



Hostile Environment

Weather effects in Epic Armageddon

By Miles Holmes

Before we begin a note from Jervis: I recommend you role at the start of each turn and on a '1' then one randomly chosen effect applies that turn only. I don't recommend using the changing conditions rule.

A challenge that has faced commanders of past, present (and of course a certain dark, far future) is the ability to not only coordinate military objectives in the face of adversity by the enemy but also from the sometimes chaotic environment in which they must make war. Entire armies have been defeated by hard winters, or stopped dead by climates they were not equipped to travel, for example. In this article, optional rules for including extreme weather conditions in games of Epic Armageddon are introduced. While it can be assumed that normal games of epic allow for varying weather conditions, in which forces simply soldier on, these rules focus on particularly nasty spells of weather that can disrupt military operations in one way or another.

Using weather is relatively simple, and consists of the following four steps:

1. Determine Climate
2. Randomise or roll strategy ratings to determine prevailing weather condition
3. Roll to determine if prevailing conditions are persistent or unstable
4. Play game

CLIMATE

First, determine the type of battle-zone being played in to figure the type of climate it belongs to. Climate will define the types of adversity the environment can impose upon forces. Players can define climate by mutual agreement, or by simply matching to the terrain they are using to play with.

Once a climate has been determined, randomize which unusual weather condition will begin the battle from the selection available to the climate being fought in. Do this just prior to the beginning of the game, after the armies have deployed.

As an alternate, use a strategy rating roll to decide which weather condition will commence the game, representing the winning commander's ability to use prevailing weather conditions to their advantage in choosing the time for battle! If this alternate solution is used, the losing player may decide the result of the Changing conditions roll, without rolling the D6.



EXTREME WEATHER TYPES BY CLIMATE

Tropical

Tropical climates may observe the following types of unusual weather patterns: Extreme Precipitation (monsoons), Fog, Heavy Precipitation, and Storms: Electromagnetic

Dry

Dry climates may observe the following types of unusual weather patterns: Heat, Extreme Heat, High winds and Storms: Sand,

Temperate

Temperate climates may observe the following types of unusual weather patterns: Fog, Heat, Heavy Precipitation, and Storms: Electromagnetic

Cold

Cold climates may observe the following types of unusual weather patterns: Fog, Heavy Precipitation, Cold, and Storms: Electromagnetic and Storms: Snow

Polar

Polar climates may observe the following types of unusual weather patterns: Cold, Extreme Cold, High winds, Storms: Snow, and Storms: Blizzard

Once an unusual weather type has been determined based upon the climate options, refer to the description and effects of the appropriate weather.



Climate Type	Worlds where this climate is predominant	Typical battle-zones
Tropical	death worlds, primordial, feral	rain forest, jungle swamps
Dry	barrenworlds, dead, hive worlds	deserts, rocky, ash wastes
Temperate	agri worlds, cardinal worlds, verdent worlds	grasslands, deciduous forest
Cold	frontier worlds, hive worlds	plains, coniferous forests, moorlands
polar	frozen worlds, penal colonies	tundra, arctic

EXTREME WEATHER GAME EFFECTS

1. Fog

Description: Visibility becomes severely impaired as either low-lying clouds or pollution of some kind fills the atmosphere. On some worlds this may be naturally occurring (toxic or benign) gas pockets or man made gaseous waste, as is common on hive worlds.

Effect: Visibility reduced to 30cm. All ranged attacks are at -1 to hit. Add +1 blast marker when a formation receives blast markers from any ranged attack or failed initiative check.

2. High winds

Description: High winds scour the surface at speeds of 100km or more. While most ground units are not overly disrupted, flyers and skimmers find such weather treacherous.

Effect: Any skimmers moving on double or triple treat each move as if on dangerous terrain. Flyers are at -1 to initiative, and also treat their approach and disengagement moves as if on dangerous terrain.

3. Heat

Description: High Temperatures beat down from the sun, making infantry easier to exhaust, and prone to errors in judgment. Even troops with environmental protection find their equipment prone to breakdown or malfunction.

Effect: Any infantry formation given a triple treats each move as if on dangerous terrain. Orders to formations of equal to or more than 50% infantry are at -1 initiative.

4. Extreme Heat

Description: Dangerously high temperatures from multiple suns or particularly arid zones can be fatal to infantry, and even strenuous on machines, pushed to operate outside their optimal environment.

Effect: Any infantry formation given a double or triple treats each move as if on dangerous terrain. Orders to formations are at -1 initiative. Vehicles and War Machines given triple moves treat each move as if on dangerous terrain. Flyers are exempt.

5. Cold

Description: Low Temperatures reduce infantry performance; they become sluggish and slow to react the less active they are. Even troops with environmental protection find their equipment prone to malfunction, as it must work harder to sustain them.

Effect: Any infantry formations given sustained fire, overwatch or marshal orders suffer -1 to their initiative.



