

Hand-out Safe meetings

Safe meetings

Prevention

Objective: reduce the reasons that might cause or facilitate the surveillance of your meetings.

- Carefully choose the location of your meeting: it should be a place you know well and where you and the person you are meeting with are comfortable with: who will also be present? Will you be able to speak without being overheard? Will it be crowded? Would you look suspicious entering there?
- If you don't know it, get to know it: plan out your access to the place, possible escape routes, nearby safe spots.
- Offices or homes can give a false sense of security.
- Have an alternative backup meeting place.
- Plan different scenarios: What will you do if you are late or if the person you are meeting with is late (or does not show at all)? What will you do if someone you don't expect turns up to the meeting? How will you safely bring back any documents you might be given? What will you do if a third party interrupts the meeting?
- The best tactic to avoid eavesdropping is to be unpredictable and change locations frequently.

During activities

Objective: Take adequate measures in order to ensure the safety of your meetings.

To and at the meeting

- Remove batteries from phones before travelling to the meeting location.
- If you know you are under surveillance, get someone to conduct counter-surveillance for you in order to establish whether someone is following you or not.
- Arrive first and check the place is safe.
- Try to sit where you can observe the whole location but still have your back to a wall, and be close to an escape route.
- Agree a subtle and simple signal to alert the person you are meeting with if something is wrong.
- Pay for what you get straight away to allow for a quick departure if needed.
- If possible, avoid writing on paper.

After the meeting

- Let the person you are meeting to leave first, and check for any third party reactions to see if they are clean as they leave. Wait a few minutes before leaving yourself (if someone else is conducting counter-surveillance for you, he/she should leave behind you as well to check that you are not being followed).
- Transfer any notes you have to your computer (and encrypt them) and destroy them.

