

WISDOM FROM THE WASTELANDS

Issue #17:
Artifact Conditions



By Chris Van Deelen and the Skirmisher Game Development Group

Artifacts play a key role in *Mutant Future*. Like magical items in fantasy games, artifacts are treasures sought by adventuring parties that brave the mutant-infested ruins of the Ancients' world. But often these treasures are in less than pristine condition due to factors such as age, neglect, or misuse.

Although the rules provided in the Adventuring section of the *Mutant Future* core book are effective, sometimes both the Mutant Lord and the players (well, maybe just the ML) want something a little more dramatic. The following rules expand upon the Technology Condition table and make using that slightly-damaged weapon a little more interesting.

Whenever a player character uses an artifact, there is a chance it might malfunction. Every time the item is used, whether it functioned previously or not, consult the Technology Condition table in the *Mutant Future* core book. If a malfunction results, roll on the appropriate artifact table below to see what happened.

A few artifact categories require slightly more explanation beyond the tables. For instance, damage to power sources may only indicate they cannot hold full charges, so each category level represents a 20% maximum charge increment (e.g., condition 5 is 100%, condition 4 is 80%). But, there is also a table for additional power source hazards below, should the ML wish the damage to be more substantial.

Food is another special case, with each condition level

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of damage indicating a 20% chance the rations are contaminated. Thus, condition level 4 food has a 20% chance of being off, condition 3 has a 40% chance, and so on. Also, ML should remember the contamination could be just about anything—poison, radiation, chemicals (hallucinogens or acids), diseases, parasites, very small mutants, etc.

Medical drugs are also not immune to damage. Over time, they could have been contaminated, or just expired and become ineffective.

The last exception is Encasing Military Armor. When EMA is discovered, roll separately for each function to determine what still works, and what does not. Basically, if the suit is condition level 1, you can expect approximately 80% of the attachments and capabilities to be inoperative.

Break out that toolkit.

This publication is dedicated to providing useful information, game content, and ideas to players of modern, science fiction, and post-apocalyptic table-top and role-playing games in general and to fans of Goblinoid Games' *Mutant Future* RPG in particular. The material contained herein are compatible with it and any others that use the "Basic" system introduced in the most popular role-playing games of the early 1970s and are easily adaptable to many other games (especially successor systems, to include those covered by the Open Game License).



Primitive Firearms Ammunition

Roll	Effect
01-50	Dud. The round simply fails to fire.
51-65	Jammed. A round gets caught in the chamber or barrel, requiring 1d3 rounds to clear.
66-75	Weakened effect. The weapon fires, but the damage die is reduced by one category (e.g., a weapon that normally does 1d10 damage now does 1d8).
76-85	Weakened effect. The ammunition propellant has degraded, so the weapon's effective range is now half.
86-95	Cook off! The round ignites in the chamber, causing 1 condition level of damage to the weapon. The wielder must save versus energy or suffer the same damage the round would normally inflict. Save indicates no damage taken.
96-00	Catastrophic cook off! All rounds in the weapon explode! The weapon is destroyed, and the user must save versus energy or take damage equal to half the rounds left in the weapon (e.g., a handgun holding 8 rounds that do 1d6 damage each does 4d6 damage to the victim). Maximum damage is 10 dice. Save indicates the victim takes half damage.

Primitive Firearms

Roll	Effect
01-50	The weapon fails to fire.
51-65	Trigger Jam. The weapon will continue to fire its maximum rate of fire until the wielder is able to unstick the trigger, which takes 1d3 rounds. Potentially hazardous to those nearby.
66-75	Warped barrel. An irregularity in the weapon barrel causes the round to get stuck. The weapon is unusable until the barrel is fixed or replaced.
76-85	Weakened components. Because the weapon's parts are worn, the magazine falls free. The user must reinsert and reseal it, which takes 1d6 rounds.
86-95	Component failure. A part or series of parts fail in the weapon, causing it to lose 1 condition level, and range of the weapon is reduced to half.

96-00 Catastrophic cook off! All rounds in the weapon explode, the weapon is destroyed, and the user must save versus energy or take damage equal to half the rounds left in the weapon (e.g., a handgun held 8 rounds that do 1d6 points of damage each, so the victim would suffer 4d6 damage). Maximum damage is 10 dice. Save indicates the victim takes half damage.

