



RPGA®

PENALTY GUIDELINES

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U.S. CANADA, ASIA,
 PACIFIC, & LATIN AMERICA
 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
 P.O. Box 707
 Renton WA 98057-0707
 (Questions?) 1-800-324-6498



EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS
 Wizards of the Coast, Belgium
 P.B. 2031
 2600 Berchem
 Belgium
 +32-70-23-32-77

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INTRODUCTION

The RPGA *Penalty Guidelines* provide a structure to help gamemasters (GMs) determine the appropriate action necessary for infractions that occur during the course of an event or session. Penalties exist to protect players from misconduct. Unless stated otherwise, all penalties in this document assume that the infraction is unintentional. If a GM believes that an infraction was intentional, the penalty should be upgraded as appropriate. Please remember that these are only guidelines. If the session GM, Appeals GM, or Senior GM believes that the situation has significant, extenuating circumstances, that GM is always free to modify any and all penalties as appropriate. The *RPGA Penalty Guidelines* apply to every game the RPGA offers and supports.

Note: See Appendix 1 of the *RPGA General Rules* for definitions of terms in this document

I. INFRACTIONS

Infractions are listed in the following manner:

Infraction Name [Infraction Type]

Definition: The description of what qualifies as an infraction.

Example: Sample incidents of the infraction.

Philosophy: The reasoning behind the penalty.

Penalty: Recommended penalties.

CHARACTER INFRACTIONS

This section generally deals with campaign character problems and related issues for all RPGA campaigns where the player creates and maintains their own character records.

Illegal Characters [Character Infraction]

Definition: This penalty applies to games featuring characters that players develop themselves (such as *LIVING GREYHAWK* and *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® CAMPAIGNS). Players must use the specific character creation guidelines for the appropriate campaign in order to play.

Players are considered to have illegal characters when any part of that character does not comply with campaign guidelines for that particular campaign.

Examples: (A) A player arrives at a *LIVING FORCE*™ session with a new character that has spent more than the 28 points for the Planned Generation method of ability scores that are standard for that campaign.

(B) A player arrives at a *LIVING GREYHAWK*™ session with more equipment than is possible to buy for that character's recorded gold value.

(C) A player arrives with a character that has not had character death penalties or other detrimental effects applied from a previous game.

Philosophy: The character a player brings to any RPGA campaign game must fully abide by the creation and maintenance guidelines of that campaign. If the character does not comply with the campaign's guidelines on any level, the player is considered to have an illegal character. Because characters are usually illegal due to a clerical error or an honest mistake, it is not in the best interest of the event to disqualify a player or their character for this kind of violation. Correcting the character to fit within campaign guidelines is the best option. However, if a player repeatedly participates with illegal characters, game ejection may become appropriate at the discretion of the GM. To maintain event integrity, the RPGA recommends that GMs verify the legality of all characters at the start of each game session.

Penalty: The standard penalty for this infraction is a caution. At all times, the basic procedure is to correct a player's character so it is legal, and then let the player continue playing with the corrected character. The GM should deduct any excess points and/or equipment without consulting the player. A player should be allowed to swap the illegal character if that is the best way to correct the infraction. Repeated offenses can result in a penalty escalation and be subject to RPGA investigation.

PROCEDURAL ERROR

This section provides penalties for procedural errors. Many infractions fit into this category, but it is impossible to list them all. The Senior GM should use his or her discretion when deciding which penalty applies to an unlisted procedural error.

TARDINESS [PROCEDURAL ERROR]

Definition: A player is considered to have committed this infraction when he or she is not seated and ready to play when the slot begins, is frequently absent from play, or causes undue amounts of delay that negatively affects play at the session.

Examples: (A) A player arrives to play in a session five (5) minutes after the session is scheduled to begin.

(B) A player takes extended food breaks, delaying play.

(C) A player takes an excessive amount of phone calls during a session.

Philosophy: Players are responsible for being on time for their slots and ensuring they don't disrupt the game for their fellow players.

Penalty: A caution should be given out for tardiness. If a player is not at the session five (5) minutes after the slot has started, an alternative player should be assigned, when possible, so that session can begin. The tardy player should be dropped from participation in the session. Repeated offenses could result in a possible penalty escalation and could also be subject to RPGA investigation.

LITTERING [PROCEDURAL ERROR]

Definition: A player leaves undue amounts of litter in the play area after a slot.

