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## Third party time information

Often, the investigator will be supplied with pictures or recordings that have been made by witnesses or other third parties. In such cases, it is not unusual to find that the time or date information was incorrectly set.

The investigator should try to ascertain the actual date and time when the recording or reported event occurred and where possible have the person who is supplying the information to verify this is correct.

The corrected time and the original (erroneous) information should be retained with a note relating to the altered time appended to the investigation notes. It is important to demonstrate that no alterations were made in order to change the apparent order a sequence of events took place.

If there is any suspicion on the part of the investigator that the time or date of any recording or observation made by a witness or third party has been altered or amended without good reason, the information should be considered to be unreliable and its value to the investigation will be diminished.

### 12 or 24 hour format

Devices may display the time using either a 12 or 24 hour format. Wherever possible, try to ensure that all time indicators are set to use the same format.

### Remote monitoring

Some investigators now use remote monitoring or measuring of the location. Be aware that sometimes these methods can result in the time being recorded incorrectly.

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## Good time keeping improves your credibility

When the investigation is completed and the final report is written and hopefully presented for peer review the quality of your investigation may be significantly impacted by any failure to properly include the time that any event, experience or measurement took place.

The credibility of any video or audio recordings you include will be significantly undermined by any incorrectly set time or date information. Claiming that a particular event took place at a certain time and date when the time information indicates something quite different may render your evidence open to additional questions or claims that the data is not all it should be.

Mistakes setting the time and date do occasionally happen and when they do, they should be acknowledged within the report. It is a serious mistake to guess at the time something occurred or to try and amend the report to hide any errors or oversights.



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# Setting the Time

*Failing to accurately record the date and time undermines the credibility of your investigation and hampers your ability to take full advantage of the data.*

## Using Equipment

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

## Investigation Quick Guide



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## Synchronise the time

In order to ensure accurate time keeping in reports, measurements and observations it is important for every member of the team to synchronise their personal time keeping devices and also the built-in clocks in every applicable item of equipment that you are planning to use during your visit.

Synchronising the time should be done prior to the commencement of the investigation.

Choose any suitable time keeping device and nominate it to be the “master clock”. This master clock can be a wristwatch or some other device such as a smartphone or computer which you know to be accurate.

Using the master clock as your reference; set or check the time on everyone’s personal time keeping device. Aim for an accuracy of within plus or minus 5 seconds of the master clock time.

Repeat the synchronisation step for every item of equipment that has an internal clock. This should include cameras, video cameras, audio recorders and any data-logging measuring equipment. You will need to refer to the instruction manual for each item of equipment in order to set the time and date. Don’t overlook checking that the date and even the year is correctly displayed.

### **N.B.**

If you are using any data-logging devices it is worthwhile using this step to also set the recording interval i.e. the time between each separate measurement that is to be made.

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## Time Matters

Accurately knowing the time when an event or an experience took place or when a particular measurement was made is important when trying to understand a sequence of events and the relationship between reported experiences and any measurements and recordings.

Knowing the time will also allow you to more easily compare personal reports and measurement data afterwards when the investigation reports and the measurement data is reviewed.

Members of the investigation team should routinely include the time information in their notes for every entry they make.

Manual measurements recorded by writing in a log should also include the time for each separate entry.

## Investigation records

The leader of the investigation should keep (or nominate someone to keep) a written log of the location of every person who is present during the investigation visit.

This should include the time that each person arrived in their allotted position and when they departed from it. Include the time of any breaks and of any movement of team members for things such as toilet breaks.

It is also important to record in the log the starting and ending time of any experiments or tests that are carried out.

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### Changing Time

Twice each year, in the spring and autumn, the clocks change. Many items of equipment will need to be adjusted to take account of this.

### Changed Batteries?

Some items of equipment may need to have the time and date re-set following a battery change.

The image shows the front cover of a book. The cover is a solid dark red color. The title 'Using Equipment' is written in a large, white, serif font at the top. Below the title, in a smaller white serif font, is the subtitle 'Guidance Notes for Investigators of Apparitions, Hauntings, Poltergeists and Similar Phenomena'.

Guidance Notes for Investigators  
of Apparitions, Hauntings,  
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## Further Information

For those seeking more comprehensive information about setting the time and date; 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](http://www.spr.ac.uk) (books for sale) and also from Amazon in either printed or kindle formats.

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