

COMBAT

As adventurers journey through the cities and wilds of the worlds they visit, they will encounter both men and beasts. At times, the only way such encounters can be dealt with is by force. Combat in *Traveller* is designed to be deadly, especially if there is a gap in technology between combatants.

The combat system is based on the skill system. Firing a gun, swinging a sword or ordering troops into battle are all skill checks; respectively, that's Gun Combat, Melee, and Leadership checks. The main difference between combat and a regular skill check is that timing and situational awareness play a much bigger part in combat. Characters will have to move between cover and avoid being hit by the lethal weaponry common on the battlefields of the Third Imperium.

Firing a gun, swinging a sword or throwing a grenade are all combat actions, but a combat action need not be an attack – jamming communications, giving orders, or applying first aid are also combat actions.

Setup

If the combatants are all unprepared for combat, then each person rolls 2d6 and adds their Dexterity DM to determine starting Initiative. Initiative measures a character's speed, but also his understanding and control of the battlefield. Initiative determines the order that characters act in, but it can also be spent to react to events. If some of the combatants are ready for combat and some are not, such as in an ambush, the prepared characters are considered to get an automatic 12 on their roll, giving them an Initiative of 12 + Dexterity DM.

Characters who have the Tactics skill may make a Tactics check and add the Effect of this check to the Initiative of everyone in their unit. (Only the highest Tactics Effect in the unit may be used.)

The Referee may prepare detailed maps or even models of battlefields and encounter areas, or just use sketch maps or descriptions. *Traveller* uses a scale of 1.5 metres per square for personal combat.

In most combats, the combatants begin at Medium range. See page 64 for more details about range.

The Combat Round

Each combat round lasts around six seconds of game time. In a combat round each character gets a minor action and a significant action. Actions are taken in descending order of Initiative. If two characters have the same Initiative, the character with the highest Dexterity goes first. If they are still tied, then characters act simultaneously. When a character acts, he takes all his actions at once.

Action Summary

In every round a character may make:

- One significant action.
- One minor action.
- As many reactions as he likes.
- As many free actions as he likes, within reason.

The significant action may be broken down into two minor actions instead, allowing for three minor actions instead of one significant and one minor.

Once everyone has acted a combat round is over and a new round begins. Initiative is not re-rolled but is dynamic, and may be adjusted up and down by actions taken during a round.

DYNAMIC INITIATIVE

During the course of a round a character's Initiative score may be changed by reactions, recoil and hastening. Any changes affect your Initiative for one round only – either the current round if you have yet to act or the following round if you have acted already. Reactions reduce your Initiative in order to allow you to defend yourself from attacks. Recoil slows you down if you are using a weapon heavier than you can handle. Hastening your action lets you act sooner but at a penalty to your roll.

HASTEN

At the start of each combat round a character may declare that he is acting hastily. This gives him a +2 bonus to his Initiative for that round only but all his actions receive a -1 DM. A character can only hasten once.

MINOR ACTIONS

MOVEMENT

The character moves up to six metres. Difficult terrain, such as rubble, mud or thick underbrush can halve a character's movement, allowing him to move only three metres per movement action. Crouching also halves movement. Some alien species may have different methods and speeds of movement which will be detailed in their description.

Changing Stance

A character can change to any one of the three stances – prone, crouched or standing – as a minor action.

Drawing and Reloading

The time taken to draw a weapon depends on its size and ease of use. The number of minor actions to ready or reload a weapon is

Red Zone

The Travellers' Aid Society travel zone classification for a nation, world, or system which is dangerous to travellers. In general, the imposition of a red zone classification indicates the location is quarantined, interdicted by higher authority, or at war. Quarantine indicates that a dangerous disease is present, and the danger of war is self-explanatory, but interdiction requires further discussion. Interstellar governments often find it necessary to restrict access to worlds or systems for political or military reasons, and do so by publishing interdictions. Enforcement of interdiction varies with the reason for the restriction. Interdiction may be imposed on a world if it is a military base or other sensitive installation, for the private reservations belonging to powerful families desiring seclusion, for developing societies which the government has elected to allow to evolve in isolation, or for valuable resource areas being saved for later development or exploitation.

