snuffed out. What replaced them was a patchwork of different local cultures, organizations, and belief systems created by the few who survived.

This skill represents knowledge of one such culture, organization, or belief system. It doesn't cover the in-depth customs and regulations of such groups — that is the province of the Law skill.

A Survivor may have knowledge of several different facets of the Post-Apocalypse world — each is represented by a separate Post-Apocalypse Lore skill. Types might be:

- region-based (e.g., "Desert of Blasted Pillars"),
- supernatural-creature-based (e.g., "Sentient Shadows"),
- organization-based (e.g., "New Beginnings Community Network"), or
- new-religion-based (e.g., "Church of Melqart").

### *Pilot (Type)*

Base Rating: 0%

Piloting, navigating, and captaining waterborne, or airborne vehicles. Use it to keep a vessel safe in a crisis, such as through a storm or in a dangerous pursuit. Each vessel type is a separate skill: Airplane, Drone, Helicopter, Airship, Small Boat, Ship, etc.

### *Ranged Weapons*

Base Rating: 20%



The ability to accurately hit targets with ranged non-firearm weapons such as Bows, Crossbows, and Slings.

This skill isn't used for thrown weapons like Spears – those make use of the Athletics skill instead.

### *Reassure*

Base Rating: 10%

The world after the Apocalypse is corrosive to the mental health of Survivors. But humanity is a resilient species and even in a world where clinical psychotherapy no longer exists there are still tried and true methods for healing a shattered mind through empathy.

Use this skill to understand the mental illness afflicting a person, help an afflicted person along the journey back to sanity, or talk someone down when the mental illness threatens to take hold.

You can also use this skill to assist in social interactions with someone, to calm them from an agitated state in order to extract information from them.

You cannot use Reassure on yourself.

Using Reassure to aid someone who suffered exposure to Unnatural forces might cost the reassuring Survivor SAN; see **THREATS TO SAN** on page 59.

### *Research*

Base Rating: 10%

The ability to find specific information in a large repository or buried in files, records, or ledger books. Sure, most of the actual 'libraries' might have been destroyed in the Apocalypse, but there are still scattered collections that the knowledgeable can use to track down important information. Your Survivor can use this skill to navigate the ruins of a library catalogue system, pull out buried details in account records, or otherwise locate whatever relevant information lies buried in the ashes of the world.

Note that this is different to the Scavenge skill, which is used to locate physical resources or items rather than information.

### *Ride*

Base Rating: 10%

Handling, training, and riding an animal—horses, donkeys, camels, whatever. Use it to keep safe on an animal in a crisis and to keep riding animals safe, calm, and healthy.

### *Scavenge*

Base Rating: 10%

The Post-Apocalypse world is littered with useful items, buried in amongst the rubble and junk. Use this skill to find and salvage helpful pieces of equipment or locate valuable resources like food and water. Anyone can find items in places where they are likely to be found (e.g., bandages in a hospital); use this skill to find things in places where nobody else would think to look.

Depending on the specific Post-Apocalypse setting, the difficulty of Scavenge tests and the quality of the items unearthed by successful rolls may vary. See **A WORLD IN DISORDER** starting page 74.

Note that efforts to rummage for information rather than items is handled by the Research skill instead.

### *Science (Type)*

Base Rating: 0%

The deep study of the processes of the world. This is more than common schooling; anyone can attempt an INT test to remember facts from whatever (rudimentary) schooling they received. Science is used to find a key insight about the way the universe works — or at least, the way it's supposed to work. Each Science is a separate skill: Astronomy, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Engineering, Genetics, Geology, Mathematics, Meteorology, Physics, Planetology, Zoology, etc.

### *Search*

Base Rating: 20%

Finding things that are concealed or obscured from plain sight. Searching an abandoned convenience store may not require the Search skill, only time and effort, or a sufficiently high INT. Use Search to find an object that was hidden with the Stealth skill or is otherwise so well hidden or disguised that it needs an expert. The Game Moderator may roll the Search attempt, so you don't know whether your Survivor succeeded or failed.

### *Stealth*

Base Rating: 10%

Concealing your presence or activities. Use it to hide a pistol, camouflage a position, conceal an occult amulet, pick a pocket, move silently, follow without being seen, or blend into a crowd. A Survivor attempting Stealth can be detected only by an opposing Alertness or Search skill (see **OPPOSED TESTS** on page 44).

### *Surgery*

Base Rating: 0%

The treatment of an injury or abnormality, by invasive means. By comparison, First Aid keeps a patient alive until surgery is possible, and Medicine ensures long term recovery. (See **HEALING** on page 51.)

### *Survival (Type)*

Base Rating: 10%

Knowledge of the natural world. Use it to find tracks and trails, plan an expedition, predict weather, recognize when fauna or flora are unusual, use the environment to gather other information, or find food, water, and shelter. Each type of Survival is its own skill. Common types are Desert, Jungle, Tundra, Urban.

### *Swim*

Base Rating: 20%

Most Survivors can swim for leisure. Use the Swim skill in a dangerous crisis: going a long distance in choppy water, keeping a friend from drowning, or getting to a boat before the tentacled thing below grabs you.

### *Technology Use*

Base Rating: 0%

In the days immediately following the Apocalypse most types of modern technology stopped working; electrical and gas distribution ceased, and the communication networks halted because there was nobody to operate them. That doesn't mean that the world is not littered with useful pieces of *potentially* functional technology; just that it takes some in-depth knowledge to get those items to do anything beneficial.

Use this skill to boot-up long dead computer systems long enough to extract some key data, get a rusted-out steam engine working, or to short-circuit the jury-rigged surveillance camera that someone has set up to secure their base. It is often complemented by Craft skills like Craft (Jury-Rigging), Craft (Locksmith) and Craft (Mechanics).

## Unarmed Combat

Base Rating: 40%

Self-defense. A fight between untrained combatants often involves more shoving and shouting than real violence. Use Unarmed Combat to hurt or kill an opponent with your Survivor's bare hands (or feet, elbows, teeth, or head).

## Unnatural

Base Rating: 0%

Knowledge of the fundamental, mind-shattering secrets of the universe. The things that slithered into the world when the Apocalypse happened. Use it to remember, recognize, or research facts about the things humans consider unnatural. This goes far beyond the occult, because the Unnatural skill represents things that are real. Use it to sift through the darkest parts of myth and folklore and recognize which of it is true.

Your Survivor's SAN score can *never* be higher than 99 minus his or her Unnatural skill rating.

## Detailed Description: Mental Damage from Harsh Environments

Survivors that have grown up in difficult and brutal Post-Apocalyptic worlds are likely to have picked up some mental scarring along the way. This can leave them hardened to certain types of traumatic stimuli. It might also make them psychologically distant from those around them, or even afflicted with mental disorders.

Mental Damage gained from a harsh early life can take several forms:

1. Becoming adapted to specific types of psychological trauma (see **ADAPTING TO SAN LOSS**, page 67),
2. **MENTAL DISORDERS** (page 62), or
3. Generally becoming more distant with other people.

The table below shows the possible mental damage to your Survivor based on the Harshness Descriptor for the environment he or she grew up in.

Harshness Descriptor	Potential for Mental Damage
Normal(ish)	None
Harsh	If CHA or POW Is less than 7, Survivor loses 1D4 from two Bonds (player choice, each can be either an Individual or Community Bond)
Very Harsh	1. Make a POW×4 test; failure indicates 1 starting mental disorder 2. If CHA or POW Is less than 10, Survivor starts Adapted to either Violence OR Helplessness (pick one; apply the necessary modifiers to stats and bonds, see below)
Nightmarish	1. Make TWO POW×4 tests; each failure indicates a starting mental disorder 2. Survivor starts Adapted to either Violence OR Helplessness (pick one). If CHA or POW Is less than 10, Survivor is Adapted to <i>both</i> . Apply the necessary modifiers to stats and bonds (see below).

Roll to determine mental disorders first; if any are acquired work with the Game Moderator to pick something appropriate from the list of mental disorders starting on page 62.

If the Survivor begins the game Adapted to either Violence or Helplessness place a check mark in the appropriate box on the character sheet and make the following adjustment to statistics and bonds:

- If **Adapted to Violence**: Reduce CHA by 1D6 and subtract the same number from *every* bond (both Individual and Community).
- If **Adapted to Helplessness**: Reduce POW by 1D6.

## The Game

*APOCTHULHU* is a game about the resilience of humanity. The world has been shattered by forces of the Cthulhu Mythos, and society as we know it has been torn to shreds. But despite all those defeats, there are those who live on after the Apocalypse. And they fight on. For friends, for family, and for survival.

Here's how the game works.

## Using Skills

The *APOCTHULHU* rules focus on *skills*. You decide what your Survivor attempts to do; the Game Moderator determines what skill to use. In a typical adventure, Survivors use many different skills.

Sometimes using a skill requires a roll of dice. The most important rule is this: *The Game Moderator determines if, when, and what you roll*. If the Game Moderator says a roll isn't needed, the skill rating itself determines success or failure.

### Resolving a Test Without Dice

If the Game Moderator decides you don't need to roll, it comes down to what you're trying to do and how high your Survivor's skill is. If the fact is common knowledge for your Survivor's Archetype, or can be found with a little research, he or she might be able to get it by just expending time and effort. If it requires special knowledge, your Survivor may need a certain amount of a skill.

If the Game Moderator thinks a fact should be known by a history expert with at least 60% skill, then a Survivor with History at 60% or better knows the fact without rolling. Or perhaps a Survivor with 40% can learn some clues but a Survivor with 60% would learn more.

Sometimes a combination of skills can overcome a lack in one. A clue that needs 60% History might be available if the Survivor has both History and some other relevant skill at 40%.

### How Much Skill Does the Task Require?

Only a little training; a hobbyist	20%
Basic training or minor training	30%
Years of experience or training	40%
Decades of experience or training	60%
A lifetime's mastery	80%

### Resolving a Test With Dice

If the Game Moderator tells you to roll a skill, it's a skill test. The dice determine success or failure. Roll two ten-sided dice to get a number from 01 to 00 (1 to 100).

Roll your skill test rating or lower to succeed. Rolling higher than the skill test rating means failure.

There are three criteria for rolling dice for a skill test:

**ROLL WHEN IT IS DIFFICULT:** A skill test means the Survivor is attempting something *difficult*. After all, even an expert in a skill might have only a 60% or 70% rating. A skill test is for a situation when even an expert might fail.

**ROLL WHEN THE SITUATION IS UNPREDICTABLE:** Having to roll means the situation is out of control. Randomness plays a major role. Surprising, possibly disastrous things can happen, no matter how skillful you are.

**ROLL WHEN THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES:** Failing a skill roll means ugly things are going to happen. Maybe failing at the crisis is the punishment — or with a failed roll, your Survivor succeeds but the consequences are severe. The fallout is up to the Game Moderator.

### If You Don't Have the Skill

If your Survivor has a 0 in a skill, he or she can't even attempt to use it. It requires specialized training or education that your Survivor lacks.

### Using a Stat

If your Survivor tries to do something that anyone ought to be able to do — something that's hard, but doesn't require specific training like a skill — then the Game Moderator might look to one of your Survivor's stats, for a stat test. A stat test is the relevant stat × 5. (So with STR 11, a STR test is 55%.)

Use STR if the challenge requires physical power, CON if it requires endurance, DEX if it requires agility, INT if it requires attention to detail, POW if it requires mental resilience, or CHA if it requires charm.

The stat's score itself may tell the Game Moderator whether your Survivor succeeds, without the need for a roll. Does it need someone with at least average Strength? Then your Survivor needs a STR of 10 or more. If it needs someone with above-average Intelligence, your Survivor must have an INT of at least 13. If only one person in a hundred would have enough stamina, your Survivor needs a CON of 17 or 18. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: STATISTICS** on page 6.)

### How Much Stat Does the Task Require?

Anyone could do it	3–4
Nearly anyone could do it	5–8
An average person could do it	9–12
Only an unusually gifted person could do it	13–16
Only a prodigy could do it	17–18

### Bonuses and Penalties

Having to make a skill test in the first place means there's a substantial chance of failure. But if the odds are really against your Survivor, the Game Moderator might impose a penalty, down to a minimum chance of 1%. If the situation is a little more in your Survivor's favor, the Game Moderator might allow a bonus, up to a maximum chance of 99%.

If a bonus or penalty applies, it's usually +20%/–20% or rarely +40%/–40%.

Bonus or Penalty	Frequency	Description
+40%	Rare	You <i>almost</i> shouldn't even bother to roll
+20%	Uncommon	Circumstances are noticeably in your favor
No modifier	Most circumstances	The action is difficult and unpredictable
-20%	Uncommon	Circumstances are noticeably worse than usual.
-40%	Rare	You <i>almost</i> shouldn't even bother to roll.

### Who Rolls?

A group of Survivors is searching the cult leader's compound. Who makes the Alertness skill roll to spot the tripwire?  
Good question.

If it's a task where having more help is useful, use the highest skill among the team.

If it's a task where a crowd is a hindrance, use the lowest skill among the team.

If it's a task where you need to know whether every Survivor succeeds or fails ("How many of you get a good look at the thing in the shadows?"), each player rolls.

## Success and Failure

On any skill or stat test, there are only four possible outcomes. From best to worst they are: *Critical Success*, *Success*, *Failure*, and *Fumble*. Ordinary success and failure are most common. Critical successes and fumbles represent exceptionally good or terrible outcomes.

### Critical Success

A critical success is a roll of 01 or any success where the dice digits match one another. So if your Survivor's skill is 50%, you achieve a critical success with a roll of 01, 11, 22, 33, or 44. A critical success automatically succeeds, and exceeds expectations. A critical is *twice as good* as an ordinary success. What twice as good means must be taken in context of the action. **In combat, a critical success means double damage**, but during an investigation, it might mean the action takes half as long.

### Success

A success is a roll *equal to or less* than the test chance. With a success, your Survivor accomplishes what he or she set out to achieve.

### Failure

A failure is a roll that's *higher* than the test chance. Sometimes that means your Survivor suffers harm.

There may be times when a failed roll means a Survivor achieves what he or she wanted — but it comes with an unpleasant complication. The Game Moderator always decides whether that's the case and what the cost will be. For a few possibilities, see the effects of fumbling a roll.

### Fumble

A fumble is a roll of 00 (100) or any failure where the dice digits match one another. So if your Survivor's skill is 50%, you fumble on a roll of 55, 66, 77, 88, 99, or 00. A fumbled roll fails, no matter how high your Survivor's chance of success, and has additional, catastrophic consequences.

In a car chase, a fumble might mean your Survivor crashes. In a gunfight, a weapon might jam, or you might accidentally shoot yourself. The exact complications are up to the Game Moderator. Here are some possibilities.

**PHYSICAL STRAIN:** Lose 1D6 HP *or* temporarily lose 1D4 STR, CON, or DEX.

**EMOTIONAL BURNOUT:** Lose 1D6 WP *or* temporarily lose 1D4 INT, POW, or CHA.

**ALIENATION:** Offend an important NPC. All CHA or **Persuade** tests with the NPC automatically fail until the end of the adventure.

**EXHAUSTION:** Immediately become **EXHAUSTED** (see page 45).

**DISTRACTION:** Suffer a -20% penalty to your next test.

**CONFUSION:** You make a major error and gain false information.

## The Luck Roll

Events often come down to pure chance. Are the scavengers awake when your Survivor picks the lock on the front door of the derelict convenience store? Does the stolen car have a first aid kit in the trunk? When an unexpected burst of fire tears down the door, does a bullet find you? If the Game Moderator calls for a Luck roll, there's a 50% chance that things go your Survivor's way. It doesn't depend on psychic talent or your Survivor's connection with the

cosmos or anything else. Just roll the dice. With a critical success or a fumble, your Survivor's luck is extra good or bad.

## Time Required

Sometimes speed counts. The Game Moderator determines how long it takes to perform a test.

**TURNS:** It takes a few combat turns (see **THE TURN** on page 46) or, at most, sixty seconds. Combat, some skill tests, and most stat tests are resolved in turns.

**MINUTES:** It takes a few minutes. You can't do it in combat, but otherwise, your Survivor can get through it rapidly. Many skill tests are resolved in minutes.

**HOURS:** It takes hours. Your Survivor can typically attempt two to four such tasks per day (four only if your Survivor goes without rest; see **EXHAUSTION** on page 45).

**DAYS:** It takes a day or more. Some extended skill tests, requiring multiple rolls, take days.

**LONG-TERM:** Efforts that take place outside normal gameplay, like research and training, fit here. It could be a week, a month, or years. It's up to the Game Moderator.

## Opposed Tests

An opposed test happens when someone takes action to interfere with another's action. This might be a player rolling a Survivor's **Insight** to sense the lies in a compound leader's **Persuade** roll, a Survivor escaping a pursuer with opposed **Athletics** tests, a degenerate cultist trying to wrestle a sacrificial victim to the ground in opposed **Unarmed Combat** tests, or a Survivor's **Dodge** trying to oppose an alien monstrosity's attack roll.

Usually, skills oppose skills and stats oppose stats. A stat opposes a skill only when one character must use very specific knowledge or training (and therefore rolls a skill) but the other does not (and therefore rolls a stat). It is up to the Game Moderator.

By nature, opposed tests are very unlikely to succeed. Not only must your roll succeed, but you must overcome the opposition's roll as well.

If two characters' skills oppose each other but neither needs to roll, the higher rating wins.

>> Opposed Tests and Pursuits		
Outcome	Opponent Succeeds	Opponent Fails
You Succeed	A critical success beats a success. Otherwise, whoever rolled higher succeeds and the other fails.	Your action succeeds and the opposed action fails.
You Fail	You fail to stop the opposed action.	Nobody succeeds; or whoever rolled lower succeeds and the other fails (Game Moderator's choice).

## Pursuit

A pursuit is a series of opposed tests. The most basic chase is a single test for each side, pursuer and quarry. If the quarry wins, he or she escapes and the chase ends. If the pursuer wins, he or she (or it) runs the quarry down and the chase ends. Usually that means combat.

A more prolonged chase may require two wins by one side or the other. Wins cancel each other out. If the pursuer wins one but the quarry wins the next, that cancels out the pursuer's win. Then, the quarry needs to win twice more to escape. An especially wide-open chase might require three wins to either catch up or escape.



In each test, one side or the other wins. If both fail their rolls, the lowest failure wins. A critical success with a chase test counts as two wins. A fumble counts as two failures thanks to a wreck or some other disastrous accident.

**WHICH SKILL APPLIES:** A chase on foot requires **Athletics**; one in vehicles uses **Drive, Pilot**, or even **Heavy Machinery**; in the water, it uses **Swim**; on horseback, it uses **Ride**.

**AID AND ADVANTAGES:** Coordinating with multiple pursuers (whether they're in sight of each other or have constant radio contact), having air support in radio contact, or being substantially faster and/or more maneuverable grants a +20% bonus to each chase test, or +40% if the advantages are overwhelming.

**SEEKING AN EDGE:** Instead of the usual roll to catch up or get away, pursuer or quarry may attempt to gain some advantage by testing a skill that applies to the situation, such as **Alertness, Navigate, Stealth**, or **Survival**. If this test wins the contest, instead of a "win" it grants a +20% bonus to the next chase roll, or +40% with a critical success. Failure and fumbling have the usual effects.

**COMBAT DURING A CHASE:** A passenger in a vehicle in a chase can shoot at the opposition before the pursuer and quarry roll to pursue and escape. Attacks use the **COMBAT** rules, beginning on page 46. Each contest in the chase is equivalent to one combat turn. If your Survivor is the driver or is on foot, attacking instead of rolling to pursue or escape means the opponent's roll to pursue or escape automatically wins that exchange.

## Willpower Points

Willpower Points are mental fuel. Survivors require Willpower Points to keep going despite exhaustion, to resist unwanted persuasion, to resist the effects of terror and mental disorders, and, on rare occasions, to resist or enact unnatural rituals.

**LOW WILLPOWER POINTS:** A Survivor whose WP hits 1 or 2 has an emotional breakdown. The Survivor suffers a -20% penalty to all actions until WP rises above 2.