Advanced Melee Weapons

Roll	Effect
01-50	The advanced portion of the weapon fails to function, so the weapon acts like a primitive melee weapon. For example, an energy mace loses the energy factor, but the weapon can still be used as a mace. This condition is permanent until fixed.
51-65	Electrical components loose. The weapon loses advanced feature but can be regained by taking 1d3 rounds to reattach or tighten the loose wiring. This is condition permanent until fixed.
66-75	Power Fluctuation. The weapon works as usual, but the damage die is reduced by one category (e.g., a weapon that normally does 1d10 damage now does 1d8). This condition is permanent until fixed.
76-85	Power surge! The weapon uses 1d3 extra charges but otherwise works as normal. Despite the surge, the damage is not increased. This condition is permanent until fixed.
86-95	Overload! The weapon takes 1 condition level of damage, and the user must save versus energy or take the damage one attack would inflict. No damage if the save is successful. This condition is permanent until fixed.
96-00	Catastrophic failure! The weapon is destroyed as the energy cell explodes. Everything in a 15' radius takes damage based upon the 96-00 result under Power Sources (see below).





Advanced Pistols and Rifles

Roll	Effect
01-50	The weapon fails to fire.
51-65	Electrical components loose. Weapon will not fire until the loose wiring is reattached or tightened, which takes 1d3 rounds.
66-75	Trigger Jam. The weapon will continue to shoot at its maximum rate of fire until the wielder is able to unstick the trigger, which takes 1d3 rounds. Potentially hazardous to those nearby.
76-85	Power surge! The weapon uses 1d3 extra charges but otherwise works as normal. Despite requiring the additional power, the weapon's damage is not increased. This condition is permanent until fixed.
86-95	Energy Surge! The weapon takes 1 condition level of damage, and the weapon's damage die is reduced by one category (e.g., a weapon that normally does 1d10 damage now does 1d8). This condition is permanent until fixed.
96-00	Catastrophic failure! The weapon is destroyed as the energy cell explodes. Everything in a 15' radius takes damage based upon the 96-00 result under Power Sources (see below).

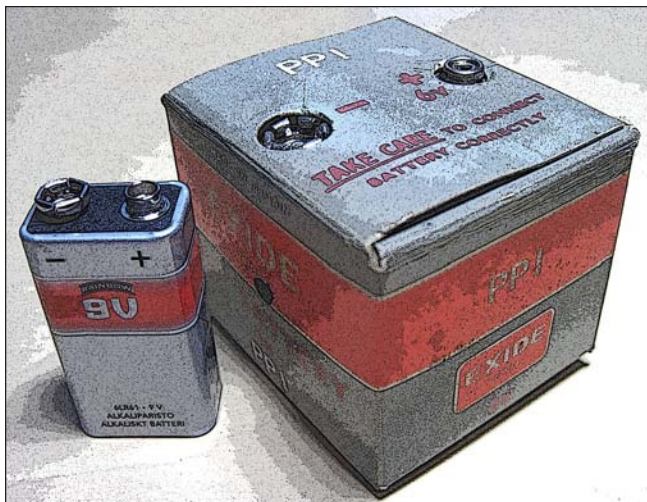
Armor (does not include EMA)

Roll	Effect
01-50	Straps and connections loose. The armor begins to fall apart! Lose 1d3 points of AC protection, plus any AC bonus due to Dexterity. It requires 1d6 rounds to reattach all parts.
51-65	Malfunctioning joints. The armor's joints begin to stick and freeze in place. Lose 1d3 points of AC protection, plus any AC bonus due to Dexterity. Movement is halved. It requires 3d3 rounds to loosen joints.
66-75	Arm guards and gauntlets lock up. The user is considered slowed (<i>slow mutant</i> drawback), and it takes 2d6 rounds to fix the problem.
76-85	Serious malfunction. If the armor provides damage resistance, it is negated. Lose 1d4 points of AC protection. Can be fixed in 3d6 rounds.
86-95	Plates and components fail. Armor takes 1 condition level damage and armor protection is cut in half.
96-00	Catastrophic failure. Any electrical components short out, causing the wearer 3d6 points of damage (save versus energy for half), and the armor is destroyed.