ENCOUNTERS AND DANGERS

This chapter covers planet-side encounters. For encounters and dangers in space, see page 139.

The topics covered in this chapter are: **Animals, Environmental Dangers (Disease, Poison, Weather, Extremes of Temperature, Falling), Healing, Non-Player Characters & Random Planet Encounters.**

ANIMALS

Many worlds in the galaxy are capable of bearing life. While a sizeable proportion of these worlds were seeded with Earth-life by the Ancients or by human colonists, there are many worlds where evolution (or engineering) has produced bizarre creatures. Regardless of their world of origin or biochemistry, the majority of creatures fall into a few categories – herbivores, omnivores, carnivores and scavengers. These categories are further broken down into behaviours, such as grazer or filter. A carnivore that hunts by ambushing its prey will be a very different encounter to one that hunts as part of a pack.

The terrain of a planet also helps determine what sorts of creatures are encountered there.

Animals have a similar range of characteristics to humans, but there are several differences:-

Instinct: Instinct is the animal equivalent of Education. Animals apply their Instinct DM to tasks such as sensing prey or solving problems. A cunning or highly successful creature would have a high Instinct score.

Pack: Pack is the animal equivalent of Social Standing. The higher a creature's Pack score, the larger the group that it is associated with, and the more standing the creature has in that group. A lone

scavenger would have a low Pack score; a member of a herd would have a medium Pack, while the alpha of a hunting pack would have a high Pack score.

Planetary Quirks

For each world, the Referee should decide on a theme or style to unite the denizens of that world. Just as all mammals or all lizards on Earth share certain traits, so too do alien creatures of different types. Are the dominant creatures hot-blooded or cold-blooded, or do they have some other method of circulation entirely? Perhaps creatures on this world are hive organisms made up of thousands of smaller creatures; maybe psionics takes the place of vision, or perhaps creatures spit acid instead of attacking with claws and teeth. For some quick quirks, choose one or more columns from the table below and roll on them to see what unusual features are common on a given world.

Rural Encounters and Terrains

Worlds are divided into several terrain types, where different species hold sway. The Referee can roll randomly to determine what the characters encounter, or build up a whole ecology in advance.

The terrain type affects the nature of the creatures found there. Animals can be amphibious (A), swimmers (S), flyers (F) or walkers (W). If a number is listed in the movement section, it is a DM to the creature's Size roll.

The Rural Encounter table gives the sort of creature encountered. If the characters are going to be spending a lot of time on a world, the Referee should fill in a Rural Encounter table for each terrain type they will be travelling through, replacing the generic creature types with specific species.

PLANETARY QUIRKS TABLE

Roll	Sensory Quirk	Defence Quirk	Nesting Quirk	Locomotion Quirk	Reproduction Quirk	Attack Quirk
1	Sees in infrared	Armoured shell	Digs burrows	Six limbs	Lays eggs	Acid spit
2	Multiple eyes	Screeches for aid	Nests in trees	Gasbags	Lays thousands of spawn	Strangling tentacles
3	Sensitive cilia or hairs	Reacts to attack with attack	Hides stocks of food	Crawls on webbing	Males gestate young	Primitive tools
4	Echolocation	Camouflage	Steals nests	Slime	Multiple sexes	Spiked tail or bill
5	Symbiosis with a hunter or pilot animal	Avoids or mitigates attacks	Builds nests from organic material	Hijacks the bodies of other creatures	Young grow inside adult, released on death	Electricity
6	Sensitive sense of smell	Inflates	Fortifies nests	A prehensile body part which is not normally prehensile	Can change gender	Poison

for other Naval missions. It is better to have a few long-running non-player characters than a constant parade of disposable patrons.

Jefri haut-Oschem, Planetologist

Required: Life Sciences, Survival; Spacecraft

Reward: Cr. 2,000/day plus expenses.

Players' Information

His Excellency haut-Oschem is a respected Imperial Planetologist, specialising in worlds that are *nearly* habitable. A planet might be a little too cold, or too dry, or be infested with a lethal native species. Haut-Oschem's genius is in making tiny changes to a planet's ecosystem or climate. All too often, a change can ripple out through the complex balances of a planetary environment and have unforeseen consequences.

