WISDOM FROM THE WASTELANDS

By Chris "Outlander" Van Deelen and the Skirmisher Game Development Group

The latest installment in our popular series on leading edge military technology and combat rules, this issue brings five deadly weapon systems and several new combat "conditions" to your gaming table. As a warning, Mutant Lords should use this equipment with care — some of these systems are *extremely* powerful. Even those weapons that do not appear lethal can devastate specific target types (like robotic units); other items have debilitating temporary effects.

Disintegrators

Developed just before the Final Wars, these fearsome weapons are extremely rare. Perhaps a good thing, for disintegrators tear apart matter at the molecular level. This takes a great deal of energy, restricting systems to rifle and vehicle-mounted variants. However, a less powerful version of this technology was used in disrupters, making these weapons more portable.

Any living target hit by the disintegrator's ruby-red energy beam must save versus death or be killed, instantly reduced to a pile of ash. Even if successful, the target suffers horrific damage. Also, all armor, weapons, and equipment carried must either save versus death (using the character's saving throw), or make an item saving throw versus energy (see *Wisdom from the Wastelands* issue #1 for optional rules on item saving throws). Any item failing this saving throw suffers 1d3 levels of condition damage.

Despite their power, disintegrators saw little combat;

force fields disperse the energy, rendering blasts harmless. Given the popularity of shield technology — used by individual soldiers, on armored vehicles, and in powered armor — disintegrators were not very cost-effective, except when deployed against soldiers or units lacking these energy fields.

However, disintegrators are great against stationary targets like buildings. Given enough shots wielders can obliterate structures, with each shot reducing one cubic foot of material per die of damage. Simple objects like doors are no match for this weapon.
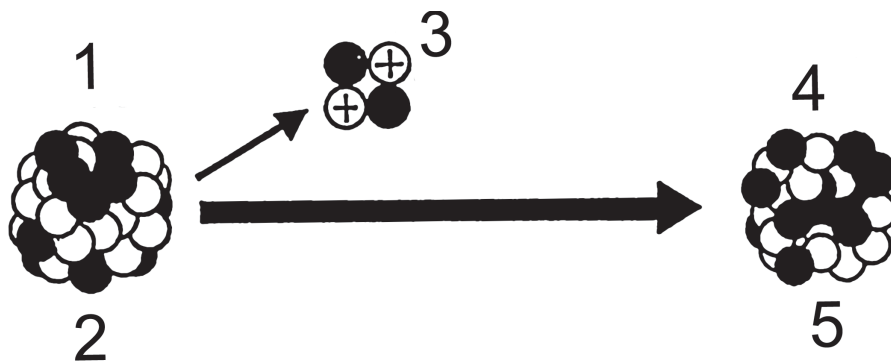
Disintegrator Table

Weapon	Damage	Trigger	Range	Weight	Battery	Charges
Disintegrator	Death/15d8	Normal	1,500'/3,000'	40 lbs.	Radioactive	Battery 10

Disruptors

Like the more powerful disintegrators, these weapons also destroy molecular bonds. But unlike the disintegrator beam's uniform blast, the bright red disruptor bolts break these bonds indiscriminately across a target.

Because of this random nature, disruptors are not very effective against buildings or large items. Instead, they easily damage smaller objects like weapons, armor, equipment, or locks, weakening structural integrity or causing malfunctions. These items must either save versus death (using the character's saving throw) or make an item save versus energy (see *Wisdom from the Wastelands Issue #1* for item saving throw rules). Failure means the target item suffers condition damage (see the **Disruptor Table**).

Living creatures hit by disruptors suffer hideous, debilitating wounds. The bolts cause regular damage, but also inflict pain one category higher (see below, under **Injury**). In addition, the target must save versus energy to avoid taking Strength and/or Dexterity damage (make a separate save for each statistic). These lost points will return at the victim's natural healing rate, but only after the disruptor wounds have healed. The victim can decide which statistic heals first and how much is healed. For example, Myn has a healing rate of 3 and lost both Strength and Dexterity. She could direct all three points toward restoring one statistic, or put two points into Strength and one into Dexterity (or vice versa).

Disruptors were only made as pistols and rifles. There were rumors of other variants (e.g., light machine gun and submachine gun), but these may never have been produced. The massive tissue damage caused by disruptors horrified human rights groups; this political pressure led all but the most unfeeling government agencies to frown on using or developing these weapons.

