

# Rules to Follow During an Investigation

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**Article Credit:** [Southwest Ghost Hunters Association](#)

1. Never go alone into an investigation unless you absolutely have to and then, always let someone know where you are going. This will give you someone to help out with the investigation, corroborate anything strange that happens and may be essential should you walk into a volatile domestic situation
2. Try to make sure that all parties related to and who own the location have given their permission for the investigation. You don't want anyone present to give you or the witnesses a hard time. This will make the investigation difficult, if not impossible.
3. Keep your perceptions clear prior to the investigation. Maybe this is an obvious one, but never drink or smoke during or prior to an investigation unless it is in a designated area.
4. Arrive with skepticism. Maintain an open mind and be aware that there may be a natural explanation for what is going on. Always know what to look for and remember to try and prove that the place is not haunted first, before accepting that it is paranormal in origin.
5. Make sure that you bring along all of the items that you need to properly conduct your investigation. Make sure that you know how to use your equipment properly and always try to find a natural source for your EMF readings before assuming that the detected energy is paranormal in origin.
6. Avoid publicity and the media. Also, try to get the witnesses to not invite their friends over to watch.
7. Keep out any would-be investigators from outside your own group, or who you have not worked with before. Unknown factors like this could be disastrous, especially if they start talking about "demons" or "exorcisms" and they could turn the whole investigation into a circus.
8. Interview the witness in depth, repeating questions if necessary. This will also allow you to tell how consistent the experience account is and whether any of the witnesses may be embellishing their version of the story.
9. Look for a pattern in the accounts and try to see if the activity is related to only one person in the group.
10. Become a part of the location. Try to blend into the background as much as possible and don't let the investigation turn into a spectacle. Also, make sure that your equipment is out of the way and not the focus of the entire household.

11. Make sure that the witnesses are comfortable with the investigation and understand what you are doing. You do not need to be technical with your explanations but make sure that they understand what the equipment is for and why you are taking so many photos... etc. You may run into a situation where the "haunting" has a natural explanation (like a banging water pipe, the wind, ect.. ) and you have to be careful how you explain this to a witness. Some people will be relieved that there is an alternate explanation besides a ghost, but if this is not handled right, some could feel that you think they were lying about the whole thing. Always explain the reasons why you think the activity has a natural cause and if possible, demonstrate this for them.

12. Try some field experiments to reconstruct the events. Let the witness walk you step-by-step through the encounter or experience and have them explain their feelings at the time.

13. Check with experts outside the paranormal field, like a plumber for explanation of water pipes, an architect about the design of the house, an electrician about strange events with lights turning on and off....., or any other kind of expertise that you may need.

14. In the course of the investigation, remember to write down everything that occurs as soon as you can, no matter how small or insignificant it might seem at the time.

15. Be careful not to let your own beliefs influence the witness accounts in any way. They could be seeking the rational explanation that you are overlooking.