

PARANORMAL RESEARCH



ASSOCIATION OF BOSTON

Standard Operating Procedures

SOP's also applicable to PRAB, PRAC, PRANH



Introduction

The Paranormal Research Association of Boston, in an attempt to gather evidence to either prove or disprove the existence of a paranormal event, abides by this list of procedures to aid us in our research and interaction within the team and community.

The protocols stated below must be adhered to by every member of the PRAB to ensure conformity in all our experiments, pictures, EVPS and investigations which brings better and more scientific data and a secure work environment.

This protocol list does not contain any confidential data, and therefore can be given to the public on request, and is made freely available on the website, www.praofb.org

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Protocol OP-1 – Standard Procedures

- 1 The PRAB will never investigate a private location without obtaining full permission of the land owner or resident.
- 2 The PRAB will never ask you to investigate a location on your own. This is for your safety and for better verification of the data.
- 3 Be subjective and objective of all anomalies you encounter. A natural explanation **MUST** be ruled out before an event can be deemed as possibly paranormal.
- 4 Waiver forms should be signed and collected by the team leader prior to any investigation. (*Appendix III*)
- 5 When sending any forms to clients, make sure you are using the most up to date version, as per PCMS database entry. The most up to date forms will also be on Internal.
- 6 Members may work with other groups only if directly authorized to do so by the Lead Investigator. Membership of other groups may lead to a breach of confidentiality and may be seen as a conflict of interest to the PRAB (*Appendix IV*)
- 7 Members are required to attend a minimum percentage of mandatory PRAB meetings. Meetings may be in person or via teleconference due to time and distance constraints.
 - 7.1 Failure of a probationary / trainee member to attend 50% of mandatory meetings without notice is grounds for revocation of membership in the association
 - 7.2 Failure of a Core Team Member to attend 50% of mandatory meetings without notice is grounds for placement on probation for a period of 2 months at the discretion of the Lead Investigator and other Core Members
- 8 All members must familiarize themselves with the memos and online guides that are available on Internal.

Protocol OP-2 – Use of Technology

2.1 Colabative

Calabative is our collaborative workspace program used to centralize all out projects and tasks. All members of the association are required to update tasks assigned to them. Performing these updates contributes to the smoother running of the association for all members.

2.2 CrewScheduler

CrewScheduler is our online calendar and time management tool. All members are required to place into the calendar times they are busy. These times include, but are not limited to, when you are working (*even if it is regular reoccurring hours / days*), times you are on vacation and other times you are not available to the association.

Failure to update this information on a regular basis may lead to you not being considered for upcoming investigations due to time constraints.

All training, investigations and other PRAB events will be posted to CrewScheduler. Members are required to accept or decline any event assigned to them.

2.3 PCMS

PCMS must be updated with all investigation data. It is our primary source of information for all investigations. PCMS data is secured and may not be sent to any clients.

2.4 DSS

The PRAB Data Sharing System is used by all members for sharing data post-investigation. All members should familiarize themselves with PRAB-INT-3-DSS for operation of this system. **After receiving your data assignments, you have 72 hours to retrieve your data, or it will be deleted. This is due to our hosting provider.**

2.5 Internal.PRAOFB.org

Internal is your source of all education documentations, internal files and the staging point for all other resources.

2.6 PRAB-INT-9-Workflow_Video, PRAB-INT-8-Workflow_Audio

Known as the INT-8 and INT-9 files, these forms **must** be submitted with all audio and video data that has been altered in any way to keep a record of our data and changes.

2.7 PRAB-INT-10 – Data Analysis

INT-10 **must** be submitted after all data analysis sessions. This is the only acceptable way to send data analysis.

Protocol OP-3 – Promotion within the Association*Trainee Paranormal Investigator – TPI1*

- An ability and willingness to learn
- Analytical mindset
- Rational / Critical thinking ability
- Some working knowledge of paranormal terms and definitions
- Excellent people skills
- An ability to take on new tasks and work under direction of the core team

Trainee Paranormal Investigator – TPI2

- Competency with paranormal research equipment use and why we use them
- Developing leadership skills while still working under core team guidance
- A good working knowledge of paranormal terms and definitions
- Demonstrated good rational / critical thinking ability
- Good communication within the team, answering e-mails etc.
- Good public speaking skills
- Ability to set up and break down kit
- Ability to analyze data in a timely manner and provide reports
- Showing competency in research skills

Trainee Paranormal Investigator – TPI3

- Excellent public speaking skills
- Ability to set up and break down kit
- Ability to analyze data in a timely manner and provide reports
- Excellent knowledge of equipment use and reasons we use it
- Has led a small team
- May have started a research project / submitted an article
- Excellent team communication and mixing with the team
- Still showing a good interest in paranormal investigation
- Demonstrated ability to interview clients effectively
- Adhered to all PRAI Protocols with no major disciplinary action on file

