

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

by Stephen Pearson

Following on from my article about scenario generation, I would like to discuss and expand upon one of the more underused aspects of the Inquisitor system, awareness modifiers. I have noticed most scenarios of Inquisitor take place in temperate, well-lit environments and I hope the following ideas will serve to bring a more realistic dimension to your scenarios.

The source of my inspiration for this article comes from two quarters, a small mention given to the effects of terrain and weather in the Rulebook (pages 30 & 53) and the Treacherous Conditions table for Necromunda.

Awareness modifiers

The purposes of awareness modifiers are, like terrain pieces, to give the location an atmosphere. Think about the time of day, weather and environmental conditions you would expect to find in the area where the scenario is set.

Having one to three awareness modifiers to represent this can really set the atmosphere. It is wise to use the modifiers sparingly otherwise they will be forgotten in the heat of the game or slow the game down to a snail's pace. Limiting their area of effect and duration are two ways of doing that.

Instead of affecting the entire battlefield these environmental conditions could easily be terrain specific.

No longer will that old dilapidated building be just another building, now it could be infested with spiders or termites, or covered with vines. With minimal alteration the awareness modifiers listed below can represent almost any environment you care to imagine.

I have arranged the environmental conditions in a series of tables to make them easier to use. If you would like to randomly generate an environmental condition roll a D6 and consult the table below to decide which environmental table to roll on.

D6	Result
1	Stormy Conditions
2	Lighting
3	Fog
4	Winds
5	Surface Effects
6	Flora and Fauna



Stormy Conditions

D6 Result

- 1 **Acid Rain:** The rain is made up of a mixture of acidic pollutants and will burn any exposed skin. Any character that has exposed skin adds D3 to their injury total for every round spent in the rain. Also characters that suffer damage as a result of the rain must pass a Nerve test or run for cover. They will not venture out into the rain again until they have recovered their nerve.
- 2 **Lightning:** A fierce electrical storm is brewing and threatens to strike any time. Roll a D10 at the start of every round. If the roll is 8+ then lightning strikes the board. To work out the point at which the lightning strikes, choose a corner of the board to measure from and roll two D100s. The first tells you the percentage across the board and the second the percentage up the board.

Any character within 2 yards of this point suffers a hit equivalent to both a frag and a haywire grenade. (If play is taking place at night then anyone looking at the point of the lightning strike is affected as if a photon flash flare has just gone off).

The effects of the haywire grenade lasts D3 rounds. In addition the thunderclap produced will reduce all hearing ranges to a tenth of what they are usually for the duration of this round.
- 3 **Snow Storm:** A blizzard is sweeping across the region reducing visibility to almost nothing. Vision range is down to only 1/10th of a character's Initiative and the snow is slowly accumulating. Every round the depth of the snow increases by 1/4 of a yard. (See snow in the Surface Effects table for the result of this).
- 4 **Sleet:** Somewhere between rain and snow, this soggy ice is demoralising rather than dangerous. As well as doubling range modifiers, sleet means if characters sustain more than 15 points of damage in a round they must pass a Leadership test or get demoralised and wander off. They will return to the fight if they are attacked or another character can convince them to stay (by talking to them and passing a Leadership test).
- 5 **Light Rain:** Light rain is falling across the area making it harder to see. All range modifiers are doubled.
- 6 **Heavy Rain:** Rain clouds have set in and it is raining heavily. All range modifiers are tripled and all hearing ranges are reduced by a quarter.



Lighting

Characters who have appropriate equipment (such as infra-red auspices, etc) can double the reduced vision ranges due to the poor light.

D6 Result

- 1 **Very Gloomy:** Visibility is down to only 10xD3 yards (roll at the start of the game).
- 2 **High Noon:** The sun is shining brightly from one random table edge. Characters facing that edge suffer an extra -10% to shooting and vision based tests.
- 3 **Starless night:** Low cloud is blocking out the light from the celestial bodies reducing vision ranges to 1/10th of a character's Initiative.
- 4 **Moonlit:** It is a clear night and the area is illuminated by the moon and stars. Vision ranges are reduced to a quarter of a character's Initiative.
- 5 **Dusk:** The sun has nearly set and visibility is down to only 50 yards. Vision range is reduced by 5 yards per round, down to a minimum of 10 yards.
- 6 **Dawn:** The sun is just below the horizon and will appear any minute. Currently visibility is only 10 yards but will increase by 5 yards per round.

