

FIREARMS



CREDITS

Research, Rules, Mechanics and Lead Writing: Pete Nash

Additional Material: Lawrence Whitaker

Editing and Layout: Lawrence Whitaker

INTRODUCTION

As many of you already know, RuneQuest 6th Edition is primarily designed for historical and fantasy settings. Yet some people have expressed an interest in using firearms in their games, anything from piratical black powder weapons to the radium guns of Barsoom. Rather than merely limiting the system to its default genres this supplement shows how to tweak the game to handle any conceivable ranged weapons, even hi-tech Science Fiction firearms.

The following rules will form the basis for firearms in many different settings, whether released as published supplements or as future free-to-download guides. We fully encourage Game Masters to take the following ideas and adapt them to suit their own imaginative campaigns. Enjoy!

RuneQuest is a trademark of Issaries Inc. Used under License by The Design Mechanism. All rights reserved. This edition of RuneQuest is copyright © 2012. This PDF is a free supplement provided by personal, but not corporate or for profit use. Material found in this book can be referred to freely under Fair Usage, but any use of the rules or mechanics found herein requires the express permission and consent of The Design Mechanism.

For details of the RuneQuest Gateway license, please contact The Design Mechanism (designmechanism@gmail.com).

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

On the face of it modifying the combat rules to include gun combat is rather problematical, since it is near impossible to avoid laser beams or bullets which travel faster than human reflexes.

Using the rules as written, this means that unless you try to dive clear of the area using Evade, any hit will immediately expose the victim to one or more Special Effects. It also changes the Action Point economy. If you can't use points to reactively defend yourself then most characters will end up using all their actions to blast away, gambling on the incompetence of their foes.

To handle this paradigm shift both Game Masters and Players may need to change the way they view – and approach – gun combat. Some things to note are:

- Gun combat is dangerous!
- On the whole people prioritise not being shot over shooting others
- The most common method of protection is to take cover
- Suppressing fire is the best way of preventing

foes shooting back

- Firearms are surprisingly inaccurate unless time is taken to brace and/or aim
- When you are shot, bad stuff happens

Defending oneself against gunfire will largely become a question of body armour, using cover and trying to prevent the opponent from being able to fire back. As such, most gun battles tend to become very tactical – lots of suppressing fire, flanking movement and flushing foes from deep cover – during which characters may pass entire combat rounds being pinned down and unable to respond until the opposition stops firing... which some players may find extremely tedious.

It is perfectly possible that an entire gunfight will result in no injuries, just one side giving up due to running out of ammunition or fleeing the battle entirely. After all, few people want to risk being riddled with a burst from a weapon on full-automatic.

The following are addendums to the existing combat rules and should mesh seamlessly with them.

NEW COMBAT ACTIONS

To reflect the gritty reality of firearms, several new types of proactive Combat Action have been created. Some of the following depend on weaponry of a sufficient technological level.

RELOAD

As per Ready Weapon in the RQ6 core rules. Reloading times can vary wildly according to the type of weapon. Single shot black powder muskets will be far slower to reload than changing an ammunition magazine or power source. Under combat conditions the former might take from 15 to 20 seconds (9-12 Turns) whilst the latter could be as fast as 5 seconds (3 Turns).

SNEAK PEEK

Sneak Peek allows somebody currently sheltering behind cover to take a quick look-see to judge what the tactical situation is. The action is ostensibly safe, permitting the observer a single Perception roll before ducking back into cover. If the Perception test is a fumble however, they foolishly overextend their head or remain in sight long enough for an enemy to take a pot shot.

STEADY WEAPON

Allows the character to establish a firm firing posture and support an automatic weapon so that it remains stable. It requires that the character be at least partially exposed and not completely pro-

tected by cover. The primary benefit is that it reduces the recoil penalty of Burst or Full-Automatic fire by one step. This effect is similar to Brace in that its benefits continue until the character moves.

SWITCH FIRE MODE

Switch Fire allows the user of an automatic or dual purpose firearm to change the selector on their weapon to take advantage of other fire modes. Thus an assault rifle could be switched from semi-automatic to burst, choose different types of ammunition (Judge Dredd Lawgivers) or a supplementary system such as an integral grenade launcher brought on line. Whilst modern weapons require an Action Point on the character's Turn to switch modes, sufficiently advanced high-tech firearms may permit it as a Free Action, triggered by electronic implants or psychically reading the user's mind.

TAKE COVER

Take Cover is a proactive action which allows a shooter to duck behind whatever cover is available in their immediate vicinity, thereby gaining some degree of protection against incoming fire. Unlike Evade it does not leave the user prone, but does rely on some form of cover being available, for example ducking back around a corner in a corridor or crouching down behind a table in a bar.

