

Optional Rules for DCC – Dehydration and Starvation

By Stephen Newton with input from the Google Plus DCC RPG Community

Are your players about to travel across vast distances? Perhaps they've been hired by a wizard to seek a renowned "Blood-Drinking Box" requiring a 3-day march down a spiral staircase. Or perhaps they've decided to journey towards the center of Aearth in search of the fabled city of Agharta? Well, if your players are anything like mine, they probably didn't pack enough food and water before heading out. Adding optional rules governing the effects of starvation and dehydration can sometimes make for some interesting gameplay – perhaps it's time to start butchering that hen you've been bringing with you since you were a 0-level farmer, not to mention how much more valuable that *Food of the Gods* spell has become.

First, some quick notes about real-life humans based on some quick internet research. Generally speaking:

- Humans can live 3 or 4 days without water
- Humans can live up to 21 days without food (in ideal conditions... but as we know, dungeoneering is never ideal...)

DEHYDRATION

Dehydration occurs when characters do not have access to potable drinking water.

For each day a PC does not have access to water:

- Lose 4 temporary points of Stamina.
- Comatose when the PC's Stamina reaches 1, and dead when it reaches 0.

But how does this affect combat and spellcasting? The community was split on best way to handle this: some preferred stat penalties, and other preferred the dice chain method.

Stat Penalty option: for each day without water, lose 2 temporary points of *both* Agility and Strength.

Dice Chain Penalty Option: for each day without water, the PC takes 1-step down the dice chain for combat, spellcasting, and save rolls. I would also personally add the temporary reduction in Agility for tracking when the PC expires from dehydration.

Luck: Should a character be able to burn Luck? If the situation came up at my table, I would adjudicate that burning Luck would not avoid the effects of dehydration (this is serious business after all!) but I would allow a PC that spends half a day searching for water-bearing plants or coming up with some sort of rig to capture moisture could use Luck to increase their odds of success.

And of course, the judge may want to modify the severity of the effects based on the climate (e.g., wandering across the scorched wastes of Terra A.D. may accelerate the effects of dehydration.)

STARVATION

Starvation occurs when characters do not have access to the minimum number of calories recommended for their character type – for example, a judge might rule that a human requires more calories than an elf.

The rules for starvation are similar to the rules for dehydration, but the effects happen slower:

- 1 temp Stamina point lost per day; comatose at 1, dead at 0.
- 1 temp Strength and Agility lost per day

Luck: Given that starvation happens much slower than dehydration, as a Judge I'd be more liberal with how a PC could expend Luck. My advice would be that 2 points of Luck could be burned in exchange for 1 additional point of Stamina.

DROWNING

This is actually documented in DCC Core Rulebook, but including I'm including here for wilderness travel completeness:

Drowning PCs take 1d6 points of Stamina damage per round while denied access to air, and die when Stamina reaches 0; lost Stamina is restored immediately if they are removed from the morass.) (DCC pg 244, 412)