



Bullet Points #71

Critical Location Queries

by Owen K.C. Stephens

In this installment of *Bullet Points*, we look at questions raised by *d20 Critical Locations*.

This book is an aid designed to give you quick access to maps of locations where interesting things happen. When describing a scene in which characters just talk or hang out, it's not necessary to pull out a map and keep track of where everyone is. Use the modern cineplex when meeting a contact you don't trust, hiding from a hoard of zombies, or looking for the computer disk the genius hack high school student hid, not when the characters are just going to see a movie. If a location will be used a lot, such as a high school all the heroes attend, it can be worthwhile to make the map available even for non-conflict encounters, but don't let a search for minutia in building design slow down the fun.

Further, if you're going to draw out these locations on a map of some kind (for figures to be placed on), feel free to make changes. If you think the area in the back of the bowling alley is too small or the cemetery ought to have more headstones, make those changes. These maps are a resource, not an atlas of how every building in your game world must be put together.

You can find additional modern maps at the Wizards' web site, many in the free, downloadable adventures. Some are listed below.


- [Marine Aquarium](#)
 - <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/article/20060510a>
- [Railroad Tracks](#) (in the adventure *Faint Transmissions*)
 - <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/oa/20050222a>
- [Wee Bee Toys](#) (in the adventure *Far Voices*)
 - <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/oa/20041012a>
- [The Roasted Nut coffee shop](#) (in the adventure *A Friendly Warning*)
 - <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/oa/20040706a>
- [Courtroom C](#) (in the adventure *Resolutions*)
 - <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/oa/20040113a>
- [The Moore House](#) (in the adventure *Team Bravo System Error*)
 - <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/oa/20031230a>
- [The Peterson Penthouse](#) (in the adventure *The Peterson Counterstrike*)
 - <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/oa/20030911a>
- [Main Subway Platform](#) (in the adventure *The 7:48 from Central Ave.*)
 - <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20modern/oa/20030814a>

Now, on to the questions!

Critical Locations

 **Isn't it possible to go permanently blind from snow blindness, rather than just lose sight for 1-4 hours?**

This is one of those places where the rules of the game softball potentially harmful effects to keep the game fun. Being temporarily blinded is dramatic and interesting. Being permanently blinded is a major handicap for a character, especially in campaigns without the magic or technology to fix it.

 **How much damage does a nuclear bomb do? The bomb shelter notes it has hardness 500 against outside attacks but cannot survive a direct hit. Does that mean a nuclear bomb deals around 170d6 of damage on a direct hit (an average of 595 points of damage, surely enough to destroy the shelter)?**

A nuclear bomb does as much damage as the plot calls for. It destroys anything short of a hardened bunker built under a mountain -- the kind only governments can afford to build -- and even those are badly damaged. Such weapons are so devastating that giving them game stats is pointless.

 **What are the things on the far western wall of the bowling alley, just left of the tables in the bar?**

They are wall-mounted televisions. They are generally tuned to sports or news shows but can also display trivia questions for bar games, bowling scores during bowling tournaments there at the bowling alley, and even video screens from the more popular video games in the arcade.

 **Couldn't you use a Profession check to determine who wins a bowling game if a character is a professional bowler?**

You sure could.

 **What are the two things on the wall just west of area 12 in the modern cineplex?**

Water fountains. The northernmost of the two is lower, for children and handicap access.

 **Where are the "public assistance counters" mentioned in the description of City Hall?**

All over. The most commonly used ones are those for licensing, area 10.

 **Where do the stairs and elevators go to in the City hall map?**

Anywhere you want them to. You can simply assume there's both a basement and a second floor with layouts identical to the main floor, or you can add sections of other maps as needed. For example, it might be that the county crime lab and morgue are in the basement of City Hall.

☛ If an autopsy fails to reveal enough information, is there any way to make a second check by bringing in new personnel or better equipment?

Sure, either of those would work. For that matter, an autopsy is one of the few cases where you are allowed to take 20 with a Treat Injury check. However, this represents running dozens of tests and analyses and takes 3d6 days.