Example: (A) A player leaves packaging or partially eaten food at the play area.

(B) A GM leaves adventure handouts or other paper at the play area.

Philosophy: Players should expect to play in a comfortable and clean environment. Each player is responsible for making sure any litter they create is cleared for the benefit of other players.

Penalty: In all cases the offending player should receive a caution. Repeated offenses could result in a possible penalty escalation and could also be subject to RPGA investigation.

UNSPORTING CONDUCT

This section deals with unsporting conduct at RPGA events. A player does not have to be actively involved in a slot to receive a penalty for unsporting conduct.

MINOR DISRUPTION [UNSPORTING CONDUCT]

Definition: Minor unsporting conduct is defined as behavior that may be disruptive to a person in the RPGA play area, but that has no significant impact on the operation of sessions or the event.

Examples: (A) A player uses excessively vulgar and profane language.

(B) A player repeatedly and inappropriately demands to a GM that another player receive a penalty or penalty increase for an infraction.

Philosophy: Different levels of unsporting conduct should be penalized accordingly. The Senior GM is always the final authority on what constitutes unsporting conduct and is free to interpret the guidelines as he or she sees fit.

Penalty: In all case the offending player should receive a caution. Repeated offenses could result in a possible penalty escalation and could also be subject to RPGA investigation.

MAJOR DISRUPTION [UNSPORTING CONDUCT]

Definition: Major unsporting conduct is defined as behavior disruptive to a session's play, or to player or players, but that does not cause delays nor does it include any form of physical contact or significant emotional distress.

Examples: (A) A player repeatedly argues with a GM about rules interpretation.

(B) A player fails to obey the instructions of a GM or other RPGA official.

Philosophy: Different levels of unsporting conduct should be penalized accordingly. The Senior GM is always the final authority on what constitutes unsporting conduct and uses his or her discretion in interpreting and applying the guidelines.

Penalty: In all case the offending player should receive a warning. Repeated offenses could result in a possible penalty escalation and could also be subject to RPGA investigation.

SEVERE DISRUPTION [UNSPORTING CONDUCT]

Definition: Severe unsporting conduct is defined as behavior disruptive to a player or players in the RPGA play area that causes delays, and may include any form of physical contact or significant emotional distress.

Examples: (A) A player pulls a chair from beneath another player, causing him or her to fall to the ground.

(B) A player argues in an excessive, belligerent and abusive manner with a GM after he or she made a final ruling.

(C) A player threatens any form of physical violence.

Philosophy: Different levels of unsporting conduct should be penalized accordingly. The Senior GM is always the final authority on what constitutes unsporting conduct and uses his or her discretion in interpreting and applying the guidelines.

Penalty: In all cases a session ejection with possible immediate escalation to play area ejection based on severity. Repeated offense results in an immediate RPGA play area ejection if not warranting so in the first offense. A player is also subject to RPGA investigation and possible suspension.

CHEATING

This section deals with intentionally committed infractions that are not encouraged or condoned by the RPGA.

BRIBERY [CHEATING]

Definition: A player attempts to determine the outcome of a game by way monetary or reward incentives.

Examples: (A) An RPGA member offers cash for adventure advantages.

(B) An RPGA member offers LIVING FORCE certificates, in return for adventure advantages.

Philosophy: Bribery disrupts the integrity of games at the most basic levels and is therefore strictly forbidden.

Penalty: Game Ejection. Repeated offenses could result in a possible penalty escalation and could also be subject to RPGA investigation.

OTHER CHEATING [CHEATING]

Definition: This category includes any intentional infraction that does not fall into the category of bribery and happens during play.

Examples: (A) A player deliberately miscalls the roll of the dice in his or her favor.

(B) A player deliberately fails to track their life total in a game.

(C) A player intentionally miscalls character information to gain success and/or character benefit.

Philosophy: At all times, the guiding principle is ensuring the players have a good gaming experience. Cheating in all its various guises is a very serious situation and should not be tolerated.

Penalty: The player receives an immediate warning. Taking a player to one side and letting them know of the violation and penalty should be a priority when it happens, is noticed or the first convenient point after notice. This action should not be done in such a way as to disrupt the rest of players at the session or highlight the infraction to the other players. Once the slot is finished all acts of cheating should be brought immediately to the Senior GMs attention. Repeated offenses will result in a penalty escalation and be subject to RPGA investigation.

