Hirelings and Henchmen

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Just as in real life, individuals for hire offer their services for a fee in Cresthaven. These range from seasoned fighters willing to risk their lives in dangerous raids to humble torch bearers aiding in illumination and treasure transportation. While most hirelings prefer to avoid perilous situations, those brave or desperate enough to face danger often demand, and receive, a fair share of any acquired loot.

The Dungeon Master determines the availability and specific types of hirelings in any given location. The local Adventurer’s Guild often serves as a reliable resource for finding suitable companions, though more illicit or specialized services might require delving into Cresthaven’s underworld.

The maximum number of hirelings a character can enlist depends on their Charisma ability score and their current Reputation.

Hireling Capacity

Charisma/Reputation Ability Score	Maximum # of Hirelings
4 or less	0
5	1
6	2
7	3

Types of Hirelings and Costs

The Dungeon Master should adjust the costs listed here based on the size and economic stability of the town or village, how dangerous the target location is, and the overall charisma and reputation of the player party. These represent typical rates in established settlements; prices will vary in the wilderness or in desperate circumstances.

Hireling	Daily Wage	Share of Loot	AC	Hit Dice	Damage	Carry Capacity
Guide	15 sp	—	13	1d8	1d6	120 lbs
Laborer	10 sp	—	10	1d8	1d4	140 lbs
Servant	5 sp	—	10	1d8	1d2	100 lbs
Squire (Melee)	50 sp	1/10	16	2d8	1d8 +1	130 lbs
Fighter (Melee)	1 gp	1/5	17	2d8	1d8 +1	160 lbs
Archer (Ranged)	5 gp	1/4	15	2d8	1d8 +2	160 lbs

Reputation’s Influence on Hireling Wages

A party’s Reputation significantly impacts the daily wages of potential hirelings.

High Reputation: A good reputation attracts more principled and good-aligned followers who share your heroic ideals. Such individuals might offer their services at a discount. For every point of positive Reputation a character possesses, the daily wage for hirelings may be reduced by 1%, up to a maximum of 15% off. Exceptionally renowned heroes might even find individuals willing to serve for free, driven by a desire to be part of something greater than themselves. However, earning and maintaining a truly heroic reputation is a challenging feat in Cresthaven.

Low Reputation: Conversely, a notoriously villainous or unreliable character might struggle to find trustworthy companions. They may attract only those motivated purely by greed or a shared malicious intent. While criminal organizations or desperate individuals might be more willing to work with a character with a bad reputation, offering lucrative contracts or dangerous tasks, their loyalty might be suspect and their prices inflated. For every point of negative Reputation, the daily wage for hirelings may increase by 1%, up to a maximum of 20% surcharge. Trust, once broken, is rarely regained in Cresthaven.

Optional Additions for Depth

Hireling Loyalty & Morale

Each hireling begins with a starting Loyalty Score of 5 (neutral). This score can increase or decrease based on how they are treated, paid, or put at risk by their employer. The Dungeon Master may call for a **Morale Check (Wisdom Save DC 10)** when a hireling experiences a traumatic or testing event:

- The hireling takes more than half their Hit Points in damage from a single attack or effect.
- Their employer is defeated, captured, or flees from combat, abandoning the hireling.
- They witness an act of extreme betrayal or cruelty by their employer or the party.
- They are consistently underpaid or put into situations they deem unnecessarily suicidal.

On a failed Morale Check, the hireling may react negatively: they might flee immediately, refuse to follow orders, demand more pay on the spot, or in extreme cases, turn on the party or betray them to a rival faction. A successful check indicates they stand firm, though their Loyalty Score might still be affected.

Threat Level Wage Multipliers

To help the Dungeon Master adjust hireling costs based on the perceived danger of a task, consider applying the following multipliers to their base daily wage:

Threat Level	Wage Multiplier	Notes
Routine (City Escort)	x1	Standard duties, low immediate risk.
Dangerous (Dungeon Delve)	x2	Significant risk of combat and injury.
Suicidal (Demon Cult Lair)	x4 or Negotiate % Cut Instead	Extreme danger, survival is unlikely; often requires a larger share of loot rather than fixed daily pay.

Contract Rules

Players can negotiate various contract terms with hirelings, adding agency and social leverage to their dealings:

- **Flat Rate:** The hireling is paid a fixed daily or weekly wage, regardless of success or failure (standard in the “Types of Hirelings” table).
- **Share of Loot (%):** The hireling receives a percentage of any treasure or valuables recovered during an adventure. This incentivizes them but means no pay if no loot is found.
- **Hazard Bonus:** An agreed-upon additional payment made only if the hireling survives combat or a particularly dangerous encounter.
- **Long-Term Retainer:** For loyal hirelings, a long-term agreement might include lodging, food, and a smaller regular payment in exchange for consistent service (e.g., for a stronghold staff).

Quick Hireling Generator (DM’s Discretion)

Use this table to quickly generate a unique trait for a hireling, adding immediate roleplay hooks:

d6	Hireling Trait
1	Old soldier with shaky hands, haunted by past wars.
2	Devout but cowardly acolyte, prays constantly for safety.
3	Former criminal trying to go clean, anxious about their past catching up.
4	Muted tracker from the northern wastes, communicates with gestures.
5	Talks to their sword (or tool), believing it to be a sentient companion.
6	Desperate parent on contract, sending every coin home to their family.

Spellcasters and Exotic Henchmen

Beyond the common hirelings listed above, Cresthaven’s complex society sometimes offers more specialized, esoteric services. These individuals are extremely rare, command exorbitant prices, and are almost always tied to powerful factions, arcane guilds, or political figures. They are generally only available in major cities under specific circumstances.

- **Street Thaumaturge:** Can cast a limited number of 1st-level spells (DM’s choice). Highly illegal if not sanctioned by the Hermetic Order. (Cost: 10-25 gp/day, + material components, + risk of Order interference).
- **Diviner:** Possesses innate intuition or minor magical aptitude, granting advantage on specific passive checks (+1 to passive Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Insight) checks for the party if nearby). (Cost: 20-50 gp/day, rarely risks direct combat).
- **Scribe/Researcher:** Skilled in copying scrolls or books, invaluable for research or replicating forbidden texts. (Cost: 5-15 gp/day, plus cost of materials; requires safe, quiet working conditions).