

# GUMSHOE House Rule

## Mitigation Tests

by [Justin Alexander](#)

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014

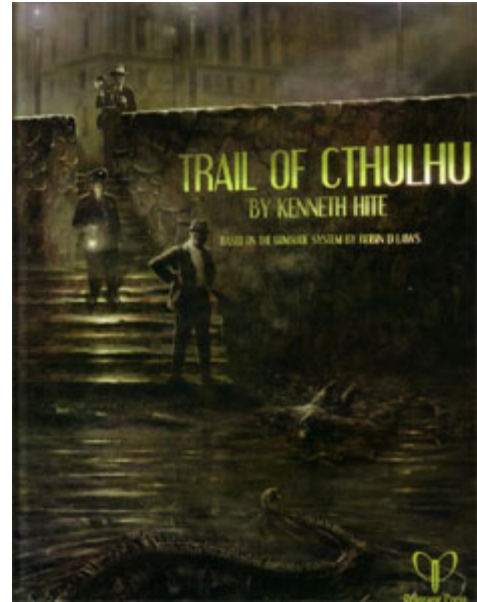
**Mitigation Test:** When making a mitigation test, instead of setting a difficulty number the Keeper sets a “worst case quantity”. The Investigator then resolves the test normally (spending points, adding them to their roll, and so forth), but the result of the test is subtracted from the worst case quantity to determine the actual outcome. (In some situations, you might choose to use multiples of the test of the result.)

*Example:* One of the investigators has been bitten by a Mythos creature and the creature’s poison is turning their flesh to stone. The team’s doctor decides the only way to save their life is to cut away the “infection”. The Keeper calls for a mitigation test using Medicine to determine how much damage the doctor deals to the victim/patient and sets the “worst case quantity” to 12 points of damage. The doctor’s player spends two points, rolls a 4, and manages to perform the procedure while only inflicting 6 points of Health damage ( $12 - 4 - 2 = 6$ ).

*Example:* An orphanage is beginning to collapse. An Investigator is trying to rescue as many kids as possible before the building comes down completely. The Keeper calls for an Athletics mitigation test to determine how many kids survive and sets the “worst case quantity” to 6 dead kids. The player asks if he can spend Architecture points to assist (by judging which sections of the building are in most jeopardy) and the Keeper agrees. He spends 3 points and rolls a 2... He’s just not able to find Timmy before it’s too late.

*Example:* The player is trying to carve a forged copy of a stone tablet, but is under something of a time crunch to get it done. The Keeper sets a “worst case quantity” of 48 hours and calls for a Craft test. The Investigator gets a result of 6, which the Keeper multiplies by 5: It’ll take  $48 - 30 = 18$  hours to complete the duplicate tablet.

*Thanks to Colleen Riley, Phil Henry, Tess Keen, and Sarah Holmberg for being my guinea pigs.*



# GUMSHOE House Rule

## Heat Track

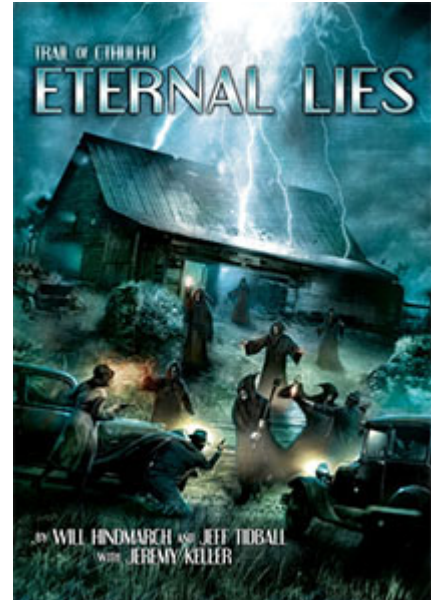
by [Justin Alexander](#)

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014

The effect of prolonged exposure to extreme temperatures in [Trail of Cthulhu](#) is very straight-forward: Investigators are considered to be **hurt**, resulting in them suffering a +1 difficulty on all tests.

The designers of [Eternal Lies](#) had a desire to make exposure to extreme heat more mechanically interesting and they introduced a rudimentary heat track. I found their treatment interesting, but wanted something a little more robust (particularly when it came to treatment and recovery). These mechanics are specifically designed for desert travel.

(They're also not exactly "untested", but I don't have a series of posts called "minimally tested", so here we go.)



### HEAT TRACK

0. Not suffering heat.
1. Can only make spends after first resting for 10 minutes (to gather their thoughts and spirits).
2. Difficulty of contests +1 (including hit thresholds).
3. Difficulty of tests at +1.
4. Can only make 1 spend per day and must make it in the morning after a good night's sleep, before the day's temperatures begin to rise.
5. Cannot make any spends.
6. Can only refresh 1 Health per day. If Heat Track would advance, it remains at 6 but character suffers 1 damage.

### ADVANCING HEAT

**Desert Travel:** +1 Heat track per day. Characters who traveled during the day are considered to be under extreme heat conditions for the purposes of treating heat.

**Camping:** Characters who take a rest from traveling by camping for one full day are considered to be in favorable conditions for the purposes of treating heat.

**Oasis:** An oasis or similar place of significant respite may be considered "controlled conditions" for the purposes of treating heat.

## TREATING HEAT

A given character can be treated for heat once per day.

**First Aid/Medicine** in favorable conditions to prevent advancement or reduce position on the heat track by 1.

**First Aid/Medicine** (difficulty 3 + heat track) in extreme heat conditions to prevent advancement or reduce position on the heat track.

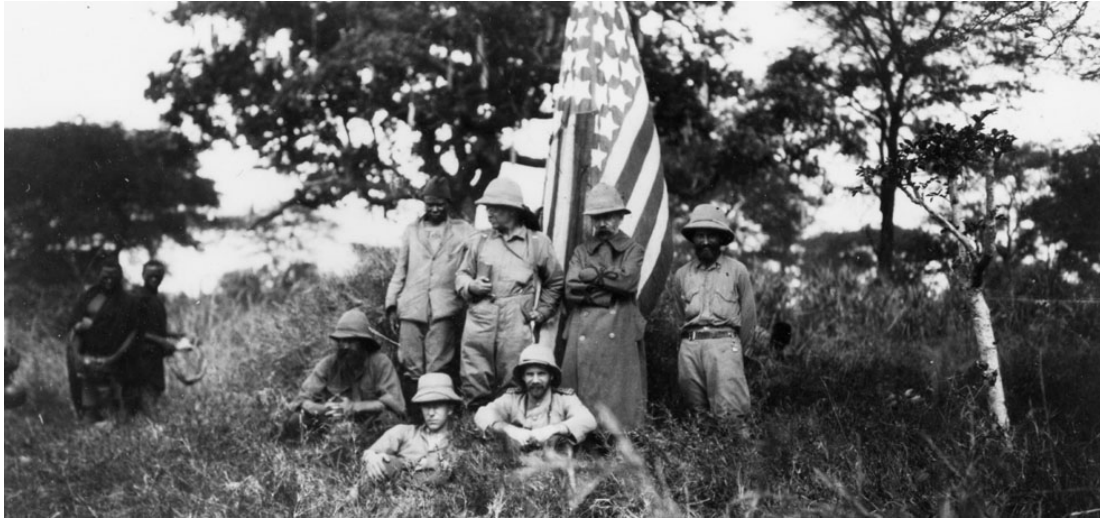
**First Aid 1 / Medicine 1** in controlled conditions to bring an investigator back to 0.

# GUMSHOE House Rule

## Basic Expeditions

by [Justin Alexander](#)

July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

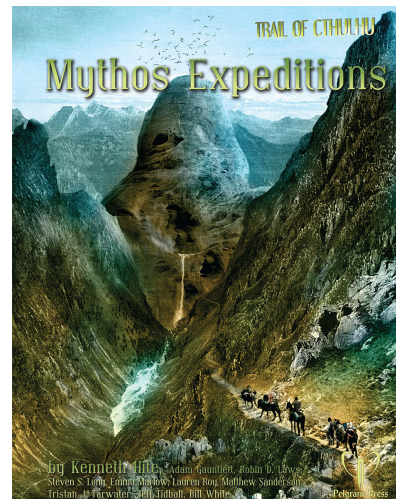


When running a globetrotting historical [Trail of Cthulhu](#) game — whether set in the 1890's, the 1920's, or the 1930's — it's not unusual for the investigators to find themselves trekking out into the wilderness, akin to those expeditions described by H.P. Lovecraft in *The Shadow Out of Time* or *At the Mountains of Madness*.

Pelgrane Press has actually published an entire collection of such scenarios in [Mythos Expeditions](#), which I understand to also include a rather robust set of rules for organizing and running such expeditions. I'm afraid I don't actually own that particular volume, and the rules you'll find here are unrelated to whatever full-fledged mechanics you might find there. What I wanted/needed was a relatively streamlined set of mechanics that could be used to meaningfully organize expeditions as part of a larger campaign in which they were not necessarily the primary focus, but nevertheless a significant part.

### EXPEDITIONS

These guidelines assume a modest, personal expedition consisting of a fairly typical group of investigators, perhaps one or two local guides, and their porters. They're not appropriate for larger groups, industrial-scale explorations, or military expeditions into the wilderness (although adapting them to such might not require too much effort).



**SUPPLIES:** The supplies for an expedition require a 1-point Credit Rating spend per week of supplies.

**PORTERS:** The expedition requires 1 porter per investigator, plus 1 porter per guide. It generally costs a 1-point Credit Rating spend per porter, but **Bargain** reduces the total cost by 1-point. A 1-point **Bargain spend** halves the total Credit Rating cost for porters.

If an expedition will list for more than three weeks, the number of porters must be doubled (due to the increased number of supplies to be carried).

## GUIDES

In broad terms, a guide will provide a pool of Outdoorsman points (and other expertise which may or may not be useful). In certain circumstances, guides may also possess specific navigational knowledge (i.e., the location of a “lost” locale or local watering holes) or other advantages (friendship with local, usually hostile tribes).

**TRACKLESS WASTE:** Navigating through a trackless waste is not trivial. It requires a 1-point **Outdoorsman** spend simply to navigate out of the waste. (For example, getting to the Pacific coast from the midst of the Amazonian jungle.) Getting to a specific point of your choosing is a 2-point **Outdoorsman** spend.

However, a **map** or **compass** each counts as a 1-point Outdoorsman spend. (So if you have the Outdoorsman skill, a map, and a compass, you can get to a specific point of your choosing without any spend.)

**FINDING A “LOST” LOCALE:** Sometimes you don’t actually know the specific point at which you can find whatever it is you’re looking for. (For example, you might be searching for the lost city of Irem.) For each week of the expedition, the expedition rolls 1d6. Assuming the location actually exists and is in the region they’re searching for it, they’ll find it on a roll of “6”.

The Investigators and their guides can spend points to enhance the search. For every 3 points spend, they can roll an additional d6. Such spends could come from Outdoorsman, Archaeology (analyzing ruins throughout the area), Anthropology, Oral History (questioning locals), or any other skill for which a logical purpose can be proposed. (This will be highly dependent on the particular circumstances of the specific locale being searched.)

## INTERPRETERS

Whether on an expedition or not, any Investigator without an interpreter who cannot speak local languages must make 1-point spends with Interpersonal abilities that would otherwise function without a spend. Acquiring an interpreter generally requires Bargain or Streetwise.

Acquiring an interpreter without Assess Honesty may result in hiring an unreliable fellow. Such an interpreter may do something that could inconvenience or even harm their employer (abandoning them, stealing from them, warning local cultists, etc.).

## OTHER CONCERNS

Depending on where the expedition is located, it may be appropriate [to use a Heat track](#) (or similar environmental impact mechanic). Investigators who insist on hauling large quantities of explosives into the outback will find themselves saddled with [additional logistical concerns](#).

# GUMSHOE House Rule

## Transporting Explosives

by [Justin Alexander](#)

August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

*Trail of Cthulhu* contains some rudimentary guidelines for the use of explosives. They can be found on [my system cheat sheet](#), but I'll briefly summarize them here for easy reference.

**SETTING EXPLOSIVE DEVICES:** Requires an Explosives test. A Sense Trouble test (difficulty 4 or the result of the Explosives test) can be made to dive out of the way our pull comrade to Close range.

**THROWN EXPLOSIVE:** Make an Athletics test (difficulty 2 for point blank range, 3 for close range, or 5 for near). If aiming for for a very specific spot the difficulties are 3 for point-blank, 4 for close, or 7 for near. If the explosive is not balanced for throwing, add +1 difficulty.

**OTHER EXPLOSIVES:** Artillery/mortars use a Mechanical Repair test. Rifle-Grenade uses a Firearms test.



### TRANSPORTING EXPLOSIVES

These basic guidelines are quite useful. However, at the, let's say, "prompting" of my players, I've found the not-so-occasional need to figure out what might be involved in the transportation and use of truly *prodigious* amounts of explosives. In the case of globetrotting campaigns like *Eternal Lies* or *Masks of Nyarlathotep*, this has often included hauling explosives on [lengthy wilderness expeditions](#). (You'll probably have similar experiences with the scenarios in Pelgrane's *Mythos Expeditions*, although I don't own that book personally yet.)

**DEDICATED PORTER:** An additional porter is required per 1 large gun or 1-3 charges of dynamite.

**CARRIED BY INVESTIGATOR:** If explosives are carried by an Investigator, they will suffer damage per day and an increased difficulty to physical tasks (as shown on the table below). A maximum of 6 charges can be carried by a single Investigator.

**URBAN AREAS:** Transporting large amounts of explosives through metropolitan regions usually requires a Stealth test (or similar precautions). The difficulty of this test is increased based on the number of charges (as indicated on the table below).

[Edit](#)

Charges Carried	Damage	Difficulty Increase
1-3	1 point per day	+1
4-5	-2 damage per day	+2
6	+0 damage per day	+3

