

NEGATIVE CONDITIONS

Life in the blasted wastelands of the New Earth is harsh, and even those who manage to survive its dangers rarely do so unscathed. Your character can become subject to *conditions* such as Hungry, Thirsty, Sickened, or worse. Conditions are added based on the privations or injuries that your character faces, and can usually be removed by correcting whatever affliction brought the condition on in the first place.

Most conditions have only one real mechanical consequence: each one applies a -2 penalty to hit rolls and a -1 penalty to all skill checks and saving throws. These penalties stack, so being sick, weak with hunger, parched with thirst and panged by a broken rib can reduce the mightiest warrior to a tottering wreck. A given condition only applies once, however- you cannot be Hungry twice, for example, though you might be Hungry and Starving both.

A few conditions are special, however, being much shorter-duration effects or much more severe in their results. Abilities that allow

characters to ignore one or more conditions do not apply to these special conditions unless explicitly noted. These special conditions do not apply the usual penalties to hit rolls and saves and only affect a character as given in their description.

Dazed characters can move normally and have their full armor class, but they are too disoriented to attack or use offensive mutations.

Stunned characters can do nothing at all. They can take no actions, trigger no mutations, and lose any Dexterity bonus to their armor class. Opponents still need to roll to hit them, however.

Incapacitated characters can likewise do nothing, but are so helpless that any opponent who successfully hits them will reduce them to zero hit points. An enemy who spends a full round lining up a shot will automatically hit unless their weapon is unable to injure the character.

SURVIVAL AND FORAGING

Enduring the harsh conditions of the New Earth can wear on a hero. Many of the following systems apply negative conditions to a PC, such as Thirsty, Hungry, Contaminated, or other unfortunate states of being.

SUSTENANCE

Food and water supplies are measured in "rations", the minimal amounts necessary for a day's needs. A ration of food consists of roughly a kilogram of nutrient-rich meat or carbohydrates, while a ration of water amounts to about three liters of liquid. Each ration counts as one item. Three meals of food can be bundled together as one encumbrance item, but water is heavier and more cumbersome to carry and cannot be bundled. Your character must eat and drink one ration a day to maintain full strength, and might require more in some very hostile environments.

Each day at dusk, a character gains one hunger point and one thirst point. Consuming a ration of food or water will remove a point of hunger or thirst, and consuming two rations will remove two points. A character who gorges on more food than that will gain no further benefit, as the weakness of extended malnutrition can't be fixed by a day-long banquet, but a character with sufficient clean water can drink away any thirst they may suffer.

When thirst points rise to 2, a character must save versus Physical Effect or become *Thirsty*. When thirst points rise to 4, the character automatically becomes both *Thirsty* and *Parched*, and must save versus Physical Effect or perish of thirst. When thirst points rise to 6, the character dies a terrible death. A character must drink away all thirst points before they can throw off the effects of thirst.

When hunger points rise to 5, the character must save versus Physical Effect or become *Hungry*. When hunger points rise to 15, the character automatically becomes *Hungry* and must save or also become *Starving*. When hunger points rise to 30, the character

must save or drop dead from hunger, and will become perpetually *Dazed* even if they make the save. When hunger points equal 45, the character dies. A character must eat enough to remove all hunger points in order to throw off the effects of *Hungry* or *Starving*.

CONTAMINATED FOOD AND WATER

Clean, radiation-free, non-toxic comestibles are so valuable in the wastelands that they form the basis of the barter economy. Often, men and women have to make do with impure food and drink. These makeshift foodstuffs gradually build up toxins in those who eat them, eventually causing sickness or death. For many people, the threat of slow death tomorrow is less fearsome than the promise of starvation today.

Each time a person eats or drinks a ration of "dirty" food or water, they gain one toxin point. Each day that ends with them fully-fed and hydrated, with zero hunger or thirst points, they can make a Physical Effect saving throw to drop one toxin point, representing a healthy and well-fed person's ability to purge their system of these subtle poisons. Some pretech pharmaceuticals can also purge toxin points.

When a character's toxin points reach 10, the PC must make a Physical Effect save or become *Sickened*. When toxin points reach 20, the character becomes *Sickened* and must save or become *Contaminated*. When toxin points reach 30, the character dies.

Contaminated food and water is generally obvious to an observer- it has the faintly metallic taste of Dust infestation, or the sickly flavor of rot, or any one of a hundred other little qualities that tell a denizen of the New Earth that it is not safe to eat. Some artful traders can conceal the presence of contaminants in food supplies, but these men and women rarely live to try the trick twice.



SURVIVAL SKILLS

Survival is difficult in the wastes, as even seemingly pure water, freshly-caught rabbits or harmless-looking berries can be contaminated with the residue of nuclear fallout or Highshine byproducts. It requires an expert eye to find the still pools that have settled out their poisons and to process mutated wild game into safe edibles.

A character may spend four hours in any given day to hunt for food. On a successful Wisdom/Survival skill check at difficulty 8, the hunter gains 1d3 plus their Survival skill in food rations. If the character spends eight hours foraging, they may add +1 to the skill check. Longer hunting periods will not help. Characters may forage in a group, in which case each participant makes their own Wisdom/Survival check.

If the foragers are less fussy about what they eat, they can find potentially larger amounts of food. A forager can make a second Wisdom/Survival check at the same difficulty if they so choose. If this roll succeeds, the forager gains 1d3 plus their Survival skill in food rations. However, everything foraged that day on either roll is considered Dirty, and will add toxin points to those who eat it. Gatherers who forage as a group must choose together whether or not to use this option for all members of the hunting party.

A character may only make a foraging attempt once per day. Some exceptionally rich lands might offer a bonus to the Survival skill check or add additional rations to any gathered. Unusually hostile or overhunted terrain might have the opposite effect.

It is not usually necessary to forage for water. There are usually enough clean streams, pools, or succulent plants around to refill a party's canteens without stopping to hunt for it, barring some exceptionally desolate stretch of badlands.

Foraging can be dangerous, and the above rules assume that the foragers are taking steps to avoid the territories of large predators and dangerous mutant plants. Exceptionally dangerous terrain might still give them a chance of encountering mutants, but such encounters will be rare- if every village hunter faced fanged doom on a monthly basis, none would live out a year.

Bolder hunters can push on where wiser ones would turn back. If the foraging party ignores danger signs and goes wherever the hunting is best, they gain a +2 bonus to their Survival checks, but have a 1 in 6 chance of encountering something nasty, of a kind to be determined by the GM.