Disruptor Table

Weapon	Damage	Trigger	Range	Weight	Battery	Charges	Stat/Condition Level Loss
Disruptor Pistol	6d6	Normal	500'/1,000'	4 lbs.	Power Cell	5	1d2
Disruptor Rifle	10d6	Normal	1,500'/3,000'	18 lbs.	Power Clip/Magazine	20	1d4

Ion Blasters

Ion blasters discharge an electric-blue stream of energized particles, which damages both flesh and electrical systems. They are particularly effective against robots and similar units.

Against biological targets, the blaster does regular tissue damage and causes the nervous system to misfire: the victim will suffer 1d3 points of Dexterity damage (save versus energy for no nerve damage). This heals at the normal recovery rate and is never permanent. Even if hit multiple times, for significant Dexterity losses, characters will fully recover, given enough time. Should the ion damage reduce a target's Dexterity to zero (it cannot drop below zero), the character will be paralyzed until he heals at least 1 point. For mutants resistant to certain types of damage, the ionic energy stream is considered electrical damage.

Robots and androids hit by blaster fire also suffer damage and Dexterity reduction, but to a much greater degree (unless the artificial lifeform is hardened against electro-magnetic pulse [EMP] or electricity). All damage is increased by 50%, and the target must make TWO saving throws. The first is a save versus stun; failure causes 3d4 rounds of paralysis. The second is a save versus energy; failure causes 2d3 points of Dexterity loss. The same rules mentioned above (for healing rates and 0 dexterity) also apply to artificial and robotic lifeforms.

Lastly, all electrical equipment the target carries must either save versus energy (using the target's save), or save versus electricity (if using the optional item saving throw rules from *Wisdom from the Wastelands Issue #1*). Should any fail, the item will suffer 1d3 condition levels of damage.

Ion weapons are listed in the two tables below. Targets in an ion explosive's burst radius save versus energy for half damage. Use the *Mutant Future* core rules to determine ranges for these two weapons.

Ion Blaster Table

Weapon	Damage	Trigger	Range	Weight	Battery	Charges
Ion Pistol	5d6	Normal	750'/1,500'	2 lbs.	Power Cell_	6
Ion Carbine	7d6	Normal	1,000'/2,000'	6 lbs.	Power Clip	15
Ion Assault Rifle	7d6	Automatic	1,000'/2,000'	10 lbs.	2 Power Clips	30
Ion Sniper Rifle	10d6	Normal	2,000'/4,000'	12 lbs.	Power Clip	8

Ion Explosives Table

Weapon	Damage	Burst Radius	Weight
Grenade	15d6	30'	2 lbs.
Micro Missile	10d6	15'	20 lbs.

Microwave Emitters

Originally a method of non-lethal crowd control, the military quickly adapted microwave technology to use against unprotected troops. The emitters inflict painful thermal damage by exciting water molecules inside the body and other organic material. They can also cause metal to spark — possibly damaging the target and any metallic equipment carried.

The two variants have either a pistol grip or rifle stock attached to a small satellite dish. Both forms have a short range and a conical area of effect. The cone starts 5' from the emitter and widens by 5' for every 10' feet the wave travels (to a maximum width of 20'). Thus, if the weapon is fired at a target 30' away, the area of effect will be 15' wide.

Both variants inflict an initial damage, but this increases
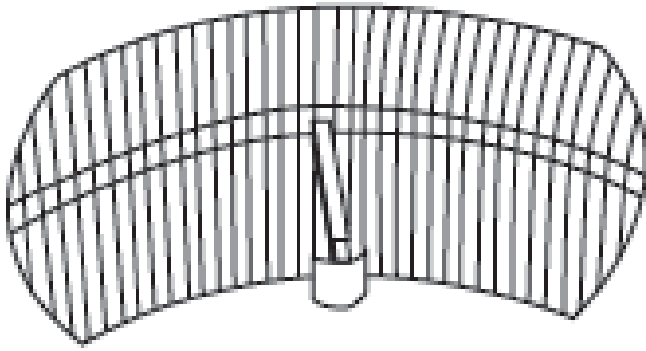
by 1d6 for each successive round the target is hit, until reaching the configuration's maximum damage. For example,

a pistol causes 3d6 damage in the first round, 4d6 in the second round, until the 7th round, when 9d6 is inflicted with a successful hit.

If the target carries any metal equipment or weapons, the microwaves will cause the items to spark, possibly inflicting 1d3 points of damage per item carried. For a target wearing metal armor and carrying five pieces of metal equipment, the damage could potentially be 6d3. The ML can have the victim either save versus energy for each piece of equipment, or, for simplicity's sake, make a single save.

