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Ultimate Ghost Hunting Guide



**Everything you need to know for
Paranormal Research**

Ultimate Ghost Hunting Guide A Comprehensive Guide

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Paranormal Investigating

What is Paranormal Investigating?

Paranormal investigating is the journey to find proof of the things in life that go unexplained. Ghosts, spirits, UFO's, and unusual creatures (e.g. Loch Ness, Big Foot) seem to be the most commonly researched subjects. However, there are a few that delve into deeper subjects such as vampire, lycanthropy, witchcraft, psychic abilities, possessions, or demonology.

Although, the intent of this section of the book is to discuss the search for possible ghost or spirit activity, a variety of the techniques and equipment could certainly be used in the other disciplines.

“Paranormal Expert”

Let's lay the cards on the table. The title “Paranormal Expert” is really in the eye-of-the-beholder.

Those who spend a large part of their time investigating the paranormal have a greater understanding in the investigation process, but as for evidentiary answers.....well, that really can be subjective.

Being a paranormal investigator is much like being an astronomer who is writing a paper on what lay beyond the outskirts of the universe. Theories abound and questions arise that are answered by best guesses and loosely based evidence.



So why do it? It's freaking fun, that's why.

Don't expect to make a living at it and hope for your own TV show. It's possible, but not probably. Instead make it an affordable hobby, create a web site, and share your experiences and discoveries with others. Join a club, make a newsletter, or write a book. If you wish to make money at it then take it serious and be a professional. This may allow you to charge a small fee if you are requested to provide and investigation for evidence or debunking of activity. This may allow you to recoup some of your expenses.



How does paranormal investigating integrate with my religion?

This question can only be answered by you. You must interpret if looking for a spirit is allowable in your doctrine. Many religions teach that the raising or conjuring of spirits is simply evil. I won't be teaching you how to conjure spirits so feel free to keep reading.

If you are going out to fight demons with the power of your faith then please don't use this book as your guide. You certainly can add a prayer to your investigation for guidance and protection without too much hypocrisy.

There are two worlds of Paranormal Research; The Spiritual and The Technical. These worlds may collide, argue, and at times are complimentary to each other. The spiritual side seeks evidence through the use of séances, conjuring rituals, psychics, and divination. The technical side collects evidence

much like a detective through the use of equipment, observation, interviewing, and record keeping. Then there are the investigations that use a mixture of the two. Perhaps a team of “techies” will use psychic in the attempt to obtain clues to a haunted location to a murder site.

Again, the techniques you wish to follow are a choice for you. Some feel the conjuring of spirits asking for trouble. A common belief is that provoking phantoms can draw the attention of evil spirits or even possibly a demon. If you are fearful of such things then just don't become involved with them. If you don't feel like a Spiritual Warrior of any sort then don't go looking for a fight.

The following guide will incorporate the use of technology. I cannot intelligently write about spiritual research. Although, I will tell you that I have participated in a few and have not found the experience especially resourceful, but that was my own experience. You may find your encounters different.

The down side of Technical Paranormal Research is that it does take longer to set-up and tear down equipment and that equipment COSTS MONEY. The more technical you want to be, the more COSTS.

Overall have fun with it. If you are ghost hunting with your friends in some civil war battleground with just flashlights and a digital camera then that is a great experience you will always remember. It is not to be taken seriously all the time. One of my favorite nights was out with my fellow freaks on a haunted playground at Mariposa Elementary in Redlands, CA just sitting there watching a swing move by itself.

On the whole, most ghost hunters are fun people to be with. Believe it or not there is a certain snob group to ghost hunting. They feel that if you don't own a bunch of equipment or haven't been to twenty séances then you somehow couldn't produce any useful evidence. Give them the credit they deserve - NONE. There are websites that encourage people to not ghost hunt unless they go with a “experienced” hunter. Come on. We're not talking about stunt driving – we are talking about ghost hunting. Go and have FUN, but be safe. On the very rare chance you encounter something you feel is evil, then back away and get the necessary help.

What is a Ghost? And Types of Entities?

Gallup Poll results show that 40% of people believe in ghosts and spirits, and that another 16% are unsure if they exist. That means 44% of people don't believe in ghosts or spirit life. Don't take it personal. A large portion of the world population believes in reincarnation, telepathy, and some even believe that cows are sacred animals. Do you?

So what is a ghost? Much like religion everyone has their own opinion. For some a ghost must be a person that died who hasn't crossed over. For others a ghost is energy, bad or good, that a person has emitted from their own body and created an entity. Of course, some think that a ghost is just a figment of someone else's imagination.

Almost every culture has some form of ghost or spirit. Throughout history ghosts are written about by people such as Shakespeare with Hamlet's father. Even the Bible and Torah make reference to spirits and ghost.

