

# POWER PROFILE: ELECTRICAL POWERS



Thunderbolts were thought to be the weapons of the gods, and the powers of electricity still command godlike awe. Heroes and villains of the modern world can do far more with electrical powers than just throw lightning, of course, commanding the very power that sustains civilization and our technological infrastructure.

## ELECTRICAL DESCRIPTORS

"Electrical" is the key descriptor for the powers in this profile implying a number of different sub-conditions and side effects.

- Conductive:** Many materials, notably various metals and water, conduct electricity while others, such as rubber, are non-conductors used to insulate electrical charges. It may be possible for some electrical powers to conduct through suitable materials whereas insulators provide a circumstance bonus to resistance checks against them, or even complete immunity. Characters may be able to use the presence of conductive materials to perform power stunts with their electrical powers, particularly applying different Area modifiers to them.
- Electronic:** Electrical effects can overload or short-out electronic equipment; generally, any hit with an electrical power is worth a resistance check with a +0 modifier, shielded or surge-protected equipment gets a circumstance bonus. Failure on the check means the equipment is overloaded and non-functional until repaired. Electronic devices (effects created using the Removable modifier, as opposed to equipment) are immune to this and are only af-

fected by electrical powers that explicitly damage or counter them (see **Countering**, following). So an electrical Damage effect may overload electrical equipment but not a character's power armor (for example) unless the electrical effect is explicitly used as a countering effect.

- Grounded:** Electricity seeks the quickest route to "ground" into the earth, and so ungrounded targets (flying, for example) may gain a circumstance bonus to resistance checks against electrical powers, at the GM's option. If this is likely to cause too much trouble or overly weaken electrical powers in your game, feel free to ignore it for simplicity's sake.
- Countering:** Electrical powers are useful for countering other electrical effects, including all types of electronic or electrically-powered technology, as mentioned under **Electronic** (previously).
- Various insulating effects and materials may be able to counter electrical powers while magnetic effects may be able to contain or otherwise counter electrical effects due to the connection between the two (see the **Magnetic Powers** profile).

## ELECTRICAL FEATURES

Some potential Feature effects associated with Electrical Powers include the following:

- You can power electrical devices as if you were a battery or standard electrical outlet simply by touching or holding the device or its power cord.

## SHOCKING RANKS

Electrical energy is measured in *volts* and *megavolts* (each one million volts). A very rough guideline is to treat the measure of volts as equal to pounds on the **Measurements Table** (*Hero's Handbook*, page 11). So a 1,000 volt charge (a kilovolt) is between 800 and 1,600, equal to a rank 5 effect. Some common electrical ranks are:

- **Car battery:** 12 volts (rank -2)
- **Household current:** 120 volts (rank 2)
- **Subway third rail:** 700–1,200 volts (rank 4–5)
- **Power cable:** 100,000 volts (rank 11)
- **Lightning bolt:** 1 megavolt or more (rank 15+)

- You can generate enough static electricity to move small objects within arm's reach, weighing no more than a pound (weight rank -5) or so.
- You can do spot-welding by touch, like an arc-welder. This may also be a capability of Precise Electrical Damage effects.
- You can detect the approximate amount of electrical energy in a storage device (e.g., a battery) simply by touching it.
- You can act like a defibrillator to treat heart attack victims, automatically stabilizing their condition.
- Similarly, you may be able to jump start or reset an incapacitated construct with an electrical system.

## OFFENSIVE POWERS

Electricity has plenty of offensive potential, from massive lightning bolts to its more subtle effects on the muscles and nervous system or electrical devices.

### ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE (EMP)

You emit a powerful pulse of electromagnetic energy, overloading and damaging electronics in the area around you. Unlike a regular use of an electrical power to counter, an EMP affects all targets in the area at once. Weakened electronics do not recover without being repaired and having damaged components replaced.

Apply additional ranks of the Area modifier to extend the affected area. If you can create an EMP at a distance, add the Ranged modifier.

**EMP:** Weaken Electronics, Affects Only Objects, Broad, Burst Area, Simultaneous • 4 points per rank.

### LIGHTNING BOLT

You hurl a surge of electrical power at a target, inflicting shock and burning damage.

If you call down lightning bolts from the sky overhead, apply at least 2 ranks of the Indirect modifier.

**Lightning Bolt:** Ranged Damage (electrical) • 2 points per rank.

If you create "ball lightning"—blasting everyone in an area—apply the Burst Area modifier to your power.

**Ball Lightning:** Burst Area Ranged Damage (electrical) • 3 points per rank.

For "chain lightning"—where arcs of electricity leap from target to target before grounding out—apply the Multiattack modifier to your power.