Depending on circumstances, the available cover may or may not be sufficient to completely protect the character. The type of cover will also determine its protective qualities; a thick steel door for instance may prove impenetrable to bullets, whereas a thin wooden wall might only provide 4 Armour Points. For general guidelines concerning the protective qualities of certain materials, see the 'Inanimate Objects Armour and Hit Points' table on page 123 of the core rules.

WHY IS TAKE COVER NOT REACTIVE?

Whilst it might appear somewhat unfair that Take Cover is not reactive, there are several reasons for this. Firstly most projectile weapons fire ammunition which travels at supersonic or light speeds. In layman's terms this means that a musket ball or bullet actually hits you before you hear the sound of the shot and try to duck. Secondly it adds a very tactical element to a fire-fight, making it risky to expose oneself to take your own shot, unless you wait until the enemy needs to reload or you have friends providing suppressing fire.

On the other hand, some genres possess ranged weapons like blasters which are both sub-sonic and highly visible. In such cases it may be more 'heroic', or indeed just more fun, to allow characters the ability to use Take Cover reactively.

NEW SPECIAL EFFECTS

Some players of RQ6 often imagine that there are few useful Special Effects for ranged weapons, despite the fact that many of the offensive options are easily transposed between weapon types (see Modified Special Effects). To redress this inequality, some new effects are presented below, specifically for the use of firearms.

CIRCUMVENT COVER

Offensive, High-Tech Firearms Only

Assuming that the shooter is using some high-tech weaponry, they can fire around the target's cover. In most cases this will require something along the lines of self guided ammunition. If used as a trick shot, for example bouncing a laser blast off a mirror or ricocheting a bullet off a wall, then the special effect should be treated as a Critical Success only with a commensurate reduction in damage.

DROP FOE

Offensive, Firearms Only

Assuming the target suffers at least a minor wound from the shot, they are forced to make an Opposed Test of their Endurance against the attacker's hit roll. Failure indicates that the target succumbs to shock and pain, becoming incapacitated and unable to continue fighting. Recovery from incapacitation can be performed with a successful First Aid check or using some form of technological or narcotic booster if such exists in the campaign. Otherwise the temporary incapacitation lasts for a period equal to one hour divided by the Healing Rate of the target.

DUCK BACK

Offensive, Firearms Only

This special effect allows the shooter to immediately duck back into cover, without needing to wait for their next Turn to use the Take Cover action. The character must be already standing or crouching adjacent to some form of cover to use Duck Back.

MARKSMAN

Offensive, Firearms Only

Permits the shooter to move the Hit Location struck by his shot by one step, to an immediately adjoining body area. Physiology has an effect on what can be re-targeted and common sense should be applied. Thus using this special effect on a humanoid would permit an attacker who rolled a leg shot, to move it up to the abdomen instead. Conversely shooting a griffin in the chest would permit selection of the forelegs, wings or head.

OVERPENETRATION

Offensive, Critical, Firearms Only

If shooting at lineally positioned opponents or into a densely packed group, this special effect allows the shot to travel completely through the first victim to strike a second behind them, assuming that it overcomes the first target's body armour. The second victim however, only suffers half damage due to attenuation or slowing down of the shot. Overpenetration is generally of more use with high powered weapons that inflict large amounts of damage or those which have some sort of armour piercing ability. Any special effects inflicted on the first target are not applied to the second.

PIN DOWN

Offensive, Stackable, Firearms Only

Similar to Press Advantage, this special effect forces the target to make an Opposed Test of their Willpower against the attacker's hit roll. Failure means that the target hunkers down behind whatever cover is available and cannot return fire on their next Turn. Note that Pin Down works even if no actual damage is inflicted on the target (perhaps due to a successful evasion or shots striking their cover instead), as it relies on the intimidation effect of gunfire passing very close by.

Although a pinned victim is unable to fire back for the requisite time, they can perform other actions provided they don't expose themselves to fire in the process, such as crawling away to new

cover, communicating with others, reloading a weapon and so on.

WEAPON MALFUNCTION

Attacker Fumbles, Firearms Only

The attacker's firearm malfunctions in such a way that it is rendered useless until time can be spent field stripping and cleaning it.

MODIFIED SPECIAL EFFECTS

Depending on the type of ammunition or energy they project, some Special Effects should be slightly modified, even restricted. It is impossible to cover all types of ranged weaponry as there will always be exceptions, but some general guidelines are provided for the most common effects.

