

Tips for Audio Data Gathering

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The practice of gathering audio data is an important part of all paranormal investigations. The following information is meant to be a rule of thumb for such data gathering:

- 1) First and foremost talk in a normal voice and do not whisper or talk loudly. It will be hard to distinguish between an investigators voice and a paranormal one. ***This is rule #1.***
- 2) It is best to remain stationary if you are holding the recorder. The movement and footsteps will be picked up by the recorder and could be confused with something paranormal.
- 3) Be careful not to bump or rub the recorder during the session. It is best to set the recorder down on a flat surface during audio sessions. If you can not, then hold it firmly in your hand, with your hand as far from the microphone as possible.
- 4) If possible start the recorder before you enter the investigation site. Several investigators have reported catching EVPs like "Shhh, they are coming" or "Shhh, be quiet they are trying to find us" as they enter into rooms at haunted locations. Lucky for those investigators they had their recorder on already and hadn't waited until after they entered the room. The rule of thumb we use is to have one running 100% of the time from entry into the property until we exit.
- 5) When you turn on a recorder pause for 20 to 30 seconds before you begin to speak. There is a theory that most EVPs happen within the first few minutes of turning one on. If that is true you just might be talking when the first EVP comes in.
- 6) After the desired pause, announce the date/time, location, and who this is. This is important to distinguish one investigator or area in an investigation from another.
- 7) Take a baseline reading of the investigation space and of the investigators. That is done by allowing the recorder to run in the environment at least 20 to 30 minutes with no one in the area. Also if possible, have all investigators speak their name and a key phrase into the recorder as well (or at least one on the site), such as "Can you tell us your name?". That way you get a baseline of the sound of the environment, as well as one of each investigator's voice.
- 8) Make sure to call out all noises you as an investigator make and/or any noises you can identify the cause for. That way the reviewer of the audio data will know that it is nothing they need to review further. For instance, if you move a chair or open a creaky door, call it out. If you use your flashlight or other equipment and it makes a noise, call it out. Even if your stomach growls, call it out. This will save you a lot of wasted time during the review and possible embarrassment. ***This is rule #2.***
- 9) During the Question and Answer segment of the audio data gathering make sure to speak clearly and at a normal speed and tone. Be sure to pause at least 30 seconds between questions. This pause will give the spirits time to answer. The theory is they have to manifest energy to

communicate so it might take a few seconds to do so. Also, make sure to take turns asking questions and be careful to not talk over the other investigators present. **These are rules #3 and 4.**

- 10) Make sure the recorder has fresh batteries before you start the investigation. During an investigation there is nothing worse than batteries dying on a key piece of equipment. You also should check on the equipment throughout the night to make sure they are still working.
- 11) If possible make sure every investigator has a recorder and/or microphone on him/her to be able to rule out false positives from the investigators present.
- 12) Check the settings of the recorder and make sure you are using the most optimum settings for the environment you are in. The recommendation is at the highest quality possible.
- 13) When you are done gathering data for the night, announce into the recorder that the data gathering session is complete. That way you avoid any confusion on why the recorder shut off when it did.
- 14) Make sure to ask simple, clearly worded, and concise questions. We still don't know much about this field and how spirits hear what we are saying. Breaking questions down into as simple of terms as possible is best and will reach a broader audience.
- 15) Try asking questions that may be relevant to the activity report and avoid questions that might not make sense to such activity. For instance, if the activity reported seems to be a child, then focus the questions on something a child would understand like: "Would you like to play with us" or "Do you like balls/toys?". However, if it is a soldier in a Civil War uniform and you are in GA you might ask questions such as "Did you fight for the confederacy?" or "Were you with the GA militia?". Make sure to avoid any slang or language that might not be understood by them.
- 16) Be polite. You will get more bees with honey than vinegar. That is true with real life and I have to believe it is true with the after life as well. If you were a spirit would you want to communicate with someone that is nice and pleasant or someone that is mean and gruff. Also, make sure to say thank you throughout the session.
- 17) Announce your intentions of what you are doing and what you are looking for. The spirit has been there longer than you and will be there past you're leaving. Just let them know you don't want to hurt them, affect their environment, and/or have them leave.
- 18) Lastly, cross reference your data. Check any data tags during review against data gathered on other recorders from the investigation. To learn more about cross referencing go to: <http://www.tntparanormal.com/Articles/Article11-Cross%20Referencing%20Data.pdf>.