

THE SCHOOL OF PRIVATE INVESTIGATION HOME STUDY COURSE

Free Guide To Electronic Surveillance Techniques & Equipment

Private Investigation Special Supplement

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Types of Electronic Surveillance

The main forms of electronic surveillance, or 'eavesdropping', are LISTENING DEVICES (known As 'bugs') and TELEPHONE MONITORING (known as 'taps') and there is a subtle but important difference between the two. A listening device can be located in any room or area, either operating independently or carried by an individual, to monitor everything that is said in that area. A telephone monitoring device, on the other hand, is used solely to monitor what is being passed over a telephone line. Where such equipment may be deemed helpful, its use is discussed this report of the main home study course.

Listening devices consist of four basic components: a MICROPHONE, a TRANSMITTER, a RECEIVER and a RECORDING DEVICE. The operator can configure these devices in order to provide the most effective monitoring of the individual area in question; What is suitable for one assignment may be inappropriate for another.

Microphones

The smallest surveillance microphones currently available are typically 5mm x 5mm x

10mm. These may be hidden, for example, under a desk or in a light fitting, but it is more usual to disguise them in an innocent, 'host' device such as a pen, briefcase or plug adaptor.

Transmitters

The transmitter is a very important part of any surveillance installation. These come in a variety of shapes and sizes, the smallest being approximately 35mm x 18mm x 10mm. As with microphones they can be either hidden in a room or disguised as an innocent item.

Receivers

If using a transmitter you will also need a receiver. There are various types on the market and performance is usually related to size. Receivers are available which can monitor up to five different signals at the same time.

Recorders

Every surveillance configuration should employ a recorder if it is to be truly effective. This can be situated either with the microphone (making a transmitter and receiver optional) or at a remote location with the data being relayed over a transmission link. The chief disadvantages to locating the recorder in the area to be monitored are the space requirement and also the need to maintain the device (ie.replace the tapes and batteries). The great advantage to concealing the recorder in the area to be monitored is that these devices are almost impossible to detect with counter surveillance equipment. (If your recorder is located at a remote location then it is always possible, indeed quite likely, that the transmission signal may be picked up by a debugging device.)

Finally remember that no matter what kind of listening device is used their effectiveness always depends on the skill of the operator in choosing and using devices, from the range we discuss in this publication, which are most appropriate for the situation in question.

Telephone Monitoring

As we have seen, by no means are all surveillance devices attached to telephone equipment, but a good many items are. Depending on the assignment in question it may be necessary to employ both a listening device and a telephone monitor. You will find a directory of the best recommendations within the main home study course

It should also be remembered that, with the development of modern communications, it is now possible to monitor any type of information sent down the telephone line. This includes voice transmissions, facsimile (fax) transmissions and computer data transmissions. In each case these may be recorded and, in the latter two cases, deciphered with the use of an encoding machine or even just a compatible fax machine or computer.

There are three methods of monitoring 'phone calls :

1. Wire a device to the telephone line.

A recording device, or a transmitting device, can be attached at any point on the wiring system to monitor voice, fax and data signals. The most basic devices simply plug into an extension socket on the same line as that being recorded. More advanced devices are available to monitor the operation of microprocessor controlled telephone systems (eg. PABX systems).

2. Locate a transmitter on or near the telephone equipment. In these situations the telephone handset or base is usually chosen to house the 'bug'. This form of eavesdropping is only suitable for the monitoring of voice communications.

The smallest transmitter currently in use is approximately $35mm \times 18mm \times 10mm$ and will transmit to a receiver about 400 yards away. (For best results the receiver should usually be located in the same building or a nearby parked vehicle.)

3. Specialised telephone equipment.

It is possible to obtain telephone apparatus which looks like, and indeed works like, a standard home or office telephone but which incorporates a monitoring device. This apparatus is used by the monitored party in all innocence.

These devices can transmit, but their great advantage is that they can release the data they collect down the telephone line to a remote monitoring position, either nearby or even on the other side of the world. When used in this way they are extremely difficult to detect and virtually maintenance free.