- **Bash:** Since Bash relies more on catching an opponent off balance, rather than throwing them backwards by pure force, it is perfectly reasonable for projectile ammunition to cause a target to stagger if it strikes an extremity. Energy weapons are less likely to inflict such an effect unless the physics of the beam result in some sort of surface explosion.
- **Bleed:** Since most firearms produce very narrow wound paths, it is actually more difficult to nick or sever a major blood vessel than it is with a slicing or stabbing weapon. Due to this Bleed should be a Critical Success only – unless the gun is some sort of weird weaponry which fires shuriken, razor fléchettes, flattened force fields or some such exotic ammunition.
- **Bypass Armour:** Although Bypass Armour can ostensibly be used with any sort of attack, some types of ammunition might either be prevented from accessing this effect (shot gun pellets due to their spread) or built into their base performance, granting it as a bonus special effect in addition to any others won (Teleportation rounds). Much depends on how the Game Master wishes to model the weapon.
- **Choose Location:** As per the default rules, Choose Location should be restricted to being a Critical Success only, unless the target is within close range and is either stationary or unaware of the impending attack. Telescopic scopes may extend this range (see Spot Rules).
- **Circumvent Parry:** This is obviously of little use unless targets are using firearm resistant shields, or you are shooting at a lightsabre armed Jedi...
- **Compel Surrender:** Firearms are usually very intimidating weapons. Thus Compel Surrender need not be restricted to only those targets placed at a tactical disadvantage; and can be utilised at a distance also.
- **Damage Weapon:** Since striking a hand held weapon at range is even more difficult than targeting a specific body location, this should generally be reserved for Critical Successes only. There are several exceptions however, the first being that a shield should, by its very nature, be much easier to hit. The second concerns exotic weapons which fire a cone shaped beam able to target hand held objects within its area of affect; for instance an induction gun that heats metal objects.
- **Disarm Opponent:** As per Damage Weapon above. There's nothing quite as satisfying than shooting an enemy's gun right out of their hands.
- **Entangle:** Although usually reserved for thrown weapons such as nets or the bolas, entangling firearms are a staple for some golden and silver-age science fiction settings. Tanglers should be permitted access to this special effect.
- **Impale:** The ammunition of most projectile-based firearms will be able to impale. Game Masters may wish to restrict or ban this effect for plasma or laser based energy weapons. Bullets, fléchettes and similar projectiles are clearly too small to impose any secondary impaling effects.
- **Kill Silently:** Obviously this cannot be selected if the weapon is inherently loud unless it possesses some sort of silencer. In general, any gun which fires ammunition travelling faster than the speed of sound will make significant noise, no matter what method it uses to accelerate the projectile. Sniping with something like a Microwave Laser on the other hand will be utterly inaudible.
- **Maximise Damage:** This special effect should be available for any firearm. Remember however, that it only affects a single die. Something which should be taken into consideration by a Game Master when designing modern or futuristic weapons for their

campaign.

- **Pin Weapon:** Useful only with specialised firearms, it could be used for harpoon guns or tractor beam rifles for example.
- **Rapid Reload:** Whilst useful for black powder or single round firearms, this special effect has less of an obvious application when applied to automatic weapons, where the next shot is chambered (or charged) instantly. However, Rapid Reload could be utilised instead to quickly change weapon magazines. It might also be applicable for energy weapons that possess lengthy cycle times to recharge capacitors or allow the barrel to cool.
- **Stun Location:** Perfect for certain types of projectiles, it could also be an inherent bonus effect of non-lethal stun-ray weapons, where the damage roll is only used to see if it overcomes any worn protection rather than inflicting a wound.
- **Sunder:** A somewhat unusual choice, Sunder would be suitable for energy-based firearms designed to destroy ablative armours or more exotic concepts like gravity wave guns.
- **Trip Opponent:** Assuming the firearm actually shoots ammunition with mass, there is no reason that this effect couldn't be used when shooting at the legs of an opponent, even if no damage penetrates any worn protection.



*Carlesn Weapon Systems 20mm Split Beam
Violator Light Repeating Blaster Rifle*

SPOT RULES

Whilst running gun based combat should be relatively straightforward, the following spot rules are provided to help resolve certain features and situations caused by firearms.

ACCURACY OF FIRE-ARMS OVER RANGE

Whilst firearms generally have far greater ranges than their less technologically sophisticated counterparts, they are still subject to the same accuracy issues when shooting at a distance. The design of a firearm can also have a significant effect upon their accuracy. For example, due to their short barrel length and less stable firing position, handguns are typically more inaccurate than rifles. In general use the following modifiers when using the 'Size and Distance Difficulty Adjustment' table:

- Pistols – Increase penalty by 1 step
- Carbines/SMGs – No modifier
- Rifles – Reduce penalty by 1 step
- Sniper Rifles – Reduce penalty by 2 steps

Remember that as an exception to the normal rule, distance penalties stack on top of other ranged combat situational modifiers.

AUTOMATIC FIRE

Some firearms automatically chamber the next shot, by using the waste gases, recoil or energy from the previous shot. With no need to recock, this grants the weapon a range of different firing rates, all dependent on how much ammo the user wishes to release.

