

HIRERED HANDS

Expanded Rules for Hirelings



DUNGEON DELVING IS A DANGEROUS TASK, and it's all the more dangerous without adequate lighting or when burdened by a full backpack. When adventurers need someone to watch their horse or bear a torch, they employ the services of hirelings.

WRITING "JESTER" DAVID GIBSON
COLOR ART JACOB BLACKMON
EDITING JAMES HAECK
LAYOUT ERIC LIFE-PUTNAM

FINDING HIRELINGS

It's seldom difficult for adventurers to find people willing to follow them for gold. Even lesser-known adventures are often trailed by youths clamoring to polish armor or deliver messages when they arrive in a new town. Acquiring skilled hirelings is more of a challenge, requiring adventurers to seek out job postings or inquire at taverns or stores. Experienced hirelings know to advertise their services, posting bills at inns or on job boards. Larger settlements often have laborer's guilds who can match workers with adventurers.

Experienced hirelings insist on a contract that establishes the terms of service: expected duties, pay, and length of service. During negotiations, hirelings are explicit with their responsibilities, preferring not to perform other duties (excluding those arising from extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances). A hireling contracted to manage mounts will balk if asked to set-up camp every night, but will assist if everyone in the company takes a turn. Hirelings regularly asked to perform additional tasks charge a premium for their services, especially if it involves personal risk. This surcharge begins at 50% their daily fee, increasing sharply with danger.



PAYMENT

Regular payment is required to retain the services of a hireling, and unpaid hirelings quickly seek employment elsewhere. Skilled hirelings command higher prices, with seasoned hirelings typically demanding twice the rate of inexperienced hirelings, while expert hirelings ask five times the base rate.

Hirelings expect payment at regular intervals, such as each week or preassigned task. Most hirelings are willing to defer a few payments for larger lump sum when necessary—such as after selling treasure or returning to civilization. Unpaid and mistreated hirelings leave with whatever they can carry, taking goods as “payment owed.” Employers aren't expected to pay for food or lodging, but additional costs must be covered: if a journey takes longer than foretold, it's the employer's responsibility to provide rations.

TYPES OF HIRELING

Eschewing combat, hirelings defend themselves only if attacked. They stand well away from fighting, preferably outside the dungeon, or—when they must accompany the party—in an adjoining chamber. Hirelings have little interest in putting their lives at risk, but adventuring is a dangerous occupation and sometimes they attract a monster's attention, wander into a trap, or must avoid some manner of hazard.

All hirelings use the following stat blocks, modified according to speciality. Inexperienced hirelings are little more than commoners foolish enough to follow adventurers into a dungeon. Seasoned hirelings have either prior employment with adventurers or other experience that prepared them for adventuring. Expert hirelings are consummate professionals, rare individuals who have had their share of adventures but are comfortable in their role as assistant.

Hireling, Inexperienced

XP 10 (CR 0)

Unaligned Medium humanoid (any race)

Initiative: +0

DEFENSE

AC: 11 (leather)

hp: 5 (1d8 + 1)

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Club: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

STATISTICS

Str 11 (+0) **Dex** 11 (+0) **Con** 12 (+1)

Int 8 (–1) **Wis** 8 (–1) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Languages: Common

Senses: passive Perception 9

TRAITS

Defensive: When the hireling takes the Dodge action, their AC becomes at least 13 + Dex modifier.

Hireling, Seasoned

XP 50 (CR ¼)

Unaligned Medium humanoid (any race)

Initiative: +1

DEFENSE

AC: 12 (leather)

hp: 22 (5d8 + 5)

Saving Throws: Dexterity +3

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Club: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

STATISTICS

Str 11 (+0) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Con** 12 (+1)

Int 9 (–1) **Wis** 10 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Languages: Common

Senses: passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Defensive: When the hireling takes the Dodge action, their AC becomes at least 13 + Dex modifier.