Counter surveillance Equipment

It is important to remember that every type of electronic surveillance device can be detected in some way. Whether or not this is an advantage or disadvantage depends on which side of the fence you happen to be on at the time! The main factor which complicates detection is the wide range of surveillance equipment available and the many permutations in which it may be deployed by the operator.

The best Countersurveillance or debugging device is the operator him or herself! Knowing the devices that are available and how they are used, as covered in this booklet, makes detecting and removing them much easier. For example, knowing how to identify non-standard telephone or electrical equipment, or knowing what sounds or other tell-tale signals are emitted by common surveillance devices.

Having said this a number of electronic devices are available to aid in the detection of transmitting devices. These work either by :

1. Radio Field Strength Testing

In other words, simply detecting that a transmitter is in operation. These can be used to quickly scan a large room but are not always useful in precise location of the transmitter since various external factors can affect radio field strength.

2. Radio Receiver and Spectrum Analysis

In simple terms these monitor the transmission emitted by the bugging device itself and by filtering out background radio signals, innocent transmissions and signals onto which the bugging device may have muggled (or hidden its signal behind) allow precise location of the device.

3. Additional equipment to detect taps placed on telephone lines.

These usually work by detecting tiny abnormalities in the operation of the line. They carry out checks such as tone sweep, line voltage and current test, line carrier detection and also allow on-hook listening. Again, it is a case of the more expensive the device the more effective it will be and the cheaper it is the more rudimentary it is likely to be.

4. Jamming Devices :

Devices are available which prevent the use of listening, recording and transmitting devices, particularly when these have been applied to telephone lines. These are generally effective but the disadvantage is that the party who is eavesdropping is immediately alerted to the fact that their intrusion has been detected and may take other steps to monitor your activities.

In summary, the best piece of advice is to say that all forms of telecommunications are insecure and impossible to protect completely against surveillance. Even codes, ciphers and scrambling devices can be defeated quite easily. For example, governments worldwide do not usually licence the use of any telecommunications equipment in their respective country unless they have first discovered how to tap into it for themselves. The topic on secret government telecommunication techniques is discussed in depth within main home study course.

Having examined the various principles that apply to electronic surveillance we will now look at the various items of equipment that are available today. Different manufacturers may use different names but the principles of each item of equipment are essentially the same :

Basic Transmitting Devices

Basic transmitters range in size between approximately $35mm \times 18mm \times 10mm$, up to approximately $85mm \times 50mm \times 25mm$ for deployment where space is at less of a premium. Most investigators prefer to use the cheapest possible transmitting devices which do not need to be recovered after the operation is complete; prices start at £10.

Two important points about transmitters are that the larger the transmitter the more powerful it will be. For example, the smallest 35mm x 18mm x 10mm device may only be capable of transmitting a signal up to 0.25 mile. A 85mm x 50mm x 25mm device, on the other hand, may transmit up to two miles. Many transmitters have their own battery supply; the disadvantage of this is that they need to be replaced periodically or the transmitter eventually 'dies'. Some transmitters connect to the power supply of a host appliance (eg. a telephone or a plug adaptor). These will operate indefinitely without maintenance; the disadvantage is that they take more time and effort to 'plant' in the first place.

Another point to note when deploying a basic transmitter is that it must be disguised in a suitable location, such as a desk, light fitting or telephone. Various discreet techniques may be found in the <u>main home study</u> <u>course</u>.

Covert Transmitting Devices

A covert transmitter is essentially a basic transmitting device which is disguised as (or, alternatively, is located in) an ordinary day-to-day item. The host item operates in the normal way but conceals the transmitting device. These items can then be 'planted' in a location to be monitored or even, for example, given as a gift. Again, as with basic devices, the range over which the transmitter can operate is directly related to its size.