**Chain Lightning:** Multiattack Ranged Damage (electrical) • 3 points per rank.

### LIGHTNING FLASH

A searingly bright arc of electricity flashes between your hands, potentially blinding foes looking in your direction.

**Lightning Flash:** Perception Area Cumulative Affliction  
(Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware), Limited to One Sense • 3 points per rank

### SEIZURE

You scramble the electrical impulses of a target's brain and central nervous system, causing a momentary fugue state or seizure.

**Seizure:** Perception Ranged Affliction (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 3 points per rank.

### SHOCK FIELD

You electrically charge your body, delivering a powerful shock to anyone touching you. Since the effect's Reaction is being touched, you do not have to make an attack check except to deliberately touch or hit someone else; a successful attack check to touch or hit you constitutes a successful "attack" by the shock field.

**Shock Field:** Reaction Cumulative Affliction (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 5 points per rank.

If your Shock Field uses direct current (DC) it also "locks" the target's muscles, preventing them from pulling away and continuing to inflict the effect until the target makes a successful resistance check, breaking contact.

**DC Shock Field:** Reaction Progressive Affliction (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 6 points per rank.

### TASER

You hit a target with a modulated blast of electricity that temporarily stuns the nervous system. If you have to touch the target, remove the Ranged modifier.

**Taser:** Ranged Affliction (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 2 points per rank.

## POWER PROFILE: ELECTRICAL POWERS

# DEFENSIVE POWERS

Defensive electrical powers protect against electricity while often also turning it into a weapon or resource for the defender, or use electricity to protect against other forms of attack.

## ELECTRICAL ABSORPTION

You absorb incoming electrical energy, channelling it into recovery from damage or fatigue. You may also use it to counter the fatigue of extra effort, provided you do so on your next action. The electrical energy still has its normal effect on you unless you also have a power like Electrical Immunity, which is common counterpart to this power. The Extraordinary Effort advantage is also a common trait in conjunction with this power.

**Electrical Absorption:** Reaction Healing, Bonus Effect (Can Counter Extra Effort Fatigue), Energizing, Limited to Self, Limited to Absorbed Electricity Rank, Source (Electricity) • 4 points per rank.

Alternately, you can enhance a chosen trait up to the number of points you have invested in Enhanced Trait, or the electrical attack's rank, whichever is less, with a maximum of your Enhanced Trait points, limited by power level. The enhancement occurs automatically as a reaction, then fades by 1 power point per turn until it is gone.

**Electrical Absorption:** Enhanced Trait (Fades, Reaction: When Absorbing Electricity) • 1 point per rank

## ELECTRICAL IMMUNITY

You are largely unaffected by electricity, either perfectly insulated or able to harmlessly absorb or conduct it through you. In the first case, you are an effective insulator: anyone touching you is unaffected by the electricity, as you safely ground it out. In the second case, you are an efficient conductor: electricity does not harm you, but anyone touching you is affected by it, allowing you to, for example, grab a "live" source of electrical power like a cable and inflict electrical damage by touch like the Shock Field power (previously). Either option is just a descriptor with no change in cost. If you can choose between both from round to round, apply 1 rank of the Variable Descriptor modifier.

**Electrical Immunity:** Immunity 10 (Electrical Effects) • 10 points.

If you are merely resistant to electricity, apply the Limited to Half Effect modifier to the Immunity.

**Electrical Resistance:** Immunity 10 (Electrical Effects), Limited to Half Effect • 5 points.

If you are immune to electricity, but able to conduct it through your body and redirect it, apply the Reflect and Redirect modifiers.

**Electrical Conductor:** Immunity 10 (Electrical Effects), Reflect, Redirect • 30 points.

## ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD

A field of electromagnetic repulsion surrounds you, deflecting incoming attacks.

**Electromagnetic Field:** Protection, Sustained • 1 point per rank.

## MOVEMENT POWERS

Lightning is associated with speed, and electrical powers may grant various means of getting around quickly. Some electrically-powered characters may have true superhuman speed in conjunction with their electrical powers, see the **Speed Powers** profile for more on these options.

## ARC RIDING

You "ride" arcs of electricity through the air, leaping from one spot to another like a spark.

**Arc Riding:** Leaping • 1 point per rank.

## ELECTRO-FLIGHT

An electromagnetic field allows you to fly through the air.

**Electro-Flight:** Flight • 2 points per rank.

Electro-Flight may be Limited in various ways. The most common are for the flight path to follow electrical lines, allowing you to fly along paths of current. Another is for the power to require masses of metal to "lock on" to, allowing for flight in urban environments, but limiting it outside of them, for example. Either of these reduces the power's cost by 1 point per rank.

