

## PURPOSE

These guidelines describe both general standards for ethical conduct and research as well as the practical application to be utilized during field and laboratory type studies within the paranormal research community. They are established to represent a common understanding of responsibilities and expectations in the paranormal research community. It is the goal of these policies and standards to promote and advance the quality and integrity of paranormal research and to protect against misconduct.

### 1. OBLIGATIONS TO SOCIETY

If paranormal research is to remain of any benefit to society and the groups and individuals within it, then paranormal researchers and investigators must conduct their work responsibly and in light of the moral order of the community in which they practice. They have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and analysis of data and the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings.

### 2. OBLIGATIONS TO COLLEAGUES AND PEERS

Paranormal research depends upon the maintenance of standards and of appropriate professional behavior that is shared amongst the research community. Without compromising obligations to subjects or society at large, this requires methods, procedures and findings to be open to peer review. It also requires concern for the safety and security of colleagues when conducting field research.

### 3. OBLIGATIONS TO SUBJECTS

Paranormal researchers and investigators must strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be voluntary and as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration.

## DOCUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

Protocols for all research and studies should be well-written and clearly defined. Careful gathering and recording of data and reliable data storage is essential. Detailed notebooks should be kept in manner that data can be easily and properly reviewed. Prior to data collection, the following topics should be included in discussions among co-investigators to ensure that paper and electronic data are private, secure, accurately recorded, and trustworthy:

- a. Experimental protocols;
- b. Methods of recording and coding data that maintain the confidentiality of participants' identity;
- c. Methods for securing data, including secure electronic access and storage;
- d. Format of laboratory notebooks;
- e. Methods for copying, backing up, and cross-checking data;
- f. Methods for recording data so that the research record can be readily understood.

## CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Investigators conducting observational, participatory, field, and/or laboratory research are responsible for the ethical activities and practices applied to their research methods. When there is more than one

investigator, the lead investigator has the overall responsibility of overseeing the ethics and quality of research.

## SELECTION OF METHODOLOGIES

Paranormal researchers and investigators have an obligation to show that the research design used in their study and/or research is appropriate to the question being addressed. Additionally, investigators have an ethical responsibility to do the following:

1. Select and utilize equipment, tests, and materials that are both reliable and valid, and that are appropriate for the nature of the study.
2. Determine the reliability and validity of any non-standardized tools used for data collection.
3. Use research designs, statistical procedures, and other relevant analyses in an appropriate and ethical manner, having a clear rationale for each.
4. Provide sufficient detail about the methodology of all aspects of your research so other investigators can replicate the work.

## REPORT OF RESULTS

Paranormal researchers and investigators have an obligation to provide an honest description and analysis of their findings, and to refrain from any and all willful deception. If any researchers or investigators have engaged in research misconduct, it is the responsibility of the paranormal research community to bring this information to light to the entire community. The two most obvious types of misconduct are *fabrication* and *falsification*. Fabrication occurs when paranormal researchers make up data and falsification occurs when researchers and investigators alter data or results.

## DISCUSSION & PEER REVIEW

Paranormal researchers and investigators have an obligation to provide a critical analysis (positive and negative) of the results of their findings and case studies. All research and case studies conducted by paranormal research organizations and individuals should be made available for peer review, regardless of whether the findings displayed a negative or positive result.