In 458 BC a Greek play titled *The Oresteia* refers to a ghost that wakes hunters and stirs them to track Orestes down.

So what is a ghost? The true answer is still unknown by the technical side of ghost hunting. There hasn't been a meter or lab result of what a ghost is. There is however always theories. Some are based on religion, myths, and stories. Some are based on evidence collected. Finally, some theories are based on what psychics and mediums of the spiritual side have told us.

I know you might have bought this book to find answers. Well this book isn't filled with answers on ghosts; this book was created to aid you in finding your own answers.

Every great study or investigation always starts with an assumption. Let us assume, for our investigative purposes, that ghosts are people that have not crossed over to their final destination.

Some of the evidence I have collected over the years seems to point to this as being fact. Let me repeat that - some of the evidence.

I have evidence that has told me that ghosts might be energy released from the earth that creates false impressions on us. I also have evidence I have collected that points to something more sinister and dark. So do I have the answer? No. It is much like you and I arguing about what the Tower of Babel looked like. There are historical and archeological findings that suggest certain features but no one is certain.

There are people who have claimed they have seen ghosts of past relatives and friends, and I do not doubt them. I have met these people and they seem genuinely sincere, and I can tell they believe everything they are telling me. The question is still – what is a ghost. Is it the actual “soul” or energy spirit of that person that is dead? Is it the energy of the dead that still resides in a living person and projected out of the living at times? Maybe the living person is a conduit for the dead? Maybe it's something intelligent menacingly just trying to trick us?

Until someone has a ghost that agrees to be interviewed I don't think the answer will ever be explained enough for everyone to be convinced.

Types of Entities

The conventionally and most widely accepted types of entities are the following.

Ghost - The conventional and most widely accepted definition of a ghost is a person that has died and that remains, disembodied somewhere between the earth plain and the spirit world.



Spirit – There is, in the paranormal research world, a difference between a ghost and a spirit. Again, this is all debatable but the mostly accepted definition of a spirit is a supernatural being that has become visible or audible to the living. A good example may be an animal spirit that has been seen or heard on someone's property at night.

Spirits come in the good form and the bad form. If you are Christian you believe in a good one called the Holy Spirit. Evil Spirits can come in many forms but actually are very rare.

Poltergeist – Literally means noisy ghost. Poltergeists are usually associated as the “scary” type of entity. Most paranormal researchers believe that this type of entity is created through a living human and can often follow the human from place to place. The belief is that the subconscious mind is powerful enough to trigger paranormal events such as banging on walls or objects levitating. Evidence has been collected that often points to teens, generally girls, that are entering or in puberty. There is often emotional or mental stress associated with poltergeist.

There is also a theory that once a poltergeist is created from the mind that it can attract evil spirits or possibly demons. Evil Spirits are attracted to the fear and chaos that usually surrounds a poltergeist. If you run into severe poltergeist activity and/or you suspect that possibly a person in the house has a mental disorder; it is best to let a professional clergyman and someone specialized in mental disorders handle the situation. You should then continue your role as a researcher by documenting the case in comprehensive detail.

Demon – This word swings a lot of bad juju. There is a whole field associated with demonology. If you want to know more about it I suggest researching that in particular.

Basically a demon is a wicked Spirit that is working for the upper echelons of the evil side of the Spirit World. Don't go looking for these guys. I have never come across one, but if I do I will be getting a Spiritual Warrior team out there to battle. This is a specialized field. Some researchers don't believe that demons can occupy time here on Earth. I don't know if they can or not, and I am not looking to find out.

Others – There are a variety of other entities. Native Americans believe in Skin Walkers and Spirit Witches. People of Africa and the Caribbean believe that voodoo can use evil spirits to work their own magick. Phantoms are supposedly ghosts that are so well formed that you might think they are the living.

There are whole encyclopedias of different types of entities and it is far too numerous to list here. These encyclopedias will often list tree spirits and animal spirits and is an open world for your own interpretation.

Where do you find ghosts?

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Types of Hauntings

Residual Haunting (RH) – This type of haunting is based on energy instead of a particular type entity. The theory is that a residual haunting is a recorded energy of a particular event. Usually the event is tragic or joyful. Could a residual haunting be some type of energy from the Earth that has created a “recorded history” of the event?

I have a personal theory on residual hauntings. If you clap your hands inside a canyon what happens? The noise creates an echo and continues on until we can't hear it anymore, but is the noise really gone? The waves of that noise will continue on whether we hear them or not. I believe a RH is something of this nature, but instead the audible, and sometimes the visual, energy is being stored.

A good example would be the Civil War Battle of Gettysburg. Visitors of the battlefield have often reported sounds of gun fire, screams, and apparitions of soldiers around the park. These could be linked back to a residual haunting that projects a recorded history.

