POP Unit Operation Manual

The POP Units of Fabricated are complicated machines run by very human intelligence. When you play them, you'll engage with these rules to resolve any tests they might reach.

Concepts

The following rules assume you understand these basics from the game's fiction:

- **POP Units**: These are the machines you play as players in the game. Each player controls one POP unit, commonly simply called a **Person** (*People* plural).
- **Operators**: These are higher intelligences in the system itself. Each game has one player set aside who doesn't play a Person and instead players an **Operator**. They also kind of passively control the world around the People. In certain moments of the game, they might also go Alt, and play another Operator who is not their main. This is all a discussion from another time and place, but in short: All People can talk to their Operator at any time. Requests to the Operator allow the Person to exceed their programming. For instance, a Person might request a Power-Down command for a machine, and then the Operator can choose to do so or not.
- **Roleplaying Game**: This is a game in which you play out a shared imagined fantasy. It is all made up, between you the Player of the Person, and the Player of the Operator. It is not a competition, and there are no rewards for goals. The main agenda of this game is setting exploration, where all the players learn more about the world of this distant future.
- **Static and Dynamic**: Static game information is unchanged and fixed, it'll never change. The main ratings of the machine a Player plays are static. If something doesn't affect their machine, it'll have the same ratings forever. In the course of play though, a dynamic factor might affect a machine of a Player. Say the machine gets hit by lightning and now the it's arm is damaged. That is a dynamic situation that alters the rating of the machine in the game. It may (or may not) be resolved and then the machine would get it's normal static rating back. This is all delved into fully under Threads below.
- **Narrative**: This is “the story so far”. It is the running oral history of the game the Players are playing. It doesn't have any weight in the literary sense, but just a chronicle of the game's events. It is subject to the memory and interpretation of the Players, except where Threads come into play, which are hard fact in the Narrative. What a thread says, isn't mutable by the Players, it is agreed fact.

Tests

In normal operation, your unit acts and reacts to the world around it at your behest. It does what you imagine it does, and things unfold as the operator relates to you. This is the normal flow of play. When something happens in the fiction that a player thinks is something that might go wrong for your Person, a Test is called for. A Test means there is a chance the actions of your Person won't go that way you think will, and could in fact end up going sideways.

Power

Energize

Certain things needs to be energized by the POP unit. If the unit does not energize these things, the thing or effect is lost. When the unit chooses to energize something, they take an Energize Marker. They hold this marker as long as they choose to energize the thing, and if they choose to let it go, they discard the marker.

Spin Up, Spin Down, Spin all around...

Your machine is in one of three power states at all times: Power saving, Full power, and Red zoned. Moving to a higher power state is a Quick(3) action, and is called Spinning up. When you spin up you can pick any higher state you wish. A Spin down is a normal action, and always returns the machine to Power saving. This also triggers the resolution of all current markers it might have.

Burning the Clock

Each machine has a clock that is ticking and runs when it is at Full power or Red zoned. The clock for the machine is represented by dice based on it's endurance:

- 3H: 1d6
- 1D: 1d10
- 1W: 1d20

For each round the clock is increased once. Increase it twice if the machine is Red zoned. When the die reaches the maximum, a Click occurs and it is reset to 1.

Resolving, the basics

Resolving, more details

Threads

Resolving with Threads

Security

Security in the system scape breaks down into three types:

- **Type I, Local Node**: Local on hardware protection. This is the old paradigm, before the code revision. Security is handled by advanced encryption with large keys.
- **Type II, System Interface**: System level protection. This is the new paradigm, using a lighter layer of encryption on top of holo-crypt compression protocols.
- **Type III, BAT Link**: New, AI based gene-expression encryption/compression protocols used only in the POP units core code (Brain-AI-Technology).

Whenever you attempt to break through security from a cross-type, you brute force it. This means you take a -6 penalty to the test and it takes 10 rounds per roll. Whenever Type I or Type II are used on III, make that a -10 penalty and 15 rounds per roll.

Safety

When your machine throws a Safety, it immediately spins down unless an override is issued to countermand it. Most commonly Safeties are thrown from Grind Markers or Harm.

Crash

When your machine suffers a Crash, it is going to immediately power down (destroyed and lost) unless:

- You use an override and pay two Compute Markers.
- Take one Grind Marker and pay 3 bank of any type you decide.

Even if it is bought off, the Crash causes you to spin down.

Click

When your machine reaches a click you:

- Pay 2 of each Bank (MMoss, Gel, and Auth) and take a draw marker **OR** take a Grind Marker.
- Select and apply one of the Wear options (see the unit record sheet).

Frazzled

A Frazzled (common tongue: frazzed) machine is clearly in distress. It is slowed, and can only make one normal action every two rounds, and no Quick actions at all. It may only take instant actions when acted upon, or when taking it's normal action.

