



PREVIEW



SCIENCE FICTION  
COMPANION

SWC4

# GEAR

In this chapter are a galaxy full of devices and weapons a hero can use to explore and survive the spaceways. Prices are set at a standard average, and should be adjusted by the Game Master based on his or her campaign, scarcity of materials, and even politics that might affect galactic trade.

## Ultra Tech

Some items are labeled “Ultra Tech.” This means the device is of an even higher tech level than the other devices in this book. An interplanetary shuttle, for example, is fairly standard in science fiction, but teleporters still exist purely in the realm of the theoretical.

This kind of advanced technology is a game changer, and the Game Master should actively decide whether or not it exists in his campaign world.

Including Ultra Tech also requires some judgment calls. For example, if teleporter tech exists, can a person teleport to a place that hasn’t been seen? What happens if there’s an obstacle where he arrived? Or a person? Can he safely carry another person in his arms?

The Game Master must occasionally answer these issues based on the circumstances and the reality level of his setting.

## Tracking Ammo

Ammunition for characters should be tracked normally, or use the Cinematic Ammo option below.

The Mods required for vehicular weapons assume ammunition racks or storage for four complete reloads. If a group wants to store additional ammo, assume four full reloads of the weapon’s full Shots takes up half the weapon’s required Mod slots (round up).

*Example: Super Heavy Mass Drivers require 6 Mods and have 10 Shots. Four additional reloads—40 more projectiles—take up 3 Mod slots. Four reloads for a Heavy Auto-Cannon (100 Shots, Mods 3), is 400 rounds, which require 2 Mods of storage.*

**Advanced Power Supplies:** If a vehicle runs off an advanced power supply, lasers or other energy weapons are assumed to have practically endless ammunition (assuming time for occasional recharging).

**Cinematic Ammo:** If the GM doesn’t want the group tracking ammo, draw a card after any engagement. If the card is a Five or lower, the group is low on ammo. One more fight and they’re essentially out. Resupply then becomes a plot device rather than bookkeeping.

You can also mix the systems by tracking bombs, missiles, and torpedoes but leaving the rest to the luck of the draw.

# SETTING RULES

In this chapter are additional rules to help you run games in the myriad worlds of science fiction, including atmospheric effects, gravity, hacking, and intergalactic trade.

## ATMOSPHERE

Most major life forms breathe nitrogen, oxygen, or a mixture of the two. Knowing what kind of atmosphere a planet contains and whether or not the air is breathable is literally a matter of life and death.

Atmospheres are divided into four categories: Vacuum, Thin, Dense, and Normal.

**Vacuum:** Vacuums contain little or no air or atmosphere, meaning most organic beings must breathe through artificial means (such as spacesuits). The lack of atmosphere also means pressure is extremely low or nonexistent. This causes blood vessels to burst and lungs to rupture. If a character doesn't have a sealed suit (or it's breached), he must make a Vigor roll every round or suffer a wound from decompression.

**Thin:** Thin atmospheres have little breathable oxygen, and the pressure can cause physical trauma as blood vessels expand and rupture. Characters require pressurized spacesuits to operate safely in Thin atmosphere. Any breach of the suit forces the individual to make a Vigor roll every minute to avoid gaining a level of Fatigue (assuming there is at least some breathable air). This can lead to death. The

victim recovers a Fatigue level every 10 minutes if returned to standard atmospheric pressure.

**Normal:** Earth-like atmospheres are said to be "normal" and have no special effects. Atmospheres between Normal and Thin or Dense may also exist. Use whatever condition is closest, but failed Vigor rolls cannot lead to Incapacitation.

**Dense:** Dense atmospheres have a higher pressure than Earth and are almost as difficult to breathe in as thin atmospheres. A being must wear some sort of breathing apparatus or make a Vigor roll every 30 minutes. Failure results in a level of Fatigue that can lead to Incapacitation but not death. Victims recover a Fatigue level every 10 minutes if returned to standard atmospheric pressure.

**Hazardous:** The gaseous content of a Hazardous atmosphere does not support human life, regardless of pressure. It may be high in carbon dioxide or made up of more primeval gases like methane, hydrogen, and ammonia, as with Jupiter and other gas giants.

A character without a rebreather (or spacesuit if the pressure is too low) must make a Vigor roll every round (or minute or hour for less toxic environments, as determined by the GM) or suffer a Fatigue level that can lead to death. Recovery is only possible when the character receives air at standard pressure and one Fatigue level is recovered every 10 minutes.

## STARSHIP CRITICAL HITS

### 2d6 Effect

- 2 **Superstructure:** The attack glances through the superstructure causing. This attack does *not* cause any wounds.
- 3 **Engine:** The engine or engine system is hit. Acceleration is halved (round down). This does not affect deceleration. Engines are typically volatile, spilling radiation or heat into the rest of the ship. The crew has 2d6 rounds to make a Repair roll at -2 (ignore any other wounds the ship has suffered for this roll). This doesn't fix the engine, but keeps it from exploding, wrecking the ship and likely killing everyone aboard.
- 4 **FTL System:** The ship's FTL drive is damaged and must be repaired before it can jump into hyperspace. This requires 1d4 rounds per Repair roll at -2 for each hit it's taken, to a maximum of -6. This might be a good Dramatic Task depending on the situation and whether or not the player characters are directly involved.
- 5 **Thrusters:** The ship's thrusters have been hit. Piloting rolls are made at -2 until the critical hit is repaired (max of -4). Further hits mean the vessel can no longer maneuver and drifts in the last direction it was going until repairs are made.
- 6-8 **Hull:** The vehicle suffers a hit in the body with no special effects.
- 9-10 **Crew:** The blast causes a Hull hit (as above) and affects a number of crew members determined by the size of the target ship as well. Reroll damage from the attack, subtracting the vehicle's Armor from the damage, and apply it to 1 Crew Member for a Small Ship, 1d6 for a Medium, 2d6 for a Large, 3d6 for a Huge, 4d6 for a Giant, and 5d6 for a Gargantuan vessel.
- 11 **Weapon:** A random weapon is destroyed and may no longer be used. If there is no weapon, this is a Hull hit instead.
- 12 **Wrecked:** The ship begins to explode or fall apart. See **Wrecked**, below.

### Wrecked

When a ship is wrecked (more than three wounds or the Wrecked Critical Hit), crew and passengers have a chance to eject (Small ships) or reach the escape pods. Player characters must roll the lower of their Smarts or Agility to evacuate. Those who fail go down with the ship. Assume 50% of nonplayer character crew also manage to evacuate.

Those who eject from Small ships parachute to land if in atmosphere, or drift until picked up in space. Escape pods hold 10 human-sized occupants and provide one month's worth of food, water, and power. The pod's distress beacon has enough power for one year, and beams a signal that reaches 1000 miles—further if relayed by satellites. If a planet is in range (determined by the Game Master), the pod has enough fuel to angle itself in and perform one controlled landing.

## USING MINIATURES

In general, we recommend using the Chase rules to handle starship combat. Should you want to game it out tactically, however, here's some advice on scaling ship sizes, movement, and weapon ranges for the table-top: A Small ship is 1" long, a Medium 2", and so on. Width is up to the general look of the ship, but in general is 25% of length.

Divide Top Speed and Weapon Ranges by 100, and Acceleration by 10. This certainly isn't realistic, but it should give a better table-top experience. Use the Turning Template from the **Vehicle Rules** in *Savage Worlds* as usual.

Most battles should begin with ships moving at "cruising speed," or half their Top Speed.