Some people believe that rocks, especially quartz, will store RH energy. A few facts about Crystals. Quartz are that quartz actually conducts electricity. It projects light better than glass, and is the most abundant material on the Earth's crust. Crystal quartz is used in radios, TVs, radar, lenses for cameras and numerous other items all linked back to quartz. Knowing all these facts makes the theory of quartz being a natural recording device sound plausible.



Intelligent Haunting (IH) – This type of haunting is what most people associate a haunting to be. There is usually an entity(s) that may interact or attempt to interact with the living. This type of haunting is usually harmless physically, in most cases. Mentally, most people have a tough time living with any type of haunting.

The entity in IHs appears to have human attributes such as playfulness, mischievousness, emotion, voices, or perhaps appears in human form.

This type of haunting is associated with an entity(s) that is frequently familiar with the location. Theoretical reasons they may have attached themselves to a location is:

Personal attachment to the location such as the original builder or occupant.

Died in the location – either tragically or normally

Has relatives or someone special living at that location

Doesn't realize they are dead

Renovations are being performed on the location

Feels they have unfinished business

They want to tell you where they buried the treasure (ok maybe this one is just a wish)

This type of haunting is usually detected by one or more of the Indicators of a Possible Haunting in the next section.

Intelligent Haunting Evil (IHE) – Some people classify this as a Demonic Haunting or as a Poltergeist. I classify this a little different. I categorize this as something that is not good natured and has the intent of either terrifying or harming the living. This type of haunting encompasses a wide variety of entities. Demons, non-human spirits, poltergeist, evil spirits, and ghosts, who were ev

while living, all may fit into this category.

~~Possessions and/or mental disorders of your client may relate into this type of haunting. Depression, suicidal tendencies, and schizophrenia have been a channel for these types of hauntings.~~

Conjuring spirits with the use of Ouija, voodoo, chanting, séances, and conjuring spells can raise evil. Often the person or persons practicing these is not after an evil spirit, but once the door is open anything can step through. Don't practice this stuff. I have never heard of any actual good coming from it.

Document and research everything you can. Evidence will be key here. If you believe someone has been possessed or has a mental disorder then document what they say, but don't trust it. There is a good chance you are being lied to on purpose.

These are the type of hauntings that you want the help of a professional clergy or someone experienced with this type of haunting. Don't take the risk. Again I stress if you are looking for a fight with an evil spirit then get with a team of experienced people.

I am not trying to scare you out of ghost hunting. There is such a very small chance you will run into something truly evil, but be prepared.



Indicators of a Possible Haunting

Many indicators can be associated with a haunting. These indicators or signs should be considered thoroughly before claiming a location is haunted. Banging noises throughout the night may not be a paranormal phenomenon but merely water pipes not secured properly. Your job as an investigator is not to accept everything at face value but to actually investigate and attempt to debunk those abnormal events.

Unusual lights - Lights can come in a few different forms. Balls of light, that you can see with your eyes, not just a camera, are often called orbs or ghost lights. Don't be fooled by orbs that appear on film only. Cameras are susceptible to anomalies of light due to a number of things such as dust, bugs, and digital speeds. Ghost lights have been reported to come in varieties of colors. The ghost lights are reported with and without tails trailing behind them. Insure if you are investigating light phenomena that you watch for outside lights, such as headlights, that can be mistaken for something paranormal.

Unusual Noises – This is always a tricky item. The most common noises reported are of course footsteps and bangs from somewhere inside the location. This phenomenon must be investigated meticulously. There are so many possible causes of these noises that it would be impossible to list them all. Plumbing, animals, and raucous neighbors are just some of the origins of erroneous noises. We investigated a home that claimed they heard voices when they lay in bed. We discovered that the teenage son would go to the basement late at night and watch TV. The sound would travel up into the venting.

Very rarely should you ever claim a location is haunted just on noises alone. There are just too many variables. Obviously if you hear a voice and cannot find the source then maybe you have a true haunting.

Doors and items moving – Who hasn't walked up to a door and said to themselves "Didn't I close the door earlier?", or if you're me you blame your lost keys on ghosts.

Items that move on their own are usually linked to poltergeist activity.

If you have a client that is reporting something is constantly being moved then put a camera on it. Record it for days if you can.



Being watched - this is a very common sign that clients will report when they believe their being haunted. Many clients feel that they will catch a glimpse of someone out of the corner or may feel that someone is watching them from perhaps a closet or another room.

This is a good time to get out an EMF meter if you have it. The feeling of being watched is often attributed to an abundance of EMF in a room. If someone is lying in their bed and they feel something watching them from the closet, test the area around the bed especially along the walls. For this test leave the power on. It is important to get a feel if there is an excessive amount of EMF in that room.

know when I am working in a large electrical room I get a sense of light tingling on my skin. If I wasn't aware that the EMF has the ability to do this I might mistake it for a paranormal event.