Haut-Oschem requires a spacecraft and a crew trained in the sciences for a brief period of research – no more than a few weeks, possibly a month or two. While haut-Oschem has worked with the Imperial Scout Service in the past, this mission is entirely under the aegis of private research. The ship will be visiting worlds outside settled space.

Referee's Information

Any character with contacts in the Scout service can find out that haut-Oschem has quarrelled with the Survey section, and that his once-stellar career has dark clouds hanging over it. Something has gone wrong...

1. Haut-Oschem has been replaced in the eyes of the Scout service by a younger researcher, Harad Leish. Old haut-Oschem wants to prove that his theories and methodologies are still valid. Leish and a laboratory ship from the Scout Service are currently surveying a jungle world inhabited by numerous hostile species. To prove his worth, haut-Oschem needs to find a way for humans to live safely on the world before the Scout service do.
2. As above, but haut-Oschem is bitter, and his real plan is to sabotage Leish's survey team.
3. Haut-Oschem has discovered that he made a terrible mistake at the start of his career. He approved the settlement of a world before he fully understood the ecosystem. Every few centuries, a species of carnivorous locusts hatches in vast swarms and devours everything in their path. The characters need to find a way to stop the insects from hatching.
4. As above, but haut-Oschem wants to preserve his reputation above all else. The characters need to stop the insects without revealing what they're doing to the settlers.
5. Haut-Oschem discovered something very valuable on his most recent survey, such as a massive deposit of precious metals or alien technology. He wants the characters to help him recover it.
6. As above, but haut-Oschem is in a race with the Scout service. He's not the only one to have read between the lines in his latest survey.

Astor Kemble, Spy

Required: Deception, Mechanic/Engineer/Pilot/Comms

Reward: Cr. 5,000 and a new contact

Players' Information

Astor Kemble is a 'freelance researcher' – a spy for hire. Her current mission is to investigate links between a shipping corporation, Jump Transit, and Ine Givar terrorist cells. Jump Transit may be shipping weapons past Imperial patrols. She suspects that the Ine Givar leaders in the area know she is on their trail, so she needs to use unfamiliar faces to finish her mission.

The mission is to infiltrate the shipping company, confirm that the weapons are being smuggled by Jump Transit, and if so, follow the weapons to their destination.

Referee's Information

Kemble approaches the characters after observing them for some time, to learn the best way to win their confidence and trust. If they are patriots, then she poses as an Imperial agent; if they get into trouble, she shows up to rescue them or help them; if they are mercenaries, she shows up with a big wad of credits. The mission is a lot more dangerous than Kemble initially suggests.

She has already infiltrated Jump Transit's office on a hub world, and can arrange for the characters to get jobs with the company. Following the shipments is up to them.

1. Kemble is on the wrong trail – Jump Transit is almost entirely innocent. The weapons shipments are being transported by a band of illegal smugglers, who are using old Jump Transit cargo containers stolen from starports. The characters need to be on watch at the end of their journey.
2. Jump Transit is indeed smuggling weapons, but en route, the cargo ship is attacked by pirates. The characters will need to either defeat the pirates or retrieve the stolen goods to complete their mission.
3. Kemble is discovered and killed by the Ine Givar after the characters begin their time undercover. Fortunately, the cargo ship jumps away before the other terrorists are informed that the PCs are spies. They need to complete their mission before the word reaches the cargo ship's destination.
4. The Ine Givar are aware the Imperium are on their trail. The 'weapon' they are smuggling is actually a bomb, designed to go off when the cargo ship is in jump space, killing any Imperial investigators.
5. The weapons aren't destined for the Ine Givar – they are for a group of rebels on an oppressed planet. The characters may find themselves sympathetic to their cause.
6. Kemble is actually working for the Ine Givar – the characters are actually protecting her cargo of weapons through pirate attacks and Imperial customs inspections.

Melee Weapons

Melee weapons are a symbol of status among the Imperium's nobility, but they also serve a useful purpose in boarding actions. When attempting to capture an enemy vessel, a sword is much less likely to cause significant damage to vulnerable systems or cause a hull breach than a gun but is better at opening a self-sealing vacc suit to the airless cold of space.