These firing modes are known as Semi-Automatic, Burst and Full-Automatic. Whilst this ability can make some guns capable of dealing out fearsome damage, trying to maintain accuracy with recoiling weapons is problematic. Assume that the following rules primarily apply to projectile firing automatic weapons.

Semi-Automatic: This is actually the default rate of fire for most guns, where each pull of the trigger fires a single shot and loads the next round.

Burst: For burst fire each pull on the trigger releases a short number of rounds, usually no more than three to five depending on the weapon. Its original purpose was to permit limited suppression fire, but restrict excessive ammunition use. It is not intended to improve the shooter's chance to hit since rapid, sequential recoil continually jerks the weapon off-line. Firing in burst mode imposes a penalty grade of Hard to the attack roll. If the attack succeeds however, the shooter rolls a dice to see how many of the rounds in that burst struck home on the target. So a three round burst would use 1d3. Roll separate location and damage for each round which hits.

Full-Automatic: Normally used for full blown suppressing fire to pin down multiple targets, full-automatic can be devastating if fired into a closely grouped body of enemies. The shooter decides how many rounds of ammo to fire (up to the limit of the cyclic rate of the weapon) which are then evenly distributed across all the targets included in the arc of fire. Any spare rounds are considered lost whilst traversing aim (thus firing 15 rounds at 6 targets would be two bullets each). A separate attack roll is made for each target, but at a difficulty grade of Formidable due to the increased recoil effects of sustained fire. Those targets who are hit suffer a random number of rounds as per Burst Fire.

Note that only the first shot which strikes during a burst or full automatic spray can benefit from special effects. Thus roll-

ing a critical attack whilst firing in automatic mode would permit the selection of Maximise Damage, but only with the first shot, even if all the remaining rounds hit home.

DUAL FIREARMS

Characters may use dual firearms, shooting both weapons simultaneously during their Turn to gain a more rapid rate of fire. However, this comes at a penalty to accuracy. Firing a pistol in each hand suffers a penalty of Hard to hit the target. Those trying to concurrently shoot with a carbine or SMG in each hand suffer a penalty of Formidable.

FUMBLING WITH FIREARMS

Since gunfire is not normally resisted by an opposing skill, a special provision should be made when a shooter fumbles their attack roll. In this case, whomever was the intended target is allowed to select a fumble specific special effect, which the shooter then suffers. See also the fumble only special effect Weapon Malfunction above.

PARRYING WEAPON FIRE WITH SHIELDS

As expressed earlier, it is almost impossible to deliberately parry a supersonic projectile or energy beam. Shields however still provide a degree of protection since in effect they are portable 'cover'. To utilise a shield in a fire-fight, just use the Passive Blocking rules on page 154 of RQ6.

WHY IS AUTOMATIC FIRE SO PENALISED?

It may seem that the rules for automatic fire are unduly harsh compared with the apparent accuracy of modern firearms. There are several reasons for this, the primary ones being streamlining and game balance. Players who criticise their character's inaccuracy should be reminded that any tweaks to the rules will be applied against them too; which given the lethality of rapid fire should be a sobering thought.

Of course, some of these recoil penalties can be mitigated, for example by using Steady Weapon to brace automatic firearms. The truth of the matter is though, that fire-fights are very different to target shooting on a gun range (see The Disconnect Between Range Marksmanship and Combat). The instinct to take cover when bullets are flying, the need to keep mobile and every shot taken pinpointing the shooter by its muzzle flash or sound, often prevents any chance of aiming or bracing. The phrase 'Spray and Pray' was coined for very good reason!

With regard to more modern firearms or those of a science fiction nature, a Game Master may wish to grant the shield an Armour Point value rather than assigning it a Size, based upon the inherent material it is made from. For example a wooden shield might be treated as 4 Armour Points, a Kevlar tactical shield 8 AP, and a Ulysses 31 bracelet force field shield 15 AP.



*Tyrell Industries .408 Recoil-less
Gauss Pistol.
Nicknamed 'Hand Cannon'*

CREATING FIREARMS

Game Masters wanting to create their own firearms for RQ6 must take into consideration numerous aspects of weapon design and the effects they pose on characters.

PURPOSE

The first thing to think about is what the weapon is designed to be used against. An elephant gun for instance has ammunition calculated to take down charging big game, and thus should inflict more damage than a normal hunting rifle intended for deer.

The type of damage is important too. A Rocket Propelled Grenade is manufactured to be used against tanks. Whilst it can inflict terrible injuries, its real purpose is to destroy vehicle armour, often with the intent to follow up with a second shot to the same location which then penetrates the vehicle easier (see the Ablating trait below). Thus the base damage dice for an RPG need not be that large, allowing anyone caught in its blast radius a better chance of survival.