Being touched by an unknown force-this is very similar to the feeling of being watched. EMF can create the misrepresented feeling of being lightly touched. However, if your client is reporting that they are being smacked, punched, or assaulted then you can discount EMF as a culprit. On a particular TV ghost show, the investigator attempts to provoke a spirit to assault him. I'm not a fan of provoking any unknown force. You never know what might come at you. Avoid provocation unless you are ready for the results or if nothing is happening at all. Although, if your client has reported being touched or smacked in a particular area; you will want to visit that area and record yourself on camera. There are cases where people have been scratched or bruised by unknown forces. If you run into a case like this it is rare; I suggest contacting a clergy person to bless the home immediately. Obviously the entity is malevolent or mischievous at best.

Lights and toys turning on and off by themselves - this is probably one of the easiest items to debunk. Electrical problems in a house are easy to trace without becoming too technical. Lamp fixtures, and outlets all can have loose connections that can make a light turn on and off on its own. I happen to have a fluorescent fixture in my kitchen. At times I will turn on the switch and the light won't even come on until it warms up a minute or two later. Once the light bulbs are replaced it goes back to normal.

If a client states that their bathroom light will turn on and off by itself, the first question you need to ask is if the light switch is loose. First, play with the switch moving slowly and see if you can get it to jiggle a little and see if the switch has some play in it. Then turn on the switch and move to the fixture. Grab hold of the fixture and jiggle it a little with your hands being careful not to pull it from the wall or ceiling and be careful not to burn yourself. Observe if this causes the light to turn on and off by itself.

Of course during your investigation you'll want to have a camera watching that area and that fixture in particular.

As for toys turning on and off by themselves; I find this to be a common theme. I have three boys of my own and I know for fact that toys that are activated by touch are easily triggered by walking by or vibrations from a door closing. If the batteries get low, the electronics inside will cause all sorts of undesired effects. Test the toys out. If you know how to use a multi-meter or battery tester, then test that the batteries are the proper voltage. Batteries rated AA, AAA, C, D are 1.5 volts new; if they are lower than 1.2 volts then toss them out. Nine volt batteries should be replaced when they reach 8 volts or lower.

Pets and other animals - From my own personal experience I can tell you I believe pets and animals are far more in tune with the spiritual world than the people around them.

On a case in a small tract home I witnessed a blessing from a clergyman. At that time the dog of the house sat in a back bedroom and stared quietly at a closet for hours at a time. After the blessing, the priest felt that the entity had left the house and the dog moved to the backyard and stared at a bush in the backyard. Normally this dog was a very active dog and very friendly to all who came in the house. We took this as a sign that the entity, which at that time we felt was not good natured, had moved to the back yard. The priest had the group move to the backyard and began a blessing there. A few

moments later the dog raced across the yard as if chasing a cat or a squirrel and stopped at the opposite fence. The whole group felt lighthearted at that time as if the entity or whatever it was had left the area. The dog resumed its normal lifestyle immediately.

I know of an investigator who brings his dog out for investigations. He watches his dog's reaction when entering rooms almost as if the dog was a drug dog or a living ghost sniffer. Take his example and watch the family pets or livestock, if you're in a farm environment, these animal actions and reactions can be good indicators. If the family's pet is refusing to enter a room or won't leave a room, there is a good chance that might be your hotspot.

Unusual Smells - I have been on a few cases where the homeowner or business owner is reporting an unusual smell. In every case, except one, I have been able to find the source of the smell. A dead mouse in a vent system provided a distasteful smell as you can imagine. On a single case there was the odor of a strong tar that became very strong in a room. The smell would disappear after a few moments and then return overwhelmingly strong again. We searched the small cabin, in which this occurred, and could not find anything that would result in that.

The investigation took place during the winter months so the possibility of a natural outside smell coming into the cabin was not probable. Beside the unusual smell, there was a ringing in our ears every time we asked a question out loud to the possible entity. I marked the cabin as possibly haunted because of these repetitive events. Of course we checked the heating, ventilation, open pipes, and looked for possible gas leaks – all these can be misinterpreted for possible paranormal smells or caused hallucinations.

Cold spots - this is a very common sign during paranormal activity. The principle is a cold spot may be a sign of a spirit trying to manifest itself and absorbing heat and energy in proximity. The key to cold spots is using a high quality digital infrared thermometer for accurate readings. Cold spots or hot spots are very hard to determine using your body alone. Unless you can see your breath in a room that was just a few moments ago 70°; then don't trust anything but a digital infrared thermometer.



There are a few reasons you may feel a "cold spot" in a room. Air is moving inside a room; even when doors and windows are closed. When you move inside a room or move your hand, air begins to move immediately. Imagine a room full of smoke. As you move through it the smoke would shift wouldn't it? So does air. Humidity also plays a role in cold spots. If the room is humid and your body forms even a minimal amount of sweat, then your skin will feel colder compared to being in a dry room.

