

TSCM Listening Post – Warning Signs That Indicate You Are Bugged

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TSCM - Technical Surveillance Counter Measure ECM - Electronic Counter Measure

You may discover that others know your confidential business information or trade secrets. Confidential information seems to be getting out to competitors and the competitor seems to be one step ahead all of the time.

There is a range of people from political & public life, cheating partners, senior management in competitive companies, persons engaged in research & development, especially in the IT field and others who are potential targets for bugging and other methods of covert surveillance.



There could be unusual noises, volume changes or drop-outs with your telephone. There could be suspicious vehicles parked near your premises for extended periods of time and on different occasions with or without a person being visible in the vehicle.

All of these might be indications that there is covert eavesdropping activity occurring.

There are other indicators which you should be aware of, especially inside premises. Furniture may have been moved or changed. A repairer or tradesmen might have shown up to do work although he hasn't been called. There could be new paint or unusual texture visible in small areas on walls or floors in the premises. This can indicate use of conductive paint where a hidden microphone has been placed.

Unusual and unexplained plaster, dust on the floor or a discolouration on areas of the wall, could indicate ceiling tiles being removed to plant listening devices or drilling occurring on the other side of the wall to position a microphone or miniature camera, into a permanent position for audio or video surveillance.

Sockets or switches may show signs of being disturbed or socket plate covers have been replaced with a cover that has a listening device built into it and powered from the mains power supply. It may be obvious that screws have been removed from the sockets for pieces of the socket may be cracked or worn. These indicators need to be explored.

A modified telephone handset can leave the handset microphone active and thereby become a bugging device capable of picking up all conversation in the room.

A telephone transmitter can be connected to the telephone line quickly and easily or mounted inside of the telephone and that will be undetectable to the untrained eye. A device may be mounted inside of the telephone socket or the junction box or anywhere along the telephone line. Conversation inside a room or the other party on the line can be monitored by someone inside of the room, outside of the premises or anywhere in the world. Setting up repeater stations or transmission & listening posts, means eavesdropping has virtually unlimited potential.

A fax transmission can be intercepted by quality telephone taps. It is always a good idea to be familiar with your fax hardware and wiring system so you can look out for any unusually connected devices or wires.

A bug can be installed without entering premises and a wall contact can be used to monitor conversations through concrete. A quick visual inspection may reveal something unusual on the outside wall areas of the building.

If you suspect for some reason that you are a victim of bugging, you have to decide if you wish to feed the bugger misinformation so as to gain an advantage within your business dealings; or you may decide to remove the bugging device and install permanent counter-surveillance monitoring equipment.

If you have concerns about being bugged, it's time to seek professional guidance without delay. The detection of electronic devices such as listening devices and wiretaps is complex work. It requires technical, expensive equipment & knowledge of electronics. An experienced TSCM agent should also have vast knowledge of security & investigations.

It is advisable to deal only with a reputable TSCM agent via a secure telephone line to discuss your concerns about being bugged. It is advisable not to use a cell phone or to use the telephone from within the area of concern. Sometimes contact with a TSCM agent from a public telephone can be a secure way of making initial contact with your TSCM agent for further consultation via other prearranged communication.

You may wish to meet your TSCM agent in a prearranged secure area for further consultation or arrange another method of communication from your initial contact. An experienced TSCM agent will advise you accordingly of their approach to security in respect of your bugging concerns.

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All the best with detecting warning signs that indicate you are bugged. PJI

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Disclaimer This information is given as a means of providing an introduction to TSCM Debugging Investigations. It is not provided with the intention of giving a comprehensive understanding of the way in which TSCM Debugging Investigations occur. Such an understanding should be based on technical manuals which relate to TSCM Debugging Investigation Services & on advice of those qualified to advise on such matters.