

Spirits and Summoning

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On the Spirits themselves:

There are 5 types of spirits in Earthdawn:

1- Elemental Spirits: Obviously, spirits from the Elemental Netherworlds, reflecting any of the five True Elements. Those are usually summoned and dealt with by Elementalist Adepts. The main Elemental Spirits types are described in the Gamemaster's Guide from page 383 onward.

2- Ally Spirits: Those are usually summoned and dealt with by Nethermancer Adepts. There are two types of Ally Spirits:

- The spirits of the deceased (example: 'ghost' of dead Adepts). Those are not that very common. They usually have 'unfinished business' and remains in our world in astral form. They retain their knowledge and memory from when they were still alive and, sometimes, some of the magical talents they had. Often used for the Ghost Master Ritual.
- Spirits native to Astral Space which have some sort of 'kinship' with Namegivers society (example: guardian spirits, graveyard spirits and muses). Many are benign and express some (positive) interests to Namegivers, their favors must be carefully managed while some others might be indifferent or even malevolent.

The main Ally Spirits types are described in the Gamemaster's Guide from page 376 onward.

3- Beast Spirits: Spirits who have animal form. They are NOT animals thought and should be treated as any other spirit (e.g. sapient/sentient) although they are usually less 'alien' than other spirits, being social creatures with values and are more likely to build relationships with Namegivers. Those are usually summoned and dealt with by Shaman Adepts. The main Beast Spirits types are described in the Adept's Journey – Mystic Paths from page 338 onward. Please note that those Spirits (and the Shaman Discipline) were only introduced in this book and are therefore not referred to at all in the Player's Guide nor the Gamemaster's Guide.

- Note that Beast Spirits can only be vertebrate 'animals'; invertebrate spirits, like insects, are called Invae (see further below) and are an anathema to Shamans.
- Also note that

4- Invae: Evil, insect-like spirits considered 'cousin' of the Horrors. They need to invade a host body and then turn them in either a mix of Namegivers with insect-like features or into actual insects but of much bigger size. Invae summoning is usually the realm of 'evil' NPCs. The main Invae Spirits types are described in the Gamemaster's Guide from page 404 onward.

5- Tasked Spirits: Those are not usually summoned through the Summoning talent proper but instead through other spells or talents; for example, the spirits used for the 'Orbiting Spy' talent.

A Spirit most important features are their Strength Rating, Powers and whether it has a Name or not:

- **Strength Rating:** The higher it is the more powerful the spirit is, and the more different powers are available to it. There is, in theory, no upper limit to their Ranks although no spirits describe in the books goes over Rank 20.
- **Powers:** Those are the abilities that the spirit can use to perform a service. As it will be described further below, the mage must negotiate with the spirit for it to accept to use a particular power. A list of possible Spirit Powers for Elemental and Ally spirits is available in the Gamemaster Guide from page 369 onward. Although many of the powers used by Beast spirits are the same as listed in the Gamemaster Guide, some unique powers for Beast spirits are listed in the Adept's Journey – Mystic Paths at page 337.
- **Names:** Some spirits are Named, usually from Strength Rating of 8 and more.
 - Spirits with Strength Rating of 13 or more (called Great Form Spirits) are almost always Named.
 - A spirit will usually carefully guard its True Name. The name under which he is publicly known might not be his True Name.
 - Any spirit can be Named by the summoner (unless it already has a Name):
 - Doing so to a friendly spirit (Attitude of Friendly or better) will strengthen the relationship between the two, possibly increasing the spirit's Strength Rating.
 - Doing so to a spirit who does not have a positive Attitude toward the mage can be dangerous. Knowing a spirit's True Name gives the mage power over the spirit who may resent the increased control and will likely begin working against the mage, perhaps even try to kill him to be free from future tasks.

On Summoning:

Elementalist, Nethermancers or Shaman can use their respective Summon talent to summon spirits. Elementalist can only summon Elemental spirits, Nethermancers can only summon Ally spirits while Shamans can only summon Beast spirits.

1- The ritual to summon a spirit takes 30 minutes.

2- The mage must first decide the Strength Rating of the spirit he wants to summon.

- The total Strength Rating of any spirits summoned and/or currently waiting to perform a Service cannot be higher than the mage's Rank in the Summon talent. For example, a mage with Rank 5 in Summon could summon a spirit with a Strength Rating of 5 if he has no other spirits currently summoned. Similarly, he could only summon a spirit with a Strength Rating of 2 if he already had a spirit with Rank 3 currently performing (or waiting to perform) a Service for him at that moment.
- Note that the 'Spell/Spellcasting' power has a similar restriction; the summoned spirit could only use spell(s) of a Circle equal or below its Strength Rating.

3- The mage makes a Summon test against the Mystic Defense of the spirit he attempts to summon:

- The Mystic Defense of spirits varies depending of their Strength Rating and are shown in the Gamemaster guide from page 376 onward.
- If the mage wants the spirit to have a specific power, the difficulty is increased by +2 for each power(s) specified by the mage. A list of possible Spirit Powers is available in the Gamemaster Guide from page 369 onward.

