

Armor Degradation

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Body armor shouldn't stick around forever, especially when it gets wracked up as much as it does in Shadowrun. Armor can only take so many hits before it simply falls apart or, at the very least, loses the rigidity or coverage required for it to give an actual armor benefit. Eventually the armor becomes a holed up rag giving no more protection than would a handi-wipe. Hence my armor degradation rules.

Variation 1 makes a little bit of sense but may be a little rough. I use variation 2 because I think this situation is handled much better through a simple GM judgment call.

Variation 1

If the total number of rounds which has impacted the character's armor exceeds double the total armor rating then the level drops by one. In other words, if the total armor rating is 8 then, after the armor receives 16 bullets, the rating drops by 1 starting at the top layer of armor. I think this rule is a bit, but not a whole lot, better than FASA's because it would normally be more realistic to determine armor loss by the number of bullets, not damage. A sniping round may end up virtually killing somebody wearing an armor jacket but would have little effect on the armor, creating a fairly small hole on the grand scale of things. For the purpose of armor degradation the GM may wish to double the bullet "value" of weapons firing exceptionally large rounds, such as HMGs, Shotguns, MMGs, etc. For hardened armor the GM may wish to half the value of light weapon bullets, while keeping the bullet count for heavy weapons at 1 per bullet. The big down side of this variation is it requires book-keeping, which is why I prefer variation 2.

Variation 2

Basically, the GM determines when the armor rating of a PC should drop by taking into account how much they've been wracked up. If somebody takes a couple 6 round bursts from a HVAR, you can bet a bit of armor's been shredded. But, at the same time, it may only take a few rounds from a shotgun to do the same armor damage because, with shot, it ravages a larger area and, with slug, the bullets are really, really big. Assault rifle rounds may not even phase Heavy armor, but a stream of slugs from an HMG should be chipping armor left and right. There are so many different kinds of bullets, firing rates, and so on and so forth that to specialize rules for each kind of weapon would be an enormous headache.