



SCARY STORIES

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY OR POOR BUILDING PERFORMANCE?

(3-minute read)

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A building that creaks when no one is there. A cold draft that seems to come from nowhere. Lights flicker at just the wrong moment.

Sounds haunted, right?

Before calling the ghost hunters, it may be worth considering a more likely explanation. Many of the “paranormal” events people experience in buildings can be traced back to ordinary building systems, materials, and maintenance issues.

The Case of the Mysterious Noises.

You're alone in the building when you hear it... A series of footsteps echoing down an empty hallway. You stop and listen. The sound disappears, only to return a few minutes later from somewhere else in the building.

What sounds like footsteps in an empty hallway may simply be a building responding exactly as it was designed to do. Metal expands and contracts as temperatures change. Structural components shift slightly under changing loads. Mechanical systems cycle on and off. Together, these normal building movements can create sounds that are easily mistaken for footsteps, knocks, or other unexplained noises.



The Unexplained Cold Spot

You walk into a room and immediately feel a cold chill. The windows are closed, the HVAC system seems to be running normally, yet a persistent draft appears from nowhere.

In reality, air infiltration can occur through gaps in windows, doors, wall assemblies, or roofing systems. Changes in pressure throughout a building can create noticeable airflow in certain locations, making one room feel significantly different from another.

While it may feel supernatural, it's usually a sign that the building envelope deserves a closer look.



The Building That Won't Stop Shaking

You're sitting at your desk when you feel a subtle vibration beneath your feet. A nearby desk begins to rattle, or equipment seems to shake for no apparent reason. In the right setting, it can feel like something unseen is moving through the building.

These issues are often tied to mechanical equipment, structural resonance, or changing occupancy loads. Even a well-functioning HVAC unit can create vibrations



that travel farther than expected if isolation measures are inadequate.

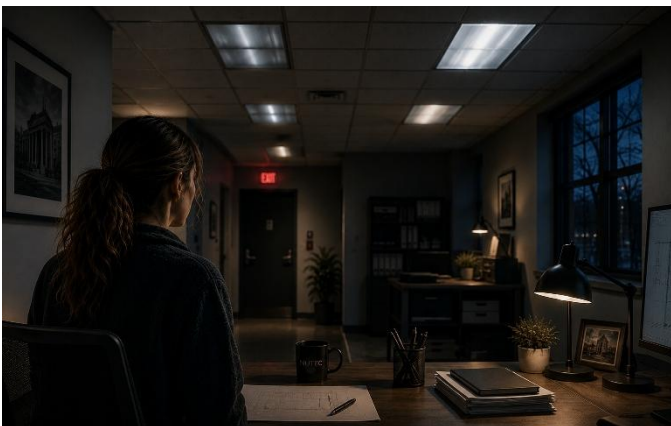


The Flickering Light Phenomenon

The lights dim for a moment. Then they flicker. Maybe once, maybe several times. You're suddenly thinking about horror movies, where it's often the first sign that something supernatural is about to happen.

Flickering lights are commonly caused by electrical issues such as loose connections, aging fixtures, voltage fluctuations, or components nearing the end of their service life. While the occasional flicker may be harmless, persistent lighting issues can indicate that a building's electrical system needs attention.

So before assuming paranormal activity is at work, it may be worth calling an electrician instead of a ghost hunter.



The House That Settles

A new crack appears above a doorway. The floor creaks in a spot that never used to make noise. A door suddenly sticks, even though it worked perfectly before. For many homeowners, these changes can make a building feel like it has a mind of its own.

As buildings age, materials naturally move and adjust. Foundations respond to changes in moisture, temperatures fluctuate with the seasons, and structures continue to adapt to long-term loading. These movements can result in small cracks, occasional creaks, and minor shifts throughout a building.

In most cases, settling is completely normal. However, excessive movement, widening cracks, or recurring issues may be signs of underlying structural concerns that should be evaluated before they develop into larger and more costly problems.



The Real Lesson

While ghost stories make for great Halloween entertainment, most building mysteries have explanations rooted in science, engineering, and building performance.

Strange noises, unexplained drafts, vibrations, flickering lights, and signs of settling are often a building's way of signaling that something deserves attention. In many cases, these symptoms are harmless. In others, they may be early warning signs of maintenance needs, aging



systems, or developing structural issues.

Understanding the difference can help property owners address concerns before they become costly repairs.

So, this Halloween, if your building seems a little spooky, don't assume it's haunted. It may simply be telling you it's time for a closer look.