

# THE RULES

## The Dice Pool

The dice pool is simple: each investigator has a pool that can hold up to six 6-sided dice. These dice are placed on the investigator's portfolio for tracking purposes. The size of the dice pool represents the character's current health (to a maximum of 6). It also limits how much effort they can put into taking actions during a narrative scene or during a single round of a structured scene.

When an investigator takes damage, they reduce the total number of dice allowed in their dice pool (called the **dice pool limit**). This affects how many dice they can use each narrative scene (or each turn in a structured scene) to take actions. Investigators can heal themselves to restore their dice pool limit to its original maximum (called the dice pool maximum). This is explained more later.

During a narrative scene or a turn in a structured scene, a player can spend dice from their dice pool to have their investigator perform actions. Once a player spends a die, they must set it aside until the pool refills. Dice pools refill to their current dice pool limit at the beginning of a game session, at the start of a new scene, or at the start of the investigators' turn during a structured scene.

### Narrative Scenes and Dice

If the investigators run out of dice during a narrative scene, but still have tasks they want to accomplish, a new narrative scene begins. The GM determines approximately how long the scene took the group (most commonly 15 minutes to an hour).

If an investigator runs out of dice during a narrative scene, but other characters still have dice, the investigator can still communicate and plan with the group, but their character is busy with the tasks they chose to do and must wait for a new narrative scene to perform additional actions. This ensures each character has an equal chance to act during this time.

### Additional Dice

Some knacks, abilities, and pieces of equipment allow characters to add additional dice to the hand of dice they are about to roll during certain actions. Any additional dice are in addition to the dice chosen for the action from the character's dice pool, and after the dice are rolled, the additional dice are lost (they do not increase the character's dice pool limit: they are used only for that action's roll and then removed). This allows characters to potentially roll more dice than are in their dice pool before it refills.

### Visibility of Dice Pools

Dice pools are visible to all players, including the game master. This rule applies to *every* dice pool—including those of characters controlled by the game master, whether they are the investigators' allies or enemies. Being able to see how many dice a character has in their pool is important for passing and reactions, which are covered later in this adventure.

## SKILLS AND ACTIONS

Each of the investigators, as well as each of the characters controlled by the game master (also called **nonplayer characters**, or **NPCs**), has a set of skills. **Skills** represent a character's ability to succeed at certain types of tasks or interactions. Each skill has a value between 2+ and 6+, with 2+ being the best and 6+ being the worst.

If a character wants to do something, they are going to spend dice from their pool to perform an **action**. Generally, this involves taking some of the dice remaining in their pool and adding them to their hand of dice (a technical term that refers to the dice that have been taken from the pool and are about to be rolled). Then they roll those dice and check the results.

They remove that number of dice from the pool and roll them. Usually, if at least one die rolls a number that is **equal to or greater than** the value of the character's relevant skill (relevancy is determined by the game master), the character successfully performs the action they attempted. For instance, if Rita Young has an **Agility** value of 4+, she needs at least one die to roll a 4, 5, or 6 for her to succeed at an **Agility**-related action.

The skills are explained here:

- ◆ **Agility:** How agile, flexible, and physically maneuverable a character is.
- ◆ **Athletics:** How physically strong a character is and their general endurance.
- ◆ **Intuition:** How well a character can sense others' motivations or intentions, or how well they can judge a situation to be safe or dangerous. Also, how well the character can survive in a wilderness setting.
- ◆ **Knowledge:** How well a character can recall facts, tap into general knowledge, or research a topic.
- ◆ **Lore:** This skill encompasses all the otherworldly and occult abilities present in the *Arkham Horror* setting. It also includes knowledge of occult and supernatural matters.
- ◆ **Melee Combat:** How well a character can fight in close quarters, such as in hand-to-hand combat, when grappling an opponent, or when fighting with a melee weapon like a knife or baseball bat.
- ◆ **Presence:** How socially adept a character is; how well they can persuade, deceive, or intimidate others.
- ◆ **Ranged Combat:** How well a character perform with ranged weapons like guns or thrown objects.
- ◆ **Resolve:** How well a character can keep calm under pressure, resist mental strain, stand your ground, or overcome trauma.
- ◆ **Wits:** How clever and mentally quick a character is. It also covers how observant a character is; it's used to search locations and spot lies.

### Advantage and Disadvantage

Advantage and disadvantage are simple ways to represent characters aiding one another, circumstances working out in their favor, problems with their environment, or circumstances that may cause problems.

When an action is performed with **advantage**, the player adds one additional die to the pool before rolling. After rolling, they must remove one die with the lowest dice result from the pool.

