📘 APS Field Manual: Data Collection Protocols

Study: The American Periphenomenal Survey

Unit: 📋Field Research | **Region:** 🌲Cascadia (Reg10)
Status: ACTIVE REFERENCE | **Version:** 3.3 (Rebranded)

1. THE GOLDEN RULE: TIMESTAMP SYNCHRONIZATION

Your clipboard form is analog. The subject's form is digital. **YOU are the bridge.**

- **The Critical Moment:** As soon as the subject taps "Submit" on the tablet, check your watch/phone.

- **The Action:** Write that *exact time* (e.g., 14:02) in the Time of Submission field on your clipboard.

- **Why:** The Registry uses this minute-by-minute match to merge your notes with their story. If the times don't match, the data is orphaned.

2. CODING GUIDE: ENVIRONMENT (Section B)

Use these definitions to ensure consistent coding with the Master Database.

A. SETTING TYPE (setting_type)

- **RES (Residential):** Private homes, apartments, backyards.

- **LIM (Liminal/Road):** Transient spaces. Highways, parking lots, rest stops, bridges, stairwells. Places where people move *through*, not *to*.

- **NAT (Wilderness):** Forests, National Parks, oceans, ravines.

- **COM (Commercial):** Stores, offices, industrial parks.

B. WEATHER (env_weather)

- **CLEAR:** High visibility.

- **RAIN:** Light to heavy precipitation.

- **STORM:** Thunder, lightning, high wind.

- **FOG:** Visibility reduced <100m. (Often correlates with Type-I Spatial Distortion).

- **OZ (The Oz Factor): CRITICAL.** Distinct, artificial silence. Use this code if the witness reports that background noise (birds, traffic) suddenly "cut out" like a mute button was pressed.

C. AMBIENT NOISE (env_noise)

- **SILENT:** Near-zero decibels / unnatural stillness.

- **HUM:** Low-frequency vibration or "diesel idle" with no source.

- **TRAFFIC:** Standard urban background.

- **NATURE:** Wind, water, animals.

3. CODING GUIDE: SUBJECT OBSERVATION (Section C)

How to interpret the subject's behavior without diagnosing them.

A. DEMEANOR (obs_demeanor)

- **CALM:** Subject is detached. They are reporting a fact, not an emotional event.

- **AGITATED:** Physically restless, looking around, rapid speech (Fear response).

- **INTENSE:** The "True Believer." Manic, "over-sharing," desperate to be convinced.

- **SKEPTICAL:** Confused/Angry. "I don't believe in this stuff, but..."

B. NARRATIVE DELIVERY (obs_delivery)

- **FLUID:** Story flows naturally with pauses for thought. (High credibility).

- **REHEARSED:** Fast, no pauses, specific buzzwords. Sounds like a memorized Reddit post. (Potential Cultural Priming).

- **FRAGMENTED:** Jumps around in time, struggles to find words. (Common in traumatic recall).

3.5 LEGAL CONSENT & ARCHIVING

- **The Mandatory Question:** You *must* explicitly ask: "Do you consent to having this story published anonymously in the public archive?"

- **The Checkbox (permission_level):**

  - **PUBLISH_ANON:** Subject agrees to public history. (Preferred).

  - **PRIVATE_DATA:** Subject wants data used for internal stats only.

- **The Rule:** If left blank, data defaults to **PRIVATE_DATA**.

THE VERIFICATION SCRIPT (The "Double Check")

Use this immediately before closing the interview to confirm their intent.

"Before I seal this file, I need to confirm your privacy setting. You selected **[Read Choice]**.

If you selected **Publish**, your narrative will appear on the public registry, but your name and contact info will be permanently redacted. Are you still comfortable with that, or would you prefer to switch to **Private/Internal Use Only**?"

(If they hesitate, switch them to Private. Do not pressure a witness to publish.)

4. SAFETY & ETHICS (The "No Debunking" Rule)

Your job is **Methodological Agnosticism**.

- **Do Not Validate:** "Wow, that sounds exactly like a Skinwalker." (Biases their memory).
- **Do Not Debunk:** "That was probably just sleep paralysis." (Shuts them down).
- **The Correct Response:** "Thank you for sharing that. I am documenting exactly what you experienced."

5. DEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

Before leaving Base, ensure you have:

- [ ] 1x Tablet (charged) with `index.html` loaded.
- [ ] 1x Clipboard with 10x **APS Field Instruments**.
- [ ] 5x **APS Resource Cards** (The quarter-sheet handout).
- [ ] 2x Pens (Ink can freeze; bring backup).
- [ ] 1x Analog Watch (Critical for timestamp sync).