Hardy: While dying, in place of a death saving throw the hireling can choose to become stable. Once used, this trait can't be used again until after a long rest.

Hireling, Expert

XP 200 (CR 1)

Unaligned Medium humanoid (any race)

Initiative: +1

DEFENSE

AC: 12 (leather)

hp: 65 (10d8 + 20)

Saving Throws: Dexterity +3, Wisdom +3

OFFENSE

Speed: 30ft.

Melee Attack—Club: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

STATISTICS

Str 11 (+0) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Con** 14 (+2)

Int 10 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Languages: Common

Senses: passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Defensive: When the hireling takes the Dodge action, their AC becomes at least 13 + Dex modifier.

Evasive: When the hireling attempts a Dexterity saving throw against an effect that deals damage, the hireling takes no damage on a success, and half damage on a failure.

Hardy: While dying, in place of a death saving throw the hireling can choose to become stable. Once used, this trait can't be used again until after a long rest.



APOTHECARY

Rate: 5 gp/day

Known for the assorted tonics and serums, apothecaries are sometimes mistaken for alchemists, but their services are purely medicinal.

Apothecaries use a hireling stat block but have an Intelligence score of 14, possess a healer's kit, and are proficient in the Nature skill and with alchemists' supplies. Apothecaries gain the following traits:

- **Administer Treatment.** An apothecary can spend one minute caring for a patient. An ally treated by the apothecary can make a new saving throw against a poison or disease. This expends a use of the apothecary's healer's kit.
- **Prepare Remedies.** While traveling or adventuring, an apothecary can spend 10 days brewing an antitoxin or creating a new healer's kit. In a natural environment, the apothecary doesn't need to purchase raw supplies to craft these items.

COOK

Rate: 1 gp/day, plus 1 gp/meal served

Preparing meals over a campfire is an entirely different skillset than cooking in a kitchen. Warm meals are a luxury many adventures forgo, but consuming only preserved rations can lead to ill health.

Cooks use a hireling stat block but are proficient with cook's utensils and gain the following trait.

- **Hearty Cooking.** Any creature who eats a meal prepared by a cook during a rest where they spend Hit Dice regains an additional 1d4 hit points.

INTERPRETER

Rate: 5 gp/day

Occasionally called "translators," interpreters are polyglots who are not only able to speak multiple languages, but quick to learn new tongues.

Interpreters use a hireling stat block but have an Intelligence score of 14, know three additional languages, and gain the following trait:

- **Linguist.** It only takes an interpreter 125 days to learn an unfamiliar language and half that to learn a language that shares a script with a known language. Additionally, an interpreter has advantage on all Wisdom (Insight) checks to comprehend a speaker's meaning, even if the language is unknown.

MINSTREL

Rate: 6 sp/day

Equally adept at performing songs and telling tales, minstrels entertain during long travels and recount adventurers' heroic deeds.

Minstrels use a hireling stat block but have a Charisma score of 14, are proficient with three musical instruments, and gain the following trait:

- **Spread Reputation.** A minstrel that spends a day in a settlement can perform songs of their employer's exploits. Until a week passes, one of the subjects of the song can choose to reroll a Charisma check in that settlement. Once this trait has been used in a settlement, it can't be used again until new tales can be told.

PORTER

Rate: 2 sp/day

Alternatively known as “bearers”, adventurers employ porters to carry supplies. Porters are used by most expeditions being to transport gear over terrain that pack animals can’t easily traverse, such as across mountains or into dungeons.

Porters use a hireling stat block, except they have a Strength score of 13 and gain the following trait:

- **Broad Shoulders.** A porter treats their Strength score as 2 points higher when calculating their carrying capacity, and has advantage on all checks made to carry heavy objects over a distance.

SCHOLAR

Rate: 10 gp/day

Scholars are specialized hirelings frequently consulted by those in search of obscure information. Scholars rarely leave civilization, but sometimes accompany adventures who need their expertise to examine ruins or immovable relics.

