

Avoiding Pitfalls: Handling Traps

The question naturally arises of how Legend handles traps. We want them to work during combat; we want them to work in place of combat. This means they need to be brutal without being totally deadly. They also need to operate inside the encounter level (EL) system, which limits them but also forces them to be powerful enough to threaten parties on their own. Thus, traps, like monsters, have an EL that determines their capabilities. This means that traps count as encounters, even without accompanying monsters.

These rules cover most traps. Complex gauntlets will be presented later with a new kind of skill game, and the GM may need to specially craft some of those. However, these drop-and-go traps will address most dungeoneering needs and expand the tactical depth of your combat encounters.

If you want to use traps as filler or segues in a dungeon and for the effects of such traps to affect players meaningfully beyond the scope of a single encounter, we'll also be releasing a skill-game to handle these situations more effectively than this approach to traps would.

Rules for Traps

Traps are generally part of the terrain. Abilities, such as the Scourge Legendary ability, that seriously alter the terrain can affect traps under EL 10. Above EL 11, traps are typically protected by wards or other precautions.

Traps come in two major types: Concealed Traps, the standard for a dungeon delve, and Open Hazards, which include everything from lava pits to ancient and deadly gear works. Concealed Traps follow all the normal rules for traps. Open Hazards follow these rules, with some changes, noted below.

Open Hazards

Many dungeons are dominated by enormous lava pits, sprawling spike traps, or just poor construction standards. We call these Open Hazards. Open Hazards occupy twice as many squares as other traps, are automatically detected, and cannot be disarmed, destroyed or otherwise deactivated, except where noted otherwise. Open Hazards have no recharge time. Creatures who remain in the area suffer the effect again at the beginning of their turns.

Generally, players should be able to overcome open hazards with enough preparation and knowledge. Such knowledge can usually be obtained with knowledge checks. Open Hazards can range from window dressing to brutally assured total party kills. Open Hazards that cover chokepoints or the majority of an encounter's battlefield increase the EL of the trap by at least 50% and should not be used regularly.

Triggering Traps

Traps, fundamentally, are all about going off. This can range from a hail of deadly arrows to a seeping poison cloud. Regardless, traps at the end of the day are defined by what happens when you trigger them. For the purposes of determining if a player is going to trigger a given trap, traps occupy a number of contiguous squares called the trap's area. Any creature that enters a trap's area triggers the trap, suffering that trap's effect. The square of the trap's area the creature enters is called the triggered square. Some traps also require saves. Once a trap has triggered, it cannot trigger again for until a number of [Rounds] have passed, given as the trap's Recharge, unless otherwise specified.

With some time and effort, players may be able to circumvent a trap that they've seen operate even if they can't disarm or destroy it.

Detecting Traps

If a player's comes within [Close] range of a trap and his or her Awareness exceeds a trap's DC, that player automatically detects the trap. Otherwise, a party may make a number of rolls given on Table 1 to detect a trap. These rolls can be Perception, Engineering, or Larceny rolls, and are compared against the DCs of any traps within [Close] range. The first roll requires no action, and each player may make the roll. The party uses the highest result.

After the first roll, even if there are no opponents present or known to the players, the players roll initiative and play proceeds in [Rounds], with turns in order of initiative. Players may continue to make rolls, but only one roll can be made per [Round] by a given player, and each roll must be made as part of a move action or as a swift action.

A player may also spend a standard action to gain a +2 bonus to all checks and to Awareness to detect traps until the end of his or her turn. If the player knows the general vicinity or nature of a trap in advance, he or she gains an additional +3 bonus to all checks and to Awareness to detect the trap.

Disarming Traps

Players can attempt to disarm any trap they have detected. A party may make a number of rolls given on Table 1 to disarm a trap. Only one roll can be made per [Round] by a given player, and each roll must be made as a standard action or two consecutive move actions, which may be spent over multiple [Rounds]. You can use Knowledge, Engineering, Athletics, or Larceny. Other skills may be used at GM discretion. If a party fails all the rolls to disarm a trap, the trap becomes jammed, unable to be disarmed. Attempts to disarm a trap can be made against any of a trap's squares.