When an action is performed with **disadvantage**, the player adds one additional die to the pool before rolling. After rolling, they must remove one die with the highest dice result from the pool.

A complex action may be performed with both advantage and disadvantage.



## ROUNDS AND TURNS

A structured scene is divided into rounds. Each **round** consists of a single investigators' turn and a single game master's turn. Investigators and any of their NPC allies present in the scene (see **Allies**) take actions during the investigators' turn, and enemy or neutral NPCs take actions during the game master's turn. Which turn occurs first in the scene depends on whichever group instigated the encounter. If the investigators decide to attack a group of ghouls, for example, they would take the first turn. If, on the other hand, the investigators are surprised by a group of ghouls bursting out of a barn, the ghouls (and by default, the GM) take the first turn.

### INVESTIGATORS' TURN

During the investigators' turn, the following steps occur. In addition, if any neutral or enemy NPCs have leftover dice from passing, the game master may use their dice to let those NPCs take reactions during the investigators' turn (see **Passing and Reactions**, respectively).

#### Step 1: Refill Dice Pools

At the start of the investigators' turn, the dice pool of each investigator refills to its current dice pool limit (which is usually six, unless they've taken damage). The dice pools of NPCs allied with the investigators also refill.

#### Step 2: Take Actions

The investigators' goal during their turn is to work together in the most effective way they can. Each player controls their investigator and gets to decide how they want to spend their dice to take simple and complex actions.

The investigators and their allies can act in any order and can split up their actions however they want. When an investigator acts, their player describes what the investigator is trying to do and, if appropriate, performs a complex action by rolling dice using the most relevant skill to determine whether the action succeeds. When an ally acts, the game master has that ally perform the most logical and helpful action that benefits first the ally, then the investigators. The game master is responsible for determining the best course of action for that ally based on the ally's understanding of the situation and personal motivations.

The investigators can take as much time as they want to decide what to do, but if the game master or a player feels the discussion is taking too long, they can say the phrase "I've got a bad feeling..." to indicate in a lighthearted way that it's time to make a decision and keep the game moving.

**Note:** If two or more players want to act at the same time and can't agree on which investigator should go first, the game master decides instead.

#### Step 3: End Turn

The turn ends when each investigator and NPC ally has used all their dice or has chosen to keep some leftover dice by passing. After the investigators' turn ends, the game master's turn begins.

### PASSING

To pass, a player or the game master opts to avoid spending all of a character's dice on their turn, instead keeping one or more dice in their pool to use for reactions. Reactions are a type of action a character can take when it is not their turn (see **Reactions**). When a character passes, they cannot spend any more dice during their current turn (so if an investigator passes, they cannot spend any more dice during the current investigators' turn, but they can spend dice on reactions during the game master's turn).

### ALLIES

Allies are NPCs—characters controlled by the game master—who are friendly with the investigators. They work with the investigators and act on the investigators' turn.

### GAME MASTER'S TURN

The game master's turn is very similar to the investigators' turn, comprising the following steps. In addition, if an investigator or an NPC allied with the investigators has leftover dice from passing, the player or game master controlling that character may use their dice to let them take reactions during the game master's turn (see **Passing and Reactions**, respectively).

#### Step 1: Refill Dice Pools

At the start of the game master's turn, the dice pools of NPCs who are enemies of the investigators or who are neutral toward them refill to their current dice pool limit. (The dice pools of the investigators' NPC allies refill during the investigators' turn.)

#### Step 2: Take Actions

All NPCs except investigator allies act on the game master's turn in any order the game master wants. Usually, each of these NPCs does everything they want to do before the next NPC acts (so each either spends all their dice or uses some dice and saves the rest for reactions by passing).

#### Step 3: End Turn

The game master's turn ends when all NPCs except investigator allies have either spent all their dice or have chosen to pass.

### SECOND AND FOLLOWING ROUNDS

After the investigators and the game master have each taken their turn, the round ends and a new round begins, starting with the side that took the first turn in the previous round. Rounds continue until combat ends—such as if one side is defeated or flees—or until the scene comes to its logical conclusion.

### ATTACKS AND DAMAGE

To attack a target, a character performs a complex action using one of the following skills:

- ◆ Use **Melee Combat** to make a standard (nonmagic) melee attack against a target within 5 feet. If two characters are within 5 feet of one another, they are considered to be **engaged** with each other.
- ◆ Use **Ranged Combat** to make a standard (nonmagic) ranged attack against a target more 5 feet away. Ranged attacks require a ranged weapon or an object that can be thrown. These weapons usually have a maximum range at which they can be used, listed in their item profile.
- ◆ Use **Lore** to make a magic attack using a magical knack or capability.

