



Bugs, Cameras, and Trackers

Responding to Physical Tracking Devices

Bugs, cameras, and trackers are devices or software used to secretly listen to conversations, watch activity, or monitor location without consent. These tools may be used by stalkers, abusive partners, criminals, or anyone attempting to exert control or gather information covertly.

This may include:

- Hidden microphones or audio bugs
- Hidden cameras in homes, vehicles, or personal spaces
- GPS trackers attached to vehicles or belongings
- Tracking apps or spyware installed on phones or computers
- Smart devices misused for surveillance

If you believe there is an immediate threat to your safety, call 911.

Common warning signs include:

- Someone knowing private conversations or movements
- Unexplained noises, clicks, or lights from devices
- Items appearing moved or newly placