

Warhammer 40,000 2nd edition players' revision summary

Introduction: For many gamers, the second edition of Warhammer 40,000 remains the definitive game of squad-level combat in the far future. Rendered obsolete in 1998, it nevertheless retains a considerable and dedicated following.

There is no question that the rules needed changes and clarifications, but the core of the system remains sound. To that end, members of the now-defunct Games Workshop fan site Portent.net offered the following suggestions to speed and improve game play.

While technically “house rules,” these changes are strikingly common and already in use around the world. The purpose of this document is to organize and codify them, making it easier not only for experienced gamers to keep things straight, but also to recruit new players into the One True Edition of Warhammer 40,000.

Frequently Fracked Facts: Except where noted, the written rules published by Games Workshop take precedence. Unfortunately, some of these rules were not always clear and/or were distorted over the years. To that end, we have provided a list of popular misconceptions to help players fully understand the underlying genius of these tragically flawed but ultimately brilliant rules. Items that are marked (FFF) therefore not changes per se, but rather clarifications of things that players regularly got wrong.

1. Core Mechanics

1.1 Measurement: Many players may prefer to allow free measurement. If both opponents agree, this is perfectly acceptable. If it is used, “guess” weapons are placed where desired. The defending player may adjust the template if it targets specific characters/special weapon troopers so long as the same number of models are affected. To hit and/or scatter rolls are then made normally.

2. Movement

2.1 Jump Packs: Jump packs do not roll for scatter. Ork jump packs roll a d6 for each model every time they jump: on a 1, consult the malfunction table in the ork codex.

2.2 Charging (FFF): Models may charge squads they cannot see.

2.3 Transports (FFF): Models in transports may only charge if the transport has not moved. They do NOT count as charging from cover unless the transport itself is in cover.

3. Shooting

3.1 Sustained Fire: Rather than use a 6” radius, sustained fire must be directed at a single squad, vehicle or squadron.

3.2 Distribution of Hits (FFF): Hits flow from front to back, both with templates and direct fire. Thus a grenade or other blast template using direct fire would have to hit visible models at the front of the squad rather than bursting over (unseen) ones in the middle.

3.3 Persistent Weapons: To speed game play, weapons with persistent effects (vortex grenades, plasma cannon) do not remain in effect. The only exception is blind grenades/smoke launchers, which remain in effect (but do not roll for expansion/contraction) until the start of the firing player's next turn.

3.4 Fire: Flamers, fire-based weapons and similar devices do NOT set models on fire. Models hit by these weapons take damage as normal after which the weapon has no further effect.

3.5 Overwatch Follies (FFF): No rule in the old game is more controversial or subject to being screwed up as Overwatch. Yet it is essential to keeping the game honest and not all that difficult to use. Remember: models on overwatch still follow the normal targeting procedures. The only difference is that it occurs during the opponent's movement phase. Non-phasing players should be open and honest about who is on overwatch and what they can see. Similarly, phasing players should move their forces confidently and expect them to be shot at if they are in the open. Again, the targeting rules are still in effect, so moving a more protected or expendable unit out in front will, in almost every case, draw overwatch fire away from more valuable targets. Overwatch is the single most realistic aspect of Warhammer 40k. Deal with it.

3.6 Reliable Weapons: Under the normal rules, ballistic template weapons (i.e. battle cannon, frag missiles) that miss must roll scatter. A combination of "Hit/Misfire" results in the weapon hitting the user, an extremely silly (if sometimes entertaining) event. Instead, template weapons that score a "Hit/Misfire" result are considered jammed instead.

4. Close Combat

4.1 Leaving Close Combat (FFF): The rules here are vague and poorly understood. As the rules state, engaged models give their opponents a "free strike" if they wish to leave the combat. Unengaged models (that is, those not in base-to-base), however may disengage without penalty, but must retreat and are counted as BROKEN.

4.2 Squad Cohesion in Close Combat: Because the cohesion rules do not apply in close combat, some players have used the fact that unengaged models may leave close combat without "free strikes" to force attackers to chase them across the board. This runs contrary to logic and the spirit of the game. Therefore, unless unengaged models choose to disengage (and are broken as outlined above), they may not otherwise move away from an enemy engaged in hand to hand combat with their squad.

5. Vehicles

5.1 Transports Are Not Death Traps: Most datafax cards contain damage results that either kill passengers on a simple die roll (usually a 4+) or exterminate them wholesale. This ignores the often considerable amount of armor they are wearing. Therefore, passengers on board a

transport that is the datafax indicates are killed (either on a 4+ or “all models on board are killed”) instead make an unmodified armor save. If they pass, they are placed adjacent to the wrecked vehicle.

5.2 Out of Control (FFF): Vehicles that are stationary do not move out of control. Only vehicles that moved during the previous turn must move out of control.

5.3 Taking The Wheel (FFF): If the driver is killed for any reason, the vehicle will still move out of control until another model on board can take over. The earliest this can happen is after the owning player’s next movement phase. Note that 5.2 still applies, so a Lemman Russ that did not move in its previous turn that has its driver killed would remain stationary until its next movement phase, when a gunner could take over and drive it.

5.4 Turning Scrap into More Scrap (FFF): Remember that if a vehicle location is destroyed (such as tracks) additional hits to that location have no further effect.

6. Army Lists

6.1 But I Thought Farseers Were Rare: Eldar are not required to take an avatar or farseer as an army commander, nor must Space Marines take Captains. Any character can be the army commander. EXCEPTION: Because of the rigid hierarchy of both armies (for very different reasons) Tyranids and Imperial Guard must use their mandatory commanders.

6.2. Something’s Wrong With the Comlink: The Imperial Guard Codex has players roll a d6 for the “interference” on calling in a barrage with the comlink. This can result in either extremely easy (2+) or almost impossible (6+) artillery support. To make things more consistent no die roll is made. Comlinks will work on a 4+.

7. Wargear

7.1 Virus Weapons: Virus weapons are extremely unbalancing and should not be used.