Encasing Military Armor

Roll	Effect
01-50	Armor will not power up, all functions are non-operational. The user cannot move.
51-65	Servos malfunction. All movement is reduced by 50%, user acquires the <i>slow mutant</i> mutation for 1d8 rounds while the armor reboots and restores proper servo function. Armor class is reduced by 1d4+1 for the duration.
66-75	A mounted weapon randomly mis-fires. If there are any weapon systems onboard, one fires without the user triggering it. Randomly choose a target and pray. If no weapon systems are available, a different function (chosen by the ML) breaks down and now no longer functions.
76-85	Cascade failure. 1d3 random functions fail. There is a 50% chance that each will reboot in 1d6 rounds. The user must roll for each failed function. If they do not reboot they are off-line until repaired.
86-95	Component failure. Armor takes 1 condition level of damage and AC is reduced by 1d4.
96-00	Catastrophic system failure. Power feedback into the suit's power system causes massive damage. Wearer takes damage based upon the 96-00 result under Power Sources (see below) and the suit is destroyed!





Power Sources

Roll Effect

01-50	No additional effect
51-65	Item uses twice the amount of power required. This condition is permanent until fixed.
66-75	Item uses three times the amount of power required. This condition is permanent until fixed.
76-85	Power surge causes 1 condition level of damage to the item it is used in.
86-95	Power source melts down! Causes 1d3+1 levels of condition damage to item. Inflicts 1d6 points of heat damage PER CONDITION level lost, to everything in a 15' radius. Power source is destroyed. If mini-fusion, plutonium, or radioactive battery, it releases a burst of class 4, 7, or 10 radiation (respectively) in a 100' radius for 1d10 turns.
96-00	Power source explodes! Both item and power source are destroyed. All creatures in a 30' radius must save versus energy or take the following damage based upon power source type: power cell 3d6, power pack 5d6, power clip 8d6, power beltback 12d6, power backpack 16d6, minifusion 20d6, plutonium clip 25d6, radioactive battery 30d6. The last three all produce class 4, 7, or 10 radiation (respectively) in a 100' radius for 4d6 months.

Grenades/Bombs/Explosives

Roll	Effect
01-50	Fails to detonate.
51-65	Detonates but does only 75% damage.
66-75	Detonates but does only 75% damage and has 50% the usual range.
76-85	Detonates but does only 50% damage and has 25% the usual range.
86-95	Detonates but does only 25% damage and has 25% the usual range.
96-00	Detonates but does only 10% damage and has 10% the usual range.

Powered Gadgets and Gizmos (includes medical devices)

Roll	Effect
01-50	Fails to work.
51-65	Item uses double the amount of energy to function. This condition is permanent until fixed.
66-75	Item uses triple the amount of energy to function normally. This condition is permanent until fixed.
76-85	Some function of the item fails to work. It can be brought back online in 1d6 rounds.
86-95	Component failure. Item fails to function at all and loses 1 condition level.
96-00	Catastrophic failure. The item malfunctions spectacularly and is destroyed! Everyone in a 15' radius takes damage based upon the 96-00 result under Power Sources (see above).

Foodstuffs

Roll	Effect
01-40	Provides no nutritional value.
41-50	Mild poison (class 1-4)
51-60	Moderate poison (class 5-10)
61-65	Deadly poison (class 11-18)
66-70	Food has become acidic. A save versus poison means the character will suffer no ill effects. Failure means the character takes 4d6 damage, and must save again next round. This damage continues and lessens by 1d6 for three more rounds, or until the character saves, i.e., round 2 would be 3d6, round 3 would be 2d6, and the last 1d6.
71-90	Contains a disease (save versus poison). ML should choose the type of disease present, or create a suitably nasty one that has infected the food.
91-95	Food contains a tiny mutant—and it is not happy that you tried to eat it. Roll for initiative. ML needs to decide the type of mutant present.
96-00	Somehow the food has become contaminated and causes genetic damage. Lose 1d2 points from one statistic, or 1 randomly determined mutation.