Covert transmitting devices must either be powered by their own batteries or wired into a power source. Transmitters disguised as wall sockets or plug adaptors are therefore very common since they have direct access to mains electricity. These are some of the items a covert transmitter is most commonly located within :

An electrical wall socket. A plug adaptor. A telephone (handset or base). A fountain pen. A desk or handheld calculator. A briefcase. An 'exit' sign. An emergency lighting luminaire. A smoke detector. A PIR detector (part of a security alarm system). A false air vent.

The shrewd operator will also devise and construct his or her own covert transmitters, thus making it extremely difficult for other people, however experienced, to discover where a transmitter may or may not be located.

Covert transmitters (or alternatively a recording device) can also be bodyworn, ie. located on the person of an operator to record meetings and conversations. In this situation they are known as a 'wire'. For best results a body-worn transmitter may be used in conjunction with a pen microphone.

Receivers for Use With Listening Devices

Any transmitter must be used in conjunction with a suitable receiver. Transmitters and receivers used in electronic surveillance can operate on any radio frequency but most typically operate on narrow band FM over a frequency range of UHF 365-455 MHz. Most good quality countersurveillance scanners search for transmissions anywhere in the 1 MHz - 2 000 MHz range. Some transmitters are designed to 'muggle' their signals alongside another FM signal (eg. a commercial radio station) to make detection more difficult. This does not by any means make detection impossible. More on detection within the <u>main home study course</u>.

Receivers are available in various formats including handheld, desk top and briefcase size. A small handheld receiver will be around 85mm x 65mm x 25mm and will allow you to monitor one transmitter. The most advanced receivers are often mounted in a briefcase and will allow the monitoring and recording of four or five transmitters. It is not the quality of the receiver which determines how far from the transmitter it can operate, but the quality of the transmitter and its power source. Receivers are rarely used independently and should mostly be used with a compatible recording device.

Recording Devices

A good recording device forms the heart of any electronic surveillance system. Any professional digital mp3 recording machine or portable household audio cassette recorder will do this job with the proviso that the better the quality of the machine the better the quality of the recording.

The main drawback with recording devices is that the amount they can record depends on a) the length of the tape and b) the life of the power source, eg. the batteries. In longer-term surveillance operations (and also situations where the recording device is to be concealed in the premises being monitored) it is therefore customary to use a compaction device, wired between the receiver and the recorder. These allow up to 8 hours of recording to be made on one side of a standard C120 cassette tape. Some compaction devices allow several recorders to be wired together (known as cascading) so that many weeks of recording may be made without any maintenance being required.

Pen Microphone

A pen microphone is a very useful adjunct to a recording system. These are available in two types : a simple pen microphone which is wired to a recording device and a transmitting pen microphone which transmits its signal to a remote location.

Pen microphones (which appear to be a high quality fountain pen and do actually work as pens) are ideal in noisy environments. The pen can then be placed in position in front of the party whose voice is to be recorded and background noise cut to a minimum.

<u>Sonic Ear</u>

Also known by some operators as a 'bionic ear' this is a very useful surveillance device. It basically consists of a highly sensitive gun microphone, often positioned in a parabolic 'satellite' dish. When carefully aimed this device will pick up normal conversation at a distance of 100 yards plus; coverage of greater distances (up to one mile) is often possible *in* good conditions and when used hi conjunction with an amplifier.

The main limitations of the sonic ear are that it is cumbersome and it, and its operator, must be concealed at some distance from the subject, ie.in

undergrowth or under cover of darkness. The sonic ear cannot be used successfully on an unattended basis.

Wall Contact Amplifier System

A WCAS (or wall listener) can be invaluable on many assignments. It basically comprises a highly sensitive limpet microphone attached to a powerful amplifier. This can be attached to a wall to monitor a conversation on the other side, even from outside buildings. The quality of the reception depends on the quality of the device; the best WCAS can eavesdrop on normal conversation through a 12" brick or concrete wall. Even the most basic models can make conversation audible through standard block or timber partition walls or doors.