TELESCOPIC SIGHTS

A telescopic sight improves the accuracy of a firearm over greater distances when the user takes the time to aim properly (see Aiming on page 159). The most basic telescopic sights are merely optical magnifiers, but as technology advances they begin to incorporate integral rangefinders, projectile trajectory calculators, air movement sensors, atmospheric lensing compensators, IR or low light amplifiers and a host of other gadgets which improve its effective 'hit' distance.

Thus telescopic sights reduce the apparent distance (on the Size and Distance Difficulty Adjustment table) by a number of distance steps equal to the multiplier. For example an x12 scope will extend Close Range to twelve times its base distance, whilst additionally reducing the apparent distance by 12 steps, or 240m (12 x 20m) before penalties are calculated.

Other types of damage exist. Stunning or paralysis allows the creation of non-lethal weapons. Disintegration on the other hand might inflict permanent damage on Hit Locations making it very frightening if no method of regeneration exists!

DAMAGE

In real life it is quite possible to be shot by small or medium calibre handgun rounds and still remain functional. At the upper end of the scale, rifle rounds can inflict terrible damage, incapacitating the victim, but still not necessarily kill them outright. Much depends on the ammunition of course, but the objective is generally to wound, not completely annihilate the target.

With that in mind, small firearms designed for use against humans should probably be scaled at around 1d6 damage, able to inflict Light Wounds with a reasonable chance of a Serious Wound. This would be something like a .38 pistol. Top tier weapons designed for use against hu-

THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN RANGE MARKSMANSHIP & COMBAT

Since 1970, the Firearms and Tactics Section of the New York City Police Department has gathered statistical data about police involved firearms exchanges. The results have shown that an officer's ability on a target range has little bearing on what actually occurs in a combat situation.

The following statistics are the hit percentages of trained officers who fired during a gunfight. They are not only surprising, but also demonstrate that some of the more penalising Spot Rules modelled for RQ6 gun combat are actually very lenient in terms of what happens in real life.

- 3 or less yards: 1990, 38%; 1992, 28%
- 3 – 7 yards: 1990, 11.5%; 1992, 11%
- 7 – 15 yards: 1990, 9.4%; 1992, 4.2%
- 15 – 25 yards (1990 not included in average); 1992, 2.3%
- Average Hit Percentage at 15 yards or less: 1990, 19%; 1992, 17%

mans really shouldn't inflict any more than 20 damage maximum, but averaging just over half that, enough to regularly inflict Major Wounds. A top of the line M24 or Dragunov sniper rifle might be rated at 2d8+4 damage for instance.

Anything larger is just wasted ammunition mass or shot energy, and works against player character survivability when facing equally well armed foes.

PROJECTILE OR ENERGY

The type of projectile or energy shot from a weapon will have consequences on how it works. For example a visible Laser may be able to pass through bullet-proof glass, bounce off mirrors, and yet be utterly useless in fog or rain.

Whilst energy weapons are pretty much fixed as to their effects, projectile weapons can be quite versatile according to what ammunition they are loaded with. In fact the type and amount of damage caused depends more on the bullet, rather than the gun which projects it. The latter having more influence over firing modes, range, accuracy and such like.

AMMUNITION CAPACITY

Whether a firearm shoots physical projectiles or energy beams, it will have a limited number of shots before the magazine or power source needs to be swapped out. This is important, not because of any real world or hard science considerations, but without changing clips on a regular basis, a firefight will simply be won by whomever establishes suppressing fire first and then walks down his cowering foes.

With no need to reload, every battle may well turn into a bloodbath, which is fine if you are merely expending clones or droids, but will become extremely frustrating to players when rolling up new characters for the umpteenth time.

Modern projectile weapons currently have magazines of about 10-30 rounds, which should be sufficient capacity to enable a decent amount of shooting until needing to change the clip. Heavier support weapons which have a much higher rate of fire, should possess larger magazines.

OVERCOMING ARMOUR

Some previous d100 settings using firearms have compensated for the protective value of armour by boosting the base damage to very high levels. Although this enables injury of those wearing significant body armour, it has a detrimental effect of making such weapons near instantly lethal against unprotected foes, which is not necessarily realistic.

A better alternative is that firearms should reduce or bypass a certain number of Armour Points according to their penetrative nature. This permits the base damage of the weapon to remain within survivable limits. Some weapons may be completely unaffected by armour entirely, like electromagnetic weapons of higher or lower frequencies; or weapons which inflict other effects, such as brain scramblers that induce unconsciousness.

Of course, with more exotic weaponry there should always be some form of counter or protection available to thwart its effects. In a hard Sci-Fi setting, defending against an X-Ray Laser might require 1cm thick lead-lined armour to halve its effects (great for cross-genre Gloranthan trolls), or conversely 150m of air, meaning that X-Ray rifles are going to be rather poor as long range sniper weapons.

