

DEADLY TRAPS

From Indiana Jones to James Bond to the earliest stalwart fantasy adventurers, traps are a staple part of any fantasy gamer's diet. Poison needles, spiked pits, rolling boulders, cursed scrolls, electrified safes, motion-activated lasers, and explosive

mines all deal death and destruction to the unwary intruder.

BASIC TRAPS

At the basic level, all you need for a trap is a dice pool. This tells you how deadly the trap is. Everything else can be derived easily from that dice pool.

Choose a dice pool. A dice pool equal to the PCs' dice pool is a fairly dangerous trap; one less than their dice pool is an inconvenience, while one higher can be very deadly. For example, with a group of PCs at 6d6, you might choose a 4d6 trap to slow them down a little.

A trap's dice pool determines its attack roll, how hard it is to spot and disarm, and the amount of damage it does.

DESCRIBING A TRAP

A simple trap can be described in evocative ways. Rather than simply saying "the lock clicks, and a burst of flame does 16 fire damage to you", say "You carefully turn the lock, but something is wrong. The key only turns halfway. To your right you hear a slight grinding noise, and you look on with horror as the goyle's head



slowly turns to stare at you. From its mouth comes a billowing burst of fire, its intense heat enveloping you all."

From the player's side, attempts to disarm traps should be described also. Players should tell the GM what they are doing to circumvent the pit trap they just spotted; the roll then tells you how well they succeed at this. For example, they might say "OK, we'll take out 10' poles and lay them across the trap, using the 50' of rope to lash them together into a crude bridge." Should they fail their check, the GM might reply "You carefully make your preparations. It looks sturdy! As the first of you crosses the bridge, however, your crude construction slips...."

SAMPLE TRAP

The following is a sample trap stat block. Following that, each entry will be discussed in detail.

POISON GAS (5D6)

A pressure plate causes deadly poison gas to be emitted, filling the area with death.

Trigger pressure plate

Circumvent none

Difficulty 20

Attack 5d6 melee (burst 5)

Damage 5d6 poison

Reset 1 hour

TRIGGER

The traps' trigger mechanism should be briefly described. Common examples include:

- Pressure plate
- Tripwire
- Door handle
- Wrong key
- Wrong password
- Touch
- Motion sensor
- Activation/opening
- Sound
- Timed

This description can be as simple or complex as needed. It might simply say

"pressure plate" or it might say "anybody who opens the chest without turning the two knobs anti-clockwise first".

CIRCUMVENT

Some (but not all) traps have a deliberate deactivation mechanism, usually used by the person who placed the trap or their allies. For example, a magical trap might be deactivated if the right password is spoken, or a needle trap on a chest might be deactivated by turning one of the gems on the lid. This isn't the same as disabling the trap, and it requires no attribute check.

If a PC performs the circumvent action (deliberately, by accident, or blind luck) then they get to circumvent the trap.

DIFFICULTY

This is the INT roll needed to spot or disarm the trap (or, indeed, to do anything else to/with it). The target number is equal to **4 times the dice pool** - so a 4d6 trap needs rolls of 16 to spot and disarm.

To spot a trap, roll an INT (*perception*) check. To disarm it, roll an AGI (*thievery*) check. *Thievery* might be replaced by *engineering*, *computers*, *spellcraft*, or other relevant skills, depending on the trap.

Note that spotting and disarming traps are separate rolls. Failing to disarm a trap sets it off.

This value can be used for all sorts of checks related to the trap. It's basically the difficulty value of the trap - if you are trying to sneak past sensors, you'd use this value; if you are trying to climb out of a pit, you'd use this value; and so on. In some cases (such as the latter) you may need narrative reasons as to why the pit is so hard to climb out of.

You'd also use this value to repair the trap, to build the trap (assuming you had all the necessary parts - if you don't have a 15' spherical boulder, you can't build a Rolling Boulder trap), and so on. If you're interacting with a trap and need a difficulty number for an attribute check, this is it.

Complex. If a trap is noted as being complex, it requires an extended skill task

to circumvent. Typically, this will be three checks. As always with extended skill tasks, the GM should allow PCs to use any relevant skills. These work especially well with countdown traps to create a sense of tension.

ATTACK

This is the roll the trap makes when somebody sets off its trigger (opens the door, steps on the pressure plate, and soon). This is equal to the dice pool, so a 5d6 trap rolls 5d6 to attack victims who set it off.

Whether the trap attacks MELEE, RANGED, or even MENTAL defence depends on the nature of the trap. A poison needle would make a melee attack, while a falling boulder would make a ranged attack.

If the trap has a range, or an area of effect, such as a cone, line, or burst, this is also noted in parenthesis. If there is no note, it simply affects one adjacent target. For more information on cones, lines, and bursts, see the core rules.