FRAUD

This section deals with intentionally fraudulent activities and infractions that are not encouraged, condoned or tolerated in any way.

MINOR FRAUD [FRAUD]

Definition: A player intentionally misrepresents rules, procedures, personal information, RPGA status, multiple accounts or any other relevant information.

Examples: (A) A player uses a fake name and RPGA number when registering for a slot.

(B) A player signs up multiple family members without their knowledge or fictitious people as members, to gain extra benefits for themselves.

Philosophy: There is zero tolerance for this type of activity.

Penalty: Session ejection. Offenses will be subject to RPGA investigation and possibly escalated penalties.

MAJOR FRAUD [FRAUD]

Definition: Defrauding the RPGA data system in order to gain advantages for character or personal gain.

Examples: (A) A player creates multiple RPGA accounts to deliberately order RPGA adventures to use for their own character enhancement.

(B) A player deliberately plays in an adventure they have previously been a GM for to maximize their character advantage.

Philosophy: There should be zero tolerance for this type of activity.

Penalty: Game Ejection if detected at an event. Offenses are subject to RPGA investigation and possibly escalated penalties, including suspension.

SEVER FRAUD [FRAUD]

Definition: Creating or distributing fraudulent game or membership material, be they adventures, certificates, membership cards, or RPGA event rules or guidelines.

Examples: (A) A player arrives at a campaign session with a photocopied certificate detailing a powerful item obviously not appropriate to the character level.

(B) A player arrives at a campaign session with a duplicated certificate detailing an item the player had lost.

Philosophy: Players must always have a reasonable expectation that the documents they use to play in games at RPGA-sanctioned events are authentic, valid and binding. When they are not, it may adversely effect their play experience.

Penalty: Play area ejection if detected at an event. Offenses are subject to RPGA investigation and possibly escalated penalties, including suspension.

2. APPLYING PENALTIES AND REPEAT OFFENSES

Once an infraction is identified, and penalty is applied. In many instances, the infraction description not only gives the recommended penalty, but also gives guidelines on when the penalty should be applied; for infractions that don't, use the following guidelines.

For infractions that don't disrupt game play, or grant a player an unfair advantage during game play, apply the penalty after game play is over. If the infraction does disrupt game play, and/or grants a player an unfair advantage during play, apply the penalties immediately.

If the infraction is brought to a GM's attention after the fact (that is, after the session it took place), the knowledge of the infraction and the penalty for the infraction should be communicated at the first available opportunity. If the player who committed the infraction is involved in play, a GM can wait until the session is over to communicate the infraction and penalty, if the penalty is not a game area ejection or does not involve the session said player is participating in. If not, communicate the infraction and penalty immediately. Outstanding infractions should be dealt with before the event closure in all cases.

A player does not need to receive an RPGA play-area ejection or game ejection to be subject to an RPGA investigation.

The recommended penalty for the first offense is listed in the Penalty section of each infraction. For the second offense of the same infraction, the next highest penalty is recommended (see Definitions of Penalties section, below). Session ejections from accumulated infractions are subject to further RPGA investigation and possible additional penalties. Similarly, committing the same infraction over the course of multiple sessions at the show may result in a play area ejection.

3. REPORTING INCIDENTS

For infractions that warrant a warning or more server penalty, the senior GM must report the details to RPGA Headquarters (RPGA HQ). A *GM Incident Report* form should be completed and submitted to RPGA HQ either by fax or regular mail within eight (8) days of the incident.

A *Player Incident Report Form* is required for all correspondence and comment to RPGA HQ regarding any incident by the player or players involved. Note that this form is not for in-game decisions (for exam-

ple, character death) and that the ruling from the GM at the event is final. The form is provided for official player feedback and comment pertaining to an individual's reported offense.

Please submit all correspondence to e-mail: rpgagm@wizards.com; or by mail: RPGA Program Manager, Wizards of the Coast, 1801 Lind Ave. SW, Renton, WA 98055; or by Fax: (425) 687-8287

4. DEFINITION OF PENALTIES

Caution

This is the lowest level of penalty that can be given. A caution is a verbal warning given to a player by a session GM, Senior GM or Appeals GM. The caution must explain the infraction and the consequences if the infraction is repeated (usually a warning, see below). A caution should be reported to the Senior GM, but does not need to be reported to RPGA HQ by way of a *GM Incident Report*.