**RUNNING OUT OF WILLPOWER POINTS:** A Survivor whose WP hits 0 collapses, completely incapacitated and perhaps unconscious. The Game Moderator controls your Survivor until WP returns to 1 or higher. A Survivor with 0 WP cannot succeed at *any* tests — including SAN tests.

**REGAINING WILLPOWER POINTS:** When your Survivor gets a full night's sleep (but no more than once in a 24-hour period), he or she regains 1D6 WP. If you play up one of your Survivor's personal motivations in a way the Game Moderator finds compelling, your Survivor regains 1 WP.

## Exhaustion

A Survivor who works too long or faces extreme danger and injury without resting becomes exhausted. When this comes into play is up to the Game Moderator, but a good rule of thumb is that going a night without sleep or refusing to rest after losing SAN or Hit Points leads to exhaustion.

An exhausted Survivor suffers a -20% penalty to all skills, stat tests, and SAN tests, and loses 1D6 WP. The exhausted Survivor loses another 1D6 WP after going another night without sleep, after working hard for a few hours, or after running or fighting for a few minutes. A full night's sleep cures exhaustion.

**STIMULANTS:** Taking stimulants offsets the exhaustion penalty for 1D6 hours. Harder drugs offset it for 2D6 hours. During this time, your Survivor can't sleep. A Survivor can take more stimulants to keep going, but every dose after the first costs 1D6 WP.

If your Survivor gains a new mental disorder while using stimulants, the Game Moderator has good reason to say the disorder takes the form of addiction to them. (See **DISORDERS** on page 62.)

## Sleeplessness

The first time your Survivor tries to sleep after suffering temporary insanity or gaining a new mental disorder (see **TEMPORARY INSANITY** and **DISORDERS** on page 62), you must make a SAN test. If it fails, your Survivor wakes in terror, losing the possibility of regaining any WP for 24 hours.

**SEDATIVES:** A Survivor can drink heavily or take sleeping pills to sleep despite trauma. This gives a +20% bonus to the SAN test to get to sleep. If the test fails, the Survivor gets no rest despite taking sedatives. In addition, the Survivor is sick the next day, at a -20% penalty to all tests until he or she gets a full night's rest. If your Survivor gains a new mental disorder while using sedatives, the Game Moderator has good reason to say the disorder takes the form of an addiction to them.

## Combat

A serious fight, where people are trying to kill each other, is chaotic, frightening, and fast. That's what these rules represent. Being skilled, having better weapons, or being in a superior position helps, but the inescapable randomness of combat can claim even the most skilled combatant's life.

Lovecraft's fiction presaged humanity's urge to reduce any confrontation with the unnatural to base combat. "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" features a massive military assault on a U.S. town. The artist in "Pickman's Model" blazes away with a revolver when the ghouls come. In "The Call of Cthulhu," Inspector Legrasse leads a raid on a Cthulhu cult that turns into a pitched battle. Johansen on the *Alert* rams his ship *through Great Cthulhu itself*.

Humanity's weaponry are as ridiculous to the unnatural forces that control the universe as an ant wielding a pebble is to the bulldozer razing the field the ant hill stands in. Combat rarely resolves any unnatural threat.

## The Turn

Combat is measured in *turns*. A turn is a few seconds, or as long as it takes everyone to complete a single action.

The Game Moderator counts down by DEX for all characters, from highest to lowest. Each character acts when his or her number comes up. If DEX scores tie, the actions occur at the same time or the Game Moderator can choose some tiebreaker.

During a turn, a combatant can attempt *one* of the following actions.

### Aim

Sacrifice one turn to aim and gain a +20% to your attack next turn. Aiming requires no roll. After the next turn, or if your Survivor suffers any damage before attempting it, the bonus is lost.

### Attack

An "attack" encompasses anything from throwing a punch to firing an anti-tank rocket. The "standard" attack (ranged or hand-to-hand) is a skill test to see if your Survivor hits a target; damage is inflicted based on the weapon used. Usually it's **Firearms** for a gun, **Ranged Weapons** for a bow or crossbow, **Athletics** for a thrown weapon, **Melee Weapons** for a hand-to-hand weapon, or **Unarmed Combat** for a punch or kick.

The number of shots fired in a single firearm attack depends on the weapon used — a bolt-action rifle fires one shot while a semi-automatic pistol might fire two or three shots — but it's always a single attack roll and a single damage roll.

Attacking with unarmed combat or a melee weapon (but not with a firearm or ranged weapon) also means your Survivor is parrying and blocking. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 50 for details.

## Called Shot

A called shot is an attack to a particular body part (the head, the hand, the leg). A called shot allows your Survivor to roll a grenade past cover to explode on the far side, or to shoot someone in the leg and avoid body armor. If the attack is automatic gunfire that can hit multiple targets, the called shot affects only the first target.

A called shot is more difficult than a standard attack, so it has a penalty:

**PARTLY COVERED (-20%):** The target is partially covered (half the body).

**MOSTLY COVERED (-40%):** The target is mostly covered (all but a limb or head).

Making a called shot with unarmed combat or a melee weapon (but not with a firearm or ranged weapon) also means your Survivor is parrying and blocking. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 50 for details.

## Disarm

An attempt to knock an object from the target's grasp using the Unarmed Combat skill. This is possible only if your Survivor has both hands free and is in hand-to-hand range. If your roll succeeds, the target drops the object.

Attempting to disarm also means your Survivor is parrying and blocking. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 50 for details.

## Dodge

This is a **Dodge** skill test to get out of the way of an attack (or a disarm or pin). This opposed test pits your Survivor's Dodge skill against the attack roll. If your roll overcomes the attack roll, your Survivor avoids harm. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 50 for details.

## Escape

A roll to escape a pin. Roll either **STR×5** or **Unarmed Combat**, whichever is better. This acts as a defense roll against the character pinning your Survivor (see **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 50 for details); it's opposed by the pinning character's attack roll against your Survivor. If the pinning character is not attacking, the escape is opposed by either **Unarmed Combat** or **STR×5** (whichever is better). If the escape roll succeeds, your Survivor is no longer pinned — and the escape roll defends against other attacks until your Survivor's next action. If it fails, your Survivor remains pinned and cannot defend against attacks.

## Fight Back

If someone attacks your Survivor with a melee weapon or unarmed combat (not a firearm, ranged attack or an explosive), your Survivor can fight back with **Unarmed Combat** or **Melee Weapons** to block and counterattack. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 50 for details.

## Move

An action that moves your Survivor a significant distance: 10 yards jogging, 20 yards running, or 30 yards sprinting (or you can move about 3 yards while performing some other action).

Usually moving requires no roll, but if Survivors are running or sprinting, players may need to make a **DEX×5** test to keep their footing. Fail, and your Survivor falls prone and must spend a turn recovering.

If there's cover at the end of your Survivor's movement, getting behind it provides protection (see **PROTECTION IN COMBAT** on page 54). This can give your Survivor armor against firearms, ranged weapons and explosives — if the Survivor is behind cover when the attack happens.

## Pin

An attempt to immobilize a target, either on the ground or up against something, using **Unarmed Combat**. This is possible only if your Survivor has both hands free and is in hand-to-hand range. If it succeeds, the target is pinned.

All unarmed or melee weapon attacks against a pinned target are at a +20% bonus. A Survivor pinning a target can attack the pinned target in later turns.

A pinned target can attempt escape once per turn (see the **ESCAPE** action, above) but nothing else.

Attempting to pin a target also means your Survivor is parrying and blocking. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 50 for details.

### Wait

Survivors can choose to wait to take any action after their DEX order comes up. At any time before your next turn, you can insert your Survivor's action before the next action in DEX order. Your Survivor can't wait until another character acts and then jump in before it's resolved, but your Survivor can jump in before the other character's turn comes up.

### Anything Else

Drink a test-tube full of a glowing liquid, throw open an unlocked door, hit the power button on a winch, grab a rope, reload a gun, stand up from a prone position — anything that takes a moment's concentration. The Game Moderator decides whether it requires a stat or skill test.

#### >> One Action Per Turn

A Survivor can take only one action per turn. A weapon like a submachine gun or a rocket launcher might hit multiple targets, or one target multiple times, with a single roll (see **LETHALITY RATING** on page 53), but it's still just one action per turn. If this seems counterintuitive ("a good boxer can throw three jabs a second!") don't think of every roll as a single action but as a few seconds of fighting or moving.

## Attack Rolls

An attack is a skill roll which inflicts damage, disarms or pins the target, depending on the attacker's action.

### Critical Hits and Fumbles

An attack roll that's a critical success (see page 43) is a *critical hit*. A critical hit inflicts double damage.

An attack roll that *fumbles* (see page 43) is bad news. The exact outcome remains up to the Game Moderator and can include:

1. A gun misfires, requiring 1D4 turns to clear it.
2. A bow or crossbow has its string or wire snap
3. A weapon drops and it takes a turn to pick it back up.
4. The attacker accidentally hits a friend, a bystander, or himself / herself.
5. The attacker stumbles and falls.

### Attack Modifiers

When you make an attack roll, it means the situation is out of control. Combat is chaotic and unpredictable even for the most highly trained fighters. The combatants' skill ratings and the luck of the dice usually tell everything you need to know.

Bonuses and penalties in combat apply only in extraordinary circumstances. The **COMBAT MODIFIERS** table, nearby, lists the likeliest modifiers. If they do apply, Attack bonuses stack up to a maximum +40%. There's no limit on penalties.

No matter the bonus or penalty, a roll of 01 always hits and a roll of 00 (100) always misses.

>> Optional Rules: Other Called Shots

If the Game Moderator agrees, you can make a called shot for some effect other than ignoring armor. Here are some possibilities.

**DOUBLE TAP (-20%):** Make two attack rolls. Both must be on the same target. If two potential targets are close enough that you could hit either one, randomly determine which one takes each hit. Not an option with bows, bolt-action or one-shot weapons.

**STUN (-20%):** A hit stuns the target (see **STUN**, page 50).

**FLESH WOUND (-40%):** A hit inflicts half damage (round up).

**HEAD SHOT (-40%):** A hit is critical without matching dice.

>> Optional Rules: Other Critical Hits

If the Game Moderator agrees, a critical hit can inflict normal damage (not double) and have some *additional* effect: STUN or DISARM the target; knock the target PRONE; make the hit a CALLED SHOT; or allow the attacker to immediately roll a SECOND ATTACK.

>> Thrown Weapons

Survivors use the **Athletics** skill to attack with a thrown weapon such as a knife or grenade.

**Surprise Attacks**

If your Survivor is out to kill someone who's unaware or helpless (and nobody is trying to stop you), that's hardly combat. You may not even need to make a roll.

**TARGET IS TOTALLY HELPLESS — BOUND OR ASLEEP:** No roll is needed to murder the target in one turn.

**TARGET IS ACTIVE BUT UNAWARE AND COMBAT HAS NOT YET BEGUN:** Make an attack roll at +20%. Any success is a critical hit. If it fails, the attack misses. Maybe your Survivor flinched at the last instant or maybe the target moved. Work out the details with the Game Moderator.

**Shooting Into a Crowd**

Use a CALLED SHOT to hit a particular target in a crowd with a ranged attack. Otherwise a random member of the crowd takes the hit.

>> Combat Modifiers

Circumstance	+20% Bonus	-20% Penalty	-40% Penalty
Very Long or Very Short Range	Shooting at point-blank range (3 yards or less)	Beyond base range (up to 2x)	Beyond 2x base range (up to 5x)
Unusual Target Concealment or Visibility	Using a laser sight	Terrible visibility due to smoke or darkness	Little to no visibility
Called Shot or Area Attack	Explosive weapon	Target about half covered or smaller than a human body	Target mostly covered or very small
Unusual Target Condition — Ranged Attack	Target standing totally still	Target prone or running	Target moving as fast as a speeding car
Unusual Target Condition — Melee Attack	Target pinned down or standing totally still	Target in a vehicle or running	Target moving as fast as a speeding car
Unusual Attacker Condition	Carefully aiming for a full turn	Suffering from pepper spray; shocked by a stun gun; exhausted	Suffering from tear gas; staggered by a stun grenade

## Defense Rolls

Dodging and hand-to-hand combat (with unarmed or with melee weapons) are tests that protect your Survivor by opposing an attack roll.

### Dodging and Fighting Back

Your Survivor can Dodge or fight back against an incoming attack even before your Survivor's DEX order in a turn. If you do this, it becomes your Survivor's single action for that turn. A Survivor who has already taken another action that turn can't Dodge or fight back until the next turn.

A roll to Dodge opposes *all* hand-to-hand attacks that turn, and lets your Survivor duck behind cover to evade all ranged attacks that turn, if you win the contest. Dodging never inflicts damage.

Fighting back blocks *all* hand-to-hand attacks that turn, if you win the contest. It does not protect you against ranged attacks unless you're close enough to push the ranged weapon away. Choose an offensive action for fighting back: **ATTACK, CALLED SHOT, DISARM, or PIN**. If your roll beats the attack, your Survivor takes no damage and your Survivor's action affects the attacker.

In order to Dodge or fight back, your Survivor must know an attack is coming and be physically able to block or evade it. If your Survivor is pinned, if the attack occurs before he or she realizes it, or if your Survivor can't see or hear the attacker, your Survivor can't Dodge or fight back.

### Dodging Ranged Attacks

An ordinary Dodge roll can avoid an arrow or a thrown weapon. Nobody can react as fast as bullets and shrapnel, but your Survivor can use Dodge to scramble for cover. If your Survivor is within three yards of cover and knows gunfire or an explosion is imminent, make a Dodge roll for the Survivor to get behind the cover. If there's no cover, Dodging does no good. This is why people get nervous when guns come out.

### Defending After Attacking

When your turn comes up, declare your Survivor's action — **ATTACK, CALLED SHOT, DISARM, OR PIN** — and make the roll. Your Survivor can harm, disarm or pin only one target per turn (the attack might hurt others, but all attacks have a single target).

A roll to attack, disarm, pin, or make a called shot also opposes each **Unarmed Combat** and **Melee Weapons** attack against your Survivor until your Survivor's next action. If an attack fails to overcome your roll, it does no harm.

To oppose an attack, your Survivor must know the attack is coming. That requires seeing or hearing the attacker. The Survivor must *also* be physically able to block the attack, if it is melee. A pinned Survivor can't defend, nor can a Survivor who has already successfully pinned a target.

An attack roll with a ranged weapon or firearm does not oppose attack rolls against your Survivor.

## Damage

Combat is about inflicting damage. Each weapon or attack has a damage rating measured in dice. When an attack hits, roll the weapon's damage dice and subtract the result from the target's Hit Points.

**DAMAGE BONUS:** High or low Strength modifies the damage of unarmed and hand-to-hand attacks, to a minimum of 0:

>> Damage Bonus from STR Score				
1—4	5—8	9—12	13—16	17—18
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

**STUN:** Stun attacks startle and impair. While stunned, your Survivor can't act. When it's your Survivor's turn, you may attempt a **CON×5** test to recover and act normally next turn. If a single attack inflicts half of your Survivor's *current* HP, the Survivor is automatically stunned.

**UNCONSCIOUSNESS:** If your Survivor is reduced to 2 or fewer HP, he or she falls unconscious. An unconscious Survivor is helpless and can be killed with a single attack without having to roll. At 3 HP or more (or after an hour passes), the Survivor regains consciousness.

**PERMANENT INJURY:** Any time your Survivor is reduced to 2 or fewer HP, make a **CON×5** test. Failure indicates permanent injury. The Game Moderator selects a stat to be *permanently* reduced by the number on the *lowest ten-sided die of the failed CON×5* roll. Stats can only be reduced in this way to a minimum score of 3. If STR or CON drop, adjust HP accordingly.

**DEATH:** If an attack brings your Survivor to 0 HP, he or she is dead. HP do not go below 0.

#### >> Optional Rules: Other Permanent Injuries

At the Game Moderator's discretion, a permanent injury may have some effect other than stat loss: a permanent penalty that can't be corrected with surgery. Usually it's a -20% penalty that applies in certain circumstances. Here are some possibilities.

**PARTIALLY BLINDED:** The Survivor suffers a -20% penalty to all tests requiring good eyesight.

**PARTIALLY DEAFENED:** The Survivor suffers a -20% penalty to all tests requiring good hearing.

**ARM CRIPPLED OR SEVERED:** The Survivor suffers a -20% penalty to all tests requiring two hands.

**LEG CRIPPLED OR SEVERED:** The Survivor suffers a -20% penalty to all tests requiring movement.

## Healing

There are four types of healing: *Resuscitation*, *Stabilization*, *Treatment*, and *Recuperation*.

**RESUSCITATION:** Sometimes it's possible to resuscitate a dead character. If the Game Moderator says resuscitation is possible, someone must make a **First Aid** test. This must occur within a number of minutes after death equal to the victim's CON score. If it succeeds, it restores 1D4 HP (doubled for a critical success) and allows the patient to recover. If First Aid fails, the victim dies and may not be resuscitated.

**STABILIZATION:** Stabilizing a wounded character with a successful **First Aid** test immediately heals 1D4 HP. A critical success doubles the amount healed; a fumble *inflicts* 1D4 damage. Once your Survivor receives first aid, success or failure, the Survivor can't benefit from it again until he or she suffers damage again.

**TREATMENT:** Treatment is medical care in a clean, calm location with extensive tools and medicines. A doctor can attempt a **Surgery** or **Medicine** test once per week: Surgery for critical care of severe wounds; Medicine for poison, disease, and ongoing healing. If treatment succeeds, the patient recovers 1D4 HP. This is doubled with a critical, while a fumble *inflicts* 1D4 HP damage. At the Game Moderator's discretion, having worn-out tools or poor quality medicines (not uncommon in a Post-Apocalyptic world) may incur a penalty.

**RECUPERATION:** Over time, the human body repairs itself. A patient who rests in a safe place with proper food and water can attempt a **CON×5** test once per day to recover 1 HP (in addition to any HP recovered due to medical treatment). On a critical success, the patient regains 1D4; on a fumble, the patient loses 1 HP.

## Complications

After medical treatment, and until the patient heals all lost Hit Points, undertaking strenuous activity (any physical stat or skill test) *inflicts* 1D4 HP damage as sutures rip, broken bones shift, or fever sets in.

## Recovering Stat Points

Unless the Game Moderator says otherwise, temporarily lost stat points are restored at 1 point per day.



## Table of Example Weapons

>> Melee Weapons	
Sample Weapons	Damage
Bare hands and feet	1D4-1*
Brass knuckles or steel-toe boot	1D4*
Taser	STUN
Ordinary knife or hatchet	1D4*
Combat knife, garotte or nightstick	1D6*
Tomahawk, machete, or baseball bat	1D8*
Large sword, chainsaw	2D6*

>> Ranged Weapons		
Sample Weapons	Damage	Base Range
Bow	1D6	30 yards
Crossbow	1D8+2	50 yards
Sling	1D4	60 yards
Shuriken	1D3*	20 yards
Thrown Knife	1D4*	STR×5 feet
Thrown Spear	1D8*	STR×5 yards

\*Damage bonus is added for this weapon

>> Small Arms		
Sample Weapons	Damage	Base Range
Small-caliber pistol	1D8	10 yards
Medium Pistol	1D10	15 yards
Carbine or very large pistol	1D12	100 yards for carbine; 20 yards for heavy pistol
Rifle	1D12+2	150 yards
Shotgun blast, close range	2D10	50 yards (full damage up to 10yds; reduced to 1D10 for 10—20yds; reduced to 1D6 for 20+ yards)

>> Automatic and Heavy Weapons				
Sample Weapons	Skill	Base Range	Lethality	Kill Radius
Submachine gun, fully automatic	Firearms	50 yards	10%	1-3 yds
Assault rifle or carbine, fully automatic	Firearms	100 yards	10%	1-3 yds
Very heavy sniper rifle	Firearms	250 yards	20%	None
Light machine gun	Heavy Weapons	200 yards	10%	3 yds
Heavy machine gun	Heavy Weapons	400 yards	20%	3 yds
Hand grenade	Athletics	20 yards	15%	10 yds
Improvised explosive device	Demolitions	N/A	15%	10 yds
Grenade launcher	Heavy Weapons	150 yards	15%	10 yds
Rocket-propelled grenade	Heavy Weapons	200 yards	30%	10 yds

>> Selective Fire			
Type of Fire	Ammo Used	Lethality	Kill Radius
Short Burst	3	10%	None
Long Burst	5	10%	1 yd
Short Spray	10	10%	2 yds
Long Spray	20	10%	3 yds

## Lethality Rating

Certain attacks inflict damage well beyond the possibility of survival; a burst of heavy machine gun fire or an artillery shell makes fast work of human anatomy. Rather than rolling many dice for damage or many separate attacks, a weapon like this has a Lethality rating.