Optional. Create a fourth defence called BODY DEFENCE. This is created from ENDURANCE in the same way that other defences are created from AGI, etc. It is the target used for poisons, illnesses, and other effects which attack the target's physical system. The relevant skills include *resistance*, *endurance*, and *fortitude*.

DAMAGE

The damage from a trap is also equal to its dice pool - so a 5d6 trap does 5d6 damage. The damage type depends on the trap itself - jets of flame will do fire damage, a falling boulder will do blunt damage, gas might do poison damage, and so on.

Critical hits can be scored by traps in the same way as by regular attacks. The type of condition inflicted by a critical hit depends on the damage type as normal; sometimes, however, a different condition may be noted in parenthesis.

The following keywords may be found in a trap's damage entry.

Alarm. The trap might simply sound an alarm to alert occupants of intruders.

Conditions. Some traps might not do damage; instead they simply inflict a condition. A net trap might just say "restrained" indicating that the target gains the Restrained condition. Another might cast a sleeping enchantment to send intruders into a slumber.

Countdown. This is a slow trap set off when triggered, but the damage doesn't take place until the countdown period has expired. This might represent a crushing trash compactor or slowly extending spikes. In this case, the trap has no attack roll, and the damage takes place automatically when the countdown pool expires. The size of the countdown pool is the same as its dice pool (the more deadly it is the slower it is). In these types of traps, escape is often the goal; this is the same difficulty as disabling the trap.

Ongoing. Occasionally, damage might be noted as "ongoing". The damage from the trap does not require an attack roll. Instead, it applies automatically whenever a creature enters or starts its turn in the area. The escape difficulty is the same as the disable difficulty, and might involve climbing out of a pit, or forcing open a door.

RESET

Some traps can be reset, while others are used once only. This entry either says "no" (indicating the trap cannot be re-used) or it gives a time period after which it is automatically reset. The time period can be anything from "instant" or one round, to a day or more. Alternatively, this may say "manual" in which case it can be reused once somebody manually resets it.

LIST OF TRAPS

Following is a list of example traps. You should use these as inspiration and create your own traps for your own games. The traps below are from mix of genres. Note that you can easily increase or decrease the difficulty of these traps.

ACID POOL (8D6)

A false floor opens downwards into a chute, which leads into a pool of deadly acid. The damage is delivered at the start of every turn.

Trigger area

Circumvent none

Difficulty 32

Attack 8d6 melee

Damage 8d6 acid (ongoing)

Reset 1 minute

BEAR TRAP (5D6)

Steel jaws slam closed on anybody unfortunate enough to step into this concealed device.

Trigger pressure

Circumvent none

Difficulty 20

Attack 5d6 melee

Damage 5d6 piercing; restrained

Reset manual

CAVEFALL (5D6)

A tripwire is set to trigger the roof of the cave to collapse, crushing all below it.

Trigger tripwire

Circumvent none

Difficulty 20

Attack 5d6 melee (burst 3)

Damage 5d6 blunt

Reset no

CRUSHING ROOM (8D6)

The walls begin to close in, hundreds of metal spikes extending from them.

Trigger pressure plate

Circumvent none

Difficulty 32 (complex)

Attack automatic

Damage 8d6 crushing (countdown, ongoing)

Reset instant

CURSED GLYPH (6D6)

A dark sigil in the wall instils a sense of fear in any who look upon it. The weak-minded can be slain by pure terror.

Trigger sight

Circumvent none

Difficulty 24

Attack 6d6 mental

Damage 6d6 psychic; afraid

Reset instant

FLAME JET (6D6)

A gargoyle spits a cone of flame at any who attempt to open the door without the correct password.

Trigger opening door

Circumvent password "dragonfire"

Difficulty 24

Attack 6d6 ranged (cone 3)

Damage 6d6 fire

Reset 1 round

INTRUDER ALERT (5D6)

Motion sensors detect the presence of intruders and automatically lock down the base unless the day's pass code is uttered.

Trigger sensors within 30'

Circumvent password "alpha blue zero"

Difficulty 20

Attack none

Damage alarm

Reset 1 minute

LANDMINE (6D6)

A mechanical device which explodes when somebody steps on it.

Trigger pressure

Circumvent none

Difficulty 24

Attack 6d6 melee

Damage 6d6 fire/ballistic

Reset none

LASER HALLWAY (6D6)

Deadly laser beams crisscross the hallway, cutting through anything in the area.

Trigger sensors

Circumvent none

Difficulty 24 (complex)

Attack 6d6 ranged

Damage 6d6 heat

Reset 1 minute

POISON GAS (5D6)

A pressure plate causes deadly poison gas to be emitted, filling the area with death.