Obviously vents and open windows can create the sensation of a cold spot. That is why I am a huge fan of infrared digital thermometers. If you suspect you might have found a true cold spot, measure five or six places around the room and then the original cold spot. Then search the room to see if there is a crack under a door or other possibility that might be allowing for cold air to pass.

Floor vents are a usual suspect even when the ventilation system isn't turned on. If you have two rooms, one is warm and the other cold, connected by ventilation then there will be air movement

between the rooms. Again the heating ventilation or air conditioning system doesn't need to be turned on for air to be passing through it. Use your digital thermometer for accuracy in the collection of evidence.

Apparitions - This is the mother lode of all unusual signs. Apparitions can come in many forms such as a full body apparition, shadows that are human shaped or other shapes, or particular body parts of an apparition such as a floating head.

There are hundreds of videos online that have some very convincing apparitions recorded. However, as with anything on the Internet you must take it with a grain of salt because these days 14 year old kids can create convincing video ghosts. That is why we research so that we can make our own conclusions from our own evidence.

The closest event that I could say that I've witnessed some sort of apparition was not even on an investigation. When I got out of the military I still felt the need for some adrenaline rushes. Two friends and I knew of a low-rider gang that would visit a very large park in California every Halloween. This was a county park, named Bogart Park in Cherry Valley, which was heavily wooded with hiking trails throughout. We got on our camouflage and our face paint and even had netting camouflage suits. We parked our car and hid it off the road and then proceeded to hike up into the park.

We went looking for the gang that partied up there and easily found them from their noise and fire. Foolishly we taunted the gang by making noises, tossing rocks, and shaking bushes. After a half hour or so we made enough noise to cause them to go on the offensive. This was the time to leave. We felt we had stirred up the hornet's nest and we started hiking back down the trails. We were moving silently but at a good pace. As we hiked along I could hear something pacing us in a dry creek bed below. I thought at the time it was probably a bear, coyote, or bobcat, and just brushed it off.

The noise continued to pace us. We stopped several times and listened. When we stopped it stopped. When we moved it moved. I was beginning to think it was one of the partiers following us. Attempting to be brave I told my comrades to move down the trail about 50yds in front of me. I wanted to see if they continued to follow them or stayed with me. I laid down on the trail next to some bushes totally camouflaged. I heard no movement down in the creek bed and I could no longer see my friends. A moment later I heard rustling, not from footsteps, but from leaves moving around as if being pushed from the wind. It was a dead calm night. The sound was coming up from the creek bed below to the trail I was laying on. That moment I regretted letting my friends leave me behind and I pulled out my handgun I was carrying. Fifteen yards in front of me, a dark shape emerged from the woods and crossed the trail. Lying on the ground I had the moonlight in my view through the trees. As this shape crossed the trail I could see it silhouetted. It appeared to me at the moment to be around 10ft. tall and not of any particular shape; not human nor was it animal. The shape appeared to be moving smoothly as if floating. It crossed the trail and continued up the hill.

To this day I don't know what that shape was but I know this for sure; it knew I was there. As it continued up the hill and out of my sight my heart raced. It was courage that made me stand up and run down that trail to my friends. The short moment it took me to run down that trail I felt as if something was right behind me the entire way. That same feeling you got when you were a kid racing down the hall for a light switch. Fortunately I wasn't the only one to see it. My friends, feeling like something was wrong, had started coming back to find me and they also saw the dark shape cross the trail. I have to admit I was very frightened at that moment, but that is all part of the experience.

Of course everybody wants to see a ghost when they go hunting, at least that's what we tell ourselves but it's always better to see one with a friend.

How do I investigate the Paranormal?

Something about research that you should always keep in mind - You make ghost hunting what you want to be. If you're looking for a spooky night with your friends walking around a graveyard, that's exactly what you will probably get. If you are looking to do actual research and collect evidence then approach it as such, but have fun too. Research should never be a chore. When you are doing research always be a professional. Running around a location acting like a spastic frat boy, being bossy and a wimp at the same time, and thinking that every single noise must be paranormal related is an embarrassment to us all. Did I vent too much?

The following guide is not a verbatim manual on investigating the paranormal. Some steps will be relevant while others will be way off base. I encourage you to read them all anyway. Sometimes I will stick a useful nugget of information in where you might not expect it.

Pro Or Amateur – There is a fine line between professional and amateur ghost hunters. Having thousands of dollars of equipment and a business card does not make you a pro. I would say the few items that do separate the two are collection of evidence skills (even when there isn't anything to collect), debunking skills, working with clients, and finally acting like a professional.

What is acting like a professional? You already know, but if the answer eludes you, then here are two words to start you off as a professional - organization and empathy. You can't help someone else if you are the center of the chaos and if you can't understand what their needs are. Keep your ears and eyes open and your mouth shut. This always brings in answers.

