MUTANTS AND DEATH RAY GUNS

Science Fantasy Post Holocaust Miniature Rules
First Edition, version 1.1

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INTRODUCTION

To play this game, you'll need a minimum of three six-sided dice, a few miniatures, three measuring sticks and a play surface. You'll also need a few scenic material to represent hills, trees, boulders, ruins and the like. You can just use some paper outlines laid out on the battlefield if you don't have well crafted terrain.

BACKGROUND

It's hard to recognize our world after 200 years of war. The use of nuclear, biochemical and more esoteric weapons of mass destruction reduced major cities to craters of obsidian-like molten concrete and steel. Many lakes and seas have evaporated or are polluted beyond belief, and are now home to mutated animals who could swallow a ship whole.

A new dark age descended upon mankind. Social and technological splendors of the past are no more than myths to the brutal inhabitants of the radioactive wasteland. Society as we know it longer exists. Humanity has regressed to barbarism or, at most, brutal feudalism.

After mankind's self-inflicted downfall, other beings strive for dominance. Humanoid mutants, androids, mutated plants and animals fight each other for the primary resources, namely water, weapons, fuel and food. It's a brutal world that knows no hope or respite. A world with only two kinds of inhabitants: those who perish and those who survive.

FOR PLAYERS OF SONG OF BLADES AND HEROES

This game is based on the *Song of Blades and Heroes* rules engine. The activation, morale and combat mechanics will be familiar to players of SBH. Everything else is different. Some differences will become more evident during campaign play. The emphasis is on ranged combat, although hand-to-hand still plays an important role.

MDRG is a campaign game, meaning that some rules become more important when playing a series of connected scenarios. For example, you'll have to learn to save your resources from one game to another to pay the Upkeep cost (i.e., food, loot or energy cells) of your party.

GAME LENGTH

Once you know the rules and have created your characters, a game requires 30-45 minutes, making it possible to play a short campaign (3 to 5 scenarios) in a single evening.

DICE

MDRG uses standard six sided dice only, sometimes abbreviated as d6. So roll 2d6 means "roll two six sided dice and add the results, generating a number from 2 to 12". Roll d66 means "roll two dice separately, counting the first die as the tens and the second die as the units, thus generating a number from 11 to 66.

SCALE

MDRG recreates the battles of bands of adventurers, survivors and warriors in a post-holocaust, plague-ridden, monster-infested world. You can play with any scale of miniatures (a list of suggested manufacturers is on p.35) The rules are written for two players but it's possible to play with more, randomizing the order of play by drawing cards with the player's names.

One figure represents one creature. One turn represent a few seconds. All distances and ranges are measured with three measurement sticks labeled Short, Medium or Long. Pre-measuring (checking a range before declaring an attack or a movement) is allowed. Players may measure distances at any time. Build your measuring sticks with balsa wood laths, wooden skewers or strip of card as per the following table:

MEASURING STICKS		
	15mm models	25/28mm models
Short	50mm	75mm
Medium	80mm	120mm
Long	120mm	180mm

If you play with 15mm models, the minimum play surface should be 60x60 cms. In 25/28mms, it should be 90x90cms.

BASING SUGGESTIONS

This game has no standard basing rules, as players may already have models based for other gaming systems. As long as all players use the same basing conventions, it won't make much of a difference if the bases are round, square or hexagonal.

For 28mm models, a convenient standard is 20 x 20mm square bases for man-sized models, 20 x 40mm rectangular bases for cavalry models (including most four legged mutated animals), and 25 x 25mm for Big models. Huge models will use whatever base size is needed.

A convenient way to base 15mm models is to use small coins (the author uses one Euro cent coins for all infantry models, and two or five cents coins for larger models). This is cheaper than commercially produced bases and gives some weight to the figure. Coins can be painted and covered with flocking

materials, such as sand or static grass.

Another option is to use washers (the thick ones are heavier than coins). If the model is not big enough to cover the hole, you can fill it with a bit of putty. Coins and washers let you transport your troops in a magnetized toolbox without fear of toppling them over and ruining your precious paint job.

PROFILES

Every model is described in game terms by a profile. Here's a sample:

Sandy "Mindshock" (Upkeep 1 food)		
Type Mutant	Quality 4+	Combat 3
Special Rules	Telekinetic Push, Sharpshooter, Sonic Stunner, 3 cells	

Upkeep: this is used only in campaign games and it shows how much food (or energy in the case of robots) per week the character needs. When the Upkeep cost for a character is not paid, the character will be weaker or may skip a game. For more information, see the Campaign section.

Quality: this is an overall indication of the model's willingness to fight, reaction speed, initiative and morale. It is the number to be rolled on a die to activate the model, so the lower the number, the better.

When it's your turn, you nominate a model that you're trying to activate. You may choose to roll one, two or three activation dice. Every roll that is equal or better to the model's Quality is a success, while every roll that is lower is a failure. You get to do one action for every success. **If you roll two or more failures, the turn passes to your opponent (after the model acts on its one success, if it had one), who gets to nominate one of his models and to activate it**. It is generally wise to start acting with the models with the best (lowest) Quality target numbers.

Combat: this is a measure of how well the model fights. In a fight, this value is added to the roll of a die and compared to the opponent's Combat plus the roll of a die. Combat may be influenced by Special Rules and by the model's equipment.

Special Rules: this is a catch-all category which includes all the extra abilities and special powers of a model. Every special rule describes something that the creature can do in addition to its basic profile. Some Special Rules are detrimental (for example, Slow creatures move less frequently than others).

CREATE YOUR PARTY

Players should decide with how many models they are going to play. The standard game uses five characters per player. This should give you, on the average, games of about 30-45 minutes once you know the rules.

After some games, you can increase the number of models. The rules are simple enough to let you run battles with 15-20 models per side (the board size should be increased proportionally with the number of models, or your characters won't have enough space to take cover and maneuver).

Characters may be any one of the following:

Pure Humans
Mutants (or, Mutated Humans)
Mutated Animals
Mutated Plants
Androids
Robots
Wretched

Every type has a basic Quality and Combat profile and certain advantages and disadvantages. Players may mix different types in their warband as they see fit, or have all members of the party belong to the same type.

All models start with their basic profile, but one model can be upgraded to have a +1 on his Combat score. You can think of this model as your champion, or just the "tough guy" in the bunch.

In addition, one model can be designed as the party's Leader. His Quality target number is reduced by 1, e.g., it becomes 3+ if it originally was 4+, and he gains the Leader special rule.

Both bonuses can be assigned to the same model if the player so wishes. The bonuses can be assigned after special features and Mutations have been rolled up.

Having a Leader bears some disadvantages: the Leader consumes double the number of resources (see Campaigns) and causes Morale rolls if killed. Players may opt not to have a Leader in their party, but it is generally advisable to have one, especially for the lower Quality troops like Mutant Plants and Animals.

Equipment
All characters are assumed to have one hand-to-hand weapon (like a big knife, a sword or a club) or a natural claw/bite attack. This is the default condition and need not be written on the character's profile.

Equipment is rolled on the Equipment Table and is assigned by the player as he sees fit. Equipment can be reassigned to other characters between games.