Fog

Characters who have appropriate equipment (such as infra-red auspices, etc) can ignore any limitations placed on vision by the fog.

D6 Result

- 1 **Toxic Fog:** The fog consists of a nasty mixture of gases. At the start of every turn a character spends in the fog they must pass a Toughness test or be affected by Hallucinogen (see Rulebook page 89).
- 2 **Thick Fog:** The vision range is reduced to only 10xD3 yards (roll at the start of the game) and the dense fog muffles sounds, halving all hearing ranges.

In addition skills such as Deadeye Shot and Rocksteady Aim cannot be used.
- 3 **Morning Mist:** The area is shrouded in mist, which is cold, damp and hangs in the air. When a character walks through the mist he disturbs it, leaving a swirling trail. The path a character takes will remain visible until their next turn.
- 4 **Drifting Fog:** Thick banks of fog are drifting across the board occasionally obscuring characters from view. At the end of each character's turn roll a D6, and on a 4+ they are hidden from the other characters on the board by the fog.

It is hard to hold a bead on the target so skills such as Deadeye Shot and Rocksteady Aim cannot be used.
- 5 **Methane Gas:** There are pockets of methane gas that have accumulated among the buildings. Any character that shoots from cover and their To Hit roll ends in 5 sets off a pocket of gas (ie, 35). Treat the explosion as a frag grenade centred on the firing model.
- 6 **Choking Gas:** The fog consists of a choking mixture of gases. At the start of every turn spent in the fog, characters must pass a Toughness test or stumble D3 yards in a random direction and lose any actions for that turn.

Winds

The strong winds prevent skills such as Deadeye Shot and Rocksteady Aim being used.

D6 Result

- 1 **Twister!** A powerful vortex of wind 4 yards in diameter moves randomly round the board (at the end of each round roll 2D6 and a Scatter dice to determine the number of yards and direction it travels). Any character caught in the vortex is flung 2D6 yards in a random direction and will take damage from falling or impacts as normal.
- 2 **Blustery Conditions:** The wind is gusting in all directions making shooting difficult. As a result the penalties for range are doubled.
- 3 **Blown Away:** Gale force winds are sweeping through the area making it hard to stay on your feet. At the end of each round anyone above ground level must pass a Strength test or be knocked prone. Those characters that fall prone within a yard of the edge will fall off if they fail an Initiative test and will suffer damage from falling as usual.
- 4 **Howling Winds:** The windy conditions make it much more difficult to make an accurate shot. There is an extra -1% to hit per yard to the target.
- 5 **Icy Blast:** A cold arctic wind is blowing through the area and the wind chill is reducing the temperature considerably. Those characters that are unused to the cold or are not wrapped up warmly will be 'chilled to the bone'. The characters affected (GM's discretion) must pass a toughness test in each Recovery phase or add D6 to their injury total, as the cold lowers their body temperature.
- 6 **Headwind:** The wind is blowing very strongly in one direction. Randomly determine which way it is blowing. All characters moving against the direction of the wind suffer -1 to all movement rates (except crawling) and those moving with the wind gain +1 to all movement rates (except crawling).



Surface Effects

Remember sprinting across or through difficult terrain is a risky action.

06 Result

- 1 **Snow:** A layer of fresh snow has formed drifts across the battlefield, hindering movement. The distance characters are able to move depends on how deep the snow is.

Over half a yard deep Maximum movement is down to 6 yards per action. Running is a risky action and if failed the character will fall prone.

Over 1 yard deep: Maximum movement is down to only 4 yards per action. In addition any damage from falling is halved.

Over 1.5 yards deep: Maximum movement is down to only 2 yards per action. In addition characters halve damage from falling onto the snow and for the purposes of knockback.

Snow is, however, very cold, and prolonged exposure can cause frostbite, hypothermia and even death. For every round a character spends in the snow without the correct protection (GM's discretion) they must pass a Toughness test in the Recovery phase (-10% for every round spent in the snow) or add 2D6 to their injury total.

- 2 **Ice:** A heavy frost has covered the area in ice making movement treacherous. Any movement faster than a crawl is a risky action.

If they mess up the character will fall prone and skid a number of yards equal to half the movement rate they were just using (ie, if they were walking, they will skid 2 yards). Damage is doubled for the purposes of knock back.