Destroying Traps

Players can attempt to destroy any trap that has been triggered. Otherwise, a player can only attempt to destroy a trap if his or her Awareness exceeds the trap's DC. A trap is destroyed when its hit points are reduced to 0. Attacks against traps can target any of a trap's squares, automatically hit, and traps automatically fail saving throws.

Breaking and Building Traps

Traps can occupy the same squares as other traps, but GMs should generally avoid this as it's pretty unsporting and may seriously throw off EL expectations. GMs may always use fewer squares for a trap.

Traps do not last forever. They require maintenance, reloading, or even convection heating (to keep lava from solidifying). Legend does not cover this maintenance, but GMs may wish to make changes based on these considerations.

Building traps is hard, and takes a lot of time. Most traps aren't portable, and those that are are available with the Professional Soldier track. GMs can decide if more traditional emplaced traps, as described here, are available for players.

The majority of traps cause [HP reduction], instead of damage, which lasts until the end of the [Encounter] unless otherwise removed. If your maximum HP is reduced below your current HP, your current HP is also reduced. Otherwise, your current HP is unaffected.

*Table 1 –
Trap Stats
by Encounter
Level*

Encounter Level	Squares	Skill DC	Save DC	Rolls	HP	UAM	Maximum Ability Tier	Recharge (Rounds)
½	4	10	13	3	10	3	1	3
1	4	12	13	3	15	3	1	3
2	6	14	14	3	20	3	1	3
3	6	15	15	3	25	4	1	3
4	8	16	16	3	35	4	2	3
5	8	18	16	2	40	4	2	3
6	10	19	18	2	45	5	2	2
7	10	20	18	2	50	5	2	2
8	12	21	19	2	60	5	2	2
9	12	22	20	2	65	6	3	2
10	13	24	21	1	70	6	3	2
11	13	25	21	1	75	6	3	2
12	14	26	23	1	80	7	3	1
13	14	27	23	1	90	7	3	1
14	15	28	24	1	100	7	4	1
15	15	30	25	1	100	8	4	1
16	16	31	26	1	100	8	4	1
17	16	32	26	1	100	8	4	1
18	16	33	28	1	100	9	4	1
19	16	34	28	1	120	9	4	0
20	16	36	30	1	140	10	4	0

Trap Abilities

1st Tier

Alarm: Triggering this trap generates an effect like noises or lights, alerting other creatures or activating other traps. The exact effects of this depend on the scenario but should generally cause other threats to materialize.

Burn: Triggering this trap causes any of a variety of effects, such as shooting arrows from the walls, sending mammoth skulls cascading from the ceiling, creating spikes on the floor, or creating some other imminent violent threat, inflicting [HP reduction] equal to twice the sum of the trap's EL and UAM.

Flashbang: Triggering this trap creates a disorienting explosion of bright lights and loud noises, inflicting [Blinded] for one [Round]. A successful Fortitude save negates this effect. This trap may also draw the attention of any nearby guards.

Sticky Goop: Triggering this trap covers its victims in an unpleasant, immobilizing sludge, inflicting [Entangled] for two [Rounds]. A successful Reflex save negates this effect.

Obscuring Mist: Triggering this trap releases a thick fog, creating an obscuring mist, as the spell, centered on the triggered square, with a duration of UAM [Rounds].

2nd Tier

Shielding: This trap cannot be triggered. This trap protects other traps from tampering by intruders, granting all other traps in the current encounter a +2 bonus to their DCs until it is disarmed or destroyed. This bonus does not stack with bonuses from other Shielding traps.

Weakening Poison: Triggering this trap fires envenomed darts, fills the air with poison gas, or otherwise afflicts creatures, inflicting [HP reduction] equal to the sum of the trap's EL and UAM the next time the triggering creature takes damage or triggers a trap other than a Weakening Poison trap before the end of the [Encoun-

ter]. This trap cannot be triggered more than three times per [Encounter]. Triggering this trap does not reveal it if it has not been detected.