Unshielded

An unshielded machine has lost all it's protection from damage. All incoming damage is done as harm

as half it's total, ignoring Steel. Harm taken in this state is rolled with a d8 instead of a d6.

Damage

When your unit take damage, it'll have a damage value. This value is normally calculated as: Quality of the attack X multiplier + base. So a weapon might be X3/10. So that weapon has a quality multiplier of X3 and a base of 10. If you score a 5 quality hit, it'll do: 5×3=15+10= 25 damage.

The first step when you take damage is to compare it to your shield rating:

- Equal to or less than half your shield rating: Dong! Pay 1 Mmoss OR 1 Gel OR take a Draw Marker and ignore the damage entirely.
- Equal to or less than your shield rating: Ding! Pay 1 Mmoss OR 1 Gel OR take a Draw Marker and reduce your Shield rating 3, ignore the damage.
- Greater than shield rating: Reduce shield rating by 3, subtract Steel from the damage total and half what remains.

Of the damage that might remain above, each 5 full points is a roll on the Harm table. If you have remaining unspent damage, keep it noted. It'll add to further damage this turn, and then is removed at the end of turn.

The damage code for melee from a POP unit is based on size, profile, and shield. The multiplier is the TTQ of the size +2 for early profiles and size +4 for late profiles. The base is always half the lowest shield rating, rounded up.

Order

Instance

Charge

Override

Reference: TTQ

This reference is the table commonly used in the game to turn Test To Quality, henceforth known as the TTQ for short.

- 3-4: 1
- 5-6: 2
- 7-8: 3
- 9-10: 4
- 11-12: 5

- 13-14: 6
- 15-16: 7
- 17-18: 8
- 19-20: 9
- 21-22: 10
- 23-24: 11
- 25-26: 12
- 27-28: 13
- 29-30: 14
- 31-32: 15

Higher results can be extrapolated using the formula: (X - 2) / 2, rounding up.

Reference: Harm

When your unit is harmed, you make a roll on the Harm table. Normally 5 damage is one roll of a d6 on the table. If you unit is Unshielded roll a d8.

- 1: Reflex hit, -3 OR 2 spark markers.
- 2: Shield hit, -3 OR 2 spark markers.
- 3: Hash hit, -3 OR 2 compute markers.
- 4: Encode hit, -3 OR 2 compute markers.
- 5: Grind Marker, roll on Material Harm below.
- 6: Short Marker, roll on Electrical Harm below.
- 7: Drive -1, Safety.
- 8: Drive -1, Crash.

Material Harm

- 1-2: Steel & Rush, -1.
- 3-4: Power -1.
- 5: Drive -1, Safety.
- 6: Drive -1, Crash.

Electrical Harm

- 1-2: Pay 2 Gel OR take a Short Marker.
- 3-4: Pay 1 Mmoss and 1 Gel OR take a Short Marker.
- 5: Drive -1, Safety.
- 6: Drive -1, Crash.

Reference: Suspend

While not exactly harm, a unit can suffer suspension of it's functions. In these cases the loss of function can be regained with an override and payment of compute markers (3) for each suspended function.

1. Assist for Material
2. Assist for Code
3. Drain on Mmoss
4. Drain on Gel
5. Search
6. Grind

If you roll a suspension on an already suspended function, it turns into Harm.

Suspensions last until power down, or removed as above.

Reference: Instant

Any action that is called Instant, means it interrupts everything to get resolved first. Consider it to take such a small amount of time, it is practically instantaneous. You can interrupt an instant with an instant, and in that case resolve them LIFO (last in, first out). Here is an example:

- *My current machine is a standard wheeled model. I'm trying to pry open a security door to get to an escaping drone. This is a test of strength. My machine is in full-power mode, and I know the door is tough (the operator scanned it for me). So I have Steel assist Power as an instant for the action. I'm Power 5 and Steel 4. I roll for my assist and get a 3. Looking up 7 on the TTQ I get +3. My total Strength is now 5(power) +3(assist) = 8. Still seems low. Power drains Gel, so I do a drain instant to add to Power. I spend 2 Gel to get +5. I'm now at 5(Power) +5(drain) +3(assist) = 13. OK, let's do the test!*

Reference: Quick

Any action that is called Quick, takes some short amount of time for your unit. It isn't time-consuming in the way a normal action is, but instead burns down your reflex. You must have enough current reflex to pay for the action. If you are doing a Search, which is Quick(5), you must have 5 Reflex to pay for the action. All Quick actions occur before your single normal action. Here is what I mean:

- *My current machine is a standard Jumper. I've spun up to low power, so I have a Reflex score of 12. When it is my turn to act (on 12) I can Search as a Quick(5). In which case I change my current Reflex to 7. The next time 7 is the highest reflex I can act again, and I can keep doing quick actions until I can't pay for them.*

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