Microwave damage is very painful. If using the **Injury** rules below, the victim is considered injured one level higher (i.e., if lightly wounded, the victim would suffer the effects of moderate wounds).

Microwave Emitter Table

Weapon	Damage	Trigger	Range	Weight	Battery	Charges
Microwave Pistol	3d6/9d6	Normal	40'	6 lbs.	Power Clip	6
Microwave Rifle	6d6/18d6	Normal	100'	15 lbs.	Power Beltpack/Backpack	20

Sonic Disruptors

This weapon has a misleading name, as it is little like the disruptors above. Instead, sonic disruptors are more like high-intensity radio transmitters. Originally a crowd control device, but adapted for combat, the technology uses oscillating sound frequencies to disrupt brain functions in organic targets. The technology will also work against AI targets, but has no effect on programmed robotic units.

Sonic disruptors come in three main forms. The first type are thrown like hand grenades and affect targets in a relatively small radius. The second are the series of launched warheads, which can be shot from a missile launcher, grenade launcher, mortar, or artillery piece, or dropped as an actual bomb. Last is a crowd control device that must be physically placed and activated, rather like the Ancients' Claymore mine. This form was most commonly used by the police to control crowds when demonstrations went from bad to bloody.

Unless properly protected (what this means is up to the ML, but could include personal shields), any organic caught in the radius of effect must save versus stun, or suffer one of the following random effects.

The negative effect continues while the target remains within the disruptor's sonic field. Once the victim leaves this area (or the device shuts off), the effect will wear off in 2d6 rounds. A character who stays in the sonic field after making his saving throw must save every round until he leave

the zone. If he fails a later saving throw, the character will suffer an effect from the table above.

Sonic Disruptor Effect Table

Roll	Effect
1	Dizzy
2	Sickened
3	Enraged
4	Sleep
5	Paralyzed
6	Pain
7	Dazed
8	Fatigued
9	Frightened
10	Calmed

Calmed: A character currently fighting will stop immediately. He can defend himself, but will either try to run from an enemy, or sit down and relax — if there is no immediate danger.

Dazed: While dazed, the character moves half her normal rate and loses any Dexterity bonuses to AC. She cannot make physical attacks, use mental mutations, or do any complex action. The character is still capable of defending herself against mental attacks, but her Willpower is considered four points lower.

Sonic Disruptor Table

Weapon	Radius of Effect	Weight	Active Duration
Grenade*	30'	1 lb.	1d3 minutes
Bomb or Missile*	3,000'	100 lbs.	2d3 turns
Mortar or Similar*	300'	10 lbs.	1d3 turns
Crowd Control	1,000'	25 lbs.	6 turns

*See the *Mutant Future* core rulebook for grenade and launcher ranges.

Dizzy: A dizzy character may safely move only 25% of his regular rate. If he tries to go faster, use the **Grenade Scatter Table** to determine his travel direction (reprinted below, from *WftW* #11). Every round he tries to move his full rate, the dizzy character must make a saving throw versus stun or tip over. Dizzy characters cannot climb up or down, they suffer -4 to all attack rolls, and lose any Dexterity bonus to AC. Any mental attacks are -4 to Willpower for both attack and defence. Lastly, victims who can fly will not be to do so while dizzy. Trying does not cause damage, the character will just "fall down, go boom."

Grenade Scatter Table

d6 Result	Direction Deviated
1	Front left hex
2	Directly in front
3	Front right hex
4	Rear left hex
5	Directly behind
6	Rear right hex

Enraged: An enraged character will attack the nearest target, be it friend or foe. She cannot use any ranged weapons. If holding a weapon, she will either drop it, or use it as an improvised club. For the latter, damage is left up to the ML, but it should generally start at 1d4 for a pistol-sized weapon and head up to 1d8 for a full-sized rifle. If the character drops her weapon, she will attack with any natural weapons or use her fists and teeth. While enraged, the victim gains +4 to Strength, +2 to hit, and +1 per die of damage with whatever weapon she uses. All these bonuses stack with any normal benefit the character might have from a high Strength score. But, the victim loses any Dexterity bonuses, cannot use a shield (unless using it for bashing, and then still loses the AC bonus it provides), and suffers a +2 AC due to her reckless attacks.

Fatigue: This can be caused by sonic disruptors or being in combat. As a disruptor effect, for every round caught within the area of effect, a character will gain one level of fatigue until heavily fatigued. If using fatigue as an optional combat rule, the longer a fight continues, the more tired a character will get — and the more penalties that will build up. Consult the chart below for fatigue levels, amount of time in combat, and the penalties incurred as fatigue increases.