- If the mage attempts to summon a Named spirit (and does not know its name), the difficulty an additional success is required; this penalty does NOT apply if the mage knows the True Name of the spirit.
- **Shamans:** Summoning a Beast Spirit in a 'non-native environment' (like a forest for a dog spirit or a city for a panther spirit) requires an additional success on the Summon test.

4- If successful, the spirit appears (in Astral Space) near the mage, willing to perform a **(singular)** Service for the summoner.

- **IF UNSUCCESSFUL**, the mage will be affected by astral backlash that will injure him. See the section 'Astral Backlash' further below for the details.

5- The mage must then make use of either his Elemental Tongues (Elementalist) or Spirit Talk (Nethermancer and Shaman) talent to negotiate the use of powers by the Spirit:

- For each success obtained, the Spirit will agree to use one of his listed power while performing his service to the caster.
- The mage MAY 'enhance the negotiation' by offering to perform favor(s) to the spirit. No actual game mechanic is given for this 'favor' thing so I assume that it means that the GM could/would give additional 'successes' for the services in exchange of those favor(s) but said favor are NOT required if step #3 gave enough successes for what the summoner wanted in terms of power usage.

Spirit's willingness to obey:

- A spirit might argue/whine a bit but usually WILL perform the service.
- For the (stated) rare occasion where it refuses, the summoner may use the Social Interaction mechanic to convince the spirit but with penalties (requires +1 success) due to the fact that 'social norms' are not the same at all between Namegivers and Spirits.
- A spirit may refuse completely to perform a Service if it considers it hazardous. In that case, the mage might try to force it to perform the service through a Contest of Will where both the mage and spirits make a willpower test (both can use karma if they so desire):
 - If the mage test is the highest, the Spirit is forced to perform the Service.
 - If the spirit test is the highest, it can refuse to perform the Service. The spirit can then also (if it so wishes) perform a second Contest of Will and, if successful, can break free of the summoner; returning home or remain to exact revenge/cause mischief.
 - If the result is a tie, the mage can decide to do another Contest of Will.

Banishing:

Spirits can be banished by any character having the **Banish** talent, including the one who had actually summoned it in the first place.

1- To banish a spirit summoned using the Summon talent; the adept makes a Banish test against the spirit's Mystic Defense.

2- To banish a spirit summoned through a spell or another talent, the Banish test must be made against the spell or talent's Dispel Difficulty (see Gamemaster Guide p:265)

- An additional success is required when attempting to Banish a spirit that the mage is not familiar with (for example, a Nethermancer trying to Banish an Elemental Spirit).
- 3- If successful, the spirit is forced back to its normal netherworld (NOT Astral Space) habitat and any tasks it owes to the summoner are lost.

- **IF UNSUCCESSFUL**, the mage will be affected by astral backlash that will injure him. See the section 'Astral Backlash' further below for the details.

Note: As clarified by Lead Developer Josh in the official FASA Discord Channel on 23 May 2020 (<https://discordapp.com/channels/328545846935158785/328545930057875457/713820786233966654>)

- Banish can be used to banish ANY spirits, not just 'summoned' ones.
- The Spirits are sent back to their Netherworld, NOT the Astral Space, thus the spirit could not use the 'Manifest' power to come back.

Astral Backlash:

Whenever a character fails a Summon or Banish test, he is subject to damage through Astral Backlash in a way similar to Casting Raw (without the risk of Horror mark however).

Alternatively, a failed Summon test might instead result into a spirit being summoned BUT not being bound by the mage and will therefore not perform any service for him. The spirit might even decide to attack the summoner or others.

The damage suffered through Astral Backlash is based on the Strength Rating of spirit being summoned/banished AND the level of Astral Corruption of the area where the event happened. See the Astral Backlash Table further down for details.

Astral Backlash Table (Gamemaster Guide, page: 369)	
Region Type	Damage Step
Safe	Strength Rating + 4
Open	Strength Rating + 8
Tainted	Strength Rating + 12
Corrupt	Strength Rating + 16

Binding Secrets:

- Some Named Spirits can change or improved the effects of binding spells when summoned while casting said spell:
- Those spells are always of the 'Mantle' family (Mantle of the Fire Marauder, Mantle of the Woodland Hunter etc.).
- Only one Named Spirit can be summoned at a time.
- The Summoner MUST know the Bind Secret Knack (Adept's Journey – Mystic Paths page:284). Said knack must be learned for each type of summoning (e.g. Ally, Elemental and/or Beast Spirits).

- The Summoner must also know the Name AND the specific method of how to summon this spirit WHILE spellcasting. This information can ONLY be provided by the spirit and said spirit CANNOT be forced to reveal this information. The binding secret of a spirit, once learned, cannot be shared with someone else.
- The complete game mechanics for this system AND the list of Named Spirits 'compatible' with this mechanic are provided in The Adept's Journey – Mystic Paths from page 354 onward.