



Shadows of Deceit

House rules for using shadows in your games

By Brendan Kelleher & Eoin Whelan

House rules about shadows in games of Inquisitor. This article details how to use the real shadows on an Inquisitor board and includes rules for hiding in them. These ideas and rules add an entire new layer to the Awareness rules, as well as turn up the 'style' of Inquisitor a notch. Also included are rules for lanterns, flares and other equipment to light up the darkness.

INTO THE SHADOWS

Inquisitor is a narrative wargame, allowing very detailed and realistic games in a dark and foreboding galaxy. Players can use different stances to hide in cover, snipers can rest weapons on windowsills and rappel down walls. Of course this is only the tip of the iceberg, but it serves a point. Inquisitor has far more potential interaction with terrain and models than any other Games Workshop game. Yet strangely enough for the vast majority of games, players tend to overlook a natural aspect of life: shadows.

Look at any movie or computer game. How many times do you see the sniper lurk in shadows, waiting for the kill? What about all those Hollywood action movies where the hero chases his arch-nemesis through shadowy corridors? The Inquisitor game itself involves battles between shadowy organisations fighting in the darkest depth of the Imperium.

SEEING SHADOWS

One of the best things about shadows is that they're already there. They don't need any new models or super realistic terrain (even makeshift terrain can make the coolest shadows), you just need to realise that they are there and you can use them.

Next time you play a game of Inquisitor, just spend a little while looking at the shadows on the board. If there are strong shadows you can use, then all the better. Often, however, the gaming area is well-lit, which limits the shadows, in which case you will need to create your own.

CRAFTING SHADOWS

There are also ways to make shadows for your Inquisitor games, since natural lighting might not create strong enough shadows for practical use. The easiest way to create appropriate artificial light is by using an adjustable lamp (ideally a spotlight with an unfrosted bulb - a frosted bulb will make the shadows blurry at the edges.) This is set up before the scenario and aimed in the general direction of the board. Of course, other alternatives are always available: simply turning on one light in the room can do the trick, or closing all the curtains apart from one window.

Using artificial lighting lets you create your own shadows where you want them and lets you have more control over the intensity of the light. You can even have multiple lights to create complex lighting. Using coloured crepe paper or coloured transparent plastic to cover the lamp a definite feel to the battlefield can be created: a deep red glow can make familiar terrain pieces into an alien landscape. (Be careful to keep the coloured filter away from the bulb if you try this - you don't want to set the place on fire and melted plastic smells awful!)

Getting the right lighting for an Inquisitor scenario using shadows is often simply a process of experimentation until you get the feel you want.

USING SHADOWS

Shadows can be integrated into Inquisitor games easily once the lighting has been arranged. Shadows have an effect on visual Awareness and can affect both detection and identification of other characters. The following rules have been subdivided into the basic rules for shadows, which are easily incorporated into a game, and more advanced rules for extra realism.

Note that these rules can be in addition to any global rules for poor lighting as described in the Awareness section of the Inquisitor rulebook.

Risky Actions

Moving through shadows is harder than moving in the light. Unless the character possesses the Nightsight ability or is using appropriate equipment, all movement over rough or undulating terrain in the shadows counted as a risky action, which, if failed, results in the character stumbling and falling prone.

Awareness (detection)

Any attempt to spot a character in shadow suffers a -5% modifier for each location in completely covered by shadow. This can be achieved simply by looking at the model and determining whether each location is entirely within the shadow. Note that this is equivalent to having locations concealed behind terrain: if any location is concealed both by terrain and shadow, apply one modifier only, not both. (If the shadows aren't sharp enough to tell exactly how many locations are in shadow, the GM can apply more arbitrary modifiers as he sees fit. For example, -10% if partially in shadow, -20% if mostly in shadow and -40% if completely in shadow.)

Awareness (identification)

Shadows can conceal some visual aspects of characters, such as their identity, the items they are holding, symbols and numbers on armour, etc. In order to identify any part of a detected character concealed by shadows (such as the face, weapons, etc.), an additional Awareness check can be made with appropriate modifiers at the GM's discretion.

Shooting

Placed shots may not be made against a target that is fully within shadows, nor can Deadeye Shot or Crack Shot skills be used unless the shooter also possesses the Nightsight ability or is using an infrascopes (or similar device).

Deepening Shadows

The following advanced rules are more in-depth and realistic, but are best left for those games dominated by shadows and Awareness.

Adjustment

Any character in shadows will be better able to see and gains a +10% visual Awareness bonus as long as there is no light source (lantern or torch beam) in his line of sight.



Dazzle

Any attempt to detect or identify any character behind a torch suffers a -10% modifier in addition to full penalties for darkness. This can be increased at GM's discretion for really bright beams.