If your Survivor hits with a weapon that has a Lethality rating, there's a chance it simply kills the target outright. Instead of rolling normal damage, roll percentile dice against the weapon's Lethality rating. If the Lethality test succeeds, a human target immediately drops to 0 HP. If the Lethality test fails, add the two dice together as if they were individual D10s (0 is 10) and apply *that* as HP damage.

Lethality rolls do not fumble or critically succeed, but the attack roll can. If the attack roll is a critical success, double the Lethality rating, and double the HP damage if the Lethality roll fails.

## Kill Radius

If a weapon has a Kill Radius, a successful attack inflicts a Lethality roll on each character in that radius. The center of the Kill Radius is the initial target of the attack.

### Why Lethality Ratings?

The Lethality rating replaces the need to roll lots of separate attacks and lots of dice for damage. Without it, a common weapon like an assault rifle might require nine separate attacks and damage rolls to spray nine targets, or a heavy weapon like a Hellfire missile might require rolling and adding up 12D6 for damage. In the middle of combat, rolling that much breaks the tension.

If you'd rather roll damage the old way, it's 1D6 damage for every 3% of Lethality. So a weapon with 35% would do 12D6 HP damage.

With explosive weapons, Kill Radius attacks don't need to be as precise as ordinary attacks; hitting a zone within the Kill Radius of a target is enough. That adds +20% to the chance to hit.

A failed attack roll means the Kill Radius lands harmlessly outside the intended area. The attack does no harm—but may still suppress targets (see **SUPPRESSION**, below). Whether a failed Kill Radius attack does unwanted collateral damage is up to the Game Moderator.

**MANY TARGETS:** A single attack with a Kill Radius usually affects everyone in the Kill Radius. If that doesn't make sense for the situation, the Game Moderator can decide who gets hit.

The Game Moderator is welcome to let players roll the Lethality results for NPCs to speed things up. But really, you need to roll Lethality only for characters who are important enough to track in detail. Since even a failed Lethality roll inflicts between 2 and 20 damage, it's safe to just assume that most humans caught in a Kill Radius are either dead or incapacitated.

## Suppression

An attack with a Kill Radius is terrifying. Any time your Survivor knows that he or she is inside an intended Kill Radius, *even if the attack roll misses*, your Survivor's fear-riddled nervous system *forces* him or her to go to ground. Your Survivor must either find cover or go prone as his or her next action. Your Survivor can stifle his or her terror and act normally at a cost of 1 SAN.

### >> Optional Rule: Suppression Without A Kill Radius

What if your Survivor wants to blaze away with an ordinary pistol or rifle — something without a Kill Radius — to force an enemy to keep his or her head down? That's possible if the Game Moderator says so. Designate the

center of a one-yard Kill Radius and make an attack roll. If it succeeds, it does no damage, but anyone inside the Kill Radius is suppressed. On a critical, it hits one target for normal damage *and* everyone in the radius is suppressed. On a fail, nobody is suppressed

In a firefight, often targets don't realize they're under attack. When in doubt, call for an **Alertness** test. An unaware target isn't subject to suppression.

A character adapted to violence (see **ADAPTING TO SAN LOSS** on page 67) loses no SAN for braving suppressing fire. For NPCs, it's easiest to assume the average human goes to ground when suppressed. Only insane, hardened, or fanatical enemies stand up in the face of fire.

### Selective Fire

Some small arms, like submachine guns and assault rifles, have selective fire. The shooter chooses how it's used; each pull of the trigger can fire a single shot, a short burst, a long burst, a short spray, or a long spray. A weapon set for single shots attacks normally. A burst or a spray has a Lethality rating.

A short burst fires three bullets in one trigger pull. It affects a single target. A long burst fires five shots with a Kill Radius of 1 yard. Short and long sprays empty the magazine faster, but cover a larger Kill Radius. Some firearms allow only single shots or short bursts ("three-round bursts").

### Blowing Things Up

If your Survivor wants to disable or destroy a vehicle or hardware, a heavy weapon with a Lethality rating is the way to do it. Small arms can do this, but it takes longer. Large objects have Hit Points (see **EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES**, page 78), and they are considered huge targets (see **HUGE**, page 55).

### Protection in Combat

We've seen how to injure, kill, and dismember targets, but how do you protect them?

There are five stages of protection, categories that determine how easy a Survivor or other creature is to harm, regardless of their ability to get out of the way.

#### Fragile

*Fragile* targets drop to 0 HP instantly if they suffer *any* damage from a deliberate attempt to injure them. A helpless human is Fragile and may, at the Game Moderator's discretion, be reduced to 0 HP with one attack without bothering to roll damage.

#### Exposed

*Exposed* is the default for humans and many creatures. It means the target is aware of danger and trying to avoid it, but doesn't have any real protection. Attacks operate normally against Exposed targets.

#### Armored

Being *Armored* reduces the damage of attacks. Armor has an Armor rating which reduces the HP damage of attacks. Armor 5 means reduce damage by 5.

Armor comes in two forms: *body armor* and *cover*. They both reduce the damage of ordinary attacks, but have different effects on Lethality attacks. If you have more than one source of armor (such as wearing body armor while behind a wall), add them all together.

Some weapons are armor piercing, which in turn reduces armor (see **ARMOR PIERCING WEAPONS**, page 56).

**BODY ARMOR:** Body armor reduces the damage of an ordinary attack by its Armor Rating. Body armor protects against the damage of a failed Lethality roll, but does nothing whatsoever against a *successful* Lethality roll.

**COVER:** Finding cover means using a hard barrier as armor against attack. Cover protects more completely than body armor. If you have cover against a Lethality attack, the Lethality roll automatically fails, but still inflicts the sum of the dice as damage. Subtract the cover’s Armor rating from that damage.

What if your Survivors are completely enclosed in a structure or vehicle? That’s definitely cover, but it’s the Game Moderator’s call. Maybe they take damage reduced by the cover, or maybe they take no damage until the cover is breached.

Being behind cover does not make Survivors immune to suppression (see **SUPPRESSION** on page 53). If your Survivor is suppressed, his or her next action must be to hide behind that cover instead of attacking.

Armor	Armor Rating
Kevlar helmet (adds damage reduction to other armor)	+1
Kevlar vest (concealable)	3
Reinforced Kevlar vest (typical for uniformed police)	4
Tactical body armor (typical for soldiers and SWAT teams), wall or thick door, makeshift vehicle cover	5
Bomb suit; thick wall, concrete, or moderate rock; light vehicle armor	10
Reinforced wall, big rock, or sandbag; medium vehicle armor	15
Heavy vehicle armor or light tank armor	20
Heavy tank armor	25

## Huge

A huge target loses Hit Points from ordinary weapon damage as usual. But Lethality ratings don’t affect huge creatures in the same way they do a human sized target. Instead, the Lethality attack does flat HP damage equal to the Lethality rating.

## Transcendent

Transcendent entities are immune to physical damage. This might mean they exist partly in dimensions we barely perceive, or are so organized that mere excesses of force and matter cannot harm them.

Nothing of this Earth is Transcendent. Only through the use of unnatural techniques, under extremely dangerous and limited situations, can humans become Transcendent.

>> Combat Protection Summary			
Target Status	Effect of Normal Damage	Effect of Lethality Success	Effect of Lethality Failure
Fragile	Reduced to 0 HP	Reduced to 0 HP	Reduced to 0 HP
Exposed	Roll HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage.	Reduced to 0 HP	Add up the Lethality dice to determine HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage
Behind cover	Roll HP damage. Subtract the cover’s Armor value from the damage.	Add up the Lethality dice to determine HP damage. Subtract the cover’s Armor value from the damage.	Add up the Lethality dice to determine HP damage. Subtract the cover’s Armor value from the damage.
Huge	Roll HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage.	Take the Lethality rating as HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage.	Take the Lethality rating as HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage.
Transcendent	No damage	No damage	No damage

## Armor Piercing Weapons

An armor piercing weapon reduces the Armor value of a target by 5 points. Heavy armor-piercing weapons reduce armor by 10 points or more.

An explosive weapon's armor-piercing rating applies to its specific target, not to victims in its Kill Radius.

## Other Threats

The world is full of threats, combat isn't the only thing that can kill a Survivor.

### Poison and Disease

Every poison or disease has two ratings: *Speed* and *Damage*.

*Speed* indicates how soon the poison or disease inflicts damage. A poison inflicts damage once and then passes from your Survivor's system. A disease requires a series of CON tests to resist damage.

*Damage* is ordinary HP for a disease, while poisons have Lethality ratings.

**POISONS:** A poison has a Lethality rating. If the Lethality roll fails, the victim makes a CON×5 test to withstand harm. Success means half damage, and a critical success means the victim loses only 1 HP. A fumble doubles the damage. 'Hospitalization' (makeshift or otherwise) grants +20% to the victim's CON test.

**DISEASES:** Diseases inflict HP damage. If your Survivor succeeds at a CON×5 test, he or she suffers half damage and recovers from the disease. On a failure, he or she suffers full damage and must make the CON×5 test again after another Speed interval. A fumbled CON test doubles the damage. While under the effects of a disease, the Survivor cannot gain Hit Points back. 'Hospitalization' grants a +20% bonus to the CON test. Serious diseases may come with a penalty to the CON test.

>> Sample Poisons					
Poison	Entry Route	Speed	Lethality	Symptoms	Antidote?
Spider venom	Bite	1D6 hours	5%	Pain, chills, nausea; possibly necrosis	Yes
dangerous drug administered with failed Pharmacy skill use	Varies	1D6 hours	5%	Usually pain, diarrhea, convulsions, or asphyxiation	Yes
Arsenic	Ingestion	1D6 hours	10%	Pain, diarrhea, cramping	No
Scorpion or rattlesnake venom	Bite or sting	1D6 hours	10%	Pain, weakness, hemorrhaging, convulsions	Yes
Phosgene gas	Inhalation	2D6 hours	15%	Blistering, coughing blood, asphyxiation	No
Hydrogen cyanide gas	Inhalation	1D6 turns	20%	Asphyxiation	Yes
Sarin gas	Inhalation or absorption through skin	2D6 turns	20%	Muscle contractions, spasms, asphyxiation	Yes
Ricin	Injection or powder inhalation	2D6 hours	20%	Diarrhea, shock, seizures, circulatory failure	No

>> Sample Diseases						
Disease	Route	Speed	CON Test Penalty	Damage	Symptoms	Cure
Bacterial meningitis	Airborne	1D6 days	-40	1D4	Stiff neck, nausea, confusion	Antibiotics
Bacterial pneumonia	Inhalation	1D6 days	None	1D6	Cough, fever, chills	Antibiotics
COVID-19	Inhalation	1D6 days	-20	1D6	Cough, fever, loss of smell	None yet developed
Gangrene	Dirty wounds	1D6 days	-20	1D4	Discoloration, oozing, numbness	Antibiotics, excision, or amputation
Plague	Flea bite (bubonic plague), inhalation (pneumonic plague)	1D6 days	None	1D6	Fever, chills, lymph node swelling, coughing (if pneumonic), shock	Antibiotics
HIV/AIDS	Injection or unprotected sex	1D6 months	None	1D6	Weight loss, fever, swelling of lymph glands, collapse of immune system	No cure; persistent; antivirals can keep it in check
Ebola virus	Contact with infected blood, bodies, or meat	1D6 days	-40	1D6	Fever, diarrhea, nausea, bleeding, shock	None

A persistent disease — such as HIV/AIDS — means succeeding at the CON test only buys time; the disease subsides and your Survivor recovers lost HP. But every time the Survivor is badly hurt (losing more than half his or her HP) or suffers from some other poison or disease, the Survivor must make a CON×5 test to resist a resurgence.

**ANTIDOTES:** Many poisons and diseases can be cured with medication. If a physician has the antidote for a poison or the right antibiotics for a disease, a **Medicine** or **Pharmacy** test before the ailment takes effect renders the poison or disease harmless. An antidote given after the ailment takes effect halves the Lethality rating and the HP damage.

### Falling

Falling is extremely dangerous to humans. Even a bad slip can be lethal. A fall from a short distance (one to three yards) does 1D6 damage, or 2D6 if it's a particularly uncontrolled fall. Beyond that, a fall instead has a Lethality rating of 1% per yard fallen. A Survivor who survives a fall must make a **CON×5** test or be **STUNNED** (see page 51).

### Impact

Slamming into a barrier can be deadly. It has a Lethality rating of 10% for every 25 mph (40 km/h) of speed. Double the Lethality rating if your Survivor slams into a wall and there's nowhere to tumble. A Survivor who survives an impact must make a **CON×5** test or be **STUNNED** (see page 51). For damage from a vehicular crash, see **VEHICLES** on page 81.

### Suffocation

Suffocation is a slow death. If your Survivor takes a deep breath before holding it, he or she can go without breathing for CON×5 turns. After that, your Survivor's oxygen-starved brain begins to die. Once every turn, make a **CON×5** test. If it fails, your Survivor suffers 1D6 HP damage. If the CON test succeeds, your Survivor suffers 1 HP damage instead. This continues until your Survivor can breathe again or he or she dies.

If your Survivor doesn't get a breath before suffocating, the damage starts immediately and lasts until someone clears his or her airway with a **First Aid** test. Armor does not protect against suffocation damage.

## Fire

Fire damage suffered depends on the flame's intensity. The victim suffers a damage roll every turn of exposure.

Intensity	Example	Damage
Minor	Candle	1/turn
Moderate	Flaming brand; momentary exposure to a larger fire	1D6/turn
Large	Campfire	2D6/turn
Major	Scalding steam; bonfire; blast furnace	Lethality (10%) each turn

After taking damage from any moderate, large or major source of fire, the victim must make a **DEX×5** test or catch fire, suffering half damage each turn until extinguished. Being surrounded by a raging fire also causes suffocation as the fire consumes oxygen. (See **SUFFOCATION** above.)

## Cold

Survivors can last for CON in minutes exposed to freezing temperatures unprepared, or CON×5 minutes if partially prepared. Fully prepared and well equipped (decked out for an Arctic expedition, for example) Survivors can last CON hours.

After this, their bodies start to fail. Players must make a **CON×5** test every five minutes. Each failure reduces CON by 1. When a Survivor's CON hits 1, the Survivor can no longer move and suffers 1D8 HP cold damage every five minutes. Exposure to warmth and shelter restores 1 point of CON per minute. Hit Points heal normally.

## The Aftermath

When the smoke clears and the fighting stops, it's time for the Game Moderator to look to the consequences of combat. There are *always* consequences.

First, violence damages sanity. Unless your Survivor is a hardened operator, getting into a deadly fight calls for a Sanity roll. So does getting hurt. So does killing someone. (See **THREATS TO SAN** on page 59.)

Next, was anyone killed or badly hurt? If so ... who's going to come looking for them?

## Sanity

Sanity Points represent the resilience of the relationship between your Survivor's personality and the world. With high SAN, your Survivor has confidence in his or her place in the world. A high SAN score is marked by insight, self-awareness, and a life-affirming view of reality. With low SAN, the deadly truth of the universe has begun to overwhelm your Survivor. With no SAN, your Survivor is forever lost.

Unlike the protagonists in many tabletop roleplaying games, *APOCTHULHU* Survivors are likely to begin play with a level of mental scarring due to the harshness of their environment and the pervasiveness of Cthulhu Mythos threats. This scarring can manifest itself in different ways – reduced starting SAN, mental disorders, or adaptation to traumatic stimuli. The Survivor creations rules outline mechanics for determining this psychological damage (**MENTAL DAMAGE FROM HARSH ENVIRONMENTS**, page 40).

## Sanity Losses

When your Survivor faces a threat to sanity, make a SAN test: roll his or her current SAN or lower of 1D100 to take a diminished loss of SAN points; roll higher than your Survivor's SAN and he or she suffers a greater loss of SAN points.



Sanity losses look like: 0/1D4 or 1D6/1D20. The number on the left is how much SAN your Survivor loses on a successful SAN test; the one on the right is how much SAN your Survivor loses on a failed test.

## Rules of Thumb for SAN Loss

If the cost of failing a SAN test is 1D6 or less, the cost of success is usually zero. If the cost of failure is 1D8 or 1D10, the cost of success is usually 1. Some unnatural events and encounters are even more catastrophic.

A critical success with a Sanity roll means your Survivor loses the least possible SAN. If the loss for succeeding at the Sanity roll would have been 1D4, he or she loses 1 point.

Fumbling a Sanity roll means your Survivor loses the most possible SAN. If the loss for failing the Sanity roll would have been 1D20, he or she loses 20 points.

### >> Optional Rule: Keep SAN Secret

For greater suspense, each player should keep his or her Survivor's current SAN secret from the other players (of course, the Game Moderator must also know all SAN scores). Another approach is for the Game Moderator to keep the current SAN of all Survivors a secret *even from the players*. You know your Survivor has lost SAN and you'll know when your Survivor goes insane, but you won't know the point totals, adding a welcome uncertainty to the game.

## Explore the Loss

When your Survivor loses SAN, take a second to describe it. If the Survivor loses a few points, how does that look to the people around him or her? Does the Survivor jump or cry out in terror? Does the Survivor stare in shock? Does the Survivor back away involuntarily? If your Survivor kills someone and loses no SAN, what does that say about the Survivor?

What are the long-term effects of repeatedly losing SAN? What strong beliefs or motivations are eroding as your Survivor's SAN falls? The game is more potent when you play out those details and let them shape your Survivor.

## Threats to SAN

The three major threats to SAN are *Violence*, *Helplessness* and the *Unnatural*.

These categories can overlap. Being tied up and tortured might trigger both Violence and Helplessness. It's up to the Game Moderator to decide which aspects affects the Survivor.

### Violence

Killing other humans is inherently harmful to sanity. While wrestling and punching people is within biological norms, bludgeoning someone to death is not instinctive. The blasting noise and fire of mechanized violence overwhelm the human brain. Violence can drive you insane if you're not careful.

In combat, you must make a SAN test for a trauma *the first time it happens in that fight*. Outside of combat, every individual incident triggers its own SAN loss.

### Helplessness

The essential human impulse is to act. True inactivity is unwholesome to the human psyche.

Note that helplessness often makes violence worse, just like violence makes helplessness worse.

## The Unnatural

Finally there's the unnatural, the inhuman things of the Cthulhu Mythos that haunt the edges of existence. The unnatural troubles us because it is wholly outside of human experience. It wounds our sense of connection to the world by causing huge gaps in understanding.

This is why your Unnatural skill limits maximum SAN. The more you understand of man's *actual* position in the cosmos, the harder it is to navigate in the 'real' world.

If a Survivor faces the Unnatural and loses 0 SAN, it may mean the Survivor has adapted to the reality of the Unnatural in some small way — or it may mean simple denial, refusing to admit the Unnatural experience was real. It's up to the player.

Suffering Violence	Loss
• Ambushed or hit by gunfire	0/1
• Find a corpse or a mangled carcass	0/1
• Find mutilated corpse of infant or loved one	0/1D4
• Stabbed, strangled or shot	0/1D4
• Suffer a permanent injury	0/1D6
• Set on fire	0/1D6
• Reduced to 2 HP or less	0/1D6
• Tortured	0/1D10

Inflicting Violence	Loss
• Incapacitate or cripple an innocent	0/1D4
• Destroy a teammate's body to thwart discovery*	0/1D4
• Kill in defense of oneself or another*	0/1D4
• Kill a murderous enemy in cold blood*	0/1D6
• Torture a victim	0/1D8
• Accidentally kill an innocent*	0/1D8
• Kill an innocent in cold blood, even for a very good reason*	1/1D10

\* For a failed roll, add 1 per victim beyond the first, up to the maximum possible die-roll: 4 for 1D4, 6 for 1D6, etc.

