

Tools of the Trade

Geiger Counters

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In this month's Tools of the Trade, we'll discuss the Geiger counter, and how it can be used in paranormal research. First, what is a Geiger counter? It is an instrument used to detect radioactive emissions that was originally developed by German physicist Hans Geiger around 1910 and refined 20 years later to the general design we know and use today with slight improvements along the way.

A very simplified explanation is that a Geiger counter consists of a sealed inert gas filled tube that becomes conductive of electricity when it is impacted by high-energy particles such as gamma rays or alpha/beta particles. These impacts create an electric pulse that is translated by the instrument into either an acoustical click and/or motion of a needle pointer (or digital readout) on the meter, which increases in intensity as the radiation increases.

So how does this instrument help a paranormal investigator? It is theorized that the amount of detectable ionizing radiation is increased or decreased in the presence of a spirit and has been used in paranormal research going back to the 1970's. Since ambient radiation is always present as a natural environmental energy, it is easy to speculate that this, along with static charge, air pressure, temperature, light, etc.. can be similarly used or changed (directly or indirectly) by a spirit and this instrument can detect those changes.

It is important to note that by itself, the Geiger counter is NOT an absolute indicator of paranormal activity, but when used in combination with other environmental detection instrument changes and/or audio/video data, it can help to validate experiences and events. As always, it is critical to know how to properly operate ALL equipment, and what expected reading are for different environmental situations to rule out false positives.

This type of device is commonly used for experimental physics research, industrial, medical, and in the nuclear industry. The sensors can be either analog or digital, and can range from a hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars. For paranormal research, the cheaper ones are used but they still provide the cost effectiveness and sensitivity needed for an investigation.

References:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geiger_counter

<http://www.explainthatstuff.com/how-geiger-counters-work.html>