Delta Generator: Triggering this trap siphons stamina as a crimson cord of energy, dealing 10 damage to the triggering creature if it is an opponent, or healing 10 hit points if it is an ally. Delta Generators are always Open Hazards.

Claymore Mine: This trap cannot be triggered except as an immediate action by its owner, a creature in the encounter designated at the start of the [Encounter]. Its owner must be within [Close] range to trigger this trap. Triggering this trap detonates the mine, dealing damage equal to the sum of four times the trap's EL and twice its UAM. Claymore mines cannot be triggered more than once per [Encounter]. Claymore mines are most suitable for those of a traditional mindset regarding how many pieces they want their foes in. Many use their unique triggering method to attempt to get as many opponents inside affected squares as possible.

Blast: Triggering this trap results in something like a burst of flames or spinning blades that race down a hallway, dealing damage equal to twice this trap's EL.

Smash Trap: Triggering this trap causes blunt-force trauma by such devices as swinging hammers, rolling boulders, or shooting stones, inflicting [Prone], and [HP reduction] equal to this trap's EL. Some traps are simply smashing.

Acid: Triggering this trap releases a caustic spray that sears and distracts its victims, inflicting [Flat-footed] for one [Round], and [HP reduction] equal to level + UAM.

Sticky Gel: Triggering this trap coats the unfortunate victim in a rapidly-hardening, constrictive gelatin, inflicting [Slowed] for two [Rounds], and [HP reduction] equal to this trap's EL. A successful Reflex save negates the [Slowed] condition.

3rd Tier

Reverse Gravity: Triggering this trap tosses anyone without a fly speed into the air, reducing the move speed of any triggering creature without a fly speed to zero for UAM [Rounds], or until it escapes the triggered square. A triggering creature with a fly speed is instead [Checked] for one [Round].

Drifting Minefield: Triggering this trap detonates one of the many component mines, inflicting 5 [HP reduction] and destroying the triggered square, reducing the trap's size by 1. This trap recharges immediately. At the start of each [Round], each square of this trap may move up to 10 ft. This trap is always an Open Hazard.

Rocks Fall: Triggering this trap makes rocks fall on pesky adventures, inflicting [Battered] for three [Rounds], and [HP reduction] equal to the trap's EL. Rumors of its lethality have been greatly exaggerated.

Thrust Grid: Triggering this trap releases a powerful shockwave, inflicting [Blown Away] in a single fixed direction chosen when the trap is placed, and [HP reduction] equal to the trap's EL.

Deadly Neurotoxin: Triggering this trap afflicts a creature with painful, debilitating spasms, inflicting [HP reduction] equal to the sum of the trap's EL and UAM, and reducing the triggering creature's movement speed by half for one [Round]. This movement speed reduction does not stack. Deadly Neurotoxin cannot be detected until it has been triggered, and recharges immediately. Deadly Neurotoxin is always a Concealed Trap.

Turret: Triggering this trap releases a flurry of rockets, bolts, bullets, or even magical projectiles, inflicting [HP reduction] equal to the trap's EL to all opponents in any of its squares. Turrets are always Open Hazards, but they occupy quadruple the number of squares as a normal trap instead of double for being an Open Hazard.

Force Wall: Triggering this trap summons a barricade of pure magical energy, creating a wall of force, as the spell, with a duration of three [Rounds], and up to half the trap's unoccupied squares as the trap's area.

4th tier

Crushing: Triggering this trap mashes adventurers between suddenly mobile walls, floors, or ceilings, inflicting [Stunned] for two [Rounds], and [HP reduction] equal to the sum of the trap's EL and UAM. A successful Fortitude save negates the [Stunned] condition.

Ripping: Triggering this trap exposes a creature to an array of blades like so many gnashing teeth dripping with poisons or arcane energies, inflicting [HP reduction] equal to three times the trap's UAM, which does not expire until the end of the [Scene] (instead of the end of the [Encounter]).

Tearing: Triggering this trap unleashes a bloody whirlwind of telekinetic magics, inflicting [Battered] for one [Round], and [HP reduction] equal to the sum of the trap's EL and UAM. Any square the triggering creature moves through within [Close] range of this trap while [Battered] becomes part of this trap.