Core Team Member

- Ability to train others
- Usually assigned to or leading an organizational unit (Research, Technical, AV etc)
- Mixed well with the group and continues to develop that relationship
- Excellent debunking skills Ability to set up and break down equipment efficiently
- Ability to analyze data in a timely manner and provide reports
- Keeps up to date with equipment and theories
- Can take ownership of a clients case

Organizational Unit Leaders

Assigned by a joint vote of the Lead Investigator and Deputy Lead Investigator. These OU leads can be AV Analysis, Technical Management, PR, Legal etc. Only core team members with an established track record can be put forward for OU Lead.

Deputy Lead Investigator is picked solely by the Lead Investigator. Also the Lead Investigator must choose his own replacement when stepping down.

Deputy Lead and Lead Investigators

Keeps abreast of new techniques and theories and decimates to the team

Keeps the team up to date

Micro-manages the OU Leads

Reads and replies to reports from the OU Leads

Usually has published documents on paranormal theory and are the public face of the PRAB

Researches and finds new locations to investigate

Arranges all team meetings

Ultimately responsible for the association

Protocol INV-1 – Creation of Still Images (*digital or print*)

- 1 Be aware of your environment. For example, if there is moisture or dust in the area, expect visual anomalies. Note the conditions in the Command Board.
- 2 If your camera has an Auto Focus Assist Beam (AF Beam) please inform the team with you to expect it. For instance “Expect a green light and a flash”. This will stop people taking a photograph at the same time and getting a green hue on a photo
- 3 If you are in the dark and are going to use a flash, please inform your team. This aids in keeping the night vision of other members of the team.
- 4 Keep long hair tied back to minimise anomalies.
- 5 Avoid taking pictures of shiny objects. This means glass, mirrors, reflective objects and anything that shines or that could cause a reflection.
- 6 Keep track of your camera strap, fingers and lens cover. These can mimic anomaly if they swing in front of the camera
- 7 Holding your breath when taking a photo will greatly reduce false mists appearing on your photos.
- 8 In order to avoid lens flare. Never take pictures in the direction of the sun or a strong light source.
- 9 Make sure your lens is dust free and clean. This will lead to fewer anomalies.

10 Camera Settings

10.1 ISO: This is the light sensitivity of the film. The higher the ISO, the more light sensitive it is. However an ISO of 1000 will take in less light, it does a grainier picture. A good setting is 400 in normal conditions, at night 200 is recommended.

10.2 Aperture Setting: When taking a photo at night, the lowest aperture is recommended. If your lens supports an aperture (F-Stop) of (for example) 2.8, you are advised to use that setting.

10.3 Shutter Speed: A long shutter speed (exposure) will take in most light. Anything over 2 seconds should ideally be taken with a tripod.

Protocol INV-2 – Creation of Audio Data (*digital or analogue*)

1 When recording an interview, please use the format Case Number, Time, Date, Place, Subject and those present.

2 When recording an EVP, please use the format Case Number, Time, Date, Place, your name and those present.

3 Remember to download a copy of your data to the central EVP station. Once it is on central, the data will be uploaded to DSS as soon as possible.

4 Speak louder than a whisper when recording. If you make a noise, or hear a noise mark it during the recording. This will minimize false positives during analysis.

5 When adding filters to suspected data, log all changes to on an INT-8 Audio WorkFlow form and submit it with your INT10 Data Analysis Log.

Protocol INV-3 – Performing Investigation

1 When performing the investigation, remember your own health: Have sufficient rest before the investigation, and do not feel obligated to attend an investigation if you are in poor health.

2 No smoking is permitted during an active investigation. Smoking is only permitted on the designated breaks, or when you are on non-investigative duties such as command center but only when it will not interfere with data gathering.

3 No mind altering substances are permitted in the 2 hours leading to the investigation, or during the investigation or analysis. This can compromise your mental state and lead to poor decision making. Mind altering substances include, but are not limited to alcohol, non-prescribed medications and use of medications that are used in a manner which is not for their intended purpose. If you are taking prescribed medications, inform the Lead Investigator. Substances which contravene Massachusetts, other state or federal laws are not to be used, consumed, transported, carried or otherwise present on an investigation.

4 If you are on a public investigation and in charge of a team, you are responsible for your team and public members thereof safety at all times. If you have any questions, contact the Lead Investigator

5 Be aware of dangers in a location, and how they will change as night falls. Recognise and memorize any and all emergency egress areas which may be utilized if an emergency situation occurs.