Helplessness	Loss
• Being dismissed from one's role/job	0/1
• Nearly get an Individual Bond hurt or killed	0/1
• Losing all personal Permanent Resources	0/1
• A friend suffers permanent harm or gains a disorder	0/1
• A Bond's score is reduced to zero	0/1D4
• Imprisoned or held against will	0/1D4
• Waking paralyzed or blind	0/1D4
• Find a friend's remains	0/1D4
• An Individual Bond suffers permanent harm or gains a disorder	1/1D4
• Shunned by all members of a Community Bonded organization	1/1D4
• Flung into a pit of corpses	0/1D4
• See or hear a friend being gruesomely killed	0/1D6
• Learn an Individual Bond has been killed	1/1D6
• See or hear an Individual Bond gruesomely killed	1/1D8
• Learn that a Community Bonded organization has been destroyed	1/1D6
• Act in a way that directly leads to collapse of a Community Bonded organization	1/1D8
The Unnatural	Loss
• Attempting Reassure on a character who lost SAN to the Unnatural	0/1
• Witnessing a supernatural effect that's apparently benign	0/1
• Witnessing a violent supernatural effect	0/1D6
• Seeing a corpse walk	0/1D6
• Subjected to an overtly supernatural effect	0/1D6
• Suffering a violent supernatural assault	1/1D8 or more

## Insanity and Disorders

Survivors who lose excessive SAN lose control of themselves, suffering insanity and mental disorders.

**TEMPORARY INSANITY (PAGE 62):** A Survivor who loses 5 or more points of SAN in a *single roll* suffers *temporary insanity*.

**DISORDER (PAGE 62):** Every time your Survivor's SAN is reduced to his or her Breaking Point (see **DERIVED ATTRIBUTES** on page 7), he or she gains a new *disorder*. Immediately reset your Survivor's Breaking Point to your Survivor's current SAN minus POW. Even if SAN rises back above the old Breaking Point, the disorder and the new Breaking Point remain.

**PERMANENT INSANITY (PAGE 66):** If your Survivor hits 0 SAN, he or she suffers *permanent insanity* and becomes the property of the Game Moderator.

## Temporary Insanity

In a moment of overwhelming stress — after losing 5 or more SAN *in a single roll* — your Survivor loses self-control. We call it temporary insanity. For a short time, you cannot control your Survivor's actions. Your Survivor's primitive brain switches to pure panic, with one of three possible responses: *Flee*, *Struggle*, or *Submit*.

Work with the Game Moderator to determine which stance your Survivor takes. Each is more likely in some circumstances than others.

If the circumstances are calm, someone making a **Reassure** roll can talk your Survivor down from temporary insanity. Otherwise your Survivor loses control until the insanity runs its course.

### Flee

Your Survivor must move away from the SAN-affecting stimulus at top speed in any direction. Your Survivor must do this for a number of turns equal to his or her CON, whereupon your Survivor falls to the ground exhausted (see **EXHAUSTION** on page 45), or until your Survivor feels 'safe', whichever happens first. This is a common reaction against Unnatural and Violence SAN threats.

### Struggle

This is lashing out randomly at the nearest threat, no matter how insurmountable it might be. Once this course is set upon, your Survivor has no choice but to fight until he or she is killed, unconscious, or restrained. This is a common reaction against Helplessness and Violence SAN threats.

### Submit

This is shutting down or passing out from shock. If conscious, your Survivor is catatonic and paralyzed until the Game Moderator decides he or she snaps out of it. When your Survivor comes to, it's likely he or she has suppressed the trauma that caused his or her collapse. Remembering details requires an **INT×5** test and is terribly stressful. This is a common reaction against Unnatural and Helplessness SAN threats.

## Understanding the Unnatural

Whenever your Survivor goes temporarily insane or develops a disorder due to an encounter with the Unnatural, he or she also gains some deeper understanding of the true nature of reality.

If your Survivor had no prior knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos (i.e., has an Unnatural skill rating of 0), such an experience causes him or her to gain +5 percentiles in the Unnatural skill. Even if they already knew about the Unnatural, such an experience grants a further +1 percentile to the Unnatural skill.

This increase also serves to reduce the Survivor's maximum SAN (and if current SAN is higher than this value, also causes it to drop to the new maximum).

### >> Optional Rule: Insane Insight

Sometimes Survivors who face massive psychological damage from unnatural trauma come away with strange insights. If your Survivor suffers temporary insanity due to an Unnatural trauma, he or she might gain some special insight into the specific creature or Mythos Power encountered. Immediately after going insane, the Survivor can attempt an **INT×5** test – if this roll *fails*, the Game Moderator can provide the Survivor with some salient detail about the monstrosity, which may prove helpful in defeating it.

## Disorders

A Survivor whose SAN reaches the Breaking Point gains a disorder. When suffering from a disorder, the mind maladapts to mental trauma with long-term neuroses. A disorder is like a release valve for intolerable stress. Indulging in it helps your Survivor cope. It's possible to suffer from multiple disorders at the same time.

Any disorder is negative in the long term, but some are worse than others. Whatever the source of the disorder, it takes the form of an irrational adaptation to the trauma that produced it. It may manifest a few hours after the trauma, or it might take days, weeks, or months to appear. The player and the Game Moderator negotiate the exact nature of your Survivor's psychological trauma, so it makes sense. If your Survivor saw his or her partner die in a fire, developing *pyrophobia* makes sense, while developing *erotomania* based on the feel of fur is ridiculously unlikely.

### Acute Episodes

A disorder is a chronic, ongoing condition. It lurks under the surface, threatening to erupt when things get bad.

Any time your Survivor loses SAN, and any time your Survivor faces a trigger that pertains directly to his or her disorder, you must make a follow-up SAN roll. If that fails, your Survivor's disorder takes over. If your Survivor suffers from more than one, the Game Moderator decides which comes to the fore. As long as the Survivor is in the crisis or in the presence of the trigger, he or she succumbs to the disorder's internal logic and must act accordingly.

Suffering an acute episode of a disorder often means your Survivor can't take some actions (or can attempt them only with a penalty), or your Survivor *must* take some actions. The Game Moderator always decides the exact repercussions, and whether it happens immediately or builds gradually, in the aftermath of the trauma.

When your Survivor is going through an episode, it is obvious to everyone that something is wrong. An **Insight** roll can diagnose your Survivor's particular disorder.

Someone who makes a **Reassure** roll can talk your Survivor down despite the crisis or the presence of the trigger, reducing the impact of the disorder so the Survivor can regain self-control. That takes a few minutes.

#### >> Psychoactive Sedatives

In some *APOCTHULHU* settings, the Survivor may have access to drugs which can stave off the onset of an acute episode or dull its effects. These are, at best, short-term remedies and come with their own negative impacts.

Taking a benzodiazepine like diazepam or clonazepam gives your Survivor a +20% bonus to resist an acute episode of a disorder at the cost of a -20% penalty to everything else. Using such drugs frequently makes addiction to them a likely result of your Survivor's next disorder. If that happens, the drugs no longer confer any bonus to reduce acute episodes of a disorder, but still inflict the penalty.

Heavy drinking or marijuana gives your Survivor a +10% bonus to resist an acute episode at the same -20% penalty to other actions. Alcohol runs the same risk of addiction as benzos.

### Sample Disorders

There are many adaptations the mind makes when exposed to traumatic events, whether they be violence and gore, feelings of utter helplessness, or the inherent 'wrongness' of unnatural Cthulhu Mythos beings. The specific disorder received by a Survivor should never be a random roll on a table, but something specifically selected to relate to the trauma they suffered.

#### Addiction

Addictions are a reliance on a harmful habit or substance to get one through the stress of life. No matter how much stress and harm the addiction causes, a part of your Survivor needs the relief it offers — even knowing that it might ruin relationships and even kill him or her in the end.

Addiction can be low-key and manageable. But when things go bad, your Survivor will do irrational, unreasonable, self-destructive things to feed it. If he or she goes a day without feeding the addiction, your Survivor suffers a penalty which **halves** every test until he or she gives in to it.

### *Amnesia*

This is the most common disorder to result from an encounter with the bizarre or unnatural. The brain cannot process the event. Everything surrounding the episode is blank unless your Survivor finds a way to bring it back.

### *Depression*

Depression means total despair, a crushing inability to get anything done. It sometimes takes the shape of overwhelming guilt. It's caused by biological and psychological factors and is triggered by reminders of the mental trauma your Survivor suffered or inflicted. During an acute episode, all skills are **halved**.

### *Hysterical Blindness / Deafness / Paralysis*

Collectively called conversion disorder, this can manifest either as non-physical blindness, deafness, or paralysis (pick one). Whenever you fail a **SAN** test, the disorder strikes and leaves your Survivor blind, deaf, or paralyzed with numbness and tremors until the source of stress goes away.

### *Mania*

Your Survivor displays a euphoric and perhaps irritable mood that is consistently present. This may include frenzied activity for no obvious reason, uncharacteristic garrulousness, a random stream-of-consciousness flow of ideas, or difficulty sleeping. During an acute episode all tasks which require concentration or fine control are at **one-fifth chance**.

### *Megalomania / Narcissistic*

What does it mean to look upon the face of a dead god and live? Some see themselves as messiah figures. Others realize this elevated perspective exempts them from ordinary morality. When this disorder is triggered, it makes your Survivor impossible to interact with; all uses of **CHA**, **Disguise**, **Persuade**, and **Reassure** fail, as every doubt about your Survivor's superiority fills him or her with indignation.

### *Multiple Personalities*

Called Dissociative Identity Disorder. Most of the time, your Survivor seems fine, but in an acute episode — when under extreme stress — he or she takes on an alternate identity with its own personality and memories. The longer your Survivor suffers this disorder, the more alternate identities may surface. The Game Moderator decides when and whether you keep control of your Survivor's behavior.

### *Obsession*

Your Survivor becomes fixated on some person, place, event, act, or idea. In an acute episode, any long-term action or skill use — anything taking more than a day or two — is **halved** because your Survivor's mind is so often wrapped around its obsession.

### *Paranoia*

A state of extreme suspicion, in which a fear of invisible enemies pervades one's worldview. Paranoiacs interpret any event as a clue to a conspiracy against them. Unless your Survivor finds a way to stifle his or her paranoia, he or she can't trust or rely on anyone.

### *Paraphilias*

This is a general classification for psychosexual disorders which revolve around a desire for sexual gratification through something other than interaction with another human being. While an interesting character quirk, such disorders can be uncomfortable to bring to the game table (and thus should only be given to Survivors if everyone in the game is OK with such subject matter and can treat it in a mature way).

### *Phobia or Philia*

A common affliction arising from traumatic experiences is the development of an irrational fear of something related (directly or by association) with the incident. These are called phobias and can be quite debilitating. Whenever a

Survivor is in the presence of a trigger for his or her phobia, there's little choice but to suffer the Flee or Submit response to temporary insanity (see page 62). A nearby box provides some examples of phobias; searching online will reveal a huge array of other (sometimes quite weird) phobias.

A less common response to experiencing something shocking is the development of an irrational fetish or allure for something odd that is associated with the situation (perhaps which somehow related to the Survivor's survival). These are called philiias and work in a similar way to phobias in that whenever the afflicted Survivor is in the presence of his or her irrational fetish a **SAN** roll is required to maintain any degree of self-control. If failed, the Game Moderator will dictate your Survivor's actions until he or she regains control. The list of phobias shown nearby can be converted into philiias by simply inverting them: for example, where scotophobia is a fear of darkness, scotophilia is an obsessive and irrational predisposition to shroud oneself in darkness.

### *Psychogenic Fugue*

Your Survivor may shut down into catatonia or wander off in an unconnected daze. It often manifests in the face of emotional or personal complications. During acute episodes, your Survivor may disappear for days at a time, returning with no memory of his or her recent past.

### *Schizoid*

Your Survivor's personality changes towards an uncharacteristic emotionlessness. He or she will be perceived as cold or aloof by most people. This can have a devastating effect on interpersonal relationships. In game terms, all personal interaction skill tests or **CHA** tests are halved; during an acute episode such tests are made at **one-fifth** chance.

### *PTSD aka "Shell Shock"*

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a psychiatric disorder that occurs following life-threatening events. Some people shake off such horrors, while others have stress reactions. Victims of Shell Shock/PTSD relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping, are subject to depression, and can be overcome by anxiety when presented with a similar situation.

### **<box>Phobias**

- ACROPHOBIA: Fear of heights
- AGOROPHOBIA: Fear of open places
- AILUROPHOBIA: Fear of cats
- ANDROPHOBIA (for female Survivors): Fear of males
- APIPHOBIA: Fear of bees
- ARACHNOPHOBIA: Fear of spiders
- ASTROPHOBIA: Fear of thunder, lightning and storms
- BACTERIOPHOBIA: Fear of bacteria
- BACTRACHOPHOBIA: Fear of frogs and toads
- BATHOPHOBIA: Fear of the deep sea
- BELONEPHOBIA: Fear of pins and needles
- BOTANOPHOBIA: Fear of plants
- CATOPTROPHOBIA: Fear of mirrors
- CLAUSTROPHOBIA: Fear of confined spaces
- DEMOPHOBIA: Fear of crowds
- DENDROPHOBIA: Fear of trees
- DORAPHOBIA: Fear of fur
- ENTOPHOBIA: Fear of insects
- GYNEPHOBIA (for male Survivors): Fear of females



- HEMATOPHOBIA: Fear of blood
- HYLEPHOBIA: Fear of forests
- IATROPHOBIA: Fear of doctors
- MONOPHOBIA: Fear of being alone
- NECROPHOBIA: Fear of dead things
- OPHIOPHOBIA: Fear of snakes
- PYROPHOBIA: Fear of fire
- SCOTOPHOBIA: Fear of darkness
- TAPHEPHOBIA: Fear of being buried alive
- TECHNOPHOBIA: Fear of technology
- THALASSOPHOBIA: Fear of the sea
- TRICHOPHOBIA: Fear of hair
- TRISKADEKAPHOBIA: Fear of the number 13
- XENOPHOBIA: Fear of foreigners
- ZOOPHOBIA: Fear of Animals

</box>

## Permanent Insanity

A Survivor who drops to 0 SAN is effectively 'lost.' Just as being reduced to 0 Hit Points permanently removes your Survivor from your control through physical death, being reduced to 0 SAN permanently removes your Survivor from your control through insanity. Survivors at 0 SAN have embraced a world of violence, helplessness, and death. No therapy or treatment will ever bring them back.

It remains up to the Game Moderator to determine when the Survivor is 'removed' from play. Sometimes it is instant; after the SAN loss, the Survivor collapses weeping and refuses to re-engage with reality.

Sometimes it's more subtle. Many dangerous psychopaths get by for months or years without detection. A player who enjoys this kind of challenge may work in tandem with the Game Moderator to keep playing a character with 0 SAN as if things were normal. If you keep all SAN totals secret (see **OPTIONAL RULE: KEEP SAN SECRET** on page 59), this should not be difficult.

Usually, a character who reaches 0 SAN is either *Catatonic*, *Delusional*, or *Psychopathic*.

### *Catatonia*

Catatonia is complete separation. Your Survivor's mind refuses to engage with the world that injured it. Your Survivor no longer speaks, or eats (without prompting), or looks after him or herself; your Survivor stares into space in a trance. Some catatonics go so deep they no longer react to physical pain. Others rise in and out of consciousness.

### *Delusions*

Your Survivor is raving, incapable of holding a conversation that does not stray into insanity. Your Survivor is absolutely certain of the truth of his or her delusions and acts and responds as though they are completely real, even if that means violence. Nothing can dissuade your Survivor of their reality.

### *Psychopathy*

This goes beyond ordinary sociopathy. At 0 SAN, empathy has been burned out of your Survivor. The feelings and needs of others cannot touch him or her. People are mere objects for his or her amusement or use. Your Survivor sometimes engages in appallingly merciless actions for gratification. Some psychopaths with 0 SAN appear fine; they

are no longer emotionally functional or concerned with people on a human scale, but they keep a simulated veneer of civility. Many serial killers have been classified as functional psychopaths.

## Resisting Insanity

It's possible to resist SAN loss and insanity through adaptation and by placing stress on Individual and Community Bonds. But suffering a trauma always comes with a cost.

### Adapting to SAN Loss

People can become hardened to traumatic stimuli. What sends one Survivor fleeing may seem mundane to an individual who has survived it often enough. Adaptation to Violence or to Helplessness means you always succeed at a Sanity roll for that type of trauma.

Adaptation to Violence or adaptation to Helplessness occurs after your Survivor has lost SAN from that kind of trauma three times in a row *without* going temporarily insane from it or hitting the Breaking Point. The character sheet has spaces to mark your Survivor's progress toward adaptation. Each time Violence or Helplessness reduces your Survivor's SAN by 1 or more, mark a box on your character sheet to keep track of it.

If your Survivor suffers insanity from Violence *before* all three boxes are marked, erase all the "Violence" boxes and start again. If your Survivor suffers insanity from Helplessness before all three boxes are marked, erase all the "Helplessness" boxes and start again. If you fill in all three boxes for Violence or all three for Helplessness, your Survivor becomes adapted to that type of stressor.

**ADAPTING TO VIOLENCE:** Unfortunately, being adapted to Violence means your Survivor's empathy suffers. He or she permanently loses 1D6 CHA and the same amount from each Bond (Individual and Community).

**ADAPTING TO HELPLESSNESS:** Being adapted to Helplessness means your Survivor's personal drive suffers. As soon as your Survivor becomes adapted to Helplessness, he or she permanently loses 1D6 POW.

**ADAPTING TO THE UNNATURAL:** There is no adapting to the unnatural. Things that exist beyond human comprehension are beyond 'getting used to.' Every new encounter is a fresh shock. The only way to 'adapt' to the Unnatural is to reach 0 SAN, whereupon the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos make perfect sense and no longer inflict mental damage.

### Projecting Onto A Bond

When your Survivor loses SAN, you may spend WP to reduce the loss. The amount is always 1D4: roll the die and reduce your WP by that much.

If your Survivor still has at least 1 WP, reduce the SAN loss by the amount of WP spent — the amount you rolled — to a minimum of zero.

Now reduce one of your Survivor's Bond scores by the **same** amount. It could be an Individual Bond or a Community Bond. The next time your Survivor interacts with the subject of the Bond, decide what shape the projection takes. Does the Survivor grow hostile and angry, irrationally blaming his or her loved one for imagined wrongs? Does the Survivor abandon his community in favor of relationships with less importance and meaning? The stresses faced by Survivors often wreck the families, friendships and associations that give them strength.

### Using Bonds to Repress Insanity

Sometimes it's easier to cope with mental trauma if you pull strength and motivation from the relationships that give life meaning. You may attempt to repress the blind panic of temporary insanity or an acute episode of a disorder by spending Willpower Points. The amount is always 1D4: roll the die and reduce your WP by that much.

If your Survivor still has at least 1 WP after spending the 1D4, describe how a Bond might help your Survivor keep it together and reduce the Bond by the same amount.

Now attempt a SAN roll. If it succeeds, your Survivor suppresses the insanity or disorder and behaves normally. If it fails, the attempt to repress the effects did not succeed – they occur as normal, despite the points of WP and Bond strength sacrificed in the attempt.

Either way, make a note to describe later how the Bond has strained because your Survivor has taken so much support from it.

## Recovering Sanity

There are a few ways to restore mental health. These are described below.

### Defeating Unnatural Creatures

The Unnatural in *APOCTHULHU* represents such an affront to the human mind that gaining any control over it is a sort of victory. At the Game Moderator's discretion, any destruction of a Cthulhu Mythos infiltration by a Survivor can restore hope — and in the process, SAN.

As a rule, destroying an unnatural creature or an object known to contain otherworldly power restores an amount of SAN equivalent to the lowest amount that could be lost for encountering it.

If the SAN loss is 1/1D6, for example, destroying it restores 1 SAN. If the SAN loss is 1D6/1D20, your Survivor gains 1D6 SAN for destroying it.

This can mean your Survivor gains more SAN from overcoming the threat than he or she actually lost from facing it. But it can never bring SAN higher than the **Maximum SAN** score: i.e., 99 minus your Survivor's rating in the Unnatural skill.

Each Survivor who was directly involved in putting the threat down gains this SAN increase.