NEW WEAPON TRAITS

The following list gives some new Firearm specific weapon traits. Further traits can be designed for more exotic weaponry.

- **Ablating:** Designed to directly attack the protective armour of an object or person. Damage is done to Armour Points first. Once the armour has been reduced to zero, any remaining damage continues through to the target. Most HE (High Explosive) ammunition fits this trait.
- **Armour Piercing:** Ignores a specific number of Armour Points equal to half the maximum damage capability of the firing weapon. So Armour Piercing rounds fired from a .45 pistol would ignore the first four points of any protection, whereas those fired

from .50 calibre sniper rifle would ignore 12 points.

- **Cauterising:** The bolt or beam immediately seals off any ruptured blood vessels, preventing targets from bleeding out in the event of a Major Wound.
- **Disintegrating:** Inflicts permanent Hit Point damage to the target, literally vaporising the area struck.
- **Fragmentation:** The projectile violently explodes, affecting everything within its burst. The radius of this effect should be listed in parenthesis. Targets within the radius of the blast receive half damage to 1d3-1 Hit Locations (roll for each wound). Some explosive rounds (HEAP) also possess the Armour Piercing trait, so that they detonate inside an armoured object. Those that do not fully penetrate, have their explosive damage reduced by double the remaining thickness of Armour Points.
- **Frangible:** A projectile designed to disintegrate when striking a surface harder than itself. These are mainly used in fragile or dangerous environments, such as the inside of a flying airplane or a fusion power plant, where a stray hit on equipment can have potentially catastrophic effects. They are generally ineffective against body armour.
- **Hollow Point:** The projectile flattens inside the target, increasing the amount of damage inflicted. Roll damage twice and take the best result.
- **Incendiary:** Designed to ignite whatever the projectile or beam hits. If the target is naturally flammable it bursts into flame according to the Fire rules on pages 120-121. Treat as an Intensity 3 heat source for the purposes of starting a fire.
- **Knockout:** Similar to the Paralysis trait, this energy weapon does not inflict damage, but renders the victim unconscious if the target fails in an opposed roll of their Willpower against the attack roll.
- **Paralysing:** The Hit Location struck by the energy weapon does not take any physical damage, but is instead rendered incapacitated if the target fails in an opposed roll of their

Endurance against the attack roll.

- **Scatter:** The weapon or round is made of tiny shot, fléchettes or pellets which spread before they strike, reducing any range penalties by one step and inflicting damage to 1d3 adjacent Hit Locations. This comes at a cost however. Firstly the weapon damage roll for each location is halved; secondly any armour, natural or worn, doubles its Armour Point value against the damage.
- **Self Guided:** Permits the selection of the Circumvent Cover special effect.
- **Tranquilising:** Permits the delivery of a narcotic or medicine, either by injection from a tiny ampoule built into the projectile, or by the projectile itself dissolving directly into the bloodstream. Depending on its nature, damage might only rolled to see if it overcomes any protection worn by the target.
- **Weakness:** Usually applied to energy bolts or beams, the weapon suffers significant degradation to some form of environmental condition or material substance. The specific weakness is normally specified as a footnote or as part of the weapon's detailed description.



SAMPLE WEAPONS

This section provides a range of different example firearms, which can be used as a template to model additional weapons. Most are intended for use against humans or modest sized animals, and little effort is made to differentiate between specific firearms other than its form and calibre.

The following weapon statistics are merely rough approximations, representing an average weapon of that calibre and barrel length. Specific weapons may have different performance characteristics. Game Masters with a deeper interest in firearms are free to tinker with these values to represent their favoured iconic weapons.

In consideration of the nature of firearms, some of the normal statistics for ranged weapons in RuneQuest have been removed; such as Force, Armour Points, Hit Points.

Cost has also been left off since such things are setting specific.

Other aspects have been modified somewhat. Firing Rate is now either a solitary number for single action and semi-automatic weapons... or three numbers separated by slashes; representing the rate of fire for semi-automatic, burst and automatic fire in that order. The latter being the maximum cyclic rate of fire which can be released per combat action.

Likewise reloading (depending on the weapon) assumes an easily to hand, preloaded magazine which can quickly be snapped into place by ejecting and dropping the previous one. If a spare clip or speedloader is not available, then a single bullet or cartridge can be loaded per Turn.

BLACK POWDER WEAPONS

Black powder is a mixture of sulphur, potassium nitrate, and powdered charcoal - 'gun powder'.

The flintlock is the most recognisable black powder firearm. Flintlocks work by striking a sharpened piece of flint against a curved, hard steel *frizzen*, which is attached to a pivot; the impact of the hammer pushes the frizzen forward, and its bottom acts as a cover for a small priming pan. The sparks generated fall into the pan and ignite a small priming charge. The resulting flash travels through a touch-hole bored into the barrel to ignite the main charge.