Telephone Extension Monitor

This is one of the simplest and most inexpensive telephone monitoring devices available and always useful to keep as part of your kit. It simply consists of a speaker linked to a standard telephone wall plug (some models are equipped with crocodile clips). When plugged into a telephone extension socket (or clipped into any junction box) any conversation on the line in question can be monitored. The great advantage of the telephone extension monitor is that, if left connected, no voltage drop or audible interference is experienced making this very simple device extremely difficult to detect.

Linesman's Telephone

The linesman's telephone consists of a handheld telephone and crocodile clips to enable it to be connected to any telephone wiring, junction box, or overhead line. Calls can then be monitored or even made on the line in question. This is a device which must be used with great discretion as it has no legitimate purpose outside the hands of a telephone engineer.

Telephone Recorder

A telephone recorder is one of the most useful pieces of equipment in electronic surveillance. It can be connected to a telephone line (either into an extension socket or directly into telephone wiring) and simply left to record all activity on the line.

You may be wondering why telephone calls should be recorded using a hidden recorder (which has to be maintained and later retrieved) when they could be simply transmitted and recorded. The answer is that it is much more difficult to detect this form of intrusion than in installations where a transmitter is involved.

There are two types of telephone recorder :

1. Basic Recorder

Simply switches on when the 'phone is picked up and off when the 'phone is hung up. This type of device is most suitable for personal use, ie. monitoring and recording

one's own telephone calls where no attempt is likely to be made to search for bugs or taps.

2. Advanced Recorder

This kind of device is almost impossible to detect as it stabilises voltage on the telephone line (producing no tell-tale voltage drop, the method of detection used by most telephone detap-ping devices). It is also resistant to most jamming devices. Finally, an advanced recorder will also monitor activity on the line when the telephone is not in use, eg.calls made but not answered and on-hook scans made by telephone detapping devices.

Some recorders use an internal recording deck but others can be connected to any external audio cassette recorder. (Note : This will require 'remote' and 'mic' jacks.)

Field Telephone Recorder

This is an extremely simple but useful piece of equipment to have. It consists of a limpet microphone connected to a cassette recorder jack. When attached to the handset of any telephone this device enables a recording to be made of both sides of your telephone conversation. Its small size makes it suitable for use out in the field.

Monitor Telephone

The monitor 'phone is designed to look and work exactly like an ordinary home or office telephone but it can be used to monitor what is being said in the room where the device is located from any other telephone anywhere else in the world. In this respect it is what is known by electronics experts as an 'infinity device', ie. the listening range is not limited by the range of a transmitter.

To use this device it must first be 'planted' in the room to be monitored. Then, simply make a call to the monitor 'phone as normal (if necessary this can be an innocent-sounding 'sorry, wrong number' call). When the called party hangs up, however, the microphone in the monitor 'phone stays live so that the operator can hear exactly what has been said following the call.

Watchdog 'Phone

As with the monitor 'phone the watchdog 'phone looks like an ordinary telephone but it has a covert use. However, this piece of apparatus simply 'listens' for any activity in the room in question. If the microphone in the 'phone detects any activity (either a 'phone call or any speech) it will instantly and secretly dial any telephone number you have programmed into the device. You may then monitor what is being said in the room.

Again the watchdog 'phone works just Like an ordinary telephone and its primary function is virtually undectable to all but the most experienced operator.

Telemonitor

The telemonitor is mainly used to listen in to premises owned or used by the individual who wishes to monitor what is being said or done there. Telemonitors (which are approximately 80mm x 60mm x 25mm in size) are placed at strategic locations In the premises to be monitored and plugged into a standard telephone socket (this may be a Line provided solely for this purpose or shared with a 'phone or fax Line).

The eavesdropper can then monitor what is being said in the room simply by calling the number of the 'phone line to which the telemonitor is attached and tapping in a pre-set security code.

The great advantages of telemonitors are that they do not require battery power; all power is drawn from the 'phone Line. Also, as infinity devices, they are not limited in range; monitoring can be done from any 'phone anywhere in the world. These devices also have a very advanced Listening range (up to 40 feet in some cases) and offer greater clarity than is possible with a transmitter-dependent bug. Several may be used in the same building. Their main disadvantage is that they are cumbersome. They cannot be easily planted without unhindered access to the premises and are readily detectable by anyone who suspects they may be in use.