### Concluding a Dangerous Mission or Adventure

Once a deadly mission or adventure has been successfully brought to a close, all Survivors left alive can breathe a sigh of relief that — for now at least — the world is a safer place. The Game Moderator is justified in awarding such Survivors a small increase in SAN (and published scenarios may include specific SAN rewards associated with different levels of success). Such gains can never push the Survivor's current SAN any higher than **Maximum SAN** (99 – Unnatural).

### Destroying Accounts of the Unnatural

To a Survivor whose sanity has been blasted by revelations about the horrors of the Unnatural, the fact that tomes or records exist which lay bare such secrets is disturbing. It is via such dire accounts that the madness spreads. Accordingly, some who have lost sanity from unnatural Mythos encounters make it their mission to track down such physical or electronic records and destroy them. What better way to protect humanity than rid it of these dangerous traps? This, in part, explains why true written accounts of the Unnatural are so rare.

Survivors who have experienced the Unnatural and who *deliberately* destroy a tome or similar repository of secret information can earn a small boost to SAN, at the discretion of the Game Moderator. To qualify, the text or video account in question must be an actual authentic tome (see page 82) and the Survivor's actions must be deliberate, willful, and cause the permanent and total destruction of the book, hard disk, or whatever media it is recorded upon. The Survivor must also believe in the veracity of the account.

The amount of SAN increase depends upon the how many Mythos secrets the account reveals — this is measured by the Unnatural skill point gain associated with reading/viewing the tome or record.

Unnatural Skill Gain	SAN gain from Destruction
+1 to +3	1D3
+4 to +6	1D6
+7 to +12	2D6
+13 to +16	2D8
+17 or more	2D10

Such gains can never push the Survivor’s current SAN any higher than **Maximum SAN** (99 – Unnatural).

### Getting Help with Mental Illness

After the adventure your Survivor can attempt to recuperate with empathetic colleagues or by focusing on his or her Bonds; the things that give your Survivor strength (see **DOWNTIME**, below). Any such recovery can never push the Survivor’s current SAN any higher than his or her **Recovery SAN** (POW×5), or **Maximum SAN**, whichever is lower.

### Pursuing Personal Goals or Caring for Individuals

Time spent between adventures doing things that naturally reassert your Survivor’s ‘normal’ life can slightly improve his or her SAN (see **DOWNTIME**, below). This can only increase current SAN up to his or her **Recovery SAN** (POW×5), or **Maximum SAN**, whichever is lower.

## Downtime

Games of *APOCTHULHU* should feature occasional scenes that focus on Survivors’ everyday lives. These short vignettes should last no more than a few minutes. Typically, they occur between adventures, but the Game Moderator always decides when and whether one is appropriate. These vignettes are a chance to explore the most important things in your Survivor’s life — and to see whether those things are deteriorating thanks to the Survivor’s experience of the secret horrors of the Post-Apocalypse world.

## What Changed

In a downtime vignette, take stock of what changed for your Survivor in the last adventure.

**BONDS DAMAGED OR BROKEN:** Describe how each relationship has deteriorated.

**PERMANENT INJURIES:** Describe what they look like.

**DISORDERS GAINED:** Did your Survivor hit the Breaking Point during the adventure? Now’s the time for the Game Moderator to decide what disorder the Survivor gains.

**COMMUNITY:** If your Survivor misused his or her contacts, authority, or resources from his or her home community, describe how actions during the adventure may have impacted your Survivor’s reputation or standing. Does this impact any Community Bonds?

**JUSTICE:** Did your Survivor break the rules of the local community? Does that impact any Individual or Community Bonds?

## Personal Pursuits

For the vignette, the player chooses one of the following pursuits. Describe how your Survivor is pursuing it, and roll the appropriate stat, skill, or SAN test to resolve it.

Choose from these pursuits:

## Fulfill Responsibilities to Individuals

If your Survivor focuses on day-to-day obligations and relationships, describe something the Survivor is doing to support an Individual Bond. Roll a SAN test. Success improves the Individual Bond by 1D6 (up to your Survivor's CHA); a critical success also adds 1 SAN (up to your **Recovery SAN**). A fumble means some disastrous conflict reduces the Individual Bond by 1D4 and your SAN by 1. Describe how the relationship has improved because of your Survivor's efforts or worsened despite them.

## Reorganizing and Replenishing Personal Resources

As described in **REPLENISHING RESOURCES, REMOVING CHECKMARKS** (page 27), if your Survivor actively drew from his or her personal pool of Resources during an adventure, there will be check marks on the character sheet to record this. By investing some downtime (half a day or more) to reorganize or replenish your stash of gear, all such check marks can be erased. Describe the lengths your Survivor goes to tidy up or restock.

## Gaining Favor of the Community at Large

Your Survivor may choose to spend time attempting to improve his or her status within a group or society, as represented by a Community Bond he or she **already has**. This may involve influencing key individuals to build a support-base or working hard to solve the community's problems and earn their respect.

A major investment of time warrants a SAN test – success means that your Survivor's actions have drawn the attention of key people in the community. A fumbled SAN roll means that some terrible error of judgement by your Survivor creates a negative reaction: this reduces the bond value by -1D3 and causes a loss of 1 point of SAN.

If the SAN roll succeeded, there is a chance that the positive attention from the community may convert into an increase in status. Make a second D100 roll and compare it to current **Community Bond rating**×5. If the roll is *higher* than the target, the Community Bond value improves:

- If the original SAN roll was a **normal success**: +1 to bond value
- If the original SAN roll was a **critical success**: +2 to bond value

The causes of the increase or decrease in status should be described, along with their impact.

## Back to Nature

Your Survivor can spend time in contemplative seclusion, minimizing stress, distractions, and obligations. This isn't a vacation with the family; it's extended time alone, or mostly alone, in an environment that's physically active but places few other demands on the Survivor. This reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse. Roll a SAN test. Success adds 1D4 SAN, or 4 for a critical (up to your **Recovery SAN**). A fumble costs 1D4 SAN.

## Establish a New Individual Bond

Your Survivor may attempt to create a new Individual Bond with a character. This is not done lightly. It means this new character is developing into an essential, important part of your Survivor's life. Attempt a **CHA×5** test. Success establishes a new Individual Bond with a score equal to half your Survivor's CHA (round up). Unfortunately, devoting so much attention to the new Bond reduces the value of one other Bond – either reduce an Individual Bond by 1D4 or a Community Bond by 1.

## Establish a New Community Bond

Your survivor attempts to establish membership in a new community and assert some kind of status within its 'pecking order'. You might do this because you have just arrived in a new place, or because you wish to take on a position of standing within a group (e.g., a religious congregation) that provides social benefits. Getting accepted to a position of trust within a community is not easy. Attempt a **CHA×5** test. Success establishes a new Community Bond with a score equal to **half** your Survivor's Permanent Resources rating (round up). Devoting energy to currying

the favor needed to establish the new Bond reduces the value of one other Bond – either reduce an Individual Bond by 1D4 or a (different) Community Bond by 1.

### Get Help With Mental Illnesses

There is no such thing as clinical psychotherapy in the Post-Apocalypse world. The days of well-ordered professional help for mental health issues ended when the fabric of society unraveled.

However, that does not mean that there are no methods to heal a damaged mind. Most of the remaining options involve the time-honored method of sharing with an empathetic person an account of the circumstances which created the mental trauma. This other person might be a spiritual adviser, a folk-psychiatrist, or just a kind-hearted fellow member of the community that is willing to calm and reassure you.

Being helped through the process of recovering from mental trauma is an ongoing process requiring honesty and commitment. Your Survivor must decide whether to truthfully tell the empathetic person what caused the SAN loss.

- If your Survivor tells the truth, there are risks. If the original SAN loss came from confronting the Cthulhu Mythos, and the empathic person *believes* your Survivor's account, he or she may themselves lose SAN.

In order to determine whether your Survivor benefits from the reassuring catharsis, roll against the empathic person's **Reassure** skill. If your Survivor has described unnatural events and the empathetic person thinks they're delusions, this roll is at a -20% penalty. If it fumbles, your Survivor loses 1 SAN. If it succeeds, your Survivor regains 1D6 SAN (or 6 with a critical success), up to his or her **Recovery SAN**.

- If, on the other hand, if your Survivor *doesn't* tell the empathetic person the truth, the potential for healing is limited. Make a Luck Roll. If it fumbles, your Survivor loses 1 SAN. If it succeeds, your Survivor regains 1D4 SAN (or 4 for a critical success), up to his or her **Recovery SAN**.

If your Survivor suffers from a disorder, a critical success with the empathetic person's Reassure or Luck roll cures it. Your Survivor also develops a Bond with the empathetic person equal to half your Survivor's CHA (or add 1D4 to it if your Survivor already has that Bond, up to the Survivor's CHA). He or she also loses points from another bond of your choice (1D4 from one individual Bond or 1 from a Community Bond). Write a note saying "cured" next to the disorder on the character sheet — but do not erase it. The next time you gain a disorder, you must roll another SAN test. If that fails, the "cured" disorder returns in full force alongside the new one.

Regardless of whether the rolls result in improvements, the long hours spent with an empathetic person reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse.

### Improve a Skill or Stat

By training or studying extensively, your Survivor can try to boost a stat or a skill. This reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse. Describe what your Survivor is doing to improve the stat or skill: poring over crumbling textbooks for INT or a skill, lifting weights for STR, meditating to strengthen self-discipline for POW, socializing or taking leadership courses for CHA, working with the compound's medic to regain stat points permanently lost from an injury, etc.

If you wish to gain points in a skill you don't already possess and which has a Base Chance of 0%, you can only do this if you are being trained by someone who has at least 20% in that skill. Under no circumstances can the Unnatural skill be improved through training.

Attempt a test of the stat  $\times 5$  or the skill. If the test fails, your Survivor has improved. Add 1D10 percentage points to the skill (to a maximum of 99%) or one point to the stat (to a maximum of 18).

### Personal Motivation

Your Survivor indulges in the things that he or she finds meaningful. This reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse. Roll a SAN test. Success adds 1 SAN, or 1D4 for a critical (up to your Survivor's **Recovery SAN**). A fumble costs 1 SAN.

### Reading Mythos Tomes / Learning Rituals

Your Survivor may have unearthed books or other records which claim to contain wisdom about the Cthulhu Mythos forces which now haunt the world. He or she can devote time to trying to delve into such accounts or trying to learn the arcane rituals they describe. See **TOMES OF TERROR, AND APOCALYPTIC REVELATIONS** on page 82 for more on how such research is performed.

### Frenzied Research into the World of the Post-Apocalypse

Your Survivor can spend every waking hour poring over whatever information is known about the state of the Post-Apocalyptic world. This reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse. The Game Moderator secretly rolls **Occult**, **History**, or a relevant **Post-Apocalypse Lore** skill for your Survivor.

Success means you uncover some pertinent secret about the world, of the Game Moderator's devising. If the roll was a critical success, this secret is an especially valuable one. Failure means you find nothing. A fumble means you *think* you find a valuable secret, but it will turn out to be dangerously wrong. Either way, your Survivor might gain or lose a little SAN. Roll 1D6-3: if the result is a positive number, add it to SAN as a benefit gained from coming to terms with the new reality of the world. If the roll was negative, still add it to SAN (thereby reducing SAN) — this is the price of obsessing over the Post-Apocalypse world self-destructively.



## PART II: APOCALYPSE-BUILDING RESOURCES

This section consists of a series of resources which are designed to help a Game Moderator create an Apocalypse of his or her own, and to design exciting and dangerous scenarios to challenge a Survivor Group.

### Harshness of the Environment

An important factor in defining the Post-Apocalyptic setting is deciding upon the level of harshness and adversity it presents to those who must eke out a living within it. Some settings may be not much worse than Pre-Apocalypse times, just with a hidden Mythos menace haunting the world. At the other end of the spectrum, it is possible to conceive of warped versions of our world that are literally hellish or nightmarish realms of constant pain and suffering.

The degree of harshness of the world is an important consideration when creating Survivor characters (as described in the Survivor creation rules in the first half of this book).

To assist the Game Moderator in describing the harshness of his or her Post-Apocalyptic world, *APOCTHULHU* defines four broad descriptors – **Normal(ish)**, **Harsh**, **Very Harsh**, and **Nightmarish**. The game mechanic impacts of each descriptor are summarized in the table nearby.

Note that it is not necessarily the case that the *entire* Post-Apocalypse world operates at the same level of harshness – the Game Moderator might decide that parts of the setting are much more dangerous than others. Or perhaps some characters come from a more sheltered background than others. The important consideration for players creating new Survivors is knowing the harshness descriptor for the place where *their Survivor* grew up or spent most time. There is no overall positive or negative in game terms to growing up in harsher or less-harsh backgrounds, although some will shape the Survivors fortitude more than others, and drive specialization of their skills.

**Note:** when applying the effects of Harshness to Survivor generation, it is important to start with the first column (Statistics modifications) and proceed column-by-column to the right. Some changes may affect subsequent rolls. It is particularly important to determine Starting SAN and mental disorders before applying the effects of SAN Hardening (which have the potential to reduce POW).

>> Effects of Setting Harshness on Survivor Creation Process				
Harshness Descriptor	Effect on Statistics	Adversity Skill Points	Starting SAN and Disorders	SAN Hardening
<b>Normal(ish)</b>	No change	None	Starting SAN is POW×5  No starting disorders	None
<b>Harsh</b>	+1 to <i>either</i> STR <i>or</i> CON (pick one)	+20 points which must be spent on either: Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival, or Unnatural.	Starting SAN is POW×4  No starting disorders	If CHA <i>or</i> POW Is less than 7, Survivor loses 1D4 points from two Bonds (player choice, each can be either an individual or community bond)
<b>Very Harsh</b>	+1 to <i>both</i> STR <i>and</i> CON	+40 points which must be spent in 20-point blocks on: Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival, or Unnatural.	Starting SAN is POW×4  Make a <b>POW×5</b> test; failure indicates 1 starting disorder	If CHA <i>or</i> POW Is less than 10, Survivor is Adapted to <i>either</i> Violence <i>OR</i> Helplessness (pick one and apply the necessary modifiers to stats and bonds)

<b>Nightmarish</b>	+2 to <i>both</i> STR and CON	+80 points which must be spent in 20-point blocks on: Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival, or Unnatural. No single skill may receive more than 40 points from this pool.	Starting SAN is POW×3  Make TWO <b>POW×4</b> tests; <i>each</i> failure indicates a starting disorder	All Survivors are Adapted to <i>either</i> Violence <i>OR</i> Helplessness (pick one).  If CHA or POW Is less than 10, Survivor is Adapted to <i>both</i> . Apply the necessary modifiers to stats and bonds
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## The Global Salvage Yard

One of the staples of Post-Apocalyptic stories is that resources – in the form of traditional modern equipment and supplies – are scarce.

### A World in Disorder: Finding Resources in the Wreckage of the World

All items that are in short supply in the Post-Apocalypse world are considered under the generic term of ‘resources’. This includes equipment, vehicles, consumable supplies, and even basic food and water.

If a Survivor wants to obtain a resource, there are two ways:

1. By rummaging through the stockpile of junk that he or she hauls around as a personal ‘resource pile’, or
2. Searching the environment to try to locate an abandoned or unclaimed supply of that resource.

Each of these methods uses a different game mechanic. The former is a use of the Survivor’s **Resources** rating, while the latter is a use of his or her **Scavenge** skill.

In both cases, the difficulty of the test to locate a usable item depends on the characteristics of the particular Post-Apocalypse setting, as well as:

- **[For rummaging the resource pool]** – whether the item is small enough to realistically be carried around from place to place (e.g., it’s unlikely that anyone’s at-hand resource pool includes a 30m wind turbine).
- **[For scavenging]** – whether the location being searched is a likely or unlikely place for such resources to have been stored or abandoned (e.g., it’s reasonable to expect a helicopter might be at a military base but less likely at a school).

The results of a test can indicate that an item has been discovered, or describe utter failure of the search/rummaging. However even if the roll is successful there is no guarantee that the resource discovered will be in good condition – the discovered item might be heavily worn or maybe even utter junk (see box nearby).

### <box>Pre-Loved Items and Spoiled Goods

>> Junk

In the Post-Apocalypse world many vehicles, weapons, and other pieces of equipment are damaged, poorly maintained, or just badly made. If your Survivor is stuck with a junk piece of gear, it fumbles not just on a failed roll with matching numbers, but also on any roll higher than 95.

A junk item also incurs a –20% penalty to every use of it.

### >> Heavily Worn Items

Some of the items which the Survivor finds aren't junk but have seen considerable previous use and be heavily worn out. Items like this work alright but are at the risk of *becoming* junk every time the Survivor puts them into service. After each use the Survivor must make a Luck roll. On failure, the worn item has turned into junk (as per above).

It's up to the Game Moderator exactly when a perfectly normal item has had so much wear-and-tear that it qualifies as being considered Heavily Worn. This should only happen to equipment or devices that have received considerable 'on screen' use, or which were purloined from a source which is likely to have heavily over-used it.

### >> Spoiled and Potentially Dangerous Consumables

If the Survivor is searching for a type of consumable resource (e.g., water, fuel, or ammo) and gains a less-than-perfect outcome, it is possible that some quantity of the resource has been found but in a spoiled condition that may be potentially dangerous to use/ingest.

The Game Moderator will need to interpret what this means in the context of the resource type, and whether the spoiling is obvious or requires a skill test to detect.

- Ingesting spoiled food or water is treated as an exposure to poison (see **POISON AND DISEASE** on page 56). The default toxicity is (Speed 1D4 hours; Lethality 2%), but the Game Moderator can vary this to fit the situation.
- Administering spoiled pharmaceuticals can be considered as per food and water (if the original medicine was something relatively minor), or as per the failure of a **Pharmacy** roll during administration of a dangerous drug (Poison; Speed 1D6 hours; Lethality 5%).
- Attempting to use other "spoiled" consumables (e.g., gasoline or weapon ammo) usually results in them being inert and useless, although the Game Moderator might decide they result in dangerous situations for the users (explosions, damage to weapons, vehicles, etc.)

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## Resource Categories and Scarcity

When defining a Post-Apocalypse setting, the Game Moderator should give some thought to the scarcity of different types of resources in the setting. Things to consider include the nature of the original Apocalyptic event, how long ago it happened, and whether humanity has been able to recover some semblance of manufacturing or agriculture since then.

- The first factor can be important if the catastrophic event especially affected certain things more than others (e.g., if the Mythos Apocalypse caused poisonous oil to rain from the sky all around the globe, fresh water is likely to be especially scarce).
- The second factor is important since the more time that has passed, the more survivors of the catastrophe will have picked over obvious stockpiles of equipment, and more consumable items will have been used up.
- The third factor might be important for games that are designed to be set decades or centuries after the Apocalypse, when humanity has cobbled together some ability to again manufacture or grow/farm certain types of resources. In such settings, the availability of those resources will begin to improve.

In order to assist the GM in describing resource scarcity for his or her Apocalypse, some representative categories and scarcity 'ratings' are described below. Think of these as convenient tools to use or tweak as you wish, and override whenever seems appropriate.

## The Scarcity Ratings

As an abstraction, the scarcity of a resource can be rated on the following scale (from least to most scarce):

- **Abundant:** The resource is virtually everywhere; the average person probably has at least some of it at any given time.
- **Uncommon:** The resource isn't something that you'd just stumble upon accidentally but if you put concerted effort into it, you would probably find some.
- **Hard to Get:** The resource is in short supply or is somehow heavily regulated; most people don't have ready access to it at all but if you have special access or know the right people, you can probably get some.
- **Very Hard to Get:** The resource is absent from all the common places and even people with special access find it a significant challenge to track some down. Don't be surprised if you can't get any at all.
- **Impossible to Get:** Stockpiles of this resource simply don't exist (anymore); people that are especially resourceful might have been prudent enough to snare some for their personal supply, but that's it.

The scarcity rating of a resource affects a Survivor's attempt to either scavenge from the environment or rummage through their personal "resource stash" to find it. The table below summarizes the effects of scarcity.