- 3 **Tropical Jungle:** The dense tropical foliage hinders the ability to spot and track both friend and foe. All vision-based tests are at an extra -10%, range modifiers are doubled and hearing ranges are halved.

- 4 **Sewers Blocked:** Fetid water is rising from the drains, and starting to flood the area. It is rising at the rate of 1/2 yard per round (The GM should secretly roll a D10 to see how high it will go!).

Obviously the water will start off as a nuisance and gradually cause more and more problems (See rulebook page 31, for the effects of different depths of water).

- 5 **Flash Flood:** With a deafening roar, water sweeps through the area catching those on the ground floor in a powerful surge. All those characters that are on the ground level must pass a Strength test or be washed D10 yards in the direction of flow, taking damage as if they had fallen if they strike anything (Rulebook pg 180).

- 6 **Gravel:** The area is covered in loose gravel resulting in any movement faster than a sneak producing a loud crunching sound. This means that movement can be heard an extra 50% away. Damage is doubled for the purposes of knock back as it is easy to slip on the loose gravel.



Flora and Fauna

Most of the conditions in this table have limited areas of effect, which should be decided upon before starting the game.

D6 Result

- 1 **Fungi:** Fungi of various kinds are growing throughout the area. The species of fungi should be decided upon before commencing the game. Alternatively randomly choose a toxin from the rulebook (pg89).

If any fungi is disturbed or anyone passes with one yard of a patch, roll a D10 to see if it is ripe. On a score of 7+ the fungi is ripe and has just burst.

Treat it as a gas grenade of the chosen type going off, centred on where the fungus was disturbed.

Fungus can take 10 points of damage before being destroyed.

- 2 **Vines:** Many ancient buildings are covered in vast growths of vines making the original structure indistinguishable under the dense growth. For any building covered in vines all vertical surfaces can be climbed as if a ladder was there. A vine will take 10 points of damage before being destroyed.

- 3 **Rubber Moss:** Rubber moss carpets large areas and although not dangerous in itself, its growth is thick, incredibly bouncy and highly unstable.

Any character may crawl across rubber moss with no penalty. If they try to walk there is a 40% chance they will start bouncing (running 60%, sprinting 80%). If they do start bouncing they will bounce D3 yards in a random direction. If they land on more rubber moss they will bounce another D3 yards in a random direction and continue to do so until they land on solid ground.

If a character falls onto rubber moss they take no damage from falling instead they are bounced 2D6 yards in a random direction. If they land on more rubber moss they are bounced a further 2D6 yards in a random direction until they land on solid ground where they take damage to a random location equal to the last distance they travelled and fall prone.