Answering Machine Intruder

Answering machines are in very common use today but most people do not realize that these are extremely insecure. This applies not only to the owner of the machine, but to friends and associates who may leave confidential information on the machine unaware of the fact that it can be very easily 'pickpocketted' by electronic means.

The answering machine intruder simply plugs into any 'phone line, calls the answering machine to be 'cracked' and bombards it with every possible permutation of access code (following the same procedure which the owner of the machine uses to retrieve his or her messages from a remote location) until the code is discovered. This can often be accomplished in less than 60 seconds.

Once the access code has been discovered the intruder has the facility to listen to, erase or change messages left by callers, or even erase or change the message that legitimate callers hear when they call the answering machine. In short, a very useful piece of equipment for eavesdropping.

Answering Machine Guardian

The answering machine guardian is essentially an electronic countersurveillance device and the only effective way of defeating the answering machine intruder (above) or other unauthorised tampering.

This device is extremely simple in operation and links between your answering machine and your telephone line. The guardian allows the correct access code to access the machine. However, if it senses a tone burst (as caused by an answering machine intruder issuing a rapid succession of permutations in an attempt to crack the access code) it simply disconnects the line.

Telephone Tone Decoder

The monitoring and recording of telephone conversations can prove an extremely useful surveillance technique. However, it is also sometimes useful to be able to identify the third party telephone line to which calls are made, or from which they are received. The TTD device does this by analysing the line identification signals sent or received over a telephone line (live or recorded) and then showing them on a digital display.

Most TTD devices work both on telephone exchanges which use DTMF (touch-tone) systems (most developed countries) and the older-style pulse dialling exchanges.

Jamming Devices

1. Audible Jammer

This is the simplest way of minimising eavesdropping either on your own telephone line or in person-to-person conversation. The device works by issuing a random high frequency tone which desensitises the microphone of any bug which is placed in the immediate area (most jammers protect an area of 150 sq. ft. or so). This renders any bug (including a sonic ear type device) ineffective; all the eavesdropper will hear is a loud hiss.

The main drawback to this kind of countersurveillance measure is that the tone is audible to the individuals who are legitimately participating in the conversation. It is, however, a worthwhile precaution when important matters are being discussed.

<u>Recorder Jammer</u>: This is a device which prevents eavesdropping by a recording device. It is effective against taps attached to a telephone line and works by jamming the signals which operate the recording device when the 'phone is lifted. The jammer works on both incoming and outgoing calls and also indicates when it has successfully jammed a recording device. An as added feature most of these devices are also able to indicate the presence of (although not disable) infinity devices such as telemonitors and monitor telephones.

Counter surveillance Scanners

This part of the report extracted from the <u>main home study course</u> discusses a wide range of scanners which are available, from various manufacturers, to detect the use of transmitting bugs, eg. body bugs, room bugs, telephone bugs etc. In general terms the price of the scanner in question is directly related to how sophisticated and how successful it is (prices range from £300 to £1 000). In all cases no device can be completely foolproof and, of course, these scanners cannot detect bugs which are merely recording devices (recording what is being said onto tape for retrieval at a later date) rather than transmitters.

The best scanners incorporate both radio field strength, receiver and spectrum analysis (discussed earlier) to provide three levels of protection :

1. <u>Signal monitor</u>. Identifies that a transmitter is being used in the area being scanned.

2. <u>*Directional detector*</u>. Leads the operator to the source of the transmission, usually by means of an audible rising and falling tone or an LED display.

3. <u>Verification</u>. This allows the operator to listen to exactly what is being received and transmitted by the bug, hence allowing him or her to confirm the signal is being given by a bug and not some completely innocent piece of equipment, such as a TV set.