☛ I love the mob rules, but I'm wondering how things like tear gas and water cannons (common crowd control weapons) affect one? Can you "bull rush" a mob with a water cannon?

The simple way to handle a water cannon is to treat it as a nonlethal weapon. Pick the stats of any firearm you like, and use them to represent the nonlethal damage dealt by the water cannon. If you want a water cannon to be somewhat more effective against mobs, have it deal damage to the mob normally. If the mob disperses, assume that the 30% that would normally be slain are instead unconscious (raising the total percentage of unconscious members to 60%).

Tear gas and similar effects work against a mob normally. Just use the mob's saving throws.

☛ Does the Endurance feat add to Constitution checks to keep climbing stairs?

Yes.

☛ What are the small, brown rectangles found in several places in the fast food restaurant? There are two on the west wall, just under the soda fountain, then two more on the east wall and one just north of the small booths in area 2.

Trash receptacles. Each also has a place on top for plastic trays so customers don't just leave them on tables. Each trash receptacle has hardness 5, 15 hp, break DC 14. They hold 30-gallon trash bags which must be changed as often as every 15 minutes during a lunch rush.

☛ Why is a fire axe so much worse than a longsword? It has the same damage die and critical multiple but weighs twice as much and is a Large weapon.


The fire axe was never intended to be a weapon -- it's a tool. It's big to make it easy to use for its weight, allowing firemen to control it easily even when they put powerful blows behind it, making it a simple weapon. Thus firemen don't need to take the archaic weapon proficiency to use it properly

☛ Does a turnout coat give any protection against fire or heat damage?

Yes. As an official rules change, the turnout coat gives you fire resistance 3 and +2 to saves vs. fire and heat damage.

 **Why do you need powdered silver to make holy water? I'm not aware of any religion that uses such a ritual.**

Religious questions are always tricky. The holy water created by the *bless water* spell is special, *magical* holy water that harms undead and evil outsiders. The spell is a product of the fight against creatures of shadow, not any specific, real-world religion. A GM can use the ritual version of creating holy water instead, if using silver doesn't match the campaign. The cost has a game-balancing effect, however, making weapons against the forces of evil expensive.

 **I like the debris rules for fights in the grocery store, but they really slow things down. First you see if an attack hits. Then you roll a 20% chance someone gets sprayed with debris. Then you roll 1d6 to see what the debris is, and half the time it's nothing. Then you make a saving throw. Can this process be speeded up somehow?**

Sure. Have an attacker roll a second, differently-colored d20 with every attack. If the second d20 results in 18, 19, or 20, apply the debris results of 4, 5, or 6 from the normal d6 debris chart. This boils everything down to a single roll (though you still need to make saves) and means you can be hit by debris even from attacks that connect (which makes sense if they passed through cover or hit cover after hitting the target).

Do you have a rules question about the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*? Send it to bulletpoints@wizards.com type="mailbulletpoints@wizards.com. For the quickest possible answer, please put the topic of your question in the subject line and keep the question as succinct as possible. If you have more than one question, feel free to send two or more emails -- but for best results please include only one question per email unless your questions are very closely related to one another. Please don't expect a direct answer by email. Check back here every other week for the latest batch of answers!

About the Author

Owen Kirker Clifford Stephens was born in 1970 in Norman, Oklahoma. He attended the TSR Writer's Workshop held at the Wizards of the Coast Game Center in 1997 and moved to the Seattle area in 2000 after accepting a job as a Game Designer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Fourteen months later, he returned to Oklahoma with his wife and three cats to pick up his freelance writer/developer career. He has author and co-author credits on numerous **Star Wars** Roleplaying Game, **Dungeons & Dragons**, *d20 Modern*, and *EverQuest* projects. He is the author of *d20 Cyberscape* and co-author of *d20 Apocalypse* as well as *Bastards and Bloodlines* from Green Ronin. He also has producer credits for various IDA products, including the Stand-Ins printable figures.