Trigger pressure plate

Circumvent none

Difficulty 20

Attack 5d6 melee (burst 5)*

Damage 5d6 poison

Reset 1 hour

POISON NEEDLE (6D6)

This dangerous trap pricks an unwary thief with a poisoned needle when she tries to open the chest. The needle is concealed in the chest's handle. The gem's lid is embedded with three gems, of red, blue and green. Turning the red gem 180 degrees deactivates the trap.

Trigger opening chest

Circumvent turn red gem 180 degrees

Difficulty 24

Attack 6d6 melee*

Damage 6d6 poison

Reset instant

ROLLING BOULDER (7D6)

When a pressure plate is stepped upon, a giant 15' boulder falls from the ceiling and starts to roll towards the hapless adventurers.

Trigger pressure plate

Circumvent none

Difficulty 28 (complex)

Attack 7d6 melee (line 10)

Damage 7d6 blunt

Reset no

SCYTHES (7D6)

Razor sharp blades swing through the chamber, easily capable of beheading any intruder who sets them off. A torch sconce at the entrance to the chamber is a secret level which can be used to deactivate the trap.

Trigger pressure plate

Circumvent pull torch sconce

Difficulty 28 (complex)

Attack 7d6 melee (burst 3)

Damage 7d6 slashing

Reset 1 minute

SENTRY LASER (5D6)

A concealed laser emitter the wall projects a beam at anyone who enters the area without wearing a base identification badge.

Trigger sensor (30')

Circumvent ID badge

Difficulty 20

Attack 5d6 ranged

Damage 5d6 heat

Reset 1 round

SPIKED PIT (4D6)

A basic trap consisting of a 10' pit in which wooden spikes have been placed. The pit is concealed with crude netting or cloth, and dirt or leaves.

Trigger area

Circumvent none

Difficulty 16

Attack 4d6 melee (burst 2)

Damage 4d6 piercing

Reset manual

**If you are using BODY DEFENCE, these traps attack that defence instead.*

TRAP IDEAS

What follows is a list of trap ideas; or you can roll d66 for a random trap. You will need to choose its dice pool yourself; an 8d6 pit trap is likely a very deep trap!

- 11) Arrows (damage)
- 12) Swinging log (damage)
- 13) Pit trap (damage)
- 14) Alarm sound
- 15) Poison needle (condition)
- 16) Cursed scroll (condition)
- 21) Rolling boulder (damage)
- 22) Confusion gas (condition)
- 23) Falling rocks (damage)
- 24) Insect swarm (ongoing)
- 25) Scything blade (damage)
- 26) Stair slider
- 31) Fire cone (damage)
- 32) Runes (condition)
- 33) Necrotic damage (damage)
- 34) Sonic damage (damage)
- 35) Net (condition)
- 36) Reverse gravity
- 41) Collapsing roof (damage)
- 42) Bear trap (damage, condition)
- 43) Electrification (damage)
- 44) Freezing cone (damage, condition)
- 45) Contact poison (damage, condition)
- 46) Falling cage (condition)
- 51) Exploding fireball (damage)
- 52) Blinding light (condition)
- 53) Flooding room (countdown)
- 54) Acid shower (ongoing)
- 55) Acid pool (ongoing)
- 56) Lava pit (ongoing)
- 61) Crushing wall spikes (countdown)
- 62) Hail of darts (damage)
- 63) Poison gas (damage, condition)
- 64) Quicksand (countdown)
- 65) Spell (varies)
- 66) Descending ceiling (countdown)

If the trap inflicts a condition (poison, or a spell, usually), roll 2d6 on the following table unless the condition is obvious. For example, the trap may be a rune of fear, or sleeping gas. Note that the trap may well do damage also (mental traps will do psychic damage).

Don't forget that on a critical hit, a damaging trap will also impose a condition just like a regular attack does.

- 2) Angry
- 3) Slowed
- 4) Manic
- 5) Afraid
- 6) Sleeping
- 7) Poisoned
- 8) Sick
- 9) Pain
- 10) Fatigued
- 11) Forgetful
- 12) Confused

Having chosen your trap's dice pool, you can easily derive its attack, damage, spot/disarm, and escape scores.

For convenience, here are the keywords used in the above lists.

Condition. The attack inflicts a condition on a successful attack roll.

Countdown. The trap's effects are delayed. Start a countdown pool equal to the trap's dice pool. The effect takes place when the countdown expires.

Damage. The attack does damage equal to its dice pool on a successful attack roll.

Ongoing. The damage from the trap does not require an attack roll. Instead, it applies automatically whenever a creature enters or starts its turn in the area.