Scarcity	Consumable Resources (marked ©)		Non-Consumable Resources	
	Effect on Scavenge Tests	Effect on Resources Tests	Effect on Scavenge Tests	Effect on Resources Tests
Abundant	No test required; search is automatically successful.	On successful <b>Resources</b> test, a full 'unit' of the resource is found in Survivor's collection, in perfect condition.	No test required; search is automatically successful.	On successful <b>Resources</b> test, a pristine version of the item is found in Survivor's collection.
Uncommon	May be found with a standard <b>Scavenge</b> test.	On successful <b>Resources</b> test, some quantity of the resource is found.  If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, the discovery is half a 'unit'.  A critical success or a standard success with die roll 21+ discovers a full 'unit'	May be found with a standard <b>Scavenge</b> test.	On successful <b>Resources</b> test, some form of the item is found.  If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, the item is heavily worn  A critical success or a standard success with die roll 21+ discovers a pristine item.
Hard to Get	May be found with a <b>Scavenge</b> test modified by -20.  If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 10 or less, a spoiled and potentially dangerous version is unearthed.  A critical success or a standard success with die roll 11+ finds a safe supply.	<b>Resources</b> tests are made at <b>half</b> the effective Resources rating.  If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, a spoiled and potentially dangerous version is unearthed.  A standard success with a roll of 21+ yields a safe resource but only half a 'unit'.  Only if the test was a critical success, is a full 'unit' of perfectly safe resource discovered.	May be found with a <b>Scavenge</b> test modified by -20.  If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 10 or less, a junk version of the resource is found.  A critical success or a standard success with die roll 11+ finds a pristine version of the resource.	<b>Resources</b> tests are made at <b>half</b> the effective Resources rating.  If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, a junk version of the resource is found.  A standard success with a die roll 21+ finds a heavily worn version.  Only if the test was a critical success, is a pristine version of the resource discovered.

<p>Very Hard to Get</p>	<p>May only be found with successes on <b>both</b> a <b>Luck</b> roll and a <b>Scavenge</b> test at -40.</p> <p>If the Scavenge test is a standard success and the die roll is 10 or less, a spoiled and potentially dangerous version is unearthed.</p> <p>A critical success on Scavenge or a standard success with die roll 11+ finds a safe supply.</p>	<p><b>Resources</b> tests are made at <b>quarter</b> the effective Resources rating.</p> <p>If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, a spoiled and potentially dangerous version is unearthed.</p> <p>A standard success with a roll of 21+ yields a safe resource but only half a 'unit'.</p> <p>Only if the roll was 01, is a full 'unit' of perfectly safe resource discovered.</p>	<p>May only be found with successes on <b>both</b> a <b>Luck</b> roll and a <b>Scavenge</b> test at -40.</p> <p>If the Scavenge test is a standard success and the die roll is 10 or less, a junk version is unearthed instead.</p> <p>A standard success on Scavenge with die roll 11+ finds a heavily worn version.</p> <p>A critical success on Scavenge finds a pristine version.</p>	<p><b>Resources</b> tests are made at <b>quarter</b> the effective Resources rating.</p> <p>If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, a junk version of the resource is found.</p> <p>A standard success with a die roll 21+ finds a heavily worn version.</p> <p>Only if the roll was 01, is a pristine version of the resource discovered.</p>
<p>Impossible to Get</p>	<p>No test required; search automatically fails.</p>	<p><b>Resources</b> tests are made at <b>quarter</b> the effective Resources rating.</p> <p>Any test that is not a critical success fails to find the item in the Survivor's collection in any quantity or quality.</p> <p>Critical rolls locate spoiled and potentially dangerous stocks unless the roll was 01, in which case a further <b>Luck</b> roll is made: failure indicates a half 'unit' of safe resource; success a full 'unit' of safe resource.</p>	<p>No test required; search automatically fails.</p>	<p><b>Resources</b> tests are made at <b>quarter</b> the effective Resources rating.</p> <p>Any test that is not a critical success fails to find the item in the Survivor's collection in any form.</p> <p>Critical rolls locate junk versions unless the roll was 01, in which case a further <b>Luck</b> roll is made: failure indicates heavily worn items; success indicates pristine.</p>

## The Fine Art of Jury-Rigging

Survivors may often find themselves faced with an inability to track down the equipment or devices that they really need to get something done. No amount of **Scavenging** or rummaging through each person's resources pool will track down something that no longer exists. What can a Survivor group do to get around such a roadblock? One option is to devise a plan to hunt down a collection of less-scarce component items and cobble together some kind of hodge-podge out of the parts. This is the fine art of jury-rigging.

In *APOCTHULHU*, all attempts to build these kinds of lash-ups are governed by the Craft (Jury-Rigging) skill or other similar Craft specializations. The players should describe exactly what they plan to construct and what components they hope to use. Ideally there should be some kind of logic or science behind why such items might come together in the way imagined, but ultimately it is up to you as Game Moderator to decide whether the planned jury-rigged device has any chance of working.

Once the plan is made, choose a scarcity for each component parts – hopefully somewhat better than the scarcity of the original item – and the Survivors can venture forth (or rummage around their resource pools) to see if they can find all the pieces they need. Once they have each part, one or more tests against Craft (Jury-Rigging) will be needed to successfully assemble the final item or device.

At best, a lash-up created in this way qualifies as a ‘heavily worn’ version of the real item or device. If any discovery rolls along the way yielded up sub-standard parts, or the Craft (Jury Rigging) rolls were only marginally successful, you might decide the lash-up is barely-functional ‘junk’ (see **PRE-LOVED ITEMS AND SPOILED GOODS** on page 74).

## Rules for Equipment and Vehicles

Most equipment that Survivors will find and use does not require any special rules – if the Survivors have the equipment, and it is in working order then they can use it (possibly with a skill or stat test) to do things.

Two categories of equipment are exceptions to this: weapons and vehicles. Both may appear in combat or action sequences, hence their impact on tests may change the results of tense, potentially life-threatening, situations.

## Optional Spot Rules for Weapons

There’s a staggering variety of personal firearms and weaponry. Their usefulness in Post-Apocalypse adventures may be limited, of course, depending on who or what the Survivors face.

The primary game statistics relating to different types of weapons may be found on the Example Weapons Table on page 52. The availability of any class of weapon will be dictated by the style of Post-Apocalyptic setting, the technology that existed prior to the Mythos incursion, and the scarcity of weapon resources (see preceding section).

What follows are some spot rules for Survivors who have access to common ‘modern-day’ (20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> Century) weapons. Obviously if an Apocalypse took place in a different era (say the 18<sup>th</sup> Century or hundreds of years in our future), the weapons available to Survivors will be dictated by whatever technology existed at that time.

### Concealing Weapons

Knives and pistols can be concealed under ordinary clothing. Someone deliberately looking for a concealed weapon can attempt an **Alertness** test to spot it. A heavy pistol or especially big knife means a +20% Alertness bonus.

If a Survivor is wearing an overcoat or duster, he or she can attempt to conceal a bigger gun like a submachine gun or sawed-off shotgun, or a larger hand weapon (e.g., a hatchet or machete) and incur no Alertness bonus.

There’s no way to conceal a full-size rifle or a large melee weapon.

### Hand-to-Hand Weapons

Unarmed attacks, like punching, kicking, and strangling, use the **Unarmed Combat** skill. All melee weapons use the **Melee Weapons** skill.

### Primitive Ranged Weapons

Old-fashioned ranged weapons like crossbows, bow, and slings use the **Ranged Combat** skill. All such weapons require some kind of ammunition (arrows, bolts, bow) and are useless if the supply is exhausted.

### Firearms

Depending on when and where the game is set, the Post-Apocalypse world may include a number of firearms, some of which may still be in working order and reliable.

If the Survivors are trekking across the ruins of the United States, they may easily stumble upon the remains of a police squad car in which the standard-issue police carbine or a shotgun is still stowed. Alternatively, they may unearth stores of weapons previously intended for soldiers or tactical teams – such could easily include carbines or assault rifles. And, of course, the Survivors may actively decide to loot weapons from gun shops, in which case any of the abovementioned weapons – in semi-automatic form – might be found.

Firearms can be heavily accessorized. Popular Pre-Apocalypse gun add-ons include tactical lights, sound suppressors, holographic sights, telescopic sights, night sights, and targeting lasers. Many rifles can also be fitted with an under-barrel shotgun or grenade launcher. Whether any (or all) of these accessories are still available in the Post-Apocalypse world is a matter for the GM to decide.

### *Pistols*

Lightweight pistols fire low-powered cartridges and are of limited use even against humans. Medium pistols are the standard sidearms in law enforcement and the military everywhere. They fire moderately powerful rounds. Most revolvers hold six shots, but some late models hold seven or eight. Pocket revolvers sometimes take only five. There's a huge variety of ammunition capacities for semiautomatic pistol magazines, but 15 is typical, although 17 or even 20 is not uncommon. Large-caliber pistols often carry less. A typical figure for a heavy pistol is eight.

### *Shotguns*

A typical pump-action shotgun holds five shots, although there are many with extended magazines for eight or more. Double-barrel shotguns hold one shot per barrel and can fire both barrels at one target with one attack roll. Shotguns can fire shot (a spread of small projectiles), slugs (a single heavy bullet), or "non-lethal" ammunition such as bean bag rounds, baton rounds, or rubber shot.

**FIRING SHOT:** Grants a +20% bonus to hit at all ranges: at point-blank due to the target being so close (see **ATTACK MODIFIERS** on page 48) and beyond that due to the spread of projectiles. Double the Armor Rating of armor or cover against it.

**FIRING BOTH BARRELS:** You can fire both barrels of a double-barrel shotgun at one target with one attack roll. For shot, that inflicts an extra +1D10 damage up to 20 yards away or +1D6 beyond 20 yards. For a slug, it adds +2D6 damage up to 75 yards, but no extra damage beyond that as the slugs separate.

**OTHER GAUGES:** These rules assume a standard 12-gauge shotgun. Modify the damage by +2 for a heavier gauge or -2 for a lighter gauge.

### *Submachine Guns*

Submachine guns fire full-automatic bursts but are often also capable of semi-automatic fire. When firing semi-automatic, the weapon inflicts ordinary damage; with automatic fire, it uses a Lethality rating (see **LETHALITY RATING** on page 53).

### *Rifles and Carbines*

Rifles fire more powerful cartridges than pistols or submachine guns, for better penetration, wounding, and range. However, they are also bulkier. Some military rifles — assault rifles in smaller calibers and automatic rifles in heavier calibers — are capable of firing full-automatic bursts with Lethality ratings. Especially heavy rifles have Lethality ratings with single shots.

Older rifles and many hunting rifles use a bolt action that must be manually worked before each shot, which delays aiming. An attack with one in the turn immediately after it's already been fired is at -20%. A bolt-action rifle gets no benefit from the **Aim** action in the turn immediately after it's fired.

#### >> Unusual Ammunition

Most small-arms ammunition uses the standard, listed damage ratings. Special types are available.

**ARMOR-PIERCING:** Pistols, rifles, and submachine guns can fire bullets designed to pierce body armor. An armor piercing bullet reduces Armor by 5 (see **ARMOR PIERCING WEAPONS** on page 56; this replaces the weapon's usual Armor Piercing rating, if any), but it does -1 damage (to a minimum of 1 point).



**HOLLOW POINT:** Pistols, rifles, and submachine guns can fire expanding bullets designed to cause greater tissue trauma at the expense of penetration. A hollow point round does +1 damage but armor is twice as effective against it.

## Heavy Weapons, Demolitions and Artillery

Many unnatural things that Post-Apocalypse Survivors face are inscrutable perversions of physics no more vulnerable to explosions than they are to crucifixes. This never stops Survivors from trying.

The Base Range for each weapon reflects the fact that it needs to be accurate enough only to get a target within the Kill Radius. Machine guns fired off their bipod, tripod, or vehicle mount halve Base Range.

Many of these weapons actually fire in automatic bursts as well, which is subsumed under their Lethality ratings and Kill Radius. The Ammo Capacity of these weapons also varies widely, often depending on the vehicle on which they are mounted.

Only the lightest of Heavy Weapons will be commonly found, usually in military bases and the like. Most of the heavier ones are vehicle-mounted or specialized gear designed for military support units; these will typically be hard for the Survivors to get their hands on, and even harder for them to transport to where they need firepower.

## Weapons with Special Effects

Some types of weapons do something other than (or as well as) inflicting damage to Hit Points.

### *Tear Gas and Pepper Spray*

These irritant chemicals make eyes tear, lungs seize, and exposed tissues sting like hell. If hit, the target must make a **CON×5** test or be stunned and suffer a penalty (usually -20%) to all actions for one hour. If the **CON×5** roll succeeds, the target is not stunned and suffers half the usual penalty. As described on page 51, **STUNNED** individuals can't take further combat actions until they succeed at a **CON×5** test, which may be attempted once per turn.

A tear gas grenade only needs to land near a target to have effect, so the attack roll has a bonus of +20%. A tear gas grenade's cloud lingers in the air only a minute or two. Pepper spray is best used before combat begins, when no attack rolls are needed. If a pepper spray attack roll fails, the attacker partially sprays himself or herself. The attacker must make a **CON×5** test at +20% to avoid being stunned and suffers a -20% penalty for one hour.

Wearing a gas mask protects against these effects but incurs a -20% penalty to **Alertness** and **Search** tests.

### *Stun Grenades*

A "flash-bang" is a grenade that makes a huge noise and bright flash which deafens, blinds and staggers everyone within a 10-yard radius (indoors) or 5 yards (outdoors).

Each target is stunned (unable to act until a **CON×5** test succeeds; check each turn). After the stun wears off, the target suffers a -40% penalty to all actions for 1D6 turns. (Having eye or ear protection reduces the penalty to -20%.)

A stun grenade only needs to land near a target to have effect, so the attack roll has a bonus of +20%. If someone is tossing it into a closed room with the benefit of surprise, it doesn't even require a roll.

### *Bright Lights*

A bright flashlight in darkness can dazzle someone up to 10 yards away by shining it in the target's eyes. This is an action in combat. It requires a **DEX×5** test, which is automatically **opposed by the target's DEX×5** test. A dazzled target is at a -20% penalty to all rolls for 1D6 turns.

## Electroshock Weapons

A conducted energy device or stun gun discharges a high-voltage electrical shock into the target, causing the target's muscles to spasm violently. The victim must roll a **CON×5** test to resist being stunned. If stunned, he or she is unable to act until a **CON×5** test succeeds (attempted each turn). After the stun wears off, the victim suffers a –20% penalty to all actions for 1D20 turns.

Human bodies are excellent conductors of electricity. Anyone holding the target of an electroshock attack suffers the same effects.

## Rules for Vehicles

Depending on the nature of the Post-Apocalypse setting, functioning motorized vehicles might be scarce or common. If the Survivors or their adversary have access to such vehicles, the following guidelines may assist when dangerous and/or action-oriented scenes involving vehicles arise during play.

Vehicles have three basic statistics:

- **Hit Points** and **Armor**, in case they're involved in combat, and
- **Speed** ratings that affect chases.

### Hit Points and Armor

Each vehicle counts as a Huge target (see **HUGE**, page 55). It takes damage from unarmed attacks and small weapons such as knives and clubs only when the Game Moderator thinks it makes sense.

A vehicle that loses **half** its Hit Points is badly damaged. It can't be operated without a **Drive** or **Pilot** test (depending on the type of vehicle). The next time a Drive or Pilot test *fumbles*, the vehicle fails altogether until repaired.

Repairing a damaged vehicle requires time, parts, and successful application of one or more skill tests (at the GM's discretion; most likely to be some sort of **Craft** skill and a relevant **Drive** or **Pilot** skill). Even if repaired, the vehicle might now qualify as 'heavily worn' or 'junk' (see **PRE-LOVED ITEMS AND SPOILED GOODS**, page 74).

A vehicle that loses *all* of its Hit Points is demolished. It will never function again.

### Speed

There are two broad categories of vehicle speed: Surface and Air. Any vehicle with an Air Speed rating can automatically outrun a vehicle with a Surface Speed rating (except for Hot Air Balloons, which can't outrun any vehicle, and Zeppelins which are considered equivalent speed to a Slow Surface vehicle).

Within the same vehicle category, some are faster than others. A vehicle with a 'Fast' rating grants a +20% bonus to any **Drive** or **Pilot** test to pursue or escape. A 'Slow' vehicle incurs a –20% penalty instead. An 'Average' rating confers no modifier.

Jet planes have a speed rating of 'Special.' A jet automatically outruns any vehicle except another jet, and a fighter jet outruns any other kind of jet.

A vehicle that's notorious for poor handling or that's in bad shape might counts as 'heavily worn' or 'junk' (see above) at the GM's discretion.

### <box>Some Example Vehicles

>> Example Vehicles			
Vehicle Type	Hit Points	Armor	Speed
Motorcycle	15—20	0	Fast
Medium Car	25—30	3	Average
4WD or Jeep	30—35	3	Average

Armored Car	40	10	Slow
Small Truck	35—40	3	Average
Semi-Trailer	45	3	Slow
Tank	90	20	Slow
Speedboat	25	0	Average
Hovercraft	35	3	Average
Jet Ski	15	0	Fast
<b>Air Vehicles</b>			
Helicopter	20	0	Average
Light Plane	25	0	Average
Hot Air Balloon	10	0	Slow (see nearby)
Zeppelin	20	0	Slow-Surface
Passenger Jet	50	0	Special (see nearby)
Fighter Jet	40	0	Special (see nearby)
Flying Zardoz Head	300	15	Slow

</box>

### Ramming

A ramming vehicle has a **Lethality** rating equal to the **sum** of its Armor and its maximum HP. The ramming vehicle itself suffers Lethality damage with a rating equal to half the maximum HP of the target (round up). If the target of the ramming is a huge creature or another vehicle, the ramming vehicle also suffers damage equal to half the target’s Armor.

Every passenger in a ramming vehicle takes 1D6 damage on impact. Every passenger in the rammed vehicle takes 2D6 damage. A worn seat belt or active air bag halves the damage. A passenger in a vehicle that rams a target less than *huge* size suffers no damage.

If the ramming vehicle is going significantly slower than usual, halve the damage to vehicle, target, and passengers.

## Tomes of Terror, and Apocalyptic Revelations

A common feature of Cthulhu Mythos tales is the existence of musty old tomes which describe the ‘truth’ about mankind’s perilous place in the universe, and the powers thirsting for cosmic upheaval. In most Mythos Post-Apocalypses such revelations are less important – the ravaged nature of the world is evidence of the baleful potency of the Mythos, and the broken remnants of humanity are testament to mankind’s frailty.

That is not to say that revelatory tomes and the secret information they contain cannot be important parts of an *APOCTHULHU* game.

The core idea of Lovecraftian scenarios which unfold through perilous investigations of a central “weird mystery” applies equally to *APOCTHULHU*. It’s just that the mystery may be less about the existence of the Mythos and more about learning details of the alien powers that roam the land, their weaknesses, and whether the ruination of the world can be reversed.

All of those secrets might be buried in books – or old newspapers, TV news spots, and the like. Some of the revelations might describe supernatural powers or “magickal effects” that Survivors might be able to utilize to fight back the shadows. Often these will require they perform time-consuming rituals drawn from mystical traditions.

## Researching the Mythos

If you as Game Moderator want to include a 'Tome of Terror' or some other form of revelatory information source in your game, there are a few factors to consider:

- How will the Survivor's locate it?
- What skill rolls are needed to read it (or view it, or otherwise access its information)?
- How long does it take to study the information before it is understood?
- Does the information cause a Sanity Loss to those who learn it?
- Does understanding the revelations cause an increase in skills?
- Does it impart some other benefit, such as the chance to learn a magickal ritual?

Mythos tomes are one of the few ways in which Survivors may increase their rating in the **Unnatural** skill. Each has an associated amount of Unnatural skill gain that it might potentially impart ... if only the Survivor is able to see past its disordered jumble of insane ideas. Simple treatises on the Cthulhu Mythos might impart just a few points (+1 to +3 perhaps) while weighty grimoires like the infamous *Necronomicon* might offer the reader thorough and dangerous insight (+15 or more points of increase in **Unnatural**).

### Finding Information

If the 'tome' (or newspaper or video cassette, etc.) is stored away as part of a vast collection – as in a library or private hoard – Survivors may need to exercise their **Research** skill in tracking it down. Or maybe interpersonal skills will allow them to get directions to it from people who are knowledgeable about the collection?