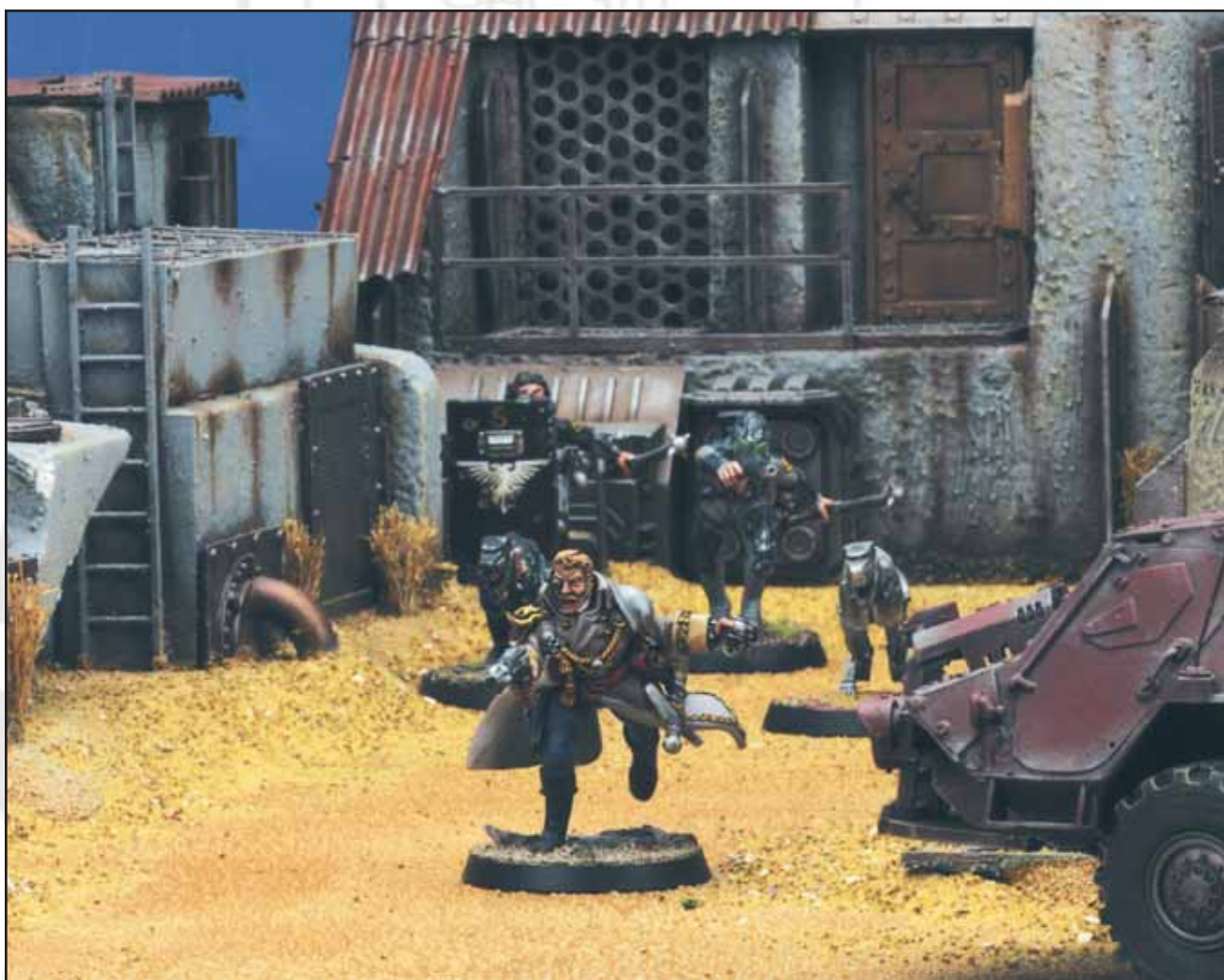
A patch of rubber moss can take 10 points of damage before being destroyed.

- 4 **Rats:** Rats are running all over, making a nuisance of themselves. All hits in combat are at an extra -10% to hit and skills such as Deadeye Shot and Rocksteady Aim cannot be used.

- 5 **Spiders:** Spiders have covered the area in thick cobwebs that hang from every surface. They hinder movement and are a real nuisance. In areas covered with cobwebs sprinting is a risky action and if failed the character must spend their next two actions disentangling themselves and regaining their bearings (pause for breath).

- 6 **Termites:** The whole area has been ravaged by termites, leaving it very unstable. At the end of every round roll a D10 for each model on an upper storey. On score of 8+ the floor gives way beneath them and they fall to the level below, taking damage for falling as normal.





Creating an Environment

By combining a few of the above suggestions you can create some real atmosphere. Try to ensure they aren't contradictory and don't involve a lot of dice rolling in one go. Here are a few suggestions for you...

Tropical Storm: Wind, heavy rain, thunder and lightning. A storm is brewing, and that's just the weather. (Stormy Conditions 2 & 5, Winds 6)

Arctic Outlook: Drifting snow and icy winds. How will you cope in the arctic wastes? (Stormy Conditions 3, Winds 5, Surface Effects 1)

Sewer: It's pitch black with pockets of methane and hordes of rats. This stinks! (Lighting 1, Fog 5, Flora and Fauna 4)

Desert: Dust devils, blinding sun beating down and miles of sand. Is that an oasis in the distance? (Winds 1 & 5, Lighting 2, (The effect of heat is very similar to that of cold!))

A Brave New World: As the sun rises on this alien world, will you survive the harsh landscape that is being revealed to you? (Lighting 6, Surface Effects 6, Flora and Fauna 3)

The environmental conditions listed here are far from comprehensive (my original set of tables had 100 entries!). I hope they will inspire you to come up with your own ideas to add variety to your scenarios.

Whatever you decide, remember that the sun doesn't always shine on the battlefield...

Author

Stephen Pearson is well known in Inquisitor circles. Not only is he on the rules committee but he is also the webmaster of the Pangolin Saloon, an excellent website full of content for Inquisitor players.



Further Information

The Inquisitor Living Rulebook is now available to download for free at the Exterminatus website.

Website

www.Exterminatus.com & www.nexusbive.co.uk