

0.1 Escalation: from talking to fighting v1.1

If a social encounter escalates into a fight, such as a bar brawl erupting, a rogue stabbing someone during a negotiation, or a standoff no longer being a standoff, these rules replace the usual Perception/Surprise Round rules.

The **Instigator** is the one who first decides to make an attack. He rolls initiative with a +6 bonus and a Bluff check. Everyone else rolls Sense Motive opposed by his Bluff result. Anyone who fails is Surprised, even the instigator's allies. There is always a Surprise Round.

The Instigator can try to signal his allies when he's going to make his move. This is treated like using Bluff to send a secret message (a DC 15 Bluff check). If he succeeds his allies are guaranteed not to be surprised. However, any enemies who beat that Bluff check with an opposed Sense Motive check are also not surprised. *(Sending a secret signal means that instigating a fight uses 2 Bluff checks and therefore 2 chances for opponents not to be surprised. However, if the instigator's bluff is very good, it makes it likely that only his allies are not surprised.)*

Any participants in the scene who had an attitude of Unfriendly or Hostile are not Flat-Footed at the beginning of combat, because they didn't trust the other side to begin with. *(However, if Diplomacy or Intimidate was used to improve their attitude, just before launching a surprise attack...)*

Note that the Ready for Surprise rule mod covers cases where people want to ready actions before the surprise round.

0.1.1 Explanation

In social situations, use of Perception is unsatisfying for determining Surprise; Sense Motive makes more sense. Having a good Bluff means it's easier to surprise people in such situations, by hiding your aggressive intentions.

There's always a Surprise Round because the start of a brawl is often chaotic and not all that conclusive. This precludes Full Attacks, but ensures an opportunity to use powers intended for the Surprise Round such as the Underhanded Rogue Talent.

Instigators receive a bonus to Initiative so that it's likely that the player who starts the combat will also be the one whose (N)PC throws the first punch.

Flat-footedness needed to make sense; just because combat hasn't broken out between a pair of gunslingers doesn't mean they're not wary of each other after all.

0.1.2 Version history and future

This is version 1.1. Instigators can now be Flat-Footed. Instigators do not have to Take 10, but can always do so. People who already didn't trust each other are not likely to be flat-footed.