

GREAT LAKES PARANORMAL RESEARCH TEAM

Video Recording during and After an Investigation

This writer has reviewed hours and hours of video from many investigations through the years. Some videos have been better than others. This article is certainly based on experience and will have a lack of technical, specialized advice. For that, you would have to consult someone who is deeper into technology than this author. Keep in mind that in the paranormal field, we have not been very successful in capturing visual paranormal events for various reasons. Some of the reasons have been due to carelessness of the use of equipment, other reasons have been because the paranormal does not always manifest in our band of light, poor angles, speed/velocity of the event and many more reasons. But perhaps, your team will find ways to do this more effectively.

Here are 11 solid points on making sure you walk away at least with a good and clear recording.

1. The good and solid set up of your video cam is important like anything else for the investigation.

You will probably go dark in most cases, so you really want to make sure you will have enough lighting or some good IR lighting in the area you are filming. This author has had to stare at a dark, fuzzy screen for 5 hours or more. This can be 1-frustrating and 2-there is a possibility you might have lost a paranormal event due to poor visibility / quality of the recording.

2. Get to know your equipment.

We can't stress this enough. Learn all you can about cam. Make sure you review instructions. Get to know the behavior of the camera/video equipment BEFORE you use it in a real investigation. It is important to make sure you don't have sleep mode on or any other features that could stop your video recording. Learn how it handles light and dark situations. How to handle the focus, and angles. Be aware of memory capability. Figure out if it has sound capabilities. How long can it run on batteries, etc. Digital cams are great these days, but they have so many features that could play against your investigation.

3. When setting up your video cam, take a good look at the view.

If something showed up, do you have something you can compare the size of it, let's say to a near by lamp, or do you have a door frame you can use as a reference. You want to be able to compare the unknown object to something and know its approximate height and size.

4. Is the image clear?

Do you have a clear image during the day and do you have a good image in the dark. If it is too dark, it might not be very useful. It all depends. Make sure the image is good enough to tell what you are looking at. Play with the focus in and out. Get it to where you want it.

5. If someone walked by, will you be able to see who it is?

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Or will you only see their legs? And yes, it depends on how close the person / presence gets to the camera. Make sure you can see enough of the investigator to know who walked by.

6. Avoid pointing the video cam towards something shinny, a window or a light.

Light and shinny surfaces will play many tricks on the camera. A light or shinny surface will confuse the camera and force it to re-focus a million times, and that is one situation you want to avoid.

7. Make sure you use electricity in most cases.

The paranormal can play with batteries and shut your video down. Well, let us say the paranormal can mess with anything it chooses, but batteries especially. Video recording also takes a lot of juice, best to be plugged in. Check your recording from time to time during an investigation and make sure it is still running.

8. Make sure your video cam is well mounted.

Make sure it is on a strong tri-pod or on a good solid surface. There are many stories of video cameras being turned or knocked over by an unknown source.

Make sure it is set up in an area where people won't bump into it or trip on the cords and either knock it over or unplug it.

9. Have plenty of extension cords in your equipment.

Bring some painters tape (light tape that does not harm surfaces) so you can tape down your cords. You just never know in what odd place you have to set the camera down.

10. Reviewing your video after the investigation.

It is always fun to review video. However, if you did 5 hours of an investigation, you will need to set aside 5 hours to review all the video. It is not recommended you just review and say or write down, "I saw nothing". You actually need to fill out a form with any and all info from the video recording. Your client will really want to know if you put in your hours worth, especially on video. Make a form with the following sections:

Time, date, location, observed event. By "observed event" that means even people walking by. Write down anything that passes in front of the camera and we really mean anything. Why? Story: I had been working in this crazy, unpredictable house. Things were popping up here and there. In my video, a spark of light showed up on the staircase post and in seconds disappeared. I chucked it up to a camera glitch or maybe dust. However, during the next investigation in the same house, little sparks and flashes of light were showing up here and there. The investigators were seeing them with the naked eye. It was definitely something we could not explain.

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If nothing paranormal showed on your video recording, fine. But if it did, review well and come to your best conclusion. Compare the video with any other instruments that were operating in the area and see if other instruments picked up any other anomaly.

- 11. If you don't have all the equipment you need to do some good video recording, don't sweat it. Remember, visuals will not be very common.**

Just wait until you have enough pennies to get what you really need. There is nothing worse than having to wait hours reviewing poor video.