

Paranormal Investigation Development



101

Provided by:
Susquehanna Mysteries Alliance

Paranormal Investigation Protocol



Paranormal Investigation Protocol

NEVER:

Go on an investigation alone.

Vandalize, trespass or take anything from a location.

Whisper during EVP session (it will later be misidentified as an EVP).

Negatively provoke spirits/ghosts to respond to your questions or perform on demand. (Living people do not like this and neither do the dead!)

Use a ouija board or conduct a séance without a professional psychic-medium present.

Smoke in the area where you are taking photos—cigarette/cigar smoke can appear as “ghostly mist” or “ectoplasm” in photographs.

Wear perfume or heavy deodorants—remember, ghosts can manifest via olfactory as well as auditory & visual senses.

Litter—In fact, if you see trash lying around, be respectful and throw it away properly.

Run—This is how people get hurt!

Take anything from the location—whether it’s public or private property.

Drink alcohol or do drugs before or during an investigation.

ALWAYS:

Obey all laws & regulations!

Respect the spirits, your fellow investigators and the property you are investigating.

Ask permission to investigate on private property. (Being willing to sign a liability waiver may help secure permission.)

Let someone know where you will be and approximate time of return.

Go on an investigation with at least two people, but no more than six, if possible.

Turn off all cell phones.

Remember you are representing ALL paranormal investigators—don’t give the field a bad name by being disrespectful, obnoxious or defiant.

Be as quiet as possible during EVP sessions—this includes NO walking, rustling around or whispering (if you need to talk, do so in a normal tone).

Take extra, extra batteries. (Ghosts have been known to drain them.)

If using a tape recorder and/or film camera--bring extra tapes, film, etc. (Be prepared if an evidence-gathering opportunity presents itself.)

Take along water & snacks. (NO munching while EVP gathering attempts are in session!)

Take a flashlight—and a spare flashlight (as usual, extra batteries, too).

Dress comfortably and take a jacket or coat in case the temperature drops after dark.

Announce loudly “Flash!” before taking a photo (if it’s dark)—otherwise, you may temporarily blind your fellow investigators.

Make note of non-supernatural noises when attempting EVP. For instance, “Bill clearing his throat” or “Jane coughing”—these sounds can be misconstrued as EVP later on when you’ve forgotten these occurrences took place.

Do a walk-through before the investigation to orient the team with the layout of the building or area.

If you are on an outside investigation:

Arrive during daylight hours so you can get the “lay of the land” and note any animal holes, rocks or branches that could become obstacles in the dark.

Also, make note of any homes that are in the area and be careful not to shine flashlights towards them—not only is it disrespectful, but you may get a visit by the local police.

If you are investigating a public historical location:

Never intimidate tourists or other investigating groups into leaving because you want to attempt EVP—these locations are for the PUBLIC’S enjoyment, NOT just for ghost hunting.

Do not take anything from these sites.

Do not hunt or dig for relics—if you find something that may be historical (such as an old bullet or mini ball at Gettysburg), inform a guide or official.

Obey all rules & regulations—if the location closes at 9:00 p.m.; be out by 9:00 p.m.

If investigating on private property:

Always secure permission to investigate on private property!

If the property owner is afraid of you getting hurt on his/her property, offer to sign a waiver. (Supplied)

Make sure each person in your group signs a waiver.

Let the property owner know how many people will be in your group, the date and time of your arrival and estimated time of departure from their property.

Leave the property in better condition than when you arrived, if possible. (Pick up trash, stack sticks/branches, etc.) You are more likely to get future investigation permission.

Always thank the person after the investigation.

Share any evidence you captured during your investigation with the property owner.

Gathering Evidence



Taking Photographs

1. Make sure you have fresh batteries and lots of extras.
2. If you have long hair, tie it back. One stray hair in front of the camera lens can be misconstrued as a “vortex.”
3. Keep your fingers as far away from the lens as possible.
4. To avoid “orb” photos, do not take photos of an area that people just walked through. Dust will have been kicked up by the movement.
5. Be aware that rain, fog or moisture can appear as “orbs” or anomalies in photographs.
6. If your camera has a strap—take it off for investigations. These can also appear as “vortexes” in pictures.
7. If using a film camera, use at least 400 speed film for low lighting situations.
8. In cold weather, hold your breath when taking a photo; otherwise, it can show up as “mist” or “ectoplasm.”
9. Avoid taking photos into the sun, a direct light source or where there are reflective surfaces.
10. Asking the spirit(s) if you may take their picture is not only polite, it just might work.
11. Take photographs of the entire area you are going to be investigating—they will come in handy later when you might need to know where a certain object was located.

