

## HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT – GAME RULES-

### Hide in Plain Sight (Su)

*A shadowdancer can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as she is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, a shadowdancer can hide herself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. She cannot, however, hide in her own shadow. DMG p195*

**1-Action:** Action-wise, Hide in Plain Sight works exactly like the Hide skill. It can be used as a move equivalent action, or as part of a move action without penalties to the Hide check (size bonuses, distance bonuses and penalties due to moving faster than half speed apply normally as for the Hide/Spot skill). When used as part of a move action, the character disappears/hides whenever he chooses during his move action. A character with a movement of 30 ft for example can move up to 15ft without taking any penalties to his Hide check. He may elect to Hide before beginning his movement and then move up to 15 ft while Hidden (taken that his Hide check was successful), or he may move for five or ten feet, Hide, and travel the rest of his movement while Hidden. Finally he may also Hide at the end of his movement (meaning that he moved for 15 ft in plain sight, and then he attempted his Hide check once upon his final square). The character should always designate the square upon which he attempts his Hide check while moving, for if the Hide succeeds, the DM should keep track of the square the character was last seen on by any observers/enemies who missed their Spot checks.

The character may also elect to Hide while charging, running or attacking, but in that case he takes a -20 penalty to his Hide check. Hide while running, charging or attacking is considered a free action (charging and running are full-round actions). A Hide check with a -20 penalty should be made after every attack (melee or ranged) to see if the character Hides successfully after the attack (or if he remains Hidden in case he was Hidden prior to the attack). For example, a shadowdancer who attacks thrice during his full-round action can make up to three Hide checks with a -20 penalty, each one right after an attack. Thus with each successful Hide check he may attempt to sneak attack the enemy on his following attack. The last Hide check, right after his third and final attack will tell whether he remains Hidden after his round is over. (*Official D&D FAQ 6/30/08 p45, Official D&D FAQ 6/27/03 p8*)

Certain actions that do not demand extreme bodily motion (casting spells with somatic components, drawing a weapon, picking up an item, drinking a potion etc.) can be performed while the character is Hidden and do not demand a new Hide check, nor do they penalize the check. Casting a spell with a verbal component does not require a new Hide check either, but all enemies/observers close enough and able to listen to the Hidden spellcaster's voice are allowed a Listen check. Even if they succeed on their Listen checks, observers/listeners are not able to pinpoint the Hidden spellcaster, instead they hear the voice "over there somewhere" (*Invisibility DMG p295*). Weaponlike spells (all those that demand an attack roll) are considered normal attacks for the purpose of remaining Hidden after casting the spell. For example a shadowdancer casting *Scorching Ray* will have to make a Hide check with a -20 penalty right after each ray hits (or not) the target. In cases where the action involves extreme bodily motion (like attacking, charging, or running) the DM should not hesitate to demand new Hide checks with penalties according to the difficulty of the action. The DM may also rule that a Hide check as a free action can be made while the Shadowdancer undertakes some other kind of full-round action, but in that case you should be careful so as to keep the game balanced.

**2-Ability:** Hide in Plain Sight (Su) is a supernatural ability, thus it is magical. (*Special Abilities PHB p180, DMG p289-290*). The shadowdancer does not actually Hide in the shadows, instead he magically draws power from the shadows to effectively mask his presence (In other words he uses a magical effect to bend the light and shadow around him providing him with the necessary concealment to Hide). For those who miss their Spot checks against his Hide check, he instantly disappears before their eyes and is rendered invisible

(*Invisibility DMG p295*). As a supernatural ability, Hide in Plain Sight is not affiliated to any school of magic (as spell-like abilities do). It is governed by its own rules and is not connected to the illusion school or illusion like effects. Hide in Plain sight, as all supernatural abilities, is used at will and does not require any Concentration checks, nor does it provoke attacks of opportunity. The only exception to this rule is when the character is standing next to an enemy and he decides to move away while Hiding. If he misses his Hide check against the Spot check of the enemy, the enemy sees him clearly and is allowed an attack of opportunity (since the shadowdancer leaves a threatened square and the enemy can see him). The same thing happens in case the character has decided to Hide at the end or during his movement. Even if the Hide check succeeds he will receive one or more attacks of opportunity for every threatened square he leaves behind since he can be seen moving clearly (remember he Hides at the end or during of his movement. Before Hiding he is crystal clear to his enemies).

**3-Effect:** As mentioned above, Hide in Plain Sight works just like the Hide skill, with two exceptions:

1-One using Hide in Plain Sight does not require any cover or concealment (*a shadowdancer can hide herself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind*).

2- One using Hide in Plain Sight can Hide even while being observed (*A shadowdancer can use the Hide skill even while being observed*), as opposed to the classic use of the skill (*If people are observing you, even casually, you can't hide. PHB p 76*).

For the ability to take effect two things are required. First the shadowdancer has to succeed on his Hide check against one or more Spot checks. Secondly the shadowdancer has to be within 10 feet of some sort of shadow. Since it is not clearly explained in the DMG what "some sort of shadow" means, here follows an explanation of the rule, as perceived by the majority of game masters and players who have dug into Hide in Plain Sight.

-He can use Hide in Plain Sight if he is within 10 feet of a square with shadowy illumination.

-He can use Hide in Plain Sight if he is within 10 feet of a shadow of small size or bigger.

-He cannot use Hide in Plain Sight if the biggest shadow within 10 feet is of tiny size or smaller.

-He cannot use Hide in Plain Sight by drawing power from his own shadow (*She cannot, however, hide in her own shadow*).

Shadows do not necessarily have the size of the object from which they derive. A small chest for example may easily cast a large or bigger shadow, if the light source is at the right angle. Therefore the player and the DM should always keep track of the light sources so as to know how big are the shadows cast on the environment. Remember that it is the size of the shadow that counts and not the size of the object. The rule stands as such so as to give plenty of opportunities to use this ability, but under no circumstances should it be abused. "Some sort of shadow" could be easily translated into ANY shadow, and since our world is composed of shadows, the shadowdancer would be able to use his ability wherever he chooses. Imagine that the shadowdancer could Hide upon an open field, claiming that he draws power from the shadow of a blade of grass. That would definitely kill the balance of the game. Therefore it is acknowledged by the most that the size of the shadow should be at least of small size (the size of a Halfling if you want to picture it).

**4-Countered:** There are not many ways to counter Hide in Plain Sight. There is no mundane way to see a creature that has effectively used the ability against you. Even spells such as *See Invisibility*, *Invisibility Purge* or any other spell that has to do with seeing magically *invisible* creatures/objects do not work since Hide In Plain Sight uses a totally different kind of magic that is not affiliated to the illusion school. *Dispel Magic* cannot disrupt Hide in Plain Sight either, since *Dispel Magic* cannot counter a supernatural ability. *True Seeing* cannot disrupt Hide in Plain Sight either and here is why:

*True Seeing:*

*You confer on the subject the ability to see all things as they actually are. The subject sees through normal and magical darkness, notices secret doors hidden by magic, sees the exact locations of creatures or objects under blur or displacement effects, sees invisible creatures or objects normally, sees through illusions, and sees the true form of polymorphed, changed, or transmuted things. Further, the subject can focus its vision to see into the Ethereal Plane (but not into extradimensional spaces).*

*True seeing, however, does not penetrate solid objects. It in no way confers X-ray vision or its equivalent. It does not negate concealment, including that caused by fog and the like. True seeing does not help the viewer see through mundane disguises, spot creatures who are simply hiding, or notice secret doors hidden by mundane means. In addition, the spell effects cannot be further enhanced with known magic, so one cannot use true seeing through a crystal ball or in conjunction with clairaudience/clairvoyance. PHB p276*

So True Seeing helps with the following:

1- One can see through normal and magical darkness. (*Does not influence Hide in Plain Sight since a shadowdancer **uses** the shadows/darkness to Hide and does **not** Hide in them*).

2-One sees invisible creatures and objects, sees creatures under blur or displacement effects normally, sees through illusions. (Meaning all effects related to the illusion school or illusion-like effects. Hide in Plain Sight is **not** an *invisibility* spell and is **not** affiliated to the illusion school or to any illusion-like effects for that matter).

3-One sees polymorphed, changed, or transmuted things. (Meaning all spells and affects related to the transmutation school. Hide in Plane Sight is not affiliated to that school either).

4-One can focus his vision to see into the Ethereal Plane. (Irrelevant to Hide in Plain Sight).

5- One can notice secret doors hidden by magic. (Irrelevant to Hide in Plain Sight).

Spells that are able to counter Hide in Plain Sight are the following: Glitterdust (-40 on Hide Checks), Antimagic Field (Don't forget that Hide in Plain Sight is a supernatural ability and thus it uses magic to work. It cannot be used in an environment where magic has been suppressed.), light related spells (*light* spells do not counter Hide in Plain Sight since the light source remains invisible/hidden, but an area of bright or shadowy illumination can be perceived by others according to the surrounding light even if the source is not perceivable. This means that an area of bright illumination can be perceived in an area of shadowy illumination and an area of shadowy illumination can be perceived in total darkness.)

Other than spells, special abilities such as Scent, the Blind-Fight feat, Blindsight, Blindsense, Tremmorsense, all affect Hide in Plain Sight as they affect Invisibility.

## References

-**Hide in Plain Sight** DMG p195, Official D&D FAQ 6/30/08 p45, Official D&D FAQ 6/27/03 p8

-**Hide skill** PHB p76, Cadv p101-102, 3.5 Rules Compendium p92, Official D&D FAQ 6/30/08 p24

-**Supernatural abilities** PHB p180, DMG p289-290

-**Invisibility** DMG p295