## LIGHTNING FLIGHT

You transform into a bolt of lightning, disappearing in a flash and reappearing almost instantly some distance away. The transformation lasts for only a moment, although characters with this power often have the Electrical Form power as well.

**Lightning Flight:** Teleport, Accurate, Easy, Extended, Limited (must pass through intervening space in lightning form) • 4 points per rank.

A version of this power is the Network Jump from **Tech Powers**: rather than flying like a bolt of lightning, you transform into electricity and move instantly through the power grid or communications network, reforming at your destination. This version is generally not Easy and has Medium (Networks) rather than Limited.

## UTILITY POWERS

Control over electricity is useful for a number of things from the practical powering of devices or shedding light to causing a blackout or even transforming bodily into electrical energy.

## ARCLIGHT

You can create a point of electric incandescence bright enough to shed light over a wide area.

**Arclight:** Environment (Light) • 1 point per rank

## BLACKOUT

You drain and shut down all electric power in an area around you, deactivating all electrical equipment. Unlike an EMP (previously) you do not damage or overload equipment, simply deprive it of power, so things return to normal when the effect ends.

Apply additional ranks of the Area modifier to extend the affected area. If you can cause blackouts at a distance, remove the Close Range modifier.

**Blackout:** Nullify Electronics, Broad, Burst Area, Concentration, Simultaneous, Close Range • 5 points per rank.

## ELECTRICAL FORM

You transform into a being of living electricity. Your electrical form is largely immune to physical harm but still affected by energy. Although it looks like crackling electricity, it is harmless to touch unless you also add the Shock Field power (previously). Your electrical form may grant other powers as well, such as Electrical Absorption, Electrical Immunity, Electro-Flight, and Lightning Flight.

**Electrical Form:** Insubstantial 3 (electricity) • 15 points.

## ELECTROSENSE

You can sense electrical energy and its flow. Amongst other things, this power is useful for detecting electrical equipment operating in your vicinity and locating sources of power like buried cables, wiring inside walls, and the like. Picking up the electrical activity of a human body is difficult: a -15 modifier on the Perception check. Apply Extended to sense over greater distances and Accurate to use your Electrosense to target attacks in combat.

**Electrosense:** Detect Electricity, Ranged, Acute • 3 points per rank.

## ELECTRO-SHAPING

You shape electricity into different distinct shapes, from walls and rings to "lightning cages." Since the electrical Damage effect is Selective, you can choose whether a target is affected by the electricity or not (left in an open space inside a ring or cage, for example). The shape lasts for as long as you concentrate. When you stop, it dissipates harmlessly.

**Electro-Shaping:** Ranged Shapeable Area Electrical Damage, Concentration Duration, Selective • 5 points per rank, +1 point per rank per +1 volume rank

## LIGHTNING CREATURES

You can summon or create semi-independent creatures formed out of "living electricity" that obey your commands. The creatures you summon are not truly alive, merely animated masses of energy. They can look like virtually anything, from humanoids to "storm spirits" or animated lightning bolts. You can apply the various modifiers for the Summon effect to get additional creatures or to make them more active or capable (removing the minion type from the template, for example).

**Lightning Creatures:** Summon Lightning Creature 8 • 90-point minion (see following template) • 16 points.

## LIGHTNING CREATURES

PLB • MRG

STR 0 STA — AGL 2 DEX 0 FGT 0 INT — AWE 0 PRE —

**Powers:** **Electrical Form** (Insubstantial 3, Protection 8, Permanent, Innate), **Electro-Flight** (Flight 2, 8 MPH), **Shock Field** (Reaction Affliction 8 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)), **Unliving** (Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects))

**Skills:** Close Combat: Unarmed 8 (+8)

**Offense:** Initiative +0, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 0, plus Affliction 8)

**Defense:** Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 8, Will 8

**Totals** Abilities -26 + Powers 88 + Advantages 0 + Skills 4 + Defenses 24 = 90

## STATIC ELECTRICITY

You can generate a powerful charge of static electricity, allowing you to attract, repel, and move objects around. "Realistic" versions of this power should be quite limited in terms of rank (perhaps even no more than the option under Features) but four-color characters might have electrostatic powers able to move massive amounts of weight.

**Static Electricity:** Move Object • 2 points per rank.

## OTHER ELECTRICAL POWERS

Electricity is pervasive in the modern world, and connected with other forces, including the full electromagnetic spectrum. Many of the powers in other *Power Profiles* may be considered electrical powers as well, depending on the descriptors and nature of the character's power over electricity.

- Electricity is closely related to magnetism, so characters with electrical powers may have **Magnetic Powers** as well, grouping the two together as "Electromagnetic Powers". They may even extend things further out into the EM-spectrum, touching upon **Light Powers** and **Radiation Powers** as well.
- If **Mental Powers** are linked to manipulating or controlling the electrical impulses in the brain, there

may be a connection between them and electrical powers, and a character may have both.

