

Rogues and Blackguards: Heat

By KillerGM

Heat: Heat is a value that ranges between 0 and 6. Heat is a representation of the attention and suspicion that the Player Character's illegal activities have brought upon them. Heat is shared among all party members, as their association with each other is likely obvious. The higher your heat the more likely you will attract the attention of the law, and greater heat also means more resources being devoted to bringing you to justice.

The Heat Roll: Whenever one of the following conditions is met, roll 1d6. If the roll is equal to or less than the parties current **Heat**, then you have attracted the attention of the law. The higher the roll, the greater the effort to confront the party.

The conditions for a heat roll are:

- You move from one city district to another.
- You traverse a guarded checkpoint within a district

Increasing Heat: Heat can increase in a variety of ways, and it is generally easier to increase heat than it is to reduce it. Heat begins at 0. The following situations cause the parties heat to increase.

- **Criminal Acts:** Committing an obviously criminal act, in view of bystanders or the law, will result in an increase of heat proportional to the crime. As a general rule, most acts increase heat by 1, while truly dangerous or destructive acts increase heat by 2. See also **Heinous Crimes**. For additional details
- **Infamy:** Well-known criminals are never without a cloud of suspicion, and so long as the party is travelling with an infamous member, Heat is effectively considered to be 1 higher than the current value.

Reducing Heat: As heat can be increased, it can also be reduced. This is a process that requires time and money. See also **Heinous Crimes**, as truly evil acts are not as easily forgiven.

- **Laying Low:** For every two weeks spent in hiding, staying mostly in your lair or hideout, not travelling outside your home district, heat reduces by one. The whole party must be in hiding in order for this decrease to take place.
- **Bribery:** Bribing the local watch is a good way to reduce heat, although bribes have their limits. A standard bribe for an individual watchman to look the other way is about a months salary (85 sp). Crimes witnessed in an area with bribed guards do not generate heat. Much, **Much** larger bribes to watch leaders can decrease heat as much as 2, this is very much dependent on the temperament of the individual leader. A failed bribe can

even increase heat, as the slighted guard or watch leader will make sure they and their associates keep an eye on you.

- **Doing your time:** Getting arrested may seem like a loss, but every cloud has a silver lining. An arrest usually means heat is taken off the group as a whole, a small consolation to the incarcerated member I'm sure. If a party member is caught by the law hand given an appropriate sentence heat is reduced by 3.

Additional Rules:

- **Arrest Warrants:** An arrest warrant is a significant increase in heat for the party. Whenever the law issues an arrest warrant for a player character, heat increases by 1. Additionally, whenever the wanted character is in the party and the party must make a heat roll, heat is considered to be increased by 1.
- **Comes with the Territory:** Every city is different! The dark fantasy Dishonored-esque city as assumed by these rules has heat tick away at a rate of one point every two weeks, but that can be different from place to place. In the great canal city of Marienburg in the Warhammer World, heat ticks away at a rate of one point every week for example! Think about how your particular locale deals with law enforcement and come up with a timescale that's appropriate.
- **"I'm not with these clowns!":** Heat is a reflection of the whole party's reputation, however criminal adventurers are often quick to disown their companions, and rare circumstances may arise where a PC truly has nothing to do with the rest of the party. Protestations of innocence towards watchmen will get you off the hook **once** per district, after that they will remember your face. This also only works if the player loudly tells off their companions in-character.
- **Heinous Crimes:** Sometimes the PCs will do something so terrible, so reprehensible or so obviously criminal that the law will be forced to come after them. Should the players ever commit a truly heinous crime that leaves witnesses, or more than two-thirds of the party members have arrest warrants out on them, then the following rules take effect.;
 1. **Heat:** If the party's heat was 6 or lower, it is now considered to be 7. If it is higher than 7, it remains at the previous value. Rules regarding arrest warrants still apply.
 2. **Manhunt:** The PCs are now subjected to a manhunt. The Law has organized a special task force of watchmen and inspectors to bring them to justice. This task force will generally be out in a force proportional to the heinous crimes committed by the players. They will descend on the player's usual hangouts and haunts, interrogating witnesses, collecting evidence and harassing loved ones and associates.

- 3. Justice be Done!:** The usual methods of reducing heat are no longer as effective. Laying low now takes a month in order to reduce heat and bribes for most watchmen are increased to three months salary (~270 sp).
- **I fought the law...** : In order for the Manhunt to be over, the following conditions must be met;
 - Heat is currently at 3 and has been at 3 for a month
 - *Someone* has taken the fall for the players crimes, whether it is one of their own number, another criminal, or a demon, it doesn't matter. But the hammer of the law must fall on some poor sod.