

Verifying reports of feeling colder or warmer

Often an individual's temperature may be measurably higher or lower than expected. It is normal for a person's extremities such as their hands or head to be markedly cooler or warmer than other areas of the body.

These variations may be caused by changing blood flow in the upper layers of the skin. This may be as a result of their emotional state or following the consumption of alcohol or tobacco. They may have been sitting in a cold draught or recently drank a hot beverage. There are also several medical conditions which can affect the blood supply and temperature of the skin.

Measuring the temperature in close proximity to a person using a contact thermometer is invasive and inconvenient. Non contact thermometers or thermal imagers are a better choice for making such measurements.

Do not rely upon a single measurement, instead obtain a series of measurements over a period of time. Ensure that each of these measurements are made using the same place on the person.

Place the thermometer in the right place.

Temperature measurements should be made as close as possible to any reported temperature anomaly. Don't just lay the thermometer on the floor or put it near to any sources of heat or cold.

Set the Emissivity to get the best accuracy

Many non contact thermometers and thermal imagers allow the user to pre-set the emissivity. Information about changing this setting will normally be in the instruction manual.

Thermal Imaging Cameras

These present the temperature in two ways: As a picture or thermograph which uses different zones of colour to indicate differences in temperature. Most models can also indicate the temperature for one or more individual points within the thermograph.

Thermal imagers are available either as stand alone devices or modules which need to be attached to a smart phone or tablet computer.

The information they provide can be used with additional software in order to gather more information about the temperature and hidden sources of any observed temperature variations.



Measuring the Temperature

Reports of sudden and unexpected temperature changes are common in cases of hauntings.

Using Equipment

Guidance Notes for Investigators of Apparitions, Hauntings, Poltergeists and Similar Phenomena

Investigation Quick Guide



Choosing a Thermometer

The choice of thermometer will be normally be determined by the type of measurements that are to be made.

Contact thermometers are intended for measuring the temperature of surfaces, liquids and air. The sensor must be in continuous contact with the medium that is being measured.

Contact thermometers are normally able to produce more accurate measurements than non-contact designs (including thermal imagers).

Non-contact thermometers are designed to remotely measure the temperature of an object or liquid from short distances away. This type of thermometer cannot measure the air temperature.

Non-contact thermometers are helpful for quickly gathering temperature data, locating regions that are warmer or colder than their surroundings and locating their source.

Contact thermometers which have an internal sensor or which have a sensor that is protected by a shield or cover may take several minutes to accurately indicate any change in the temperature.

When using more than one thermometer, using comparative calibration beforehand will allow you more readily compare the temperature data from several devices.

Some locations may already have a temperature monitoring system installed. Using this can provide an additional source of temperature data

Using the Thermometer

The frequency of measurements should be determined by the circumstances of any reported temperature changes.

Recording the temperature once every 10 or 15 minutes will generally be sufficient. However, in some circumstances the measuring frequency may need to be increased.

Commence your baseline measurements as soon as possible after arriving and continue these throughout the duration of your visit.

Make sure that sufficient time has been allowed for the sensor to properly respond and stabilise before making a measurement.

Precautions and Care

Always test the thermometer before using it.

Make sure that the sensor is undamaged and in good working order. With non-contact thermometers and thermal imagers ensure that the sensor lens is clean and free from obstructions.

If you are using a data-logging thermometer, check that the date and time is set correctly. It will also necessary to set the required interval between measurements.

When using several thermometers, make sure that each is set to measure using the same units of measurement, i.e., Celsius or Fahrenheit.

Don't forget to check the batteries !

Making random temperature measurements rarely provides helpful data.

Be guided by witness accounts and previous experiences/.

It is always better to make a series of measurements over a period of time in order to understand what is happening.

Concentrate upon areas in which someone has reported a feeling an unusual change in the temperature.

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Further Information

For those seeking more comprehensive information about temperature and thermometers; the Society for Psychical Research has published a useful book.

Using Equipment Guidance Notes for Investigators of Apparitions, Hauntings, Poltergeists and Similar Phenomena.

The book is available in soft back format directly from the SPR website: www.spr.ac.uk (books for sale) and also from Amazon in either printed or kindle formats.

Email: secretary@spr.ac.uk

1 Vernon Mews, London, W14 0RL