

Dueling In Traveller

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Dueling is accepted under Imperial law, but may not be legal within many non-Imperial jurisdictions (i.e., states, nations, worlds). The higher the Law Level the less likely the authorities will tolerate dueling, especially the lethal varieties. On the other hand, non-lethal forms of dueling are often permitted, although approval of the police or government officials may be required.

There are strict guidelines for challenging and dueling. Both parties to dueling must understand beforehand the code. Otherwise, instead of a duel the person rendering the slap may find himself in court or jail. In a duel society, a formal challenge must be given either verbally (calling another person or imputing one's personal or family honor or professional reputation) or physically (simply walking up to the person and physically slapping them across the face with a hand or glove). The insult must also be publicly witnessed.

The person accepting the insult may choose to walk away, but this would be an obvious sign of cowardliness or an admission that the insult was, in fact, true. The honorable response is to invite the offender to a duel. The person receiving the insult will contract the services of a Dueling Master (DM) to coordinate the arrangements with the other party. An invitation is also issued to the public. The DM's fees will be paid by the loser of the duel. The insulted party selects the type of weapons to be used and where and when the duel will take place. The date must be within 24 to 72 hours. The DM will provide the parties with the rules of the duel. Lethal dueling weapons include swords, one-shot dueling pistols or six-shot western style revolvers drawn from a belt holster. These are rarely used, due in large part to the local laws against manslaughter and murder. Some societies that still honor the dueling code exclude lethal dueling exempt from the law; seeing it a matter of honor among gentlemen. Non-lethal weapons include a one-on-one martial arts match, low-powered yet painful charged weapons, padded fighting staffs or sticks. Everything is done to minimize permanent damage to either party.

The duel will take place in a public field and those present will consist of the duelist, along with their seconds, the DM and a physician and/or paramedic. The role of the DM is to bring the weapons (for a fee), along with setting down the rules of the duel and insuring their observation. They will also determine who the winner. The seconds are personal friends of each duelist who are present to assist should their party fall insure they get proper and timely medical treatment. Any crowd resent will be roped off a proper distance from the match depending upon the weapons used. If the challenger loses (and is not injured or dead) they are expected to issue a public apology in front of all parties, and the crowd.

The Imperial military does not officially permit its personnel from participating in duels but non-lethal challenges are often privately held to resolve personal disputes. Getting injured in a duel is grounds for a court marshal.

Also, if the challenged is in poor health or has a significant handicap they may request that a champion fight for in their place. This could be a relative, friend or even a paid professional warrior.