Blade: A hybrid knife weapon, somewhere between a dagger and a cutlass, with a large basket hilt.

Broadsword: A heavy two-handed sword.

Cutlass: The standard shipboard blade weapon, often kept near airlocks to repel boarders.

Rapier: A duelling foil. A character using a rapier increases their effective Melee (large blade) skill by one level when parrying.

Club: Humanity's first weapon. Whether a handy length of metal piping or an extending riot baton made of advanced polymers, the club remains a popular and practical weapon wherever intelligent species gather.

Dagger: A small knife weapon, approximately 20 centimetres in length. Daggers are especially suited to close-quarters combat – while grappling (see page 64) someone armed with a dagger can do Effect + 4 damage if they choose to hurt their opponent.

Improvised Weapon: When there's no real weapon available and your bare hands just aren't enough, any snatched-up object can be used as an impromptu club.

Shield: A character using a shield increases their effective Melee (unarmed) skill by one level when parrying. A character with no Melee counts as having Melee 0 when using a shield to parry.

Staff: A length of wood or metal that can be used in a variety of combat styles, to aid walking, or to poke potentially dangerous things from a distance.

Stunstick: This melee weapon deals 2d6 stun damage in addition to its normal damage. A character struck by a stun stick must make an Endurance check with a negative DM equal to the stun damage (after armour is subtracted). If this Endurance check is failed, the character is knocked unconscious.

Slug Throwers

Despite advances in energy weapons and other offensive technologies, accelerating a small piece of metal to a high velocity is still one of the most efficient ways of killing someone. Chemically propelled firearms give way to gyrojet (rocket bullets) and gauss (electromagnetically launched bullets) as technology advances.

Accelerator Rifle: Also known as gyrojet weapons, accelerator rifles are designed for zero-gravity combat. They fire tiny missiles that leave the rifle with minimal velocity and thus minimal recoil, then accelerate to high speed.

Advanced Combat Rifle (ACR): The ultimate evolution of the conventional firearm, advanced combat rifles are the weapon of choice for many military units. Standard equipment includes an electronic battlefield sight, incorporating both light amplification and IR abilities (see page 96), visual magnification up to 5x zoom, and a laser rangefinder which may also be used as a target painting device (reveals exact distance to target). The weapon is also gyroscopically stabilised during firing (as a gyroscopic stabiliser, already included in the stats).

Antique Pistol: A flintlock or other primitive projectile weapon. Unless the weapon is especially well made, it will have a -1 DM to attacks. Antique pistols require three minor actions and a successful Gun Combat (slug pistol) check to reload. Failure means you have to start again.

MELEE WEAPONS						
Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Heft	Mass (kg)	Cost (Cr.)
Unarmed Attack	-	Melee (unarmed)	1d6	-	-	-
Improvised Weapon	-	Melee (unarmed or appropriate to weapon)	2d6-2	1	2	-
Club	1	Melee (bludgeon)	2d6	0	1	-
Dagger	1	Melee (small blade) or Ranged (thrown)	1d6+2	-	-	10
Shield	1	Melee (unarmed)	1d6	-	3	50
Staff	1	Melee (bludgeon)	2d6	1	2	-
Blade	2	Melee (small blade)	2d6	-	0.5	50
Broadsword	2	Melee (large blade)	4d6	2	3	300
Cutlass	2	Melee (large blade)	2d6+4	-1	1	100
Rapier	3	Melee (large blade)	1d6+4	-2	0.5	100
Stunstick	8	Melee (bludgeon)	1d6	-	0.5	300



Serious Firepower

The PGMP and FGMP are weapons of such unbelievable destructive potential that they are never deployed without due care and forethought – except by player characters.

- Everything counts as soft cover against these weapons. Only specially reinforced and upgraded materials can withstand the power of a PGMP or FGMP well enough to be considered hard cover.
- If a shot from a PGMP or FGMP kills a target, continue the line of fire and apply any remaining damage to whatever it hits next. Keep doing this until you run out of damage. Technically all firearms can overpenetrate in this way but it is only at this level of firepower that it becomes worth keeping track of.

to everything within six metres of the impact point. A rocket that misses has a 50% chance (4+ on 1d6) of detonating upon impact with the ground (6 – Effect metres away in a random direction). Otherwise it will miss completely and leave the battlefield without striking anything or detonating. Of course, if used indoors or in a similarly enclosed space a rocket has to strike *something* – the Referee is free to determine how much collateral damage is inflicted and on what.