ATTENTION: BORING NECESSARY STUFF

Insurance and waivers – Ok if you have decided that you might want to form your own official Ghost Hunting society, or club, or affiliation, or guild, or whatever – then you should take some cautionary steps. You must decide if you are going to charge for your services. If you do, then be a pro and give a professional report to your client - more on this later.

This is a litigious world. A few years back I read in a paranormal magazine about a team member who fell down a small set of steps while investigating and broke her wrist. First she sued the homeowner of the house that she fell in. She then sued the ghost hunting club she belonged to, and because the ghost hunting club was owned as a sole proprietorship she went after the personal assets of the club's president.

Her claim was that the house wasn't lit and was a hazard to work in. I am sure her personal injury lawyer was the brain behind that one.

Instead of making lawyers and the "sue happy" wealthy you must protect yourself and your clients from frivolous and non-frivolous lawsuits. A business or homeowner is going to be more likely to allow you access to their facility if you have the right documentation to protect them. Use this as a tool to demonstrate to a client that you are a professional.

Online there are several sources for boiler-plate waivers for paranormal research. Be careful of these. If you do decide to use one insure that it meets your State's requirements. You can find these documents on the ghosthuntertech.com website. Along with these documents you can also obtain a package for collecting and documenting evidence.

The minimal documentation you should have is:

Waiver to Hold Harmless or of Liability – Any team member that is participating in an investigation should sign a waiver to Hold Harmless the Ghost Hunting Club and any clients that you are investigating against injury, death, or personal property damage. This includes guests that come along “just for the night”... You will provide the property owner a copy signed by each team member participating in the investigation.

Waiver of Hold Harmless for the Property Owner – This is a document you will provide the property owner to state that your ghost hunting club will not sue as a business entity.

Confidentially Agreement Team Member- This is an agreement between you and your team member stating that they are not to reveal any details of any investigation to anyone without your consent. The best way to handle this is to just explain that if you are out on a random excursion for fun then the team member is allowed to reveal details. However, if your club has been hired or paid for services a details are to be kept confidential until you have given authorization. If you are working with mature people, than this agreement shouldn't be a fuss.

Confidentially Agreement with Client – Much like the above agreement this is set between you and your client. In this agreement you agree that your ghost hunting club will not reveal any results of your investigations to the public without the written consent of your client. Why is this important? Your client may be a homeowner that does not necessarily want the whole town to know of a possible haunting. This may attract the curious at odd hours of the night.

Finding a paranormal location

Finding a place to research is like finding a nerd at a Star Trek convention = Pretty Easy (don't take offense I am a nerd to). If you look on the web, read books, watch the TV shows then you can hit every spot that every other hunter is hitting. However, if you want to explore virgin territory then dig a little deeper. There are all sorts of locations for gruesome killings and suicides. My favorite spots are battlegrounds and the non-famous murder and suicides sites. I wouldn't waste my time in most graveyards unless it was a spot where they hung the guilty on a nearby tree and then buried them there. There is a belief that graveyards may be a portal to beyond the grave. This is your choice to follow up with that.

Places where mass amounts of people died (i.e. hospitals, mental facilities, battlegrounds, and prisons) all provide an ample chance to get some research done. Nonetheless, use your imagination and check in your local libraries and newspaper archives and you may be surprised what you find.

There is a belief that you are more likely to find activity in a spot where people died brutally or tragically. The truth is nobody knows. It does appear those spots do seem to have higher activity, but I suspect it is because those spots are more often sought out by investigators. The more time investigated the more evidence.

Is it more likely a spirit would go somewhere there is a tragedy or would they prefer a safe place?



In my younger days I investigated a semi-older house in what I was told had paranormal activity. With my own eyes I witnessed a sliding closet door rip open and a nearby clock radio suddenly turn on both within a second of each other. There weren't any recorded tragedies in the house. The house was a track home so there was no "original builder". So who or what was haunting it? I don't know. Trying to associate someone with every possible haunting is frivolity. It could have been the owner who first bought it or it could have been somebody who walked by the house one day and said "Wow great house. I could live there forever." The truth is that knowing who or what is haunting a place is tough to prove. (I am sure I will get plenty of emails from the Spiritual Investigators on this one)

How many times have you heard on these ghost hunting shows that a "Lady in White who died giving birth", "Old Sam who built the house", or "It is a little boy that plays with my sons toys" is the cause of the haunt. Assuming you know what an entity is - is assuming too much.

My point of this section is don't be guided by those who think they know of what a good haunting location is. It could be anywhere. Be creative and try all sorts of locations indoors and outdoors.