6 During your base readings sweep, take note of all dangers in the area. Recognise and memorize any and all emergency egress areas which may be utilized if an emergency situation occurs.

7 Readings should be recorded every 10 minutes on the paper report forms or PCMS. Note any anomalies on the report forms. *(Available on PCMS)*

8 Data should be added to the central computer throughout the night. This data will be transferred to DSS.

9 Familiarize yourself with all data on PCMS before going on the investigation.

Protocol INV-4 – Data Analysis

1 When performing filters, remember to log the changes in PRAB-INT-8-Workflow_Audio and PRAB-INT-9-Workflow_Video. Never save over the master file.

2 Recognize visual pareiolida

2.1 Look at the type of photograph you are analysing. Pictures of trees, fields, cluttered up closets, mirrors and glass are a few of the prime candidates for pareiolida issues. They include very complex shapes and patterns and, therefore, a high potential for the mind to construct a face or body out of something that isn't there.

2.2 Look at the potential face or figure. If it is truly paranormal then, the face or figure would be made up of its own material, not the material that comprises the picture. Example: If the picture is of a forest, and your mind tells you that there is a face in it. Look to see if the face is made up of the branches and leaves from the trees in the picture, or if the face is separated from them and a completely separate material from the trees

Once you have eliminated the top two issues, look at the face or figure as a real face or figure. Look at the proportions of the face. Are they "cartoony" and disproportionate or are they realistic?

3 Be aware of aural pareiolida.

4 Document all anomalies for re-investigation on INT10 Analysis Form

5 Remember to upload all your reports to DSS along with your data readings.

6 When editing any file, the file must have a corresponding workflow sheet.

6.1 – The Audio Workflow Sheet is PRAB-INT-8-Workflow_Audio

6.2 – The Video Workflow Sheet is PRAB-INT-9-Workflow_Video

This is done so we are able to track all changes to the file, and hold our work accountable to any form of scrutiny that may be required.

7 Reviewed evidence must be submitted using PRAB-INT-10-Analysis_Form. This provides uniformity to the reporting process and makes creating a final report possible.

Protocol INV-5 – Delivering Results

1 Remember that the client has asked you in to their home. Be respectful of their views at all times; however present your findings in a non-biased way.

2 Be aware of your client's state of mind. If they asked us in believing their dead aunt is walking around the house, and you have proven it is the plumbing, remember that this information may be upsetting to them, but as a scientific association it is our duty to deliver the truth in a caring way.

3 When delivering EVP data, invite the client to interpret it before sharing your interpretation. This not only eliminates you influencing their decisions but also adds weight to your evidence.

4 When delivering photographic / video data, invite the client to interpret it before sharing your interpretation. This not only eliminates you influencing their decisions but also adds weight to your evidence.

5 If it is requested, provide a full paper report to the client in a timely manner. Timely should be in 2 weeks or less.

6 Remind the client that all information gathered is strictly held confidentially within the association. Ensure that you assert that this data will not be published in any public location. (*Appendix I*)

7 Conversely, obtain permission of any well-known public location to publish data. Most public sites like to have anything that will publicize and advertise their location.

Protocol INV-6 – Communication

1 Please limit the use of PRAB radios. They are intended for in-team communication for onsite logistics.

2 They are to be used for:

- Emergency communications
- Team movements
- Anomaly checking / verification (*ie asking if anyone was moving when a sound is heard*)
- Initial set up of equipment
- Communication with base team member

3 Sending a message

- Hold the radio 2-3 inches from your mouth. This gives a clearer signal.
- Push the PTT button and wait 1 second
- Send your message using your call sign (on radio) to the call sign you are looking for. (*example Echo One to Echo 4*)
- Release the PTT 1 second after sending your call.
- You should receive an acknowledgement (*example Echo 1, Send*)
- Send your message and release the PTT after 1 second.
- End your communication with “Call sign, Out” (*example: “Echo 1, Out”*)

4 Receiving a message

- Hold the radio 2-3 inches from your mouth. This gives a clearer signal.
- Push the PTT button and wait 1 second
- Send your acknowledgement (*example Echo 1, Send*)
- Send your message and release the PTT after 1 second.
- End your communication with “Call sign, Out” (*example: “Echo 4, Out”*)

5 Your call sign is on your radio.

6 Please familiarize yourself with PRAB document “PRAB-GM-10”

7 PRAB Channel designation is in PRAB-GM-10 and is not for public dissemination.

Protocol INV-7 – Command Center

1 Each member will be rotated out into and out of the command center throughout the investigation.

2 When in the command center your duties include, but are not limited to:

- Logging time in and out of teams
- Management of communications through shift
- Documentation of any anomalies
- Monitoring of the wired and wireless camera
- Monitoring of the communication channels
- Monitoring of the team and it's safety

Appendix I: Non Disclosure Agreement**Confidentiality**

The PRAB offers among its services a guarantee of confidentiality and discretion to its clients. As a member you may become aware of certain facts pertaining to an individual or premises that are confidential in nature. If your application is accepted you become bound by the following terms even after termination of your membership.