6. THE "ELEVATOR PITCH" (Flyer Placement)

When asking a business owner (the "Community Partner") to post a flyer, the goal is to appear academic, historical, and harmless. You want to avoid sounding like a "conspiracy theorist."

Option A: The "Archivist" Approach

- **Best For:** Independent Bookstores, Libraries, Historical Societies.
- **The Vibe:** Intellectual, preservationist, respectful of history.

"Hi there. I am a local researcher managing a project called the American Periphenomenal Survey. I'm currently building a digital archive of Pacific Northwest folklore and 'high strangeness' accounts—essentially preserving local stories that usually go undocumented.

I was hoping to post a small card on your community board to let people know where they can submit their own experiences to the archive. It is purely for historical preservation."

Option B: The "Sociologist" Approach

- **Best For:** Community Centers, Grocery Stores, Post Offices, "Normie" Hubs.

- **The Vibe:** Neutral, academic, data-driven, harmless.

"Good morning. I manage a data project regarding 'Anomalous Experiences' here in the Cascadia region. I'm conducting a passive survey on how people interpret unusual events—like unexplained lights or strange wildlife encounters.

I am looking for a spot to place a recruitment flyer. It is strictly for data collection—no soliciting or selling anything. Would you have space on your public board?"

Option C: The "Field Researcher" Approach

- **Best For:** Indie Coffee Shops, Dive Bars, Music Venues, Comic Shops.

- **The Vibe:** Direct, slightly conspiratorial (in a fun way), "local mystery."

"Hey, quick question for you. I run a site called the American Periphenomenal Survey. Basically, I catalog reports of UAPs, cryptids, and high strangeness right here in North Seattle.

I have a feeling your regulars probably see and hear some interesting things. Is it cool if I pin up a flyer with a QR code? It is just a secure drop-box for them to share their stories anonymously."

HANDLING OBJECTIONS (The "FAQ")

Even with a perfect script, people might ask follow-up questions. Here is how to answer without breaking character:

Q: "Is this for a movie or a game?"

A: "No, it is an actual data registry. But I admit the branding is a little stylized—it helps people feel comfortable sharing stories they might otherwise feel silly talking about."

Q: "Are you going to bother our customers?"

A: "Never. It is completely passive. I just put up the flyer, and if someone is interested, they scan the code on their own time. I won't hang around."

Q: "Is this a cult?"

A: *(Smile/Laugh)* "Definitely not. Just a data nerd trying to organize ghost stories."

Q: "What do you do with the stories?"

A: "First, I strip out all names and personal details to ensure absolute privacy. Once the report is anonymized, it gets added to our public registry online. The goal is to build a searchable, open-access history of these events so the community can finally see what's happening in their own neighborhoods."

PRO TIP: THE "PROP" STRATEGY

When you approach the counter, hold the flyer or business card in your hand visible to them. Don't reach into your bag after asking. Showing the high-quality, professional design of the card immediately answers the question "Is this guy crazy?" with a visual "No, he is professional."

6.1 DEPLOYMENT PROCEDURE (The "Tag & Log" Loop)

Once permission is secured and the flyer is placed, you must validate the asset.

STEP 1: FIXATION

- Secure the flyer using authorized materials (push pins for cork, tape for glass).
- **Critical:** Ensure the QR code is flat. Wrinkles or laminator glare will break the scan.

STEP 2: VALIDATION (The Tech Check)

- Open your own phone camera.
- Scan the flyer **YOU** just placed.
  - **IF** it loads `index.html`: Asset is Live.
  - **IF** it fails: Replace the flyer immediately. Do not walk away from a dead link.

STEP 3: LOGGING (The Shadow Record)

- Take a wide-shot photo of the placement for the internal archive.
- **Note:** This confirms location data if the physical flyer is later removed by third parties.

📖 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE TAXONOMY OF ANOMALIES

The "What" — Official Classification Codes (v3.0)

- **TYPE_I (Liminal / Spatial):** Fog, road anomalies, buildings that shouldn't be there, time distortion. The **Location** is the anomaly.

- **TYPE_II (Crypto-Biological):** Sightings of unknown biological entities, animal silence, smells (wet dog/musk). The **Creature** is the anomaly.

- **TYPE_III (Aerial / Technical):** Lights in sky, metallic craft, hovering drones, battery failure. The **Object** is the anomaly.

- **TYPE_IV (Noetic / Psychic):** Premonitions, telepathy, "downloads," synchronicities. The **Mind** is the anomaly.

- **TYPE_V (Material / Poltergeist):** Objects moving, knocks, apports (items appearing/disappearing). The **Matter** is the anomaly.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW & SAFETY PROTOCOLS

(The "How" — Rules of Engagement)

B.1 - THE "CLEAN SLATE" RULE

Never tell a subject about other reports in their area before they give their testimony. It contaminates the data. (e.g., Do not say "We have five other reports of lights here" until after they finish their story).

