



Bullet Points

Guns and Ammo

By Owen K.C. Stephens

Welcome to the latest installment of *Bullet Points*. I'm Owen K.C. Stephens, writer of a lot of **Star Wars Roleplaying Game** material and a contributor to the recently announced *d20 Apocalypse* book. It's my job to answer your questions about the game, offer advice on tricky rules issues, and give you a little peek into the design philosophy of the game.


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 I have room and they can't wait for an appropriately themed column.

Guns and Ammo

In this installment, we're going to take a look at the questions that have piled up regarding weapons in the **d20 Modern Roleplaying Game**, the *d20 Future* supplement, and the **Urban Arcana Campaign Setting**.

Questions and Answers

Now let's take a look at some of the specific questions I've received.

 **Can a Large creature such as an ogre use a Tiny weapon such as a Derringer? What about a Desert Eagle? And can an ogre use a Large or Huge weapon one-handed, since he's bigger than a human? Can he get a special Desert Eagle made to his scale? If so, what kind of damage does it deal?**

The rules on page 97 of the **d20 Modern Roleplaying Game** state that Medium-size weapons can be used one handed, Large weapons require two hands, and Small or smaller weapons count as light weapons. But since the **d20 Modern** rules assume that all PCs are human and thus Medium-size, this information relates to Medium-size characters only.

The races section of the **Urban Arcana Campaign Setting** boils these rules down to their most basic. A weapon the same size category as the user is a one-handed weapon, a weapon of a smaller size category is a light weapon, and a weapon one size category larger than the user is a two-handed weapon. A weapon two size categories larger than the user requires two hands plus a bipod or similar mount. So an ogre can use both a Derringer and a Desert Eagle, and both qualify as light weapons for him.

However, another point should also be considered for this discussion -- namely, hand size. A Large creature's hand is bigger than a Medium-size creature's, so its grip is likely to be awkward. Borrowing a rule from the **Dungeons and Dragons** game, a GM may opt to apply a cumulative - 2 penalty on attack rolls for every size category difference between the size of the creature and the intended size of the weapon's user. Thus, an ogre


using a Desert Eagle takes a - 2 penalty on attack rolls because the weapon's grip is designed for Medium-size creatures.

On the other hand, a weapon's grip can certainly be modified for use by a creature of a different size. A character can jury-rig a new grip on a weapon with a successful DC 15 Repair check. Alternatively, a new grip can be created with the appropriate Craft skill by making an object with a Purchase DC 5 lower than that of the weapon itself (minimum Purchase DC 5).

Scaled-up or scaled-down versions of a Medium-size weapon can be created, but doing so requires building the weapon from scratch with the Craft skill rather than modifying an existing weapon. For every size category by which the weapon changes, the Purchase DC increases by 3. After all, smaller weapons are just as expensive and difficult to make as bigger ones, even though they often aren't as effective. Such custom-built weapons are actually a size category larger or smaller than the normal version, so a scaled-up Desert Eagle is a Large weapon. To find the damage dealt by Small and Large versions of Medium-size weapons, consult the table below.

Medium-Size Damage Small Damage Large Damage

| | | |
|------|------|-----|
| 1d2 | 1 | 1d3 |
| 1d3 | 1d2 | 1d4 |
| 1d4 | 1d3 | 1d6 |
| 1d6 | 1d4 | 1d8 |
| 1d8 | 1d6 | 2d6 |
| 1d10 | 1d8 | 2d8 |
| 1d12 | 1d10 | 3d6 |
| 2d4 | 1d6 | 2d6 |
| 2d6 | 1d10 | 2d8 |
| 2d8 | 2d6 | 3d6 |
| 2d10 | 2d8 | 4d8 |
| 2d12 | 2d10 | 6d6 |


 **How does a concussion rifle (from the *d20 Future* supplement) work with larger creatures and creatures with more than two legs? The rules say that a target is pushed back a number of feet equal to the damage dealt and may be knocked prone (Reflex DC equals the damage). But it seems that hitting a Gargantuan robot with eight legs shouldn't have the same effect. By the same token, are Small creatures thrown back farther than Medium-size ones? What about flying creatures? Does a hit with a concussion rifle knock a robot equipped with thrusters prone?**

A hit from a concussion rifle pushes the target back 5 feet for every 5 points of damage dealt, not 1 foot per 1 point of damage dealt. That distinction is important because if the hit deals fewer than 5 points of damage, the target creature isn't moved at all.