Silhouette

Any character that is silhouetted against the skyline or a light source loses any protection from shadows.

Character shadows

A character may be detected with an Awareness check if their shadow is visible on the ground even if they are out of sight. It's no good hiding behind a wall if your shadow is poking out around the corner!

Player awareness

The GM can heighten the tension in a game that involves a lot of sneaking around in shadows by concealing the location of characters on the board from the players. Each player must leave the room while the other has his turn: his figures are placed on the board for the duration of the turn and then removed at the end of the turn. The GM will need to record the positions of all the characters (for example, on a rough map). Should a character be detected, the figure is returned to the board.

ILLUMINATING SHADOWS

The following objects and items allow the GM to include light sources in games of Inquisitor. These rules can apply equally to portable lights carried by characters and to fixed illuminations such as streetlights. Any character with line of sight to a light source is immediately aware of it and automatically detects (but not necessarily identifies) any character carrying it.

Lantern

Examples: glowglobe, burning torch, street light, window, fires.

A lantern negates any Awareness penalties for poor lighting against any character in line of sight of the light source, with a -1 penalty for each yard away from the lamp (to a maximum of the normal penalty for poor lighting).

Note: the GM should feel free to modify these rules as appropriate: a dull glow can be represented by an Awareness penalty of -2 for every yard away from the light, while a brilliant light might only be a penalty of -1 for every two yards from the source.

Torch

Examples: flashlights, headlights, searchlights.

The beam of a torch can be represented by placing a Games Workshop template (as used by flamers in Warhammer 40,000) in contact with the character's front arc. By drawing invisible lines from each of the template's straight edges, the area covered by the beam can be worked out. A torch negates any Awareness penalties for poor light against any target in the beam with -1 for each yard away from the carrier (as with lanterns.)

Note: As before, the GM should feel free to modify these rules in the same manner as lanterns for very bright or dim torches.

Flares

Examples: phosflares, glowsticks.

Flares burn or glow for a short time, illuminating the area. They can be carried (Without risk of injury!), thrown as a grenade or shot from a flaregun using the profiles below: mark the final position of the flare with a suitable marker. When activated, they count as a lantern: phosflares last until the end of the next turn, glowsticks last for D3+1 turns.

Launcher Type	Range	Mode	Acc	Dam	Shots	Rld	Wt
Flaregun	Pistol	A	Single	-10	*	1	(1) 15

** Damage as per flare, below.*

Grenades Type	Range	Area	Blast	Dam	Shots	Rld	Wt
Phosflare	Grenade	E	1/2yd	3	D6†	**	** 5
Glowstick	Grenade	E	1/2yd	-	-	**	** 5

*** Flares can be thrown or fired from a flaregun (above).*

† Any character hit by a phosflare must test to see if they are set on fire as if hit by a flamer (see page 70 of the Inquisitor rulebook).

Starlight scope

This scope grants the user Nightsight ability when aiming so long as there is no light source in his field of fire. A character using a starlight scope immediately loses all aiming bonuses if a light (such as a torch or photon-flash grenade) appears in the area he is aiming at in addition to any other effects.

Goggles

Certain night-vision equipment comes in the form of goggles, worn on a harness over the head or built into a helmet. A wearer using goggles suffers -10% to visual Awareness tests in addition to other modifiers, unless wearing a helmet (in which case only apply the Awareness penalty for the helmet).

UV goggles

Lowlight goggles produce an invisible ultraviolet beam that allows the user to see. Any character using UV goggles counts as having a torch that is undetectable by other characters (unless they can also see into the UV spectrum).

Infragoggles

Infragoggles allow the user to see heat auras. A character wearing infragoggles suffers no effects of darkness on shooting or Awareness and can detect characters within two yards of thin walls or other obstructions. However, the character must halve his Initiative if there is precipitation or if searching for anything that is room temperature. The character must always make an Awareness test to identify other characters and cannot see shadows at all.

FROM THE SHADOWS

As you can see adding shadows to your games of Inquisitor isn't hard or overly complicated. While it doesn't revolutionise the game it add a whole new layer of atmosphere.

Hope you have fun!

Also a big thanks to all the guys from the Conclave that helped and inspired this article. Big thanks to Robey (PrecinctOmega from the Conclave) for his rules and Battle Report.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Brendan is an avid Inquisitor gamer, and a member of The Conclave forums. When not searching for the Omega Titan as his Techmarine he can be found zooming round on bikes playing Ravenwing for 40k. This is his first article for fanatic.

Eoin plays Inquisitor and Epic: Armageddon amongst others and can often be found ranting on the internet about his latest crazy theory. He even gets the occasional game in between trying to get a doctorate in genetics and raise a family.