B.2 - THE "DE-ESCALATION" SCRIPT

Use this if a subject becomes emotionally distressed or panicked.

"We can pause here. You are safe. You are simply sharing a memory, and that memory cannot hurt you right now. We can take a break or stop completely—you are in control."

B.3 - EMERGENCY CONTACTS

If a subject exhibits signs of immediate crisis (suicidal ideation or self-harm), do not attempt to act as a therapist.

- **Action:** Refer to the **APS Resource Card** in your kit.

- **Handout:** Provide the card containing the **Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988)** and local County Crisis numbers.

B.4 - THE "COOL DOWN" (GROUNDING PROTOCOL)

Goal: Shift the subject from "Reliving the Trauma" back to "Standard Reality" before you leave.

Witnessing an anomaly causes Ontological Shock. Do not leave a subject in this state; they become prone to obsession or panic. Use this script to close the interaction:

"We have completed the formal data collection. I want to thank you for the precision of your account.

Take a moment. Look around the environment right now. The event is over. The data is secured in the log. You do not need to carry the weight of remembering it anymore—that is the Archive's job now."

B.5 - THE DEPARTURE

- **The Resource Handoff:** Give them the **APS Resource Card**. Remind them the Crisis Line (988) is on the back if they experience delayed anxiety.

- **The Clean Break:** Do not linger. Do not accept invitations for "dinner" or "hanging out." You are an observer, not a friend.

"Case [Log ID] is now closed. Thank you for your contribution to the Survey."

APPENDIX C: THE "TWO-TIER" INTAKE STRATEGY

1. **Tier 1 (The Digital Sieve):** The website (`index.html`) captures volume. Low friction.

2. **Tier 2 (The Analog Sieve):** The Field Instrument captures depth.

   ○ *The Rule:* "The Website finds the story. The Field Instrument verifies the reality."

APPENDIX D: THE DIGITAL INTERCEPT PROTOCOL

(Use when Subject refuses physical meeting or is geographically distant)

1. THE TRIGGER

Initiate this protocol if the subject restricts contact to "Email Only" or declines a face-to-face Field Intercept. Do not pressure them.

2. THE STATUS CHANGE

- **Action:** In the Master Log, downgrade the `engagement_status` from **Tier 3 (Field Intercept)** to **Tier 2 (Remote Follow-up)**.

- **Goal:** You must still complete the **APS Field Instrument**, but you will do so using their written responses rather than your own observation.

3. THE "ANCHOR" SCRIPT (Email Template)

Copy and paste this text exactly.

Subject: APS Cascadia | Research Query: Case # *[Insert Log ID]*
"Thank you for submitting your report to the Archive. Because your report includes specific high-strangeness markers (e.g., Silence/Oz Factor), we have flagged this as a Priority Case.
We respect your privacy and can complete the environmental verification via email. Could you please answer the following three questions to help us calibrate the data?
1. **The Sound:** Before the event started, was the background noise level normal (traffic, birds), or was there a sudden 'cutoff' of sound?
2. **The Environment:** Can you describe the lighting at the exact moment? Was it artificial (streetlights), natural, or pitch black?
3. **The Physical:** Immediately after the event, did you notice any battery drainage on your phone or physical nausea?
OPTIONAL: If you are willing, sending a Google Maps pin of the exact location helps us check for geological fault lines in that area. Your location data will never be made public."

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4. CODING THE FIELD INSTRUMENT (Remote)

- **Section A (Site):** Check [x] DIG (Digital Context / Remote Interview).

- **Section B (Environment):** Fill in *only* what they explicitly confirmed in the email.

- **Section C (Observation):** Leave Demeanor and Physical Markers **BLANK**.

- **Section D (Notes):** Write: "Remote Intercept via Email. Subject refused field contact."

Field Researcher Annotations:

APPENDIX E: FIELD REFERENCE CARD (Tear-Out)

Quick Check for the Car Dashboard

1. THE STRANGENESS CHECKLIST

- [ ] **The Silence:** Did the birds stop singing? (Code: phenom_silence)

- [ ] **The Hum:** Diesel-like vibration? (Code: phenom_hum)

- [ ] **The Smell:** Ozone, sulfur, copper? (Code: phenom_ozone)

- [ ] **The Time:** Unaccounted time? (Code: phenom_time)

2. SAFETY PROTOCOL

- **Neutral Observer Rule:** Look boring. No tactical gear. No logos.

- **Park Nose-Out:** Always be ready to leave.

- **The Vibe Check:** If you feel a sudden, irrational dread (phenom_fear), **ABORT**. Trust your somatic. They are data.