Warning

The second tier of penalty, a warning is officially tracked by the RPGA. The purpose of a warning is to alert GMs and players involved that a problem has occurred and to keep a permanent record of the infraction in the RPGA Penalty Database. A warning can be issued by a session GM, an Appeals GM, and a Senior GM, and must be reported to the Senior GM, so that he or she can report it to RPGA HQ via the *GM Incident Report*. Warnings must also be communicated to the player(s) they are issued to, explaining the infractions as well as possible consequences if the infractions are repeated (usually a session ejection, see below).

Session Ejection

The third tier of penalty, a warning is always given with this penalty. When this penalty is applied, the player is removed from his or her current session. Players still receive whatever character rewards and prizes they have earned in event sessions played before the infraction that provoked the session ejection.

A session ejection results in the player receiving no prizes (if any) and receives no additional awards such as player rewards points, character experience, or character wealth. This result applies for the game in which the incident occurred, and for subsequent games in cases where the game ejection is not given immediately during the incident.

Session ejection is recommended for severe unsport-

ing conduct and severe cases of other cheating. Only the Senior GM or an Appeals GM may administer session ejections. Senior GMs or Appeals GM may take this action after the session GM brings the infraction to his or her attention. Additionally, the Senior GM is responsible for reporting the session ejection and its accompanying warning to RPGA HQ. The Senior GM should also report the incident to other show management that the ejection may effect (for example, the Gen Con event staff, or other convention event staff for conventions that host an RPGA event as part of their show's programming).

When a player receives a session ejection during a tournament where results from multiple sessions are rolled together to produce one set of standings, the ejected player is removed from the overall standings. All players in the tournament who were placed lower than the ejected player advance one spot in the standings. Any player advancing in the standings as a result, is entitled to any prizes that the new standing offers. If the session ejection takes place after a cut is made (such as in the D&D® Open tournament at Gen Con), no additional players advance in place of the disqualified player(s) although such players advance in the standings for prize purposes only.

In the case of team games, if any member of the team receives a session ejection then the whole team will be disqualified if the session ejection results with the team being beneath the required number of team members for that event. Substitutes cannot be brought in to replace an ejected team member.

Ejection from RPGA Play Area

A severe fourth-tier of penalty, a warning is always given with this penalty. When a play area ejection penalty is applied, the player is removed from the RPGA play area. The player still receives whatever prizes and rewards he or she has earned before the ejection.

Play area ejection results in the player receiving no prizes (if involved in a game in progress) and receiving no additional awards (such as D&D Player Reward points; character experience or wealth). Play-area ejection is recommended for extreme unsporting conduct such as actual or threatened physical abuse, extreme and continued disturbance of other players and cheating.

Only the Senior GM or Appeals GM may administer a play area ejection. The Senior GM or Appeals GM may take this action after the session GM brings the infraction to their attention. Additionally, the Senior

GM is responsible for reporting the play area ejection and its accompanying warning to RPGA HQ. The Senior GM must inform the event organizer responsible for the permanent tracking of the warning.

The player is not allowed to participate in further RPGA games for the duration of the event and is not allowed to return to the RPGA play area under any circumstances.

When a player receives an RPGA play area ejection during a tournament where results from multiple sessions are aggregated to produce one set of standings, the ejected player is removed from the overall standings. All players in the tournament who were placed lower than the ejected player advance one spot in the standings. Any player advancing in the standings as a result is entitled to any prizes that the new standing would offer. If the play-area ejection takes place after a cut is made (such as in the D&D Open tournament at Gen Con), no additional players advance toward to finale, in place of the disqualified player(s) although players do advance in the standings for prize purposes only.

In the case of team games, if any member of the team receives an RPGA play-area ejection then the whole team is disqualified if the ejection results in the team being beneath the required number of team members for that event. Substitutes team members cannot be brought in to replace an ejected team member, in any circumstance.

APPENDIX 1: CONTACT INFORMATION

RPGA website: www.wizards.com/rpga

E-mail: rpgagm@wizards.com (RPGA GM certification and training administrator)

Phone: (800) 324-6496 (Wizards of the Coast Game Support)

Mail: RPGA GM Program Manager, Wizards of the Coast, 1801 Lind Ave. SW, Renton, WA 98055.

Fax: (425) 687-8287