Random Death in MekHQ

Death comes for all—sometimes swiftly, sometimes slowly. The **Random Death** module expands on previous systems to reinforce this unfortunate reality in your MekHQ campaigns.

A New and Improved System

Veteran players may recall that MekHQ has included random death options for years. However, these earlier systems had several issues. They weren't well documented, making it difficult for players to understand how they worked. There were a large number of options, with some applying only to specific rulesets, and it was often unclear how different settings would impact personnel. Additionally, the original random death systems were based on real-world data, specifically the **2018 U.S. census**, which, while a reasonable reference point, doesn't necessarily reflect the **BattleTech** universe.

The new **Random Death** module addresses these concerns by providing a more refined, lore-friendly system that better reflects the **BattleTech** setting. With this update, players will have a more immersive and intuitive experience when managing their personnel.

Fear the Reaper

At the start of each week, every character in your campaign has a chance to die. While it might seem strange for deaths to occur on a fixed schedule, this was a necessary design choice to reduce the processing load on large campaigns. In earlier versions, death checks were performed **daily**, but this resulted in significant performance slowdowns, especially in campaigns with many characters. By shifting to weekly checks—similar to how marriage and divorce events are handled—the system ensures a smoother gameplay experience while maintaining the intended level of realism.

Avoiding Random Death

Before a character undergoes a random death check, MekHQ first determines whether they are even **eligible** to die. Players have control over this and can manually exclude specific characters from random death. To do this, simply right-click on a character in the **Personnel** tab, navigate to **Flags**, and select the **"Excluded from Random Death"** option. Any character with this flag will never die randomly, though they can still be manually killed if the player wishes. They are also not immune to **combat-related** deaths, so a lucky exemption won't save them from a well-placed gauss slug to the cockpit.

Another way to control random death is through **age-based restrictions**. In the **Human Resources** → **Biography** → **Death** section of **Campaign Options**, there are several checkboxes that allow players to enable or disable random death for specific age groups. By default, only characters **aged 20 and older** are subject to random death. However, this setting can be adjusted if a player prefers to include younger characters in the system. Since this section contains other useful options, it is worth exploring to fine-tune how character mortality functions in your campaign.

The Death Check

Once a character is confirmed to be eligible for random death, the system calculates their **base chance of dying**. This is primarily determined by **age** and **gender**. These values have been determined using statistics

pulled from **canonical BattleTech sources**. This ensures that the life expectancy of characters aligns more closely with the universe's established lore rather than modern Earth-based demographics.

While exact numbers will fluctuate based on era and location, a character in the BattleTech universe can expect an **average life expectancy of 84 years for men and 89 years for women**, assuming no outside modifiers. These values reflect the technological and medical advancements present in much of the **Inner Sphere** while also accounting for the dangers of living in an often war-torn setting.

Age Range	Chance in 1,000,000 (per check)	
	Male	Female
0-9	4	2
10-19	9	4
20-29	17	8
30-39	20	10
40-49	30	18
50-59	70	40
60-69	149	90
70-79	385	233
80-89	1000	714
90-99	2500	2000
100+	5000	3333

Era Multiplier

With the base chance determined, we next apply the **era multiplier**. These multipliers directly adjust the base chance of death to reflect the technological advancements and varying levels of peace across different periods in the BattleTech universe. A character's life expectancy will differ significantly depending on the era they live in, as wars, medical advancements, and overall stability play a crucial role in survival.

- **Age of War (or earlier):** 1.2
- **Star League:** 0.9
- **Succession Wars:** 1.05
- **Clan Invasion:** 0.95
- **Civil War:** 0.93
- **Jihad:** 1.0
- **Republic:** 0.92
- **Dark Age:** 0.95
- **ilClan Era:** 0.85

Faction Multiplier

Once the era modifier is applied, the next step is determining the **faction multiplier**. This represents the risks associated with living in different factions. Advanced medical care, infrastructure, and general stability reduce mortality rates, whereas harsh or lawless environments increase them. This multiplier is applied directly to the modified base chance, reflecting the campaign's chosen faction.

- **Clan:** 0.85
- **Inner Sphere (Major Powers):** 0.9
- **Inner Sphere (Minor States):** 0.95
- **Periphery:** 1.0
- **Deep Periphery:** 1.3
- **Pirate:** 1.35
- **Mercenary:** 1.0

Health Multiplier

With both the **era** and **faction** multipliers factored in, we now account for **health modifiers**. A character's injuries and overall physical condition significantly impact their likelihood of dying. For each **unhealed hit**, their death chance increases by **1 + (number of hits × 0.1)**.

If **Advanced Medical** is enabled, the system uses **non-permanent injuries** instead of standard hits, but the modifier remains the same. Additionally, **permanent injuries** apply an extra **+0.25** to the multiplier, though this bonus is only applied **once**, regardless of how many permanent injuries the character has sustained.

Finally, the **health modifier** is reduced by 0.05 if the planet the campaign is stationed on has access to a **HPG**.

Death Chance Multiplier

Finally, after applying all previous modifiers, we multiply the running total by the **Death Chance Multiplier** set in **Campaign Options**. This option allows players to fine-tune the overall lethality of random death in their campaign, adjusting the final probability accordingly.

Final Equation

With all factors combined, the full equation for determining a character's **random death chance** is:

Base Chance x Era Multiplier x Faction Multiplier x Total Health Multiplier x Death Chance Multiplier