To completely erase fatigue penalties after a fight, the character must rest for a number of minutes equal to one half the number of rounds he spent in combat. Should this break be interrupted, the character might drop one fatigue category (e.g., being moderately fatigued, instead of heavily fatigued) instead of recovering fully. The ML's ruling should depend on how long the character could rest.

Frightened: Targets may be frightened by several mutations or effects, in addition to the sonic disruptor. A frightened character must try to flee whatever triggered the fear, at his fastest movement rate. If he cannot, the victim will cower, incapable of any action except defending himself — and unable to make any sort of attack. Every round he cowers the frightened character must save versus stun or fall unconscious for 1d6 rounds.

Injury: Getting wounded makes a character less effective in combat. There are four injury levels, each with its own modifier to attack and movement.

Pain: This usually comes from being injured, so the Injury rules above apply. However, someone could be healthy, but still be in considerable pain because of a specific effect (produced by certain mutations, or by weapons described in this article). In this case, a character in pain is considered moderately injured until the effect is removed, experiencing those same penalties, but without the hit point loss.

Paralyzed: See the *Mutant Future* core rulebook, section 5: Encounters and Combat for more details.

Sleep: The target nods off for 2d6 rounds. He will not wake for loud noises or being jostled. Only actual damage (causing 1 hit point or more) will rouse him.

Sickened: A sick character loses half her movement and suffers a -4 Dexterity penalty. Any saves suffer a -2 penalty, and she cannot take any strenuous physical action, like attacking. The character can still defend against physical attacks, but will lose any Dexterity bonus to AC. She can defend normally against mental attacks, but cannot make any mental attack, or concentrate on any mental mutation, until the sickness passes.

Fatigue Effect Table

Fatigue Level	Number of Rounds in Combat	Modifiers
Rested	Up to 1/2 CON (round down)	No penalties
Lightly Fatigued	1/2 to full CON	-1 to hit, - 25% movement
Moderately Fatigued	Full to 1.5 x CON	-3 to hit, -50% movement
Heavily Fatigued	Over 1.5 x CON	-5 to hit, -75% movement, save vs. stun every round or fall unconscious

Injury Effect Table

Injury Level	Number of Hit Points	Effect*
Uninjured	Up to 25% of total hit points	No effect
Lightly Injured	26-50% of total hit points	-1 to hit, -1 Dexterity modifier, -25% to movement
Moderately Injured	51-75% of total hit points	-2 to hit, -2 Dexterity modifier, -1 Strength modifier, -50% to movement
Heavily Injured	76-99% of total hit points	-3 to hit, -3 Dexterity modifier, -2 Strength modifier, -75% to movement

*These modifiers stack with any fatigue penalties.

OPEN GAME LICENSE VERSION 1.0A

Other Great Skirmisher Publications

Bestsellers
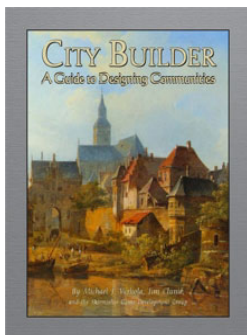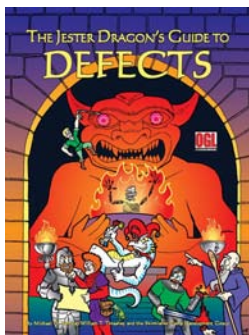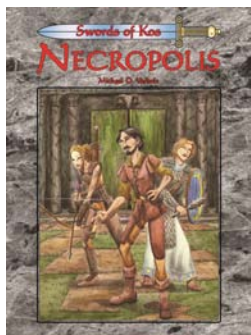
"Castle Builder" Series Universal Sourcebooks
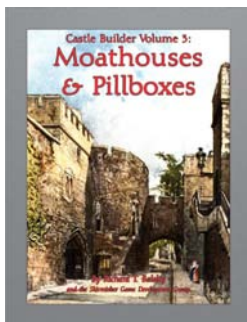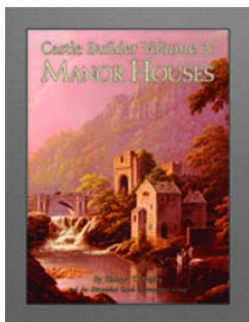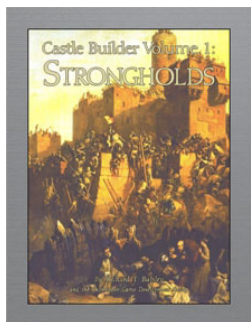
d-Infinity Multi-Platform Game Supplement