

Measuring Ambient and Surface Temperatures: Know your tools!

By R.H.Bennett

One of the biggest mistakes in ghost hunting is the improper use of infrared thermometers. Do not for one instance think this is a trivial matter. It is important to know how each piece of equipment you have works. It is important to know what each measuring device that you might have is actually measuring.



An infrared thermometer measures surface temperatures. Actually, it is a little more complicated than just measuring surface temperature – what they measure is the activity level of infrared energy – The more infrared energy the higher the temperature...

The laser guide on the infrared thermometer targets the lens toward the item you want to measure. It then measures the intensity of the radiant energy from the item within the thermometers field of view. These do not measure ambient air temperatures as some investigators would like to think.

A good example of not knowing how to use the device and thinking it measures ambient air temperature was during an investigation that I saw on T.V. One of the investigators was using an ir thermometer measuring a cold spot and then mentioned how the cold spot was moving toward her. She waved her hand in front of herself and said, "it's right here." She was new to investigating and naturally did not know any better than what was being told to her. The investigator "training" her did not tell her that she was wrong and was obviously clueless in the ir thermometers operation even though he has "extensive" years in investigating the paranormal.



So what should we use to measure ambient air temperatures? The answer is real easy and costs about \$175 to get a good accurate reading. To measure ambient air temperature my group uses the Kestrel 3000 Pocket Weather Station. It measures ambient air in >1 sec intervals. It also measures humidity, wind speed, and ambient air pressure. It is by far one of the most important tools in my arsenal. So combined with the ir thermometer and the kestrel we can cover every temperature avenue. From pin pointing objects that might have some paranormal phenomenon to locating and following transient cold spots. If you are interested in taking ambient readings

correctly then buy one of these gizmo's at <http://www.nkhome.com/ww/3000/3000.html>. I in no way make any sort of money off this. What my hope and desire is by showing you this link is to ensure the data we are collecting is exactly what we say we are collecting. If we measure ambient air temperature then we best make damn sure that is what we are measuring. It is ludicrous for us to be out in the world investigating the paranormal and giving data that is bogus because we do not understand the simplest concept of our tools; tools that we, as professionals, should know how to use.