If the attacking character succeeds, they deal damage. Each weapon that can be used in the game lists the damage it deals on its item card or in its item profile. Most weapons deal 1 or 2 damage.

Some targets have armor. **Armor** can reduce the amount of damage that gets through to affect the character it protects. When a character deals damage, make the following calculation:

$$\text{weapon's damage value} - \text{target's armor value}$$

The target reduces their dice pool limit by the result of the calculation, and if they reduce it below the number of dice they currently have in their pool, they must discard dice until the number equals the new limit.

The target's dice pool limit stays reduced until the target is healed, such as through use of the Heal Wounds action (see **Complex Actions**). This means characters who have taken damage can take fewer or less-powerful actions than normal, because they have fewer dice to spend during each turn or narrative scene.

### STRAIN YOURSELF

At the start of the investigators' turn, before dice pools are refilled, each investigator and ally may **strain themselves** to heal all damage (increasing their dice pool limit back up to maximum). If they do, at the end of their current turn (or after they have performed one complex action in a narrative scene) they suffer an injury (see **Injuries**).

### RANGES

Ranges are always listed in a given knack or ability profile in increments of 5 feet. Each square on a map is 5 feet by 5 feet. Movement diagonally or orthogonally from one adjacent square to another costs the same amount of movement (5 feet), though characters cannot move through hard corners like buildings diagonally.

### INJURIES

When a character becomes injured, their player makes an **injury roll** by rolling a d6, and the game master consults the **Injury Results** table to determine the result. The character suffers the injury listed in the appropriate row.

If the character already has any injuries when they gain a new one, then for each preexisting injury, the player adds +1 to the d6 roll before they consult the **Injury Results** table.

To heal from an injury, a character can wait a week for the injury to heal (although some injuries, specifically Severely Injured, Loss of a Sense, or Comatose take two weeks to heal). Alternatively, a character can perform a complex action using Knowledge to heal an injury that they or another person are suffering from. Note that some injuries may require multiple successes to heal, as detailed in their description. An injury can only be healed during a narrative scene. A character can suffer multiples of the same injury; the effects do not compound, but each instance of the injury must be healed before the effects go away.

### HORROR AND HORROR DICE

Certain situations, knacks, spells, and abilities deal **horror**. When a character suffers horror, their player increases their horror die limit by that amount, to a maximum amount no greater than their dice pool maximum.

When a character refills their dice pool, they first add **horror dice** equal to their horror dice limit. Then the refill the remainder of the pool with regular dice. If a character's horror die limit is equal to or higher than their dice pool limit (as may happen if the character has taken damage), their entire pool may be filled with horror dice.

Horror dice function the same way as regular dice in a character's dice pool, with two exceptions.

First, a character may never reroll a horror die that has rolled a result of 1. Second, when any character performs an action using one or more horror dice, and at least one horror die rolls

a 1, the character suffers a **trauma**. The more 1s rolled, the greater the trauma's severity is. To determine the results of the trauma, roll a d6 and add +1 to the result for each 1 rolled on a horror die during the complex action (normally this generates a result between 2 and 7, but if a character rolled multiple 1s on horror dice, the result may be higher). Then apply that result to the **Trauma Results** table.

Keep in mind that some trauma results may increase the severity of future rolls on the table. So the more trauma the character suffers from, the greater the impact of future traumas.

### TAKING DAMAGE WHILE SUFFERING FROM HORROR

If a character has horror dice in their dice pool when they take damage that reduces their dice pool limit, they must remove standard dice first before removing horror dice.

### HEALING HORROR

A character's horror dice limit may be reduced by means of one of the following:

- ◆ The Heal Horror action (see **Basic Complex Actions**).
- ◆ Certain capabilities (such as certain knacks, spells, or abilities on an investigator portfolio or NPC profile card).

Note that even if a character reduces their horror dice limit, this doesn't remove any existing horror dice from their pool. It simply means they add fewer horror dice to their pool during the next scene.

### HEALING TRAUMAS

Unlike injuries, traumas cannot be "healed." However, the effects of traumas go away over time.



### INSIGHT

At the beginning of each game session, investigators gain insight up to their insight maximum (listed on their investigator portfolio). During the game, they can spend insight in the following ways.

- ◆ After performing a successful complex action, they can spend 1 insight to add one additional success to the results.
- ◆ Before performing a complex action or reaction, they can spend 1 insight to perform the action with advantage.
- ◆ They may spend 1 or more insight to introduce a narrative element into an ongoing scene. Examples include a character finding a scalpel in an intense situation to defend themselves with, or the introduction of a preexisting relationship with an NPC (all narrative elements are subject to the game master's approval).
- ◆ Insight can also be spent to avoid effects of certain traumas, where listed.