6. Extreme Cold

Description: Very Low Temperatures become a hazard to infantry and vehicles alike, as either is prone to freezing with inactivity!

Effect: Any infantry, vehicles or war engines given sustained fire, overwatch or marshal orders suffer -1 to initiative for their orders and must roll as if they were in dangerous terrain. Flyers are exempt.

7. Heavy Precipitation

Description: Sustained rain showers pour down over several days, leaving the ground soaked and spongy.

Effect: Ground vehicles become susceptible to becoming bogged. Non skimmer type vehicles or war engines moving on double or triple orders treat each move as though on dangerous terrain. Walkers may still re-roll movement.

8. Extreme Precipitation

Description: Monsoon level rain floods the landscape, causing mudslides, flash floods and playing havoc with co-coordinated movement. Visibility is low, and vehicles and men alike are susceptible to being washed away in the rain.

Effect: Any non-skimmer vehicle or infantry units move as if on dangerous terrain. Units "moving carefully" (5cm) may re-roll this. Visibility is limited to 60 cm.

9. Storms: Snow

Description: Snow blows across the landscape, making for hard going for those on the ground.

Effect: Vehicles and Infantry formations other than skimmers or jump packs may not make triple moves, and are at -1 to initiative for a double order. Visibility is at 60 cm.

10. Storms: Blizzard

Description: High winds and a severe snowstorm rage across the landscape. Forces become bogged down and chaos threatens to topple the chain of command. Visibility becomes extremely limited. Blizzards are always a random length condition (see below).

Effect: All formations are at -1 initiative. Triple moves cannot be made and double moves are treated as if on Dangerous terrain. Visibility is at 30 cm. Flyers are at -1 initiative and must treat approach and disengagement moves as if on dangerous terrain. Blast markers accumulated in any manner are automatically doubled.

11. Storms: Sand

Description: Sand and cyclonic winds scour the landscape, threatening to engulf forces. Forces become bogged down, sometimes lost entirely and chaos threatens to topple the chain of command. Visibility becomes extremely limited. While this is the most extreme of weather conditions known, it is also limited in duration, blowing itself out in short order. A sandstorm is always an unstable condition (see below).

Effect: All formations are at -1 initiative. Visibility is limited to 30cm. Doubles and triple orders may not be given, and all units (flyers included) must make a dangerous terrain test for any movement. Blast markers accumulated in any manner are automatically doubled.

12. Storms: Electromagnetic

Description: Similar to Heavy Precipitation, with the difference that thunderstorms rage and pound the earth with lightning strikes.

Effect: Ground vehicles become susceptible to becoming bogged. Vehicles moving on double or triple orders treat each move as though on dangerous terrain. Walkers may still re-roll movement. Lightning strikes affect gameplay as follows; each turn, roll a D6. That is the number of lightning strikes hitting the area. Each player will then roll that many dice. Each 6 rolled is a ground formation hit or disrupted by lightning strikes. Randomly determine which formations are effected, and then apply D3 blast markers to them.

CHANGING CONDITIONS

As in reality, weather can be, well, unpredictable! Once the prevailing weather condition has been determined, roll a D6 once both sides have set up, and determined the weather condition to begin the game.

1-2 Weather conditions random length: roll at end of each turn: weather ends on 4+

3-4 Weather conditions are unstable -roll at end of each turn: weather changes* on 4+

5-6 Weather conditions are persistent for entire game.

*Randomize a new weather type from the climate category chosen at the beginning of the game.

VISIBILITY

In a typical game of epic, even where forces are well out of line of sight, they are still visible to either player, assumedly by way of powerful scanning devices or intelligence gathering. While such scans still make it possible to identify targets, extreme weather conditions can obscure the landscape so much that it makes it impossible to actually see targets until they are very close. Even if they know they are there, troops are not likely to waste ammunition firing at targets until they actually have something to aim at. Limited visibility affects formations in the following ways:

1. All direct fire weapons (i.e. any ranged attack that requires LOS) limit their range to the visibility range listed by weather type they are experiencing. Fog, for example, limits LOS to 30cm.
2. Artillery weapons used to fire indirectly at formations halve (rounding up) any hits caused, unless a friendly formation has the target within LOS. Effectively they must "spot" for them to get a precise fix on their location.

A FINAL NOTE

While the weather effects listed above are a good start, and broadly representative of many Imperial worlds, they are certainly not complete. The universe is a big place, and there are many different planets, some with bizarre weather conditions this list may not have been considered. (Such as the acid clouds on the surface of Calth, in the Ultramar system!) Players should feel free to add to the climate categories with new weather conditions they have devised, or even create new climate categories altogether! One of the things that make strategy games like Epic continually entertaining is the flavor and depth to the gaming experience. When players must consider many different imaginative elements to achieve their objectives, it keeps them thinking about new tactics, never letting them get too comfortable with past successes. Weather is certainly a great way to shake things up!