Scholars use a hireling stat block with the following modifications. They have an Intelligence score of 14, and are proficient in Investigation and either one additional skill (chosen from Arcana, History, or Nature) or one set of tools (chosen from alchemist’s supplies, calligrapher’s tools, or cartography tools). A scholar also gains the following trait:

- **Studious.** Whenever a scholar makes an Intelligence check to find or recall information, they may treat d20 rolls of 9 or lower as a 10.

SQUIRE

Rate: 5 sp/day

Trained to assist warriors with their gear, squires are typically youths of noble blood apprenticing to be knights. However, lowborn adventurers occasionally feign nobility and employ squires of their own. Squires remain close to their master, holding extra weapons and equipment, or picking up dropped gear.

Squires use a hireling stat block, except they have a Strength score of 12 and gain the following trait:

- **Arming.** A squire hastens donning and doffing armour, reducing the required time by half. A squire can also assist in equipping a shield; so long as a creature is within 5 feet of a friendly squire, equipping a shield is a bonus action.

A squire also loses their club attack and gains the following attack option:

- **Melee Attack—Shortsword:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

TEAMSTER

Rate: 2 sp/day

Sometimes called “pack handlers,” teamsters load and unload beasts of burden, drive wagons, and manage the feeding and grooming of pack animals.

Teamsters use a hireling stat block with but are proficient in the Animal Handling skill and with vehicles (land).

TORCHBEARER

Rate: 1 sp/day

Also known as a lantern bearer or linkboy, torchbearers provide light during expeditions to dark places, freeing their employers’ hands for other purposes.

Torchbearers use a hireling stat block and gain the following attack option:

- **Melee Attack—Torch:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 fire damage.

PERSONALITY & BACKGROUND

Hirelings should be memorable and have personality, but should also have some reason for agreeing to such dangerous work. To aid in the quick creation of a hireling, the following tables are provided.

Personality

d8 Trait

- 1 **Eager.** Always strives to please their employer.
- 2 **Fatalistic.** Believes they are helpless to enact real change.
- 3 **Stoic.** Impassive and difficult to provoke.
- 4 **Sarcastic.** Prone to wisecracks and mocking criticism.
- 5 **Excitable.** Thrilled by new sights and experiences.
- 6 **Optimistic.** Possesses a happy-go-lucky attitude regardless of the situation.
- 7 **Dull-witted.** Slow to react or process new information.
- 8 **Aggressive.** Always first to act or suggest a response.



Quirk

d20 Feature

- 1 Constantly fiddles with a brass coin.
- 2 Whittles during free moments.
- 3 Clumsily fumbles fragile objects.
- 4 Speaks in a higher pitch when excited.
- 5 Constantly reads small chapbooks.
- 6 Stutters during periods of stress.
- 7 Loves to recite folky sayings and proverbs.
- 8 Whistles when nervous.
- 9 Drinks heavily when stressed.
- 10 Has terrible eyesight.
- 11 Loves to taste new foods.
- 12 Taps their fingers on walls and furniture.
- 13 Superstitiously avoids things that cause bad luck.
- 14 Possesses an inexplicable knowledge of fine wine.
- 15 Collects commonly found items (rocks, feathers, bones, etc.).
- 16 Plays with a small knife when bored.
- 17 Hums random songs without realizing.
- 18 Loves gazing at the stars.
- 19 Doodles with charcoal on spare parchment.
- 20 Has a lucky charm they kiss for good fortune.

Background Motivation

d6 Motive

- 1 Owes money to the wrong people.
- 2 Has always wanted to be a real adventurer.
- 3 A loved family member died and now they have nothing to live for.
- 4 Loves gold and sees adventuring as a quick way to make money.
- 5 Angered a local authority figure and fears they might seek revenge.
- 6 A relationship ended spectacularly and now they want to leave town.