Again, much depends on the skill of the operator. No scanning procedure can be considered complete unless a careful physical examination of the room in question has been undertaken as well as electronic Counter surveillance.

Hold Invader

This is a very ingenious device that has a limited use for some very clever electronic eavesdropping. It simply plugs in between your telephone base and the handset. (A telephone with a detachable handset is required.)

The hold invader works by putting the party you are calling on a 'false hold'. During this period they hear the usual 'dead' sound in the earpiece and are given the impression that you are not listening to whatever they say. However, if they do make any remarks to a third party in the room the hold invader allows you to hear these! The hold invader device includes very powerful amplification electronics; even if the party being called places their hand over the mouthpiece then you may still be able to listen in to their conversation.

The hold invader requires a degree of conversational skill to obtain best results. For example, you may call the other party and mention the name of a subject or a third party you wish to discuss. Then put them on the false hold. During this tune you will be able to listen in to confidential remarks which are made on the subject!

Voice Changer

Finally in our discussion of electronic surveillance we come to a device which is not strictly a surveillance nor a counter-surveillance device but which, nevertheless, has many possible uses. This is the voice changer. The voicechanger is a device which, as the name suggests, changes your voice to make it sound like someone else! It can change the tone and pitch of your voice and even change your accent. It can turn a male voice into a female voice and vice versa! The device simply plugs into your 'phone between the base and the handset.

Various different voice changers are available but they all work in the same way. It is preferable to choose a model which does not incorporate a delay between speaking and the called party hearing your voice (as some cheaper devices do). An additional benefit of some devices is that they allow you to make a local call sound like a long distance/international call and vice versa.

The most important point to remember when deploying equipment of this nature is to ensure that the tone, pitch and volume is consistent when making or receiving calls which purport to be the same person.

Summary

We hope you have found this guide to electronic surveillance equipment both informative and interesting. We cannot stress strongly enough that this is a complex specialist field which should not be entered into without more detailed information than is supplied in this introductory booklet.

If you intend to enter into private investigation on a professional level, the vast majority of your work will be done without recourse to this type of equipment. Where such equipment may be deemed helpful, its use is discussed within the <u>main home study course</u>.

Important Note

Some electronic surveillance and countersurveillance equipment presently available is either unapproved for connection to the public telephone system in the UK or consists of unlicens-able transmitting devices. Its use (although not its purchase or possession) may be illegal in the UK. If in doubt it is advisable to check this with your chosen supplier. Complete module on legal requirements reagrding surveillance equipment available in the <u>main home study course</u>.



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How to serve court documents an all situations How to take statements and report on accidents How to carry out a 'means report' on a subject Where to obtain 'false' identification cards Everything to know about electronic surveillance equipment and where to get hold of it if needed How to analyse handwriting and other documents to help deal with cases involving fraud, forgery and nuisance mail How to choose and 'customise' a covert surveillance vehicle How to use easy-to-access genealogical information to add new and lucrative string to your investigation bow Approaching people in a way to guarantee that they will give

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corners or information only How to mount an <u>under-cover</u> operation How to deal with large and small scale <u>theft</u> The secrets of <u>effective store detection</u> work All about your <u>powers of arrest</u>. How to stay within the law What to know about cases involving <u>infidelity</u> The <u>ONE</u> rule you must never break in domestic cases to stay

on the right side of the police cell door How to **vet an employee**, job applicant or business associate



What changes you need to make if your investigations take you north of the border into **Scotland**

Three ways in which telephone calls can <u>easily be monitored</u> Four basic methods of <u>detecting</u> and preventing telephone `taps'

How conversations can be transmitted from ostensibly everyday objects

How a conversation can be **<u>eavesdropped at distances</u>** of up to a mile...in the open air

How you can literally listen through walls 12" thick

All about a phone which will **<u>call you</u>** when something interesting happens

How it is possible to listen to a subjects answer phone <u>massages within 60 seconds</u>...and what you can do about it if you think it's happening to you

Everything to know about the legal aspects of <u>electronic</u> <u>surveillance</u>.



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