Drugs

Roll	Effect
01-40	The drug simply does not work. Try a placebo.
41-50	The drug works moderately well, providing 75% of the effect.
51-60	The drug is not as effective as it should have been, providing 50% of the effect.
61-70	The drug barely works, providing 25% of the effect.
71-80	The drug is contaminated. It acts as a mild poison (class 1-4), with no beneficial effect.
81-90	The drug is contaminated. It acts as a moderate poison (class 5-10), with no beneficial effect.
91-95	The drug is contaminated. It acts as a deadly poison (class 11-18), with no beneficial effect.
96-00	The drug causes permanent genetic damage. Lose 1d2 points from one statistic, or 1 randomly determined mutation.

Repairing Items

Many of the previous tables may cause an item to lose condition levels. If an item is reduced to condition level 0, it is considered destroyed. However, this does not mean the item may explode or suffer a similar catastrophic failure; it just ceases to function. It may be repaired using the rules provided below.

In the *Mutant Future* corebook, the Adventuring section does provide players with a means to repair artifacts they discover in the wastes. However, the following expansion ideas can be used to make the dealing with artifacts a little more interesting. When using them, the character *must* first understand how to operate the artifact in question, and then must make a repair roll to successfully employ any of the rules presented below.

Also, it is possible some items simply cannot be repaired. For example, a ML could decide spoiled food may not be brought to a higher condition, and you take your chances when you try to eat it. The same can apply to medical drugs, that there is no way to repair condition damage the item may have sustained. If this is the case, the ML could decide that certain artifacts like Drugs or Foodstuffs might always be in pristine condition when discovered. Or, if a ML has access to *Wisdom of the Wastelands* issue 13, "Medical Equipment," she could decide that a medical compatibility computer could also be used to restore a drug to condition level 5.

Cost of Repair

Repairing an item requires parts that cost 10% of the list price per damaged condition level. For example, repairing an item in condition level 4 will require parts costing only 10% of the initial item price and one in condition 3 would require 20%, while an item in condition 0 would require 50%. It is obviously cheaper to repair an item than purchase a condition 5 item. Unfortunately, many equipment items are not given prices; when using this rule, the ML is encouraged to come up with an item cost.

Cannibalizing Items for Repair

This is another method of repairing artifacts, by exchanging good parts from one item for damaged parts on an identical item. As an example, several adventurers find four assault rifles in the lair of a mutant monster they dispatched. The rifles are in condition 1, 2, 3, and 3, respectively. By using a straight one-for-one swap, the party can cannibalize the good parts from the level 1 and level 2 rifles to repair one level 3 rifle to condition 4 and the other to condition 5. If they had found three rifles in condition 1, 1, and 3, the party could have repaired one rifle to condition level 5, at the cost of the other two.

Swapping Similar Items for Repair

This is very similar to cannibalizing items, but rather than using identical items, they can be similar, instead. In order to affect a repair, the character can trade condition levels on a 2 for 1 basis. As an example, a character with a condition 3 assault rifle and a condition 2 hunting rifle could sacrifice the latter to repair the former, bringing assault rifle up to condition 4.

The ML can rule the swap cost could be higher. For example, using parts of an assault rifle to repair a laser rifle might require swapping 3 levels for 1, or the ML could decide this procedure will simply not work.

Time to Repair

The time to repair an item is equal to the condition level multiplied by the complexity class time modifier (see below). As an example, if a character wishes to repair one condition level on a slightly damaged slug gun (complexity class 1) this will require one hour. However, if the slug gun was only condition level 1 and the character wanted to bring it up to condition level 5, this repair would take four hours. More complicated artifacts, like computers (complexity class 3), will take much longer to fix: repairing one of these from condition level 3 to condition level 5 would require two days.

Note that this is a general rule of thumb. The ML should increase or decrease the amount of time required depending on exactly what the character wants to do, how badly damaged the item is, and how complex an item is.

Time and Complexity Table

Complexity Class	Time Required
Level 1	1 hour
Level 2	12 hours
Level 3	1 day

Tools

The ML can also modify the chance of success and time it takes to repair an item by using tools. *Wisdom from the Wastelands* issue #1 covers toolkits and the modifiers, but if the ML does not have this issue, a good rule on the fly should cover things: without tools, reduce the character's chance to fix an item by up to 25%, and multiply the repair time by four.

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