### Accessing and Understanding the Contents

If the item is expressed in a language other than the common vernacular, understanding it might require a **Foreign Language** test. This is especially true if the information is expressed in archaic or highly technical language.

If the knowledge locked up in the item is highly contextualized on esoteric systems of thought it might also require an **Ocult** test; if it is so full of references back to old Pre-Apocalypse knowledge that it can't readily be understood, perhaps a **History** or **Anthropology** test might be required. On the other hand, if the knowledge is closely tied to people, places, and events from *after* the Apocalypse then maybe a relevant **Post-Apocalypse Lore** test may be needed.

If the information is locked away in some technological recording – on a video camera or busted server – there may be a need for Survivors to succeed in **Technology Use** tests, or track down replacement parts, or even use **Craft** skills to build apparatus to decode and display the information in a human-readable form.

### Immersion

To the layman, a 'tome of terror' looks like nothing more than a random collection of disjointed thoughts, none of them imparting any real meaning. This is because most people have no prior experience of the Cthulhu Mythos and thus have no reason to think that the gibbering ravings might be something meaningful.

If the Investigator undertaking the research has an **Unnatural** skill rating of 0, he or she will be likewise unconvinced. Such an individual will be unable to become sufficiently 'immersed' in the Tome's buried secrets to learn anything useful at all.

On the other hand, a researcher with skill in **Unnatural** may be able to see beyond the disconnected rantings and perceive the implied secrets. This requires an **Immersion test**: a roll against the Survivor's current Unnatural skill × 10 with a negative modifier based on the tome's weightiness (measured by the amount of potential additional Unnatural skill it may afford the cautious reader).

Tome's Unnatural Skill Gain	Modifier to Immersion Test
+1 to +3	0
+4 to +6	-10
+7 to +12	-20
+13 to +16	-30
+17 or more	-40

If this roll fails, the researcher becomes convinced that the Tome is a fake. No matter how many days or weeks he or she invests in studying it, that belief will prevent any deeper understanding of its contents.

If this roll is a *critical success*, the researcher becomes obsessed with the tome – and will want to pursue its analysis at all costs. This might present some difficult situations, but also means the research (see below) will be completed in **half** the normal time.

### Investing Time

Reading a musty old tome might take months, especially if it is written in rambling and confusing language; on the other hand, viewing a video recording might only take a few minutes, especially if the relevant information is explained in a clear and concise way. You as Game Moderator should make a call as to the amount of time that a Survivor must invest in order to properly appreciate the contents of the knowledge source – in general, the more cryptic and voluminous, the longer it will take. Conceivably, some arcane tomes written with elliptical logic might take months to properly understand.

If the Game Moderator determines that some form of skill test is required to comprehend the information (e.g., if it is in a foreign language or recorded in a highly unorthodox way), that roll should only be allowed *after* the necessary research time has been invested. In general, it isn't necessary for the research process to be uninterrupted, but a long break might prove a setback which lengthens the overall task.

### Dangers of Understanding

Lovecraft famously wrote that the most merciful thing in the world is mankind's inability to correlate all the pieces of knowledge at its disposal. It's this "island of ignorance" that saves humanity from going insane from the realization of the true horrors underlying the world. Deliberately diving into the study of the hidden truth is a potentially perilous undertaking.

Revelations about terrible or shocking events or disgusting practices of Cthulhu Mythos entities or their followers, might warrant a **SAN** Loss. Compared to other Lovecraftian tabletop roleplaying games, however, such losses should generally be smaller – after all, Survivors are already well aware of many terrifying truths about the Mythos.

### Skill increases

The main reason to unlock the hidden wisdom of tomes or other obscure knowledge-sources is to gain information that is relevant to the state of the current world or the scenario/campaign that is being played. In this regard, you as Game Moderator should reward successful research with some helpful details or facts which will aid in solving a problem or remaining alive in the broken world.

In addition to this, you might rule that the knowledge learned through research increases the Survivor's skill ratings in some way. The most common 'reward' is an improvement to the **Unnatural** skill (which captures hidden knowledge about the Cthulhu Mythos and its attendant horrors).

A minor tome might provide +5 skill points (or fewer) to Unnatural, while certain rare and shocking volumes might offer as much as +15.

When improving the Unnatural skill, don't forget that a Survivor's Sanity cannot ever be higher than (99 minus the Unnatural skill rating). If changing this cap means current Sanity is too high, that number must also be reduced to match the new Maximum SAN.

In addition to learning about the Unnatural, successful research might improve other knowledge-based skills as well. For example:

- Information about obscure human beliefs might improve **Occult**
- Information about the world before the Apocalypse or the cause of the Apocalypse might improve **History** or **Archeology**
- Information about the world as it is now might improve **Post-Apocalypse Lore**
- Information about human civilizations, either Pre- or Post-Apocalypse might improve **Anthropology**

More mundane knowledge might be learned as well, which improves **Art, Craft, First Aid, Law**, etc.

Usually the amount of skill gained through such means will be variable and relatively small (e.g., 1D4 to 1D10).

### Learning Rituals

Tomes may also include descriptions of rituals which, if correctly performed, can create a supernatural effect. Rituals typically involve (potentially complex) patterns of action, chants, and associated paraphernalia. The manifestations created through rituals can be significant, but unlike magic in most tabletop roleplaying games such supernatural workings are laborious. They are typically time-consuming and may require the coordinated actions of a group of people to have any chance of succeeding.

Despite such inherent limitations, supernatural rituals represent perhaps the most powerful source of otherworldly influence which Survivors (or their human adversaries) are ever likely to have under their control. As such there are some individuals who scour the blasted landscape of the Post-Apocalyptic world searching for tomes which can instruct them in such rituals. Some even believe rituals may be the pathway towards restoring the world to its unbroken state.

When a Survivor has successfully read a tome in its entirety you as Game Moderator should provide him or her with a list of any rituals it contains. Not every tome contains rituals, and not every description of supernatural effects in a tome is detailed enough to allow it to be reproduced. But for those that are present in such form, you should provide a sketchy description of what the ritual seems designed to do. This should be a description in vague game-world terms rather than in terms of game mechanics: "seems designed to bring forth a shadow entity" is preferable to "summons a Night-Gaunt".

A Survivor might decide to attempt to study the specifics of a ritual described in a tome. If so, he or she will need to devote time and effort to that endeavor. This is *in addition to* the time spent researching the tome itself and represents study that can only begin when the tome has been successfully read in full.

Exactly how much time is needed to study a given ritual depends on its complexity – that is, whether it is considered **Simple, Complex, or Elaborate**. Typically, the more powerful the potential effects of a ritual, the more complex it will be.

**Simple** rituals take research of the order of *hours or days* to learn; **Complex** rituals can only be learned through the application of *days or weeks* of study; and **Elaborate** rituals can take *weeks, months, or years* to master. The time investment to learn a ritual does not have to be a single continuous block of research but can be split across many shorter periods of intense study.

### *Rolling to Learn A Ritual*

If the Survivor invests the requisite time, he or she will still need to make a roll at the end of the period to see whether the time invested paid off. The Survivor must attempt a **SAN** roll – and *fail* the roll – to learn the ritual.

If the roll **does not** indicate a successful learning of the ritual, it means the Survivor does not grasp the nuances required to master it. He or she can try again but will need to start from the beginning and again invest the same amount of time again before re-attempting the test.

If, on the other hand, the roll **does** indicate the Survivor learned the ritual, he or she loses SAN. This is the price of internalizing unnatural truths about the universe and weird techniques for manipulating it. For **Simple** rituals, the Sanity loss should be modest (e.g., 1 point, 1D4, or 1D6); for **Complex** rituals a more substantial loss is warranted (e.g., 1D6, 1D8, or 1D10), while learning **Elaborate** rituals will always be damaging to Sanity (e.g., 1D10, 1D12, or 1D20 point loss). Learning an Elaborate ritual *also* grants a Survivor +1 percentile in the **Unnatural** skill.

Once a ritual has been successfully learned, the Survivor may attempt to perform it (see below).

### *Tomes With Multiple Rituals*

Some tomes, in particular so-called ‘grimoires’, contain descriptions of many different supernatural rituals. Learning rituals from such sources requires each effort to be attempted separately, using the method described above.

### *Keeping Failed Rolls Secret*

The Game Moderator may choose to keep the SAN roll made at the conclusion of a research attempt secret from the player. If the outcome is a clear success or failure the Survivor should recognize it as such, but if the roll was a marginal success or failure the Game Moderator might choose to tell the player that the Survivor *believes* he or she has memorized all the subtleties but is not 100% sure. The only way to know for certain is to attempt the ritual – and if the learning attempt was a failure, such an attempt will never properly succeed. Although it may still generate an unintended supernatural effect.

## **Performing Rituals**

The specific actions, chants, and paraphernalia required to successfully perform a ritual are particular to each and should be designed as part of the ritual’s description.

Any attempt to carry out a ritual without the necessary knowledge or components is doomed to failure ... although it is possible that flawed ritual activities might still generate some kind of supernatural effect, just not the one intended by the person conducting the ritual. The Game Moderator should use his or her judgement to determine any such random supernatural side-effects; they should almost always be dangerous and detrimental to those involved.

In terms of game mechanics, the successful performance of a ritual (once the correct pieces are in place) is achieved via an investment of time/effort, the sacrifice of points in one or more game attribute (usually Willpower Points), and a successful Ritual Activation Test (see below). If all these steps are successfully achieved, the supernatural effects of the ritual will manifest.

### **Time Invested in the Ritual**

The amount of time required to perform a ritual depends on its complexity rating – **Simple**, **Complex**, or **Elaborate**.

- **Simple** rituals are relatively quick to carry out, requiring somewhere between a turn and a minute.
- **Complex** rituals are more time-consuming, needing somewhere between a few minutes and an hour.
- **Elaborate** rituals are serious undertakings, consuming anything from a few hours to a day or maybe more.



During the time taken to perform a ritual, assume that all participants are completely occupied (chanting, carrying out prescribed actions, using paraphernalia in particular ways). A short interruption might not destroy the momentum of the ritual but a longer break likely will.

### Powering the Ritual

The description of a ritual should outline the type and number of personal attribute points that must be sacrificed to provide mental energies that fuel the supernatural effect.

The most common form of sacrifice is Willpower Points – to create relatively minor effects might only require 5 or 6 WPs; a substantial effect might require 15; a vastly powerful effect might require 30; and a truly cosmic-level effect might need 100 or more WPs.

When a Survivor makes a deliberate sacrifice of WPs, check to see whether the new total carries any effect upon him or her (see **WILLPOWER POINTS**, page 45). In particular, remember that reaching a WP total of 1 or 2 indicates a mental collapse of some kind, and reaching 0 WP causes unconsciousness.

Whenever a sacrifice of WP is called for, a participant in the ritual may always choose to sacrifice points of permanent POW instead – each such point is equivalent to 10 WPs for the purposes of fueling a ritual. Such sacrificed points do not refresh, but Survivors can attempt **DOWNTIME** activities to try to get some back (see page 71)

Some rituals also call for a sacrifice of Hit Points, either from the participants or from elsewhere (animal, human, or other living entity). Note that Survivors who knowingly harm another person, or even cruelly harm or kill an animal are likely to be subject to Sanity loss due to **VIOLENCE** (see page 59).

Depending on the nature of the specific ritual, it may be possible for several people to cooperate in the performance. For especially large effects this may be the only way to generate enough mental energies. While the leader of the ritual must have learned it in full (using the process described in the previous section), helpers can be instructed through simple notes and rote learning. Each assistant chooses for themselves how many points of attributes they will sacrifice.

### The Ritual Activation Test

If the requisite amount of time has been devoted to the ritual and the necessary number of attribute points sacrificed, the individual leading the performance may make a roll to see if the effort was ultimately successful.

Successfully activating a ritual depends on the ritual leader's Sanity, but success is more likely the *lower* that number. The **Ritual Activation Test** is a SAN test that must be *failed* for the ritual to work as planned.

If the roll indicates the ritual did *not* work, all the chanting and ceremony has been for naught. The ritual leader has two options – he or she can either:

- **Abandon the ritual:** nothing supernatural happens at all, and half of the sacrificed points are returned to all participants; or
- **Force a connection** to the supernatural: this involves the leader personally sacrificing 1 POW permanently to turn a failed roll to a successful one. The ritual effects happen after all, despite the roll.

### Sanity Costs to Ritual Participants

The simple act of being involved in a supernatural ritual performance is damaging to a character's Sanity, regardless of whether the ritual was successful or not.

If the performance was completed but something went awry (e.g., insufficient mental energy was raised, or the Ritual Activation Test indicated the effort was fruitless), all participants suffer an automatic SAN loss. For rituals

intended to create small effects this will be modest, perhaps just 1 SAN point; if attempting a substantial supernatural effect, the loss is 1D4; if attempting a vastly powerful effect it might be 1D6; and for a cosmic effect it might be 1D20.

On the other hand, if the ritual succeeded and the supernatural effect is generated it is quite likely that the experience of witnessing something bizarre created by one's own actions will damage each participant's Sanity. The precise losses should reflect the effect that is created, as described by the spell description. As a guideline, a minor supernatural effect might warrant a SAN loss of 1 point, a substantial one might be worth 1D8, a vast effect might lead to a loss of 1D12, and a truly cosmic manifestation might cause a Sanity loss of anything up to 1D100.

## Objects with Unnatural Power

In constructing a Post-Apocalyptic world, you may wish to include items with the power to create supernatural effects reminiscent of those wrought through rituals. Using such an item does not require any special training or learning, and no Ritual Activation Test is needed. The user of an object with supernatural powers may, however, still need to sacrifice attribute points to fuel the effect (as per the GM's description of the item) and might suffer SAN loss from the experience.

## Supernatural Effects

There are lots of weird, supernatural things that can happen in your game of *APOCTHULHU*. In most cases, the style of weirdness and its scope of effect should be tied to the specific setting, or the current adventure/campaign/plotline being played out. As such *APOCTHULHU* doesn't provide a ready-made 'grand grimoire' of supernatural rituals and effects to plunder. Effects should relate to significant plot points or elements of the setting rather than being generic RPG 'spells'.

The following guidelines may be helpful to Game Moderators inventing custom supernatural powers for their own Post-Apocalypse game settings.

### <box>Designing Supernatural Effects: General Principles

Supernatural effects in *APOCTHULHU* are unlike the forms of magic that appear in most roleplaying games, especially games set in the fantasy genre. Rather than wielding a flashy fireball into the midst of combat, a ritual magician in *APOCTHULHU* might create a supernatural effect as the result of hours of ritual incantation placing his or her mind into communion with extradimensional horrors.

The following general guidelines will help you in depicting magic in a suitably low-key and creepy fashion:

- **Supernatural Effects are seldom flashy:** while some spells might create a spectacular if shocking manifestation of unnatural horror, most work with little or no visible or physical effect. Frequently, people who aim to unleash supernatural effects have no way to tell whether their ritual succeeded or not, until hours, days, or even weeks have passed. And even then, its effects may be subtle changes that most people would never notice.
- **Supernatural Effects are usually time-consuming to create:** many supernatural effects require lengthy rituals which are repetitious and wearying to perform. While there are a handful of smaller, casual effects which might be useful in a tactical, fast-paced situation, most play out far too slowly to help in tactical environments.
- **Supernatural Effects are ALWAYS dangerous to invoke:** generating a supernatural effect is equivalent to opening one's mind and essence to the unknowable forces which make up the Cthulhu Mythos. These powers are inherently corrosive to reality as we know it. So, coming into direct mental or physical connection with them always causes some form of lasting damage to the spellcaster, and maybe others as well.

- **Supernatural Effects are the enemy of Sanity:** Connecting with the forces of the Mythos is inherently dangerous to one’s Sanity. In game terms this manifests as a mandatory sacrifice of SAN; but in narrative terms you should play up the highly disturbing experience of touching an unknown and unknowable extra-dimensional force whose very existence is anathema to everything that the caster has ever known or experienced. Generating supernatural effects should hurt. Every single time.

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## Calculating the Scope of the Supernatural Effect

The manifestations associated with a supernatural effect can be virtually anything the Game Moderator can imagine. Where such effects require game mechanics, these can be designed on a case-by-case basis.

For determining the attribute cost of a ritual, as well as its potential for creating Sanity losses, it is useful to gauge the overall ‘magnitude of the effect being generated – this is termed the **scope** of the effect. For convenience, a scale of eight scope ratings (from least to greatest) is shown below, along with a representative Willpower Point cost for fueling effects at each rating.

Supernatural Effect Scope	Indicative WP Cost
Minor	6
Small	9
Significant	12
Substantial	15
Major	22 (or 12 WP + 1 POW)
Vast	30 (or 10 WP + 2 POW)
Sweeping	45 (or 15 WP + 3 POW)
Cosmic	110 (or 10 WP + 10 POW)

The scope of an effect is based on how sweeping a change it causes to the physical (or mental) world. The sections which follow give guidelines regarding how specific types of effects might be rated using this scale.

One basic factor for consideration is the **range** of the supernatural effect (i.e., how far from the ritual site the effect manifests). Generally, it is much easier to create effects nearby and harder to influence reality a long distance away. The table below gives a rough guide.

Range of Effect	Base Scope Rating	Range of Effect	Base Scope Rating
Nearby (10 m away)	Minor	Global (anywhere on Earth)	Major
Local (100m away)	Small	Beyond earth, but within our galaxy	Vast
Line of Sight (1km away)	Significant	In another galaxy	Sweeping
Distant (100km away)	Substantial	In a separate dimension	Cosmic

Use these base scope ratings as a starting point, adapting them according to the criteria specific to different effect types as shown on the next page. Wherever multiple criteria apply, always pick the greater of the two possible scope ratings (e.g., if one criterion suggests a Significant rating and another a Vast rating, the scope of the effect is actually Vast).

## Common Types of Effects

As Game Moderator you're free to invent any type of supernatural effect that complements your vision of the Post-Apocalypse world. For settings which emulate the styles of otherworldly phenomena found in H.P. Lovecraft's fiction, a few common categories of effects may prove useful starting points for broader invention.

### Summoning Supernatural Entities

In many Lovecraftian settings there exist a family of rituals designed to compel a supernatural being of the Cthulhu Mythos to manifest at the location where the ritual is performed. The specific details of the chants and actions that must be performed to achieve this outcome vary according to the type of creature to be **summoned**.

In determining the Scope rating for this supernatural effect, the most pertinent factor is the POW characteristic of the supernatural creature summoned.

POW of Supernatural Entity	Scope Rating
1—8	Minor
9—12	Small
13—16	Significant
17—20	Substantial
21—30	Major
31—40	Vast
41—60	Sweeping
61—150	Cosmic

### Binding Supernatural Entities

Another category of rituals found in many Lovecraftian settings are those compelling a supernatural creature of the Cthulhu Mythos to obey the will of the ritual leader (at least for a period of time). This control is called **binding**. As with summoning, the Scope of such an effect is governed primarily by the POW of the creature – use the table above. Binding spells which have a long duration (more than a day) may warrant a higher Scope rating than that mentioned on the table.

### Mental Contact With Alien Gods

While the Cthulhu Mythos includes numerous races of supernatural creatures, the major Powers are more properly thought of as individual alien 'gods'. This includes vastly powerful entities that are trapped in obscure places on our planet (like Cthulhu) through to cosmic forces that define our very reality (like Azathoth).

Certain insane sorcerers have at different points in history devised rituals to make mental contact with one of these vast unknowable intelligences. In determining the rating for the scope of such an effect the primary consideration is the potency of the Alien God.

Magnitude of Alien God	Scope Rating
Minor (e.g., Nodens)	Substantial
Major (e.g., Dagon)	Vast
Significant (e.g., Cthulhu)	Sweeping
Cosmic (e.g., Azathoth, Yog-Sothoth)	Cosmic

### Opening Physical Conduits to Alien Gods

Some sorcerers are not content with communing with the vast and corrosive intelligences of the Alien Gods, but instead wish to open conduits for their physical avatars to enter our reality.

Again, the primary consideration in determining scope is the potency of the Alien God, although the act of opening a physical conduit is at least one step greater in scope than merely communicating telepathically.