There are plenty of locations now that offer ghost hunters a chance to hunt in their facilities for free or a small charge. That's up to you. Large abandoned mental facilities and prisons are known for this. I say take advantage of it. These places are usually big enough that you rarely run into the other investigators but when you do - exchange information and be friendly. If nothing else you will have had a good time with your friends

Important if you plan on doing regular investigations: There is a sure-fire way you can always secure a possible haunted location if you are willing to spend some time and leg work = the answer is to ADVERTISE. Now I don't mean dropping a \$1300 ad in the yellow pages. I suggest creating a name, making some business cards for ten dollars at any office supply store, and design a simple color flyer of services offered by you. Find your local historic district in your town or a town nearby and talk to business owners and clerks at small businesses around town. I guarantee before the tenth business entered you will have someone telling you all about how they feel they are being constantly watched, lights go on and off on their own, funny noises in the back room, or all sorts of information galore. Even if it is not their business location it could be someone's house that they would like you to come over and investigate.

Important Safety Note:

I have been to some very isolated spots where rumors of paranormal activity had occurred. Remote ghostly locations tend to draw ghost hunters and partiers. Be aware of this. When approaching a location you might want to perform a little reconnaissance on the location prior to bringing up a noisy team of investigators.

On a particular investigation I was with three of my friends, around 3am, walking up a desert hill to an abandoned quartz mine that supposedly had screams that emanated from it at night. We hadn't driven up to the mine because we were in a little car that we thought wouldn't make it up the hill. As we got close to the mine I saw a glint off something nearby around 50 feet away. I stopped and my comrades did too. The glint was moonlight that bounced off a chrome handlebar. We looked around and noticed a large group of motorcycles and people sleeping on the ground in front of the mine. We backed away slowly and quietly. Who knows what would have happened if we stirred up that hornet's nest.

How to gain access to locations that may be difficult?

With the wide variety of possible locations for ghost hunting you are bound to run into places where access is limited or just prohibited and can lead to a trespassing or even a burglary charge if you violate the law.

So how do you overcome this obstacle? The first thing you do is simply ask. When I say ask, don't call over the phone. Would you let a complete stranger over the phone access to your private property? Ask in person, dress nice, and be humbly confident. If you are denied then let it go. Move on to the next location.

If you are trying to gain access to a commercial business, such as a hotel or restaurant, you need to have a clear understanding of the following. Ghosts are big business. The ghost TV shows out there are a money maker for those locations that have shown any type of possible paranormal activity.



This is the golden carrot that you will hold up for the business owner. Now I know you probably don't have your own TV show. Instead, when you approach a business owner, you will tell them that you will post your videos and findings on all the major video sites and the major ghost hunting sites. Let them know that this is free advertising for them and they can expect a certain amount of business from the curious. Print a few web pages of ghost hunts videos, from the video websites, that have happened in other businesses, and show them that ghost videos get hundreds of thousands of views. Don't promise to increase their business or that they will be rich beyond their wildest dreams. Simply tell them that the curious will be drawn to their location.

Go in there professionally - dress the part, be business like, bring your business cards, and make no promises except that you will be a good steward of their property while investigating. Prove to them that you are a professional and show them your waiver documentation and what a final report of your

will look like.

If the business is more like a warehouse or an office building, and isn't guest driven then this will be tougher. These types of businesses usually don't wish to draw the inquisitive to their locations. The only thing you might be able to compromise with is their own desires to be on a ghost hunting team. Be open-minded and offer them a chance to help out, and treat them like a source of knowledge. Make them feel important. Ask them to bring their own digital camera.

Battleground and other historic locations are often to be found inside a federal or state park that closes at sundown. Special permission to be there after hours is occasionally granted, and it doesn't hurt to ask. You may find a Park Ranger that is a ghost hunter to and can actually provide you with information that you might not have, and if they ask to go – excitedly let them; in fact encourage them to. If they are a “team-member” then they can usually get you access to places that no one else can. Take advantage of it.

Scenario: You hear of an old house that burnt down in 1945 with six people inside. It is located on the back side of a farm in an isolated area. Your head goes “BINGO”. Do you ask the farmer for access to his private property or do you park in a non-discreet area and hike in? This choice is yours. I have to admit the thoughts of “Well if I don't ask, I can't be denied” will pass through my head too. However, if you are caught then do the right thing – leave immediately. Don't take the chance of getting into a fight, shot, or arrested. Grab your gear as fast as you can, and go.

Now in my early days there was an abandoned large hotel (still is), called Hotel Del Sol, in Yuma, Arizona. My friends and I “entered it” a few times to investigate. We found more vagrants than ghosts.

Never enter a building illegally. A trespassing charge is one thing; breaking-and-entering is another. It's not worth the risk.

If you are investigating a hotel room I wouldn't bother asking for permission for investigating. On the other hand, once you are in the room you might let management know what you are doing there. I have found some managers and staffers that just burst with information to someone who will take them seriously. Always act that you take them seriously the minute you show doubt on your face is the minute they stop sharing. In addition, you may want to investigate there again and there is nothing like an inside ally.