These weapons require more maintenance than their modern counterparts. Loading any black powder firearm requires ammunition, which may come in the form of a 'cartridge' (containing a ball and the requisite amount of powder, wrapped in paper), or simply the ball and wadding without pre-measured powder; a flask of powder for pouring and priming; and a rod to ram the charge securely into the weapon's muzzle. As black powder weapons are muzzle-loading, it takes time to prepare each round.

Ranged Weapon	Damage	Range	Firing Rate	Ammo	Load	Weapon Traits	ENC
Muff Pistol	1d6	5/10/25	1	Single Shot	4 Rounds		-
Flintlock Pistol	1d8	10/20/50	1	Single Shot	4 Rounds		1
Flintlock Pistol, Twin Barrel	1d8	10/20/50	1	2	6 Rounds		2
Flintlock Musket	1d10	15/100/200	1	Single Shot	4 Rounds		3
Flintlock Rifle	2d6	20/200/500	1	Single Shot	4 Rounds		3
Blunderbuss	2d6	5/10/25	1	Single Shot	4 Rounds	Scatter	2

MODERN WEAPONS

Most modern firearms lack any inherent traits, but defer their effects to their ammunition. By default, standard bullets possess none, merely inflicting the weapon's basic damage. Special ammunition however, can be purchased for most modern weapons however, permitting rounds with either the Armour Piercing, Frangible, Hollow Point or Incendiary traits.

Combat Shotguns are the exception to this rule, possessing a versatile range of different ammunition. Other than a plain slug, shotguns may fire the following types of round: Anti-personnel grenades (Fragmentation with 2m radius), Baton rounds (Stun Location, temporary damage), Breaching rounds (Frangible), and Buckshot (Scatter).

Ranged Weapon	Damage	Range	Firing Rate	Ammo	Load	Weapon Traits	ENC
.38 Pistol	1d6	50/100/200	1	6-9	3	-	1
9mm Pistol	1d6+1	50/100/200	1	6-9	3	-	1
.45 Pistol	1d8	50/100/200	1	6-9	3	-	1
.357 Pistol	1d8+1	50/100/200	1	6-9	3	-	1
10mm Pistol	1d10	50/100/200	1	6-9	3	-	1
.50 Pistol	1d12	50/100/200	1	6 Box Mag	3	-	2
5.56mm Assault Carbine	2d6-1	500/900/2000	1/3/-	30 Box Mag	3	-	3
5.56mm Assault Rifle	2d6+1	600/1000/3000	1/3/20	30 Box Mag	3	-	3
5.56mm Light Machine Gun	2d6	600/1000/3000	-/-/20	200 Belt	6	-	4
7.62mm Medium Machine Gun	2d8+2	800/1500/4000	-/-/22	50 Drum or 200 Belt	3 Drum, 6 Belt	-	5
7.62mm Sniper Rifle	2d8+4	900/1500/5000	1/-/-	20 Box Mag	3	-	4
.50 Anti-Material Sniper Rifle	2d10+4		1/-/-	10 Box Mag	3	-	6
12 Gauge Combat Shotgun	3d6	20/100/200	1/-/8	8 Box Mag or 32 Drum	3	-	3

ENERGY WEAPONS

The typical weapons of Science Fiction settings, energy weapons emit a beam or bolt of energy rather than a physical projectile. The power source is typically a battery or powerpack held within the weapon or carried separately and attached to the weapon via a cable. External powerpacks provide a far greater capacity. Laser weapons are silent, projecting a lased beam of light in a continuous stream. Blasters fire a pulse of plasma accompanied by a distinct crackle or sound as the bolt leaves the weapon's muzzle.

The load rating for energy weapons represents replacing a spent power source. The Ammo rating dictates how many shots can be obtained from the power source before it is depleted. For simplicity, Ammo ratings assume the weapon carries a battery or powerpack. For a separate, external source, increase the Ammo rating by ten.

Traits for energy weapons vary from the predictable to the more versatile. Blasters, for instance, can be set to stun rather than kill. Changing the setting is a Free Action.

Science Fiction has created some truly inventive energy weapons that have very different traits. The selection here captures the traditional lasers and blasters, and offers some more exotic variants found in different books, films and TV shows.

