



Bullet Points

Guns and Ammo

By James Wyatt

Welcome to the latest installment of *Bullet Points*. I'm James Wyatt, designer of a lot of **D&D** books, plus one **d20 Modern** book that's coming out in 2005, though I can't tell you much about that one just yet. It's my job to answer your questions about the game, offer advice on tricky issues, and give you a little peek into the minds of the designers (insofar as I can pry their minds open to wrest insight from them).


Every two weeks I pick an issue that's provoked a lot of questions or comments, begin with a general discussion of the topic where applicable, and then answer specific questions related to it. If there are any unrelated but pressing questions in the mailbox, I might tackle them at the end of the column, but only if there's room and they can't wait for an appropriately themed column.

Guns and Ammo


I can give you one hint about the **d20 Modern** book I worked on, which is scheduled for release in early 2005: It has guns in it. In fact, it features enough guns that I now feel somewhat competent to talk about them, even though I have never been particularly interested in that topic. But the gun-related questions keep piling up, so it's about time to take the plunge.

Questions and Answers

Now without further ado, let's get to those questions.

 I just recently picked up a copy of the new *d20 Modern Weapons Locker* book, and the chapter on shotguns got me thinking. Supposedly any Medium-size or smaller gun can be fired one-handed, as noted in the section on pistols. But does this rule also apply to shotguns? I know that pump-action shotguns require two hands regardless of their size, but what about semi-automatic ones? Does using such a weapon one-handed incur any sort of penalty?

The only Medium-size semi-automatic shotguns in the game are sawed-off shotguns and the Reutech Protecta Bulldog (revolver shotgun) described in **Weapons Locker**. A character can use either of these weapons one-handed with no penalty. The Bulldog has twin pistol grips to help the user keep the gun steady when firing it, but even though this particular weapon is designed for two-handed use, it can still be fired with one hand.

 From personal experience, I have to agree that shotguns are not the great weapons that many RPGs make them out to be. However, one of my players recently made a good point. Because of its spread pattern, a shotgun should be a bit more effective than any other gun in hitting a target that has concealment. Even if the spread is only the size of a dinner plate at its maximum, it does cover more area than a single bullet would. That feature helps to explain why the military used such weapons in Vietnam for jungle warfare, and why special operations units still carry them for similar situations.

Do you think that allowing such a weapon to partially negate the benefits of concealment would be a reasonable house rule? If so, would you reduce concealment by one level, or just reduce the percent miss chance by, say, 5% or so?

I would probably allow a house rule of this sort, but I'd limit it to shotguns set on the open choke setting (see page 141 of **Weapons Locker**) and other weapons designed to spread the shot carefully (such as the Heckler & Koch HK512 described on page 147 of **Weapons Locker**). I would also reduce the miss chance by 10%. This adjustment is a lot like reducing the level of concealment by one, but the firer still has to guess the location of a target with total concealment.



I can't seem to find the weight of ammunition in the books. Can you help me out here?

Well, you can't find it because that information isn't in the books anywhere. But yes, I think I can help you out. You can use the weights given on the following table as a guideline for establishing weights for any other kind of ammo.

Ammo	Weight
Box of rifle ammo (20 cartridges)	1 pound
Box of pistol ammo (50 cartridges)	1-1/2 pounds
Box of shotgun ammo (10 cartridges)	1 pound
Quiver of 12 arrows or crossbow bolts	1 pound




Weapons Locker gives statistics for guns that fire many different rounds, but it doesn't give a price table for the new ammo sizes. Can you find or make one for me, and for the other people who want to use the really big anti-material rifles?

Okay, here goes.


Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Purchase DC
4.7mm caseless (20)	5
5.45mm (20)	4
5.8mm (20)	4
7.5mm (20)	4
7.62x39mm (20)	5
9x39mm (20)	6*
12.7mm (20)	7
14.5mm (20)	8
15.2mm (20)	9
20mm (20)	10
.280 caliber (20)	5

.300 caliber (20)	5
.308 caliber (20)	5
.338 caliber (20)	6
4.6mm (50)	4
5.45mm (50)	4
5.56mm Knight (50)	5
5.7mm (50)	4
6.5x25mm (50)	4
7.62x17mm (50)	5
9x21mm Russian (50)	5
9mm caseless (50)	6
12.5mm (50)	5
.25 caliber (50)	4
.380 caliber (50)	5
.400 caliber (50)	5
.454 caliber (50)	5
23mm buckshot (10)	6
20-gauge buckshot (10)	5
.410 caliber buckshot (10)	6

* 9x39mm ammunition is described in the sidebar on page 59 of **Weapons Locker**.

 According to the *d20 Modern Weapons Locker* book, **Glocks are always mastercraft weapons, and the price for mastercraft is already included in the Purchase DC. Would it be possible to buy a mastercraft Glock and gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls instead of the normal +1?**

In theory, yes -- see page 94 of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* for details. Increasing the bonus on a mastercraft item increases its purchase DC by +3. So if you wanted a +2 mastercraft Glock instead of the off-the-shelf +1 version, you would simply increase the purchase DC by +3, to DC 21. However, the rules say that such high-quality mastercraft items are generally not for sale, so it would probably fall to a Techie hero to make such a spectacular gun.

 In *Weapons Locker*, it says that a weapon without iron sights incurs a -1 penalty on attack rolls when the scope is not used. In the text, however, the lack of iron sights does not seem to be connected to the -1 penalty. Some sniper rifles get the penalty but have sights, and others have neither sights nor penalties. Are these entries typos, or are we actually talking about two penalties?

The text has a few errors. For example, the Barrett M98 has no iron sights, but it does have a scope mount. This rifle's description says nothing about the -1 penalty for not using a scope, but it should. The FR-F2, on the other hand, comes with a scope but has backup iron sights. Thus, a hero who takes the scope off gets no penalty on her attack rolls (contrary to the text) because of the backup iron sights. The text about using the weapon without

a scope is intended as a reminder, but it's sometimes present when it shouldn't be and absent when it should. So just pay attention to whether the weapon has iron sights or not and ignore the helpful reminder.

Do you have a rules question about the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game? Send it to bulletpoints@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

James Wyatt is an RPG designer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. His design credits include *The Speaker in Dreams*, *Defenders of the Faith*, *Oriental Adventures*, *Deities and Demigods*, *Fiend Folio*, *Draconomicon*, and the *Book of Exalted Deeds*. He wrote the Origins award-winning adventure *City of the Spider Queen* and is one of the designers of the new Eberron campaign setting, which is due out in June 2004. James lives in Kent, Washington with his wife Amy and son Carter.

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