

Deadlands 1876

TRAIN COMBAT

Introduction

There are numerous interesting scenarios that may emerge upon a moving train; these rules attempt to establish a few cohesive mechanics. These rules apply to Regulators and NPCs alike, except for the train crew NPCs, who do not need to make rolls for standard operating procedures. For instance, an engineer does not need to make a Driving (Locomotive) roll to meet his daily schedule, and a brakeman does not need to make an Agility roll to “coon it” across the car rooftops. Of course, under adverse conditions such as bad weather, high speeds, steep gradients, or operating while under attack, the Marshal may rule that even crewmen must make any particular roll.

Credits

Some of these rules have been adapted from the *Deadlands* adventures *Night Train* and *For Whom the Whistle Blows*. They also work in conjunction with the *Deadlands* House Rules.

Train Speed Factor

Many of the following actions have modifiers that correspond to the speed of the train. Basically, every 10 miles per hour a train is moving bestows a Speed Factor (SF) of 1 (with fives rounding up.) So a train moving at 4 mph has SF-0, one moving at 13 mph has SF-1, and a train moving at 57 mph has SF-6.

Violent Embarkations and Disembarkations

Boarding a Moving Train, Unmounted

An unmounted character may make an attempt to grab onto a moving train and board it. Called “flipping,” this is a very dangerous proposition, and requires an Agility roll vs. a Target Number of 4+SF. If this roll is failed, the character takes SFd4 DAM. If the roll is successful, the character must make an additional Strength vs. TN-4+SF roll in order to hang on. A failure on this roll wrenches the character from the train, causing SFd8 DAM.

Boarding a Moving Train, Mounted

A character mounted on horseback has a much better chance of boarding a moving train. First, the character must make a serial Riding roll vs. TN-4+SF in order to line up with the desired car. Then, the invader must make an Agility roll vs. TN-2+SF in order to grab onto the side ladder, freight door, etc. and pull himself from his horse. A Critical Failure results in a rider falling from his horse, taking SFd4+SF DAM. The Marshal may add additional damage depending on the type of terrain. In the case of Incapacitation or Death, the Marshal may rule that the character has fallen under the wheels of the train.

Being Flung from a Moving Train

A character who is unwillingly thrown from a moving train has a single opportunity to grab onto the side and prevent falling off. This requires an Agility roll vs. TN-10. Failure

to make this roll results in a violent impact with the ground, causing SFd8 DAM. The Marshal may add additional damage depending on the type of terrain. In the case of Incapacitation or Death, the Marshal may rule that the character has fallen under the wheels of the train.

Jumping from a Moving Train

A character who plans to deliberately jump from a moving train is better able to prepare herself for impact. She must make an Agility vs. TN-4+SF roll. A success allows the jumper to make a free Soak roll to absorb the SFd6 DAM incurred upon landing. The Marshal may add additional damage depending on the type of terrain and the starting position of the jump. In the case of Incapacitation or Death, the Marshal may rule that the character has fallen under the wheels of the train.

Heroics on a Moving Train

Climbing the Sides of a Moving Train

Every train car except the locomotive and tender has ladders mounted on the outside, and rails mounted along the top. Under normal operating conditions, a character must make a compound serial Climb roll vs. TN-4 to successfully navigate a ladder. A Critical Failure or a Last Chance failure results in being flung from the train as described above.

Walking on Top of a Moving Train

Walking on top of a moving train is known as “cooning it,” and requires a Agility roll vs. TN-4 under normal conditions. A failed roll results in a stumble, which requires a second Agility roll to recover, or the stumbling character suffers 1d12 DAM. A Critical Failure in any of these Agility rolls results in the character being flung from the train. Of course, the Marshal may modify any of these rolls, depending on the speed of the train, the incline, or other such mitigating factors. In general, only one Agility roll is needed per episode of cooning it.

Jumping from One Car Roof to Another

Normally, a character “cooning it” across the train’s roof may simply cross from one car to another with no additional rolls; such transitions require an additional round to make safely. Sometimes, however, a character must jump across in a hurry. Jumping from one car roof to another requires an Agility roll vs. TN-4. A failed roll results in falling between the train cars and receiving 2d6+10 DAM. A Critical Failure, however, results in this damage, plus a slip *under* the train for a whopping SFd20+SF DAM!

Finding Oneself Underneath a Moving Train

For the ultimate in heroics, a Regulator may find himself clinging to the undercarriage of a train! This requires a compound serial Climb roll vs. TN-8; Critical Failure or Last Chance failure results in a fall to the tracks and suffering SFd20+SF DAM from the train. If the Climb roll is successful, a character may move under the train by making an Agility roll vs. TN-6, but this roll must be made for each additional car traversed. Failure results in a slip for SFd4+SF DAM and triggers a Strength roll vs. TN-6 in order to hang on. A Critical Failure on the Agility roll or a normal failure on this Strength roll results in a fall, which brings the always-enjoyable SFd20+SF DAM. To climb back up the sides of the train, another compound serial Climb roll vs. TN-8 must be made. Of course, if the character finds a hatch or trapdoor under there....

Operating a Train

Operating the Train

The Driving (Locomotive) skill reflects the ability to manipulate the engine's controls as well as possessing a basic knowledge of important protocols such as signaling and switching tracks. Providing that a locomotive is "in steam," successfully starting, driving, stopping, and reversing a locomotive requires a Driving (Locomotive) roll for each action. Regulators who wish to learn this skill may do so, spending 2d6 hours in the cab with an engineer and taking a d4 Driving (Locomotive) skill as an Advance.

Decoupling a Train Car

The *Leviathan* uses the old link-and-pin system of coupling cars, as described in the *Leviathan* section. Normally, coupling and decoupling cars is done when the train is stationary, although an engine is required to either move one car toward or away from another. Coupling requires a link and two pins, and for the sake of safety, a special club used to hold the link in place. Decoupling requires a tool to pull out the pins. Under normal conditions, a single Driving (Locomotive) roll suffices to couple or decouple a train, or a Smarts roll vs. TN-6 followed by a Strength vs. TN-6 roll. Critical Failures bring serious injuries, including lost fingers, crushed hands, or even death.

Decoupling a *moving* car is a good deal trickier, and never falls under "normal operating conditions." It first necessitates a character getting into the correct position between cars, which requires a Climb roll vs. TN-4 or an Agility roll vs. TN-6. Failure results in the same penalties as jumping between cars. Once in position, the decoupling may be performed. With the proper tool, pulling a pin requires one round and a Driving (Locomotive) roll vs. TN-4, or two rounds and a Strength roll vs. TN-6. Without a tool, decoupling takes four rounds: two to release the safety chain, and two to pull the pin. This action requires a Strength roll vs. TN-8. In both cases, the use of a lubricant such as tallow may add a +1 bonus to the roll. Critical Failures result in grave injuries, usually to the tune of SFd12 DAM.

But Tonto Did It!

Can a train be decoupled from below, alá *The Lone Ranger*? The answer is yes, provided the character has made all of his traveling-beneath-a-moving-train rolls. This requires four rounds: (1) A Climb roll vs. TN-4 allows the character to detach the safety chain, (2) a Strength roll vs. TN-6 pushes the pin up from the bottom, (3) another Climb roll vs. TN-4 pulls the loose pin from the top, and (4) a Climb roll vs. TN-6 for an escape! Of course, a Critical Failure results in a fall for SFd20 DAM.

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