Magnitude of Alien God	Scope Rating
Minor (e.g., Nodens)	Major
Major (e.g., Dagon)	Sweeping
Significant (e.g., Cthulhu)	Cosmic
Cosmic (e.g., Azathoth, Yog-Sothoth)	Cosmic

### Dimensional Traversal

Lovecraftian settings often incorporate the idea of extra-dimensional locales, whether remote parts of our own universe, realms created by the collective human unconscious mind, or entirely different dimensions. Stories set in such worlds may involve a myriad of different supernatural effects that permit mere mortals to cross the barrier between the normal (ravaged) world and one such outside region.

In determining the scope of an effect which allows dimensional traversal, consider the distances involved. Use the range table provided above, re-imagining the range values as referring instead to the distance traversed.

### Cursing and Damaging

Although far less common than in traditional tabletop roleplaying games, supernatural effects may exist in Lovecraftian settings which directly inflict physical harm on individuals. The scope for such an effect can be estimated by considering the amount of physical damage which may be potentially inflicted, usually represented by a dice value or Lethality rating.

Damage Inflicted	Scope Rating
1D4	Minor
1D6	Small
1D10	Significant
1D20	Substantial
10% Lethality	Major
20% Lethality	Vast
40% Lethality	Sweeping
99% Lethality	Cosmic

### Warding and Protection

As counterpoint to supernatural effects which may cause physical harm, it is equally possible for supernatural effects to exist which protect individuals from such harm. When estimating the scope of such an effect, consider the worst or most-serious type of damage the effect is likely to mitigate and consult the table from the previous section.

## PART III: GENERAL RESOURCES

### The Pre-Apocalypse World

It's not expected that your games of *APOCTHULHU* will involve significant action set in the Pre-Apocalypse time. However, as Game Moderator you may wish to set flashback sequences in this setting or even begin a game in the Pre-Apocalypse and play through the Apocalyptic event itself.

The Pre-Apocalypse world is also a convenient baseline for setting Resource Scarcity (see **A WORLD IN DISORDER**, page 74). As described in the section on scavenging, the five scarcity ratings are (from least to most scarce): Abundant, Uncommon, Hard to Get, Very Hard to Get, and Impossible to Get.

### Resource Scarcity in the Pre-Apocalypse

Human Consumables		Technological Items (cont'd)	
Food ☉ and Water ☉	<b>Abundant</b>	Cameras / Recording Equipment	<b>Abundant</b>
Medicine ☉ — first aid supplies	<b>Abundant</b>	Information Technology	<b>Abundant</b>
Medicine ☉ — others	<b>Hard to Get</b>	Construction & Demolitions – tools	<b>Abundant</b>
Technological Items		Construction & Demolitions – Explosives	<b>Hard to Get</b>
Mechanized Transport – all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	<b>Abundant</b>	Subterfuge Equipment	<b>Uncommon</b>
Mechanized Transport – combat vehicles (ground, air)	<b>Hard to Get</b>	Spare Parts for Technical Items ☉ – non-weapon	<b>Abundant</b>
Mechanized Transport – transportation aircraft	<b>Uncommon</b>	Spare Parts for Technical Items ☉ – weapon	<b>Uncommon</b>
Fuel ☉ – non-aviation	<b>Abundant</b>	Navigation Aids	
Fuel ☉ – aviation	<b>Uncommon</b>	Reliable maps and charts	<b>Abundant</b>
Low-Tech Transport – ground	<b>Uncommon</b>	Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	<b>Uncommon</b>
Low-Tech Transport – water, air	<b>Abundant</b>	Books and Other Recorded Information	
Weapons – modern, non-military & ammo ☉	<b>Uncommon</b>	Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	<b>Abundant</b>
Weapons – military	<b>Hard to Get</b>	Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	<b>N/A</b>
Weapons – archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	<b>Uncommon</b>	Livestock	
Protective Equipment	<b>Hard to Get</b>	Domesticated Animals	<b>Uncommon</b>
Communication Equipment	<b>Abundant</b>	Animal-Based Transport	<b>Uncommon</b>

## Converting Material from Other Games

Game Moderators may find statistics for horrific creatures and supernatural effects in the rules or supplements published for other Lovecraftian horror RPGs. The general-purpose guidelines below give some assistance with converting creature-related statistics for use in *APOCTHULHU*.

### Translating Creatures from D100 Games

In most cases, converting horrific creatures found in other D100 games for use in an *APOCTHULHU* game is straightforward. A seven-step process for carrying out such conversions is described below.

#### Step 1: Convert Statistics

As described on page 6, characters and other creatures in *APOCTHULHU* are principally described in terms of six core capabilities: Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Power, and Charisma. These are measured on a scale of approximately 3–18 for a human being. Most D100 games use a similar set of characteristics although the seventh edition of the world’s oldest Lovecraftian roleplaying game chooses to instead measure a character’s core statistics on a 1–100 scale.

If the creature or character being translated has game statistics for anything other than the previously mentioned seventh edition game, the translation is simple:

- Strength (sometimes STR) becomes the creature or character’s Strength statistic in *APOCTHULHU*;
- Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Dexterity (DEX), and Power (POW), all become the identically named statistic in *APOCTHULHU*; and
- If a creature/character has a listed Appearance (APP) rating, that translates to its Charisma (CHA) in *APOCTHULHU*.

When translating statistics from the aforementioned seventh edition game, the process is effectively the same, but each number is divided by 5 during the translation (e.g., a CON of 65 for a seventh edition creature would translate to an *APOCTHULHU* Constitution statistic of 13).

If the creature or character has a listed Sanity (SAN) score, that same number becomes their SAN score in *APOCTHULHU*.

#### Step 2: Derive Hit Points and Will Points (and optionally Resources)

In *APOCTHULHU* two key game attributes, Hit Points and Will Points, are derived from the core statistics. The formulae for deriving these may be found in the section on creating Survivors, on page 7. Once the core statistics have been translated for the Mythos creature or character, these should be calculated exactly as described in the Survivor generation process.

When translating human characters (as opposed to creatures) it may be important for the Game Moderator to be able to gauge how well-resourced the character is. In that situation, scanning through the list of Archetypes (starting on page 10), the Game Moderator can see which most closely relates to the character’s role – the base Resources attribute score for the character can be assumed to be the same as that Archetype. This can be modified up or down by the Game Moderator to reflect a vision for the character’s material ‘wealth’.

#### Step 3: Deriving Sanity Loss

For games which list explicit sanity losses for witnessing Cthulhu Mythos horrors, those same sanity losses can be applied in *APOCTHULHU*. For games which do not include specific game mechanics for mental stability, use the table on page 60 to pick an equivalent sanity loss based on how disturbing and/or disgusting a creature is described as being.



## Step 4: Deriving Skills

All D100-based games measure skill proficiency of a person or creature on a scale of 0—100, the same scale used by *APOCTHULHU*. So, any skill scores assigned as part of the game statistics for another game can be carried across without the need for any arithmetic. However, each different game uses its own list of skills, each of them a variant way of carving the broad field of human knowledge and abilities into different categorizations. Thus, in converting game statistics from another RPG to *APOCTHULHU*, it's necessary to decide which *APOCTHULHU* skill most closely relates to each skill named in the source stat-block.

There are four situations that can arise:

1. **Obvious Match:** The skill named in the source stat-block has an obvious counterpart in the *APOCTHULHU* skill list. In this case, simply give the person or creature the corresponding *APOCTHULHU* skill with the same percentile rating assigned to the original skill.
2. **Multiple Match:** The skill named in the source stat-block has similarities with several different *APOCTHULHU* skills. In this case, you can either pick one of the *APOCTHULHU* skills (ideally the most relevant) and assign all the original skill's percentile rating to that skill, or you can split up the percentiles among multiple *APOCTHULHU* skills.
3. **Clash:** Sometimes during the translation of many different skill ratings, it will occur that several different foreign-game skills all translate to the same *APOCTHULHU* skill. In that case, the person or creature's percentile rating in that skill should be the **highest** of all the different skills that translate to that skill.
4. **Novelty Skill:** Some games like to include silly or oddly specific skills (like “bake cookies” or “defuse nuclear bomb”). You can either ignore these skills altogether or carry them across as similar ‘additional skills’ (i.e., presume the existence of a cookie baking skill in *APOCTHULHU*, whose definition you can make up as needed).

References to a rating in the “Cthulhu Mythos” skill used in other games should all be carried across to *APOCTHULHU*'s **Unnatural** skill (see page 40).

## Step 5: Deriving Attacks

Every D100-based game describes the basic attributes of an offensive capability (or attack) in terms of a percentage chance that the attack will hit its target, plus a dice roll to determine the HP damage that the attack inflicts.

When converting a stat-block to *APOCTHULHU*, each attack mode will typically map to a similar or equivalent weapon skill with the same percentile rating. Damage ratings (die rolls) can either be carried across unchanged, or if the attack mode obviously relates to one of the weapons listed in the examples on page 52, you can just use the *APOCTHULHU* damage rating for the listed weapon. Where the damage die listed in the source stat-block mention adding a “Damage Bonus”, consult the material on page 50 to see whether the *APOCTHULHU* attack should also include the equivalent bonus.

If converting a stat-block for a creature – especially a large creature, or one with a STR well outside the normal human range – it is probably better to forget about Damage Bonus altogether. Many D100-based games give such massive monstrosities equally massive Damage Bonuses (+3D6 and above): *APOCTHULHU*'s combat system doesn't seek to model overwhelming damage by means of large pools of dice – instead, it uses the Lethality mechanic. Consider setting the total damage rating of such a creature's attacks based on its *overall* damage rating in the source system – that is, the attack's base damage *plus* the creature's stated Damage Bonus. If that total is no-more than 2 dice, then simply set the *APOCTHULHU* damage rating for the attack equal to that.

If the foreign-game attack mode lists more than 2 dice to roll for damage overall, it is likely that it would be better to represent the damage in terms of a Lethality rating. The table below gives some approximate translations:

Multiple-Dice Damage	Lethality Rating
3D6	9%
3D8	12%
3D10	15%
For each +1D6	+3%
For each +1D8	+4%
For each +1D10	+5%

### Step 6: Deriving Armor value

Creatures or individuals who have innate protection from damage, or who wear protective equipment may have an Armor value as part of their original statistic block. They may also have a description of the particular type of armor.

Armor values from D100-based games can be directly translated across – for example, a Mythos creature with an innate Armor of 2 will have the same Armor rating in *APOCTHULHU*.

An alternate method of assigning an Armor value for worn protection is to consult the table in **ARMORED** (page 54), locating a roughly-equivalent type of protective equipment and use the Armor value shown in the table.

### Step 7: Defining Special Powers and Defenses

Perhaps the hardest part of converting stat-blocks for creatures (and sometimes human beings) to *APOCTHULHU*, is translating special powers and defenses, including unusual modes of attack. These are sometimes written in a manner that is specific to the game-mechanics for the source system.

There are two basic approaches to converting special powers:

1. finding a similar power already possessed by a creature with *APOCTHULHU* stats, or
2. converting the individual game mechanics underlying the power into *APOCTHULHU* concepts piece-by-piece.

For determining appropriate *APOCTHULHU* game-statistics to cover special defenses, a good place to start is considering the categories of Defenses described in **PROTECTION IN COMBAT**, page 54. These are: Fragile, Exposed, Armored, Huge, and Transcendent.

Furthermore, some creatures have physical forms that are less susceptible to Lethal damage: the box nearby summarizes different levels of protection that the Game Moderator can assign to otherworldly monstrosities.

#### <box>Reduced Susceptibility to Lethal Damage

The following common forms of protection against Lethal attacks may be assigned to creatures/individuals which are harder to kill than normal humans.

- **RESILIENT:** A successful roll on a Lethal attack does not kill the creature/individual but inflicts Hit Point damage equal to 2D10 minus any Armor rating.
- **RESILIENT TO <attack type, e.g., Firearms>:** If attacked with other attack types than the one named, damage/lethality is as per normal. If attacked with Lethal attacks of the nominated type, a successful roll does not kill the creature/individual but inflicts Hit Point damage equal to 2D10 minus any Armor rating.
- **PARTIALLY IMMUNE (less than <number, e.g., 20>%):** If the Lethal attack has a Lethality rating less than or equal to the number mentioned, it cannot harm or kill the target – even a successful Lethality roll will cause it zero harm. For Lethal attacks with a Lethality rating *higher* than the number mentioned, the creature/individual is still not automatically killed on a successful Lethality roll but suffers Hit Point damage equal to 2D10 minus any Armor rating.
- **IMMUNE:** Is not affected at all any physical attacks, including Lethal attacks.

</box>

### <box>Some Example Special Attacks

During a translation the GM might need to invent game statistics for special forms of attacks. The following examples provide some example powers that can be used or adapted as needed.

**Blood Drain:** The bite of the entity drains blood from the victim each turn until forcibly detached. For each turn of blood loss, the victim loses 1D6 STR. If STR reaches zero the victim dies, however if he or she survives the attack, it will be slowly regained at the rate determined by the Game Moderator.

**Cling & Bite:** After the entity bites a victim, it will cling to it unless forcibly removed. Each subsequent turn inflicts a further 1D3 Hit Points of damage to the victim.

**Engulf Victims:** If a victim is pulled into the entity's mass it becomes absorbed within it. An individual trapped inside the entity must separately make an **opposed test** comparing his or her STR against the entity's STR. If the test is failed, the victim takes Lethal Damage with rating equal to  $1\% \times$  the entity's CON. Trapped targets inside the entity find it difficult to move or attack: only by making a percentile roll below their STR can such individuals make an attack while inside the entity.

**Mental Drain:** If the entity wishes to mentally weaken those in its proximity, it can compel an individual to perform an **opposed test** which matches the entity's POW versus the victim's INT. If the victim is defeated in this test, he or she immediately loses 1D6 Willpower Points + 1D6 SAN. The WPs are added to the attacker's total.

**Tentacle Constrict/Crush:** If one of the entity's tentacles successfully strikes an enemy it will wrap around it and continue to crush it in later turns. Unless freed by external means, the victim will continue to suffer Hit Point damage equal to half the normal attack damage in each succeeding turn.

**Tentacle Grapple:** If the tentacle of the entity strikes a victim it wraps itself around a limb, effectively **PINNING** the target (see page 47). Being held in this way does not inflict any Hit Point damage but the victim is effectively unable to take any actions until he or she is freed. The entity can use its other attacks against victims held by its tentacle. Breaking free from the entity's grip requires success in an **opposed test** pitting the entity's STR against the victim's STR.

**Toxic Venom:** The bite of the entity injects a potent toxin with a Lethality Rating equal to the entity's CON.

</box>

### <box>Some Example Special Abilities

During a translation the GM might need to invent game statistics for special abilities that aren't attacks but still provide the creature or person with an advantage. The following examples provide a few ideas that can be used or adapted as needed.

**Hypnotize:** The entity's gaze can render a victim in a trance-like state. When a victim locks eyes with the entity, he or she makes an **opposed POW vs POW** test with it. If the target loses, a hypnotic state quickly descends. Humans controlled in this way will always follow simple instructions. If the commands are inherently self-destructive or injurious to the controlled person, an **INT $\times$ 5** roll can be attempted at the beginning of each turn – success means the person snaps out of the trance.

**Invisible:** The entity has the power to become invisible to normal vision through a supernatural effect; attempts to hit the entity while it is invisible are *halved*.

**Mental Control:** The entity has the power to control humans via mental dominance. Resolve such attempts as an **opposed POW vs POW** test; if the target's will is overcome, he or she is compelled to remain in close proximity to

the area where the mental control was initiated. Once controlled, a dominated human can be mentally contacted by the entity regardless of where it is, anywhere on Earth. This communication costs the entity 1 Willpower Point.

**Regeneration:** Regenerates 2 HP per turn after being wounded; if the entity's HP ever reach zero it is dead and will not regenerate.

**Trans-dimensional Travel:** The entity has an innate ability to travel between different dimensions. Initiating a transition from our dimension to another takes a full (uninterrupted) turn and costs the entity 4 Willpower Points. If the entity is holding anything or anyone (e.g., someone held via a previous pin action), they too make the journey.

</box>

### <box>Some Example Special Vulnerabilities

During a translation the GM might need to invent some game statistics for a creature's special vulnerability. Here are a few ideas that can be used as starting points for new inventions.

**Hates the Light:** The entity takes damage from exposure to light. Bright light inflicts 1 HP per turn; bright and dazzling light inflicts 3D6. Full daylight reduces the entity to a pile of grey ash. This damage ignores armor.

**Poisoned by <Substance>:** The entity's metabolism is particularly susceptible to a common earthly substance. Whenever the entity comes into direct physical contact with the substance it must make a **CON** test; if it fails, the entity suffers Lethality 10% damage.

**Susceptible to Fire:** Fire inflicts *double* damage to the entity. This damage ignores armor.

</box>

## Gumshoe Creature Conversions

Creature stat-blocks in Gumshoe are relatively brief, consisting of ratings for: Athletics, Health, Scuffling, Hit Threshold, Alertness Modifier, Stealth Modifier, Weapon, Armor, and sometimes Stability Loss. The tables below give a (rough) idea of how these ratings can be carried across to *APOCTHULHU* creature statistics. Because Gumshoe is quite a different system, some creativity will be required to fill in statistics like INT, POW, etc. since Gumshoe typically doesn't measure such attributes for creatures.

### Athletics Rating

In general, a creature can be assumed to have an *APOCTHULHU* Athletics skill equal to its Gumshoe Athletics rating  $\times$  12%. Physical statistics like STR, DEX, and CON can – if needed – be inferred from this. A higher Gumshoe Athletics rating almost certainly means one or more of those stats will be well above average.

### Health Rating

In general, a creature in *APOCTHULHU* will have 2 Hit Points for every single point of Gumshoe Health Rating. For example, a Gumshoe monstrosity with a Health Rating of 10 will have 20 HP in *APOCTHULHU*.

### Scuffling and Weapon

The chance that an *APOCTHULHU* version of an attack will hit its target is usually given by the Gumshoe Scuffling rating  $\times$  4%.

For damage associated with an attack see table below.

Gumshoe Weapon Rating	APOCHTULHU Damage Dealt
-3 Damage	1 HP
-2 Damage	Either 1D3 HP or 1D4 HP
-1 Damage	1D6 HP
+0 Damage	1D8 HP
+1 Damage	Either 1D8+1HP, 1D10 HP, or 2D6 HP
+2 Damage	Either 3D6 HP, 4D6 HP, or Lethality 10%
+3 Damage	Lethality: 15%
+5 Damage	Lethality: 20%
+12 Damage	Lethality: 40%

### Hit Threshold and Armor

Gumshoe Hit Threshold	APOCHTULHU Skill in Dodge
2	0 ( <i>Attacker gains +40% chance to hit</i> )
3	15% (easier than normal to hit)
4	30% (average difficulty to hit)
5	50% (harder than average to hit)
6	75% (much harder than average to hit)

Gumshoe Armor Rating	APOCHTULHU Armor Stat
-1	1 point
-2	2 points
-3	3 or 4 points
-4	5, 6, or 7 points*
-5	8—11 points*
-6	12—16 points*
-7	17—22 points*

\* Rating may indicate that the creature is **HUGE** (see page 55), **TRANSCENDENT** (see page 55), or have some form of **REDUCED SUSCEPTIBILITY TO LETHAL DAMAGE** (see page 95).

### Stability Loss

Gumshoe Stability Loss	APOCHTULHU SAN Loss
1 point	SAN Loss of 0/1
2 points	SAN Loss of 0/1D3
3 points	SAN Loss of 1/1D4
4 points	SAN Loss of 1/1D6
5 points	SAN Loss of 1/1D10
6 points	SAN Loss of 1D6/1D20
7 points	SAN Loss of 1D8/2D20
8 points	SAN Loss of 1D10/1D100

### Stealth Modifier

In general, a creature's ability to avoid detection is measured in *APOCTHULHU* in terms of its Stealth skill rating; if a sentient (likely humanoid) creature has a sneaky kind of ability that would be better modelled by the Disguise skill, substitute that skill instead in the table below.

Gumshoe Stealth Modifier	<i>APOCTHULHU</i> Skill in Stealth
+1	30%
+2	60%
+3	90%

### Alertness Modifier

Gumshoe Alertness Modifier	<i>APOCTHULHU</i> Skill in Alertness
+1	30%
+2	60%
+3	90%

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