Because the effect is a gravity wave, targets smaller than Medium-size are not pushed back any farther. But for every size category larger than Medium-size that the target is, halve the distance it is pushed back. Any result below 5 feet means the target isn't pushed back at all. The reason that larger creatures don't get pushed back as

far as smaller ones is that the gravity wave has a lower chance of fully enveloping the larger creature. The effect has nothing to do with weight.

A flying creature takes a - 4 penalty on the Reflex save to avoid being knocked prone. If it is knocked prone, it must take a move action to recover on its next turn or begin to fall. A creature with more than two legs or one that is particularly stable gains a +4 bonus on its Reflex save to avoid being knocked prone.

 **Can railguns (from the *d20 Future* supplement) use special ammunition? If not, then which guns are supposed to use high-PL ammo? It seems that the only guns that shoot bullets are PL 5, but special ammunition exists even at PL 8.**

Railguns can use special ammo, although the railgun ammunition is not interchangeable with that of any other weapon. In many cases, the high-PL ammo types are designed to be used with older weapons. Just because a Desert Eagle is a PL 5 weapon doesn't mean no one carries it on the streets of a PL 7 society -- especially since it can be loaded with plasma-coated ammo.


 **I noticed a reference to "shrapnel ammunition" on page 61 in the *d20 Future* book, in the section on the variable ammunition gadget. However, I haven't been able to find statistics for this ammo anywhere. What book does this information appear in -- or if it hasn't appeared, what are its statistics?**

Shrapnel ammunition is not defined in any of the existing books. It's essentially a superior version of flechette ammo (see page 69 in the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*). It's not available until PL 6, and the statistics for it are presented below.

Ammunition Type Purchase DC Modifier Restriction

| | | |
|----------|----|----------|
| Shrapnel | +5 | Mil (+3) |
|----------|----|----------|


Shrapnel ammo contains tiny explosive charges that do not detonate until a split second after the head of the bullet meets resistance. At that point, the round bursts into dozens of tiny, aerodynamically accurate pieces, each of which charts its own way through the target's body. Furthermore, the threat range of a weapon using shrapnel ammo increases by 1.

 **I have two questions regarding EMP grenades (from the *d20 Future* supplement). Since most advanced guns have electronics (computers), are they shorted out by an EMP grenade? Also, does an item worn or carried by a PC get a saving throw, the way it would when subjected to a normal attack such as fire or electricity? If so, what are the details?**

In the end, the GM has to decide what does or doesn't count as an electronic device for the purpose of an EMP grenade. Certainly most energy weapons from PL 6 and higher incorporate so many electronic components that a hit with an EMP grenade (including, amusingly, an unused EMP grenade) renders them inoperative. Most ballistic weapons, however, operate by simple mechanical and chemical means. So a Falcon .45, for example, works just fine even after being in the area of an EMP grenade. This immunity to EMP effects is one reason that characters still carry lower-PL weapons even in higher-PL settings.

As written, an EMP grenade does not allow any kind of saving throw. However, a GM who decided that arrangement made them too powerful could easily allow an attended electronic weapon in a character's possession a DC 18 Reflex save to remain functional. Also, the GM could rule that electronic devices can be

hardened against EMP effects for a +5 Purchase DC modifier, thus rendering them immune to the effects of EMP grenades.

 **Can special weapon qualities (from the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*) be applied to ammo? If so, does it become endlessly reusable? If not, is there a break in the cost? Can ammo acquire melee weapon special qualities (such as disruption), since it isn't a ranged weapon per se?**

You can apply any of the ranged weapon special qualities to ammo. The purchase DC given for the quality covers 50 rounds. Each round can be used only once; thereafter it is considered expended and worthless, even if the shooter missed. Melee special qualities cannot be applied to ammo, since it is still considered part of a ranged weapon.

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

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** and *EverQuest* projects, as well as *Bastards and Bloodlines* from Green Ronin. He also has producer credits for various IDA products, including the Stand-Ins printable figures.