ENERGY WEAPONS

Ranged Weapon	Damage	Range	Firing Rate	Ammo	Load	Weapon Traits	ENC
Blaster, Palm	1d8	5/15/90	1	20	2	Cauterising	0.25
Blaster Pistol	1d8	10/30/120	1	100	3	Cauterising	1
Blaster Pistol, Heavy	1d10	7/25/50	1	50	3	Cauterising	1
Blaster Carbine	2d6	15/50/220	1	50	3	Cauterising, Knockout	2
Blaster Rifle	2d6	30/100/300	1	100	3	Cauterising, Knockout	3
Light Repeating Blaster	2d6	30/100/300	3 shot burst or full auto (up to 25 shots)	25 (250 if connected to backpack generator)	15	Cauterising	7
Disintegrator, Pistol	1d10	8/24/100	1	15	3	Disintegrating	2
Disintegrator, Rifle	2d10	25/75/300	1	10	3	Disintegrating	4
Disruptor, Pistol	1d6	10/30/120	1	40	3	Knockout, Paralysing	1
Disruptor, Rifle	1d8	30/100/300	1	50	3	Knockout, Paralysing	3
Laser Pistol*	1d6+1	12/36/144	1	50	3	Cauterising, Incendiary, Weakness	1
Laser Carbine*	1d8+2	18/60/300	1	30	3	Cauterising, Incendiary, Weakness	2
Laser Rifle*	1d10+2	40/120/380	1	80 (800 if connected to a backpack generator)	3	Cauterising, Incendiary, Weakness	3
Laser Rifle, Heavy*	1d12+2	80/240/1000	1	25 (250 if connected to backpack generator)	3	Cauterising, Incendiary, Weakness	4
Phaser, Palm	1d6	4/12/50	1	12	3	Cauterising, Knockout, Paralysing	0.25
Phaser, Pistol	1d8	8/25/75	1	24	3	Cauterising, Knockout, Paralysing	1
Phaser, Rifle	1d8	20/60/240	1	48	3	Cauterising, Knockout, Paralysing	2
Sonic Rifle**	Special	Special	1	20	3	Paralysing**	4

* Lasers can be affected by defensive materials that diffuse, deflect or reflect light, such as anti-lasre aerosol particles, mist, and mirrors. All and similar will help reduce or even block a visible light laser. Games Masters should decide on the effectiveness of deterrent and reduce the laser's damage by an appropriate percentage.

** Sonic Rifles produce an intense burst of sound that affects all targets not equipped with sonic dampeners or ear protection within a 20 metre arc directly in front of the firer. Do not roll for Hit Location. Victims must succeed in a Hard Endurance roll (unopposed) or be incapacitated until the weapon is deactivated.

EXOTIC FIREARMS

Exotic firearms are ballistics, rather than energy-based, but have a wide variety of different traits to distinguish them from Modern Firearms. They represent future advancements on ballistics technology, some of which are being realised in current weapons research.

Ranged Weapon	Damage	Range	Firing Rate	Ammo	Load	Weapon Traits	ENC
Flechette/Needle Gun	1d6	5/15/90	1	80	2	Scatter, Tranquilising	1
Gauss Pistol*	1d12+1	40/80/150	1	12	3	Hollow Point	2
Gauss Rifle*	2d12+2	80/160/300	1/3/-	30	3	Armour Piercing, Hollow Point	4
Gauss Rifle, Heavy*	2d12+6	160/400/1200	-/-/22	80 Drum or 300 Belt	3 Drum, 6 Belt	Armour Piercing, Hollow Point	6
Snub Pistol	1d6	5/15/90	1	20	2	Frangible	1
Snub Rifle	1d8	10/30/180	1/3/-	50 Drum	3	Frangible	3
Flamer, Hand	1d8	3/10/40	1	8	4	Incendiary	2
Flamer Rifle	2d8	12/36/150	1	20	4	Incendiary	4
Frag Pistol	1d6	10/30/120	1	18	3	Fragmentation	2
Frag Rifle	1d10	15/50/220	1	50	3	Fragmentation	4
Multi-Purpose Pistol**	Special	50/100/200	1	15	3	Variable	2
Multi-Purpose Rifle**	Special	100/400/1200	1/3/-	50 Box	3	Variable	4

* Gauss weapons include an electromagnetic array along the length of the barrel that increases bullet velocity substantially and means that a lower calibre of round can be used to impart significant damage. All Gauss weapons have a power supply in the form of an internal battery that must be replaced after every 50 shots.

** Multi-Purpose Weapons use sophisticated computer and ballistics manipulation technology to change the type of the ammunition being fired at the flick of a manual switch (some advanced variants are voice-activated). These weapons can select one of the following Traits to augment their standard ammunition: Armour Piercing, Hollow-Point, Incendiary and Self-Guided. Changing the selection uses the Switch Fire Mode Combat Action.

A BIT ELABORATE FOR A TOOTHPICK...

The example weapons provided here are not exhaustive and there are clearly hundreds - if not thousands - of variants. Our intention is to provide a representative sample that can act as templates for more specific firearms, real or speculative, that Games Masters can develop for their campaigns.

We hope you enjoyed reading this expansion for RuneQuest. With these guidelines you should be able to create firearms perfectly suited to whatever genre you require and experience as much fun using the rules as we did developing them.

Feel free to post your creations on our website (www.thedesignmechanism.com) to inspire others!