While doing an investigation in a haunted room at the Hotel Del Coronado near San Diego, CA, I asked the manager of guest services if she knew of any paranormal activity in the hotel. She said that she heard rumors but the elevator operator (yes, they still have one) that worked the graveyard shift could answer my questions. At 2:30am, when I knew it would not be busy, I left my room and went to find the operator. He told me some great stories of people checking out in the middle of the night and leaving from being frightened in the room. Some people are looking for an audience, be theirs.



Team Members

~~That's right I said team members. You don't think you are going to do this alone do you? If you do then you are braver than me. Ghost Hunting is a team sport.~~

The reason you want a team is for safety and for a second witness. I usually like three to five people the most, but hey every once in a while someone requests to bring a newbie along and that's great. Remember your location. If you are investigating a 1200 square foot home then three people probably all you want. If you are investigating a battleground then bring ten.

Who you should bring is more important than how many. Bring people that convey professionalism when you are investigating in front of a property owner or client. Bring people you can trust to not steal or abuse an owner's property.

Critics: Don't bring obnoxious critics of paranormal research. I want to expand what I am saying here. There are skeptics, such as myself, and there are critics. Skeptics are those that are trying to find answers and don't believe that just because the house creaked it must mean a poltergeist has taken over. Critics are those that criticize the whole investigative system. If you are there with a client and you have a team member rolling their eyes, making snide remarks, or disrupting the investigation boot them out of there. You don't need that on a research session.

I don't kid myself in believing that I'm some type of scientist or that I am going to solve the world's problems by doing paranormal research. I'm doing it for my own personal fulfillment and to try and answer some of the questions that I have experienced. I don't need some jackass there telling me I am stupid for even pursuing it. Nor will I give them the time of day because I have too much to investigate.

Insure your team members know what kind of people to bring if they want to bring someone. Tell them to keep the "naysayers" away but feel free to bring the curious and someone who will take your instructions.

Spiritual Investigators - I'm not here to judge or debate psychics or the ability to feel or communicate with a spirit. I know personally that I have never felt or heard anything that would remotely be considered a psychic ability. I can tell you I have got chills (maybe that is a minor ability?) and feel the temperature change in locations. I have seen quite a few odd things that just put more questions into my brain, but I don't feel I have any psychic abilities of any sort. It would be hypocritical and ignorant of me to say that it's not possible for anyone to have a psychic ability, although even the most psychic that I have worked with never showed any outstanding results. I have heard mixed reviews from other investigators, who take their research seriously. Some have stated psychics have absolutely produced key evidence in an investigation.

There is a particular English ghost hunting show that uses psychics on a regular basis. I think the show has damaged the reputation of possible mediums. On the web, video sites have leaked footage of the show's bogus usage of a supposed psychic. It is comical to watch and a bit sad.

Perhaps you feel a bit "sensitive" to paranormal activity which is great, but I cannot write of it intelligently since I have not shared any worth-while experiences with any. I would say if you feel you may have some psychic ability put it to the test.

Initial Walkthrough – Performing an initial walk through of your location during day light is not always necessary, but may be a good idea especially if the investigation is in an abandoned building. Take a digital camera with you and take some pictures of what you would like the stationary video cameras to view, possible safety hazards, and an overall view of the area with full lighting. Pass this information onto your team or have your team attend the initial walkthrough.

This is mainly for safety reasons. If you are entering a location that may have faulty floors or obstacles to walk around then of course these are easily more identifiable in the light. If you plan on using multiple static cameras throughout your investigation then you might want to decide in the light where your tripods or cameras will sit.

If you have equipment power considerations than an initial walkthrough may be necessary for any location. You want to be able to identify, prior to showing up, where you are going to get power for your equipment. It could be very disappointing to arrive at a location and discover that power isn't available.



HI was part of a team that was investigating the back of an incredibly large warehouse. It was just assumed that power would be available. However, when we went to set up cameras and our PC it was discovered that power outlets were only available at the warehouse office which was over 400' away. Someone had to take a trip to a hardware store and over an hour was wasted. If you're working outdoors in a remote area and power is not available you could try and use a generator. I would recommend a generator that has an extended battery life that does not require the motor to be consistently running. I'm sure you can understand why you wouldn't want a noisy generator in the background when we're attempting to record audio or listen for disembodied voices.

You may want to do a walkthrough of the location if you are unsure how many team members there will be needed. Again keep your group small for small locations and bring more hunters for a bigger location if you like.

Finally, on a walk through insure you have a plan on how you want to investigate. If you are doing a walkthrough with a client then let them do all the talking with you asking relevant questions. We will get more into this when we cover interviewing. Make notes of what needs to be covered.



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