PGMP: The *Plasma Gun, Man Portable* is the standard heavy assault weapon of the marines. It is so heavy and bulky that it can only be used easily by a trooper with a Strength of 12 or more – usually attained by wearing battle dress. Every point by which a user's Strength falls short is a –1 DM on any attack rolls made with it. It is powered by a built-in micro-fusion generator and fires a high-energy plasma stream or a hail of plasma bolts. More advanced plasma guns adjust the weapon's optimum range and plasma temperature.

FGMP: The ultimate personal firearm, the *Fusion Gun, Man Portable* is more like a piece of artillery. It includes a gravity suspension system to reduce its inertia, making it easier to use than the PGMP (minimum Strength 9) and fires what amounts to a directed nuclear explosion. Those without radiation protection who are nearby when a FGMP is fired will suffer a lethal dose of radiation – each firing of an FGMP emits 2d6 × 20 rads, which will affect everyone within the immediate vicinity. (See page 141 for the effect of rads.)

Explosives

The Explosives skill is used with explosives – the Effect of the Explosives skill check multiplies the damage, with a minimum of ×1 damage for an Effect of 0 or 1.

Plastic: This generic, multi-purpose plastic explosive is a favourite of military units, terrorists, demolition teams and adventurers across known space.

TDX: An advanced gravity-polarised explosive, TDX explodes only along the horizontal axis.

Pocket Nuke: Hideously illegal on many worlds, the pocket nuke is actually the size of a briefcase and so is too large to fit into a grenade launcher.

EXPLOSIVES

Weapon	TL	Damage	Radius	Cost (Cr.)
Plastic	6	3d6	2d6 metres	200
TDX	12	4d6	4d6 metres	1,000
Pocket Nuke	12	2d6 × 20	15d6 metres	20,000

Options

Grenade Launcher (TL 8): An underslung RAM grenade launcher can be added to any rifle at the cost of 1,000 Cr. This grenade launcher has a magazine of one grenade, cannot fire on automatic and takes four minor actions to reload.

Laser Sight (TL 8): Integrated optics and laser sights give an extra +1 DM bonus to any attack that has been aimed (see page 61 for the aim action). Cr 100. At TL 10, x-ray lasers and improved display technology removes the tell-tale 'red dot' of a vislight laser. Cr 200.

Silencer (TL 8): A silencer can be added to any slug thrower with Auto 4 or less, masking the sound produced by firing. (–4 DM to detect.) Cr. 250.

Gyrostabiliser (TL 9): Stabilisers can be added to any weapon with recoil, reducing the recoil by one point at the cost of 300 credits.

Secure Weapon (TL 10): A secure weapon requires authentication in some fashion (scanning the user's DNA or iris patterns, entering a password, transmission of an unlocking code from a comm) before it can be fired. Cr. 100.

Intelligent Weapon (TL 11): This adds Computer/0 to any weapon. Cr 1,000. The TL 13 upgrade adds Computer/1 to any weapon. Cr 5,000.

Erik's Custom Gun

Erik isn't satisfied with any of the guns here, and wants something a bit more stylish. He starts with the basic autopistol and adds a gyrostabiliser and laser sight to it. He then adds the TL 13 intelligent weapon modification, giving his gun Computer/1. Computer/1 only allows him to run a single rating/1 program on the gun, but there's the specialised computer modification in the computer options section. Erik chooses to put Gun Combat (slug pistols) specialisation 2 onto his gun, giving it the ability to count as Rating/3 for Expert Gun Combat (slug pistols) programs. With a Rating/1 Intellect and a Rating/2 Expert Gun Combat (slug pistols), Erik's gun can fire itself with a skill of 1. Of course, a gun has no Dexterity (effectively Dexterity 0) so it will have a total DM of –2 before other modifiers are taken into account. It can also aid Erik when firing, giving him a +1 DM to his attacks as long as the difficulty is less than Very Difficult (–4).