No Use.

Recipient agrees not to use the Confidential Information in any way, except for the purpose set forth above.

No Disclosure.

Recipient agrees to use its best efforts to prevent and protect the Confidential Information, or any part thereof, from disclosure to any person other than authorized members having a need for disclosure in connection with Recipient's authorized use of the Confidential Information.

Protection of Secrecy.

Recipient agrees to take all steps reasonably necessary to protect the secrecy of the Confidential Information, and to prevent the Confidential Information from falling into the public domain or into the possession of unauthorized persons.

Ownership of Confidential Information.

Recipient agrees that all Confidential Information shall remain the property of Discloser, and that Discloser may use such Confidential Information for any purpose without obligation to Recipient. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as granting or implying any transfer of rights to Recipient in the Confidential Information, or any patents or other intellectual property protecting or relating to the Confidential Information.

Term and Termination.

The obligations of this Agreement shall be continuing until the Confidential Information disclosed to Recipient is no longer confidential.

Appendix II: Media Guidelines

Official Media Guidelines

Thank you for contacting the Paranormal Research Association of Boston. We are happy to help you in your research for your article, as it gives us a chance to publicize our association while helping you to understand the scientific aspect of paranormal investigations.

As you may imagine, we have a lot of dealings with the media in the form of articles, television appearances and radio interviews. To make things easier for you, and to provide a factual view of our association, we have a few stipulations on all media coverage, which we ask you to adhere to.

Name: The official name of the association is "The Paranormal Research Association of Boston".

The official short name of the association is "PRAB" or "The PRAB" No other name is to be used.

Terms: Any article, radio interview or television appearance must **not** refer to the PRAB as "ghostbusters" either directly or indirectly. This creates a negative image of the association and is not a factual representation of the work we do.

Any article, radio interview or television appearance must **not** use the phrase "Who are you gonna call" or any variants of same, as it again creates the same stereotypical view as "ghostbusters" and as such is not a factual representation of the work we do.

No radio interview or television appearance are to use the theme tune of the ghostbusters motion pictures or any variant that could be interpreted as such. Any radio interview or television appearance that contravenes this request, even briefly, during the interview, will be subject to an immediate conclusion of interview.

Details Any article, radio interview or television appearance must include the contact information for the PRAB, investigate@praofi.org and the website, <http://www.praofi.org>, in the section. They must also mention that all services are free and confidential

Proof: All written articles must be e-mailed to your media contact before publishing for fact verification by the association.

If you have any questions regarding this document, please feel free to contact your media contact here at the PRAB.

Appendix III: Wording of indemnity agreement

Please ensure you have read this form fully as it contains important legal information

Client:

Location:

Case:

Date:

We, the undersigned hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Paranormal Research Association of Boston and any and all of its subsidiaries, members, affiliates, related parties, officers, directors, employees, agents and independent contractors on which the investigation will be conducted, above, from any claim including fees as a result of and loss, damage, accident, personal injury or death howsoever caused.

I understand and recognize that there are certain risks, dangers and perils connected with investigative activities, which I hereby acknowledge to have been fully explained to me and which I fully understand, and which I nevertheless accept, assume and undertake after inquiry and investigation as to the nature and extent of such risks has shown those risks to be wholly satisfactory and acceptable to me.

I further agree to use my best judgment in undertaking these activities, and to strictly adhere to all safety instructions and recommendations, whether oral or written. I hereby certify that I am a competent adult assuming these risks of my own free will, being under no compulsion or duress, on behalf of myself.

Appendix IV: Exclusivity

Each member of the Paranormal Research Association of Boston agrees to be bound to this exclusivity agreement. This means that no member, recent or established, may, under penalty of disciplinary action, work with any other paranormal group without the express permission of the Lead Investigator of the Paranormal Research Association of Boston. This agreement is designed to protect the confidentiality agreement and prevent any conflict of interests that may arise through a working with another group.

Joint Investigations

This agreement does not refer to joint investigations where the PRAB and another group have agreed to work together. In this case the PRAB confidentiality agreement remains intact, and information may be discussed with the other team, but only in relation to the specific case being undertaken at the time. Joint investigations do not fall into the conflict of interest category as it promotes the association's involvement in the community