- Various **Tech Powers** involve what amounts to precise control over electricity and electrical impulses, especially involving computers and networks.
- Some **Weather Powers** involve electricity in the form of lightning or atmospheric electrostatic charges.

## ELECTRICAL COMPLICATIONS

A powerful and useful tool, electrical power comes with potential complications as well. The following are some complications associated with characters with electrical powers.

### ACCIDENT

Accidents happen and, in a modern world where everything runs on electronics, it's fairly easy for electrical powers to short-out or overload computers, electrical wiring, and power systems, causing blackouts, system crashes, and all of their associated problems. Some areas might treat the appearance of an electrical controller like the arrival of a sudden and powerful thunderstorm, and wouldn't be far from the truth.

### ADDICTION

An unusual addiction for a character with electrical powers is to electricity itself: the character might need to "feed" on electric power, or could simply be addicted to the "rush" of absorbing or conducting electricity. Perhaps it stimulates the brain's pleasure centers or the user's nervous system in some fashion.

Alternately, electrical controllers might be addicted to substances which help to control their powers, especially if they stem from an over-abundance of bio-electricity. Perhaps the character's electrical powers stimulate the brain's *pain* centers instead, so using them is agonizing without pain-killing medication.

### DISABILITY

The human body runs on tiny electrical impulses, and the brain is a controlled storm of neural activity. Electrical powers might interfere with these impulses in some fashion, or changes in the body's bio-electricity could lead to the development of electrical powers.

Perhaps the character has an over-abundance of bio-electricity and failure to discharge it over time leads to seizures and mental confusion. The character's nerves and neurons might lack the normal level of conductivity to function properly, but an experimental treatment not only restores their function, but gives the character the power to channel excess electricity in various ways.

### PHOBIA

Control over electricity can lead to fears connected to the power or its loss. For example, the character might develop hydrophobia (fear of water) due to a vulnerability (see **Weakness**, following) or become afraid of power outages or blackouts due to a dependence on electric power.

Similarly, fears might be connected with trauma involving the acquisition of electrical powers. A character who gained powers from a freak lightning strike could have a fear of storms, while another who gained powers from an accidental electrocution could be afraid of damaged and sparking technical equipment, in spite of being immune to actual harm from electricity in both cases.

### POWER LOSS

Electricity is the very definition of "power" in modern, technological terms, and electrical powers can suffer from Power Loss in a number of different ways.

Surrounding the character in insulating materials may prevent any use or transmission of electrical power, and may even cut the character off from the source of the power, unless it is internally generated. For example, a character who absorbs excess static charge from the air and surrounding power sources could be cut off from them, draining stores of electrical power.

Conversely, surrounding the character in conductive material, or using electrically conductive equipment such as power cables might draw off stores of electricity, draining the character like a battery faster than the stored electrical energy can be replenished.

Lastly, some effects might "short-out" a character's electric powers such as dousing with water, strong magnetic fields, even atmospheric conditions like sunspots or solar flares. Until the condition is reversed, the character's powers are unavailable.

### WEAKNESS

Electricity-based powers can lead to a number of weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Characters may be vulnerable to effects which short-out their powers or cause some form of feedback. The most common is simple dousing with water (an effective conductor of electricity). In addition to Power Loss (previously) water might cause an electrical character to suffer conditions ranging from being dazed or stunned to incapacitated, much like an Affliction effect.

A character with electrical powers might be dependent upon electricity, beyond just an Addiction (previously): without an opportunity to "recharge" the character might suffer from fatigue or other conditions, eventually becoming incapacitated, perhaps even dying.

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## MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS POWER PROFILE: ELECTRICAL POWERS

**Design and Writing:** Steve Kenson

**Editing and Development:** Jon Leitheusser

**Art Direction and Graphic Design:** Hal Mangold

**Interior Art:** Sean Izaakse

**Playtesters:** Darren Bulmer, Leon Chang, James Dawsey, Jack Norris, Aaron Sullivan

**Publisher:** Chris Pramas

**Green Ronin Staff:** Bill Bodden, Joe Carriger, Will Hindmarch, Steve Kenson, Jon Leitheusser, Nicole Lindroos, Hal Mangold, Chris Pramas, Rich Redman, Evan Sass, Marc Schmalz

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### Green Ronin Publishing

3815 S. Othello St., Suite 100 #304  
Seattle, WA 98118

**Email:** [custserv@greenronin.com](mailto:custserv@greenronin.com)  
**Web Sites:** [www.greenronin.com](http://www.greenronin.com)  
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