Electronic Voice Phenomenon

1. Speak as little as possible during EVP attempts.
2. When first turning on your recorder, note the location, date, time, all who are present and exact location at investigation site; such as, “Peter Allen House, January 19th, 8:15 p.m., Laura & Craig in the Bridal Suite.”
3. Make sure only one person is speaking at a time. You may want to appoint one person on the team as the person who will ask the questions or you can decide to take turns asking question, one person at a time consecutively.
4. Do not whisper! If you need to speak, do so in a normal tone. Whispering can later be mistaken for EVP.
5. Do not walk around, fidget or move your feet or arms. It may seem trivial, but you’d be surprised how **loud** these sounds are when you play them back.
6. Do not hold the recorder in your hands. Lay it on a flat, sturdy surface. Even better, place the recorder on a soft cloth to avoid vibration recording.
7. If you do hold the recorder in your hand, do **not** move your fingers—the sound of your finger rubbing across the microphone (or even vibrations of your moving fingers) can be misrepresented as EVP.
8. Be sure to allow enough time between questions for the spirit(s) to answer.
9. Do not yell or scream at the spirits. Be respectful.
10. Do not negatively provoke the ghost(s) or demand they perform.

Notebook & Pen

1. Draw a map of the area you are investigating.
2. If you experience a feeling, odd noise or have a sighting—write down the time and experience. You can check the other team members’ notes later to see if you had a similar experience at the same time for corroboration.

Video

1. Watching hours of footage can be extremely boring and you could miss some amazing footage. Watch the footage only an hour or so at a sitting to remain sharp.
2. If filming outside, be aware that dust and insects can appear as anomalies.

Sample EVP Questions

Is there anyone here with us?

My name is _____, can you tell us yours?

Did you live/work/pass away here?

Are you married/have children?

Can you make a noise?

What year is it?

Who is the President of the United States?

Are you happy/sad/lonely?

Can you tell us something about yourself?

What year were you born?

It helps to know some history about the location so you can ask pertinent questions. For example, if you're at Gettysburg, you can ask "Who is your commanding officer?" or "What state are you from?"

If you know the name of person who haunts the area, you can ask if they are present and other questions pertaining to them and/or their situation.

Where to Find Haunted Locations



Where to Find Haunted Locations

*Always ask permission to investigate on private property!
Obey all laws and regulations on public property.*

Historical Locations

Buildings on the National Register of Historic Places

Many historical buildings are open to the public for a small tour fee or donation.

Battlefields

Old Jailhouses/Prisons

Colonial Furnaces

Aged Schoolhouses

Defunct Insane Asylums, Orphanages and Amusement Parks

Many historical societies and museums are housed in old buildings

Cemeteries/Graveyards

Public & State Parks

These are often isolated areas with rich (and sometimes eerie) history

Places of Historical Tragedies

Please be sensitive! More recent tragedy emotions are too raw--only investigate or gather information on more historical events, ones that occurred at least fifty years prior.

Local Libraries

Most libraries have local and state history sections.

Word of Mouth

You never know where a lead might come from. Make sure everyone you come in contact with knows about your interest in the paranormal—your family, co-workers, friends and acquaintances.

Newspaper Archives

Local Libraries

State Archives

Internet Subscriptions (For a minimal fee, usually per month, & easily searchable)

Don't forget to check newspapers that were written in the month of October, particularly close to Halloween, when most will run local ghost stories.

Internet

Easily searchable, but can be inaccurate—if not flat out fallacies. Make sure you back up any information from the Internet with another, more reliable source.

Ask Area Seniors

Senior citizens are a wealth of information! Do not overlook this valuable resource. Especially helpful if the person has lived in the area for several decades.

Historical Societies

Historical societies have enormous amounts of information and archives. Some charge a small fee for using their archival libraries. If you plan on using their archives on a semi-regular basis, it's a great idea to become a member since archive research is usually free for members.

Area Paranormal Groups

Surf the Internet for paranormal groups or clubs in the area you're interested in investigating. Many have web sites with a haunted locations page.

Businesses

Bed & Breakfasts

Restaurants

Places Associated with Death

Funeral Homes

Hospital

Churches

Graveyards/Cemeteries

Equipment



Equipment

Do not be intimidated—you do not need to spend a lot of money to participate in a ghost investigation. The most basic tools are your eyes, ears and intuition.

The basic essentials are:

- Notebook & Pen
- Watch (for noting the time)
- Flashlight
- Compass (A theory is that ghosts/spirits can effect compasses)
- Recorder (Tape or Digital)
- Camera (Film or Digital)

Extras:

- Both Digital and Film Cameras
- Both Tape and Digital Recorders
- Video Camera(s)
- EMF Detector
- Digital Thermometer (to determine abrupt temperature drops)

Upscale Gadgets:

- Tri-Field Meter
- Game Camera (only takes photos when it senses movement—usually used by hunters for wildlife)
- Digital Thermometer with Ambient Temperature Probe
- Thermal Camera

Specialty:

- Frank's Box

Be creative! Make your own experimental equipment and see what works and what doesn't. Ghost hunting is not an exact science; no one knows what spirits may or may not react to or how they communicate or manifest. Try all sorts of crazy experiments; you might create a paranormal break through!

Investigation Form



Investigation Form

Investigation Location: _____

Address of Location: _____

Date of Investigation: _____

Start Time: _____ a.m./p.m. End Time: _____ a.m./p.m.

Investigators: _____

Weather Conditions: _____

Temperature: _____

Moon Phase: _____

Historically, this haunting involves: (Circle all that apply)

Visual Audible Olfactory Sensed Felt

Equipment:

Tape Recorders: (Type/Model)

Digital Recorders: (Type/Model)

Conducting Interviews & Witness Form



Conducting Interviews

At least one person on your paranormal investigation team should be responsible for interviewing witnesses to the paranormal activity at the location you are going to be investigating, particularly if it is a private residence.

Use one form per witness.

Be sure to also record the interview on tape or digitally for future reference.

1. Set up an interview time and location that is convenient for the witness. When possible, meet at the location where the experience took place. The witness will be able to show you exactly where the event occurred and other pertinent information at the venue. Take photographs of the relevant locations.
2. Never push a witness to talk about an experience they do not wish to share.
3. Do not influence the witness's descriptions.
4. Allow the witness to remain anonymous, if they wish. **NEVER** give out a witness's name if they wish to keep it concealed.

Witness Interview Form

For Investigation Location: _____

Address of Location: _____

Interviewer: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Name of Witness _____

- Wishes to remain anonymous
- Supplied name for research purposes only—do not promote
- Male Female

Address: _____

Phone Number: () _____ - _____

E-mail: _____

Current Age _____ Age at Time of Experience(s) _____

Date of Experience: _____ Time of Day of Experience: _____ am/pm

Exact location of experience: _____

(Use Page 3 of this form for description of experience.)

Was the experience: (Circle all that apply) Visual Audible Olfactory Sensed Felt

VISUAL:

If the anomaly was visual, was it: (Circle all that apply)

Solid Transparent Vague Human—Male/Female White/Black/Color

Description of Apparition:

Clothing _____

Facial Features _____

Hair _____

Height/Weight _____

If not human, how large was it? _____

How long was it visible for? _____

Did the apparition: Disappear all at once/gradually or simply move out of sight

What action(s) did it make: _____

Did it attempt to make or make contact? _____

If so, how: _____

Did the witness recognize the apparition? _____

Does the witness have an idea who the apparition might have been? _____

If so, who? _____

AUDIBLE:

If an anomaly was an audible voice, what did he/she/it say: _____

If the apparition communicated, did it speak or convey telepathically? _____

Was it: (Circle all that apply)

Loud/Faint Clear/Muffled Male/Female/Androgynous

Curious/Friendly/Threatening/Sad Responding/Asking for a Response

Close by/Far away Other description: _____

OLFACTORY:

Describe the odor: _____

How long did the witness experience the odor? _____

Other description: _____

SENSED:

Describe sensation: _____

Duration of the sensation? _____

FELT (PHYSICALLY):

Describe event: _____

Duration of the event? _____

Liability Waiver



Waiver of Liability

I, _____ do hereby waive the rights of liability of (property owner) _____ while investigating his/her property at: _____ in the city of _____ in the state of _____.

I am solely responsible for my own safety, health and welfare during the time I am on the above mentioned property on the above mentioned date.

I have permission from the owner of the aforementioned property to conduct a paranormal investigation on the above mentioned date. I agree to take full responsibility for my actions and pledge to respect the property and the owner's privacy and that of neighboring properties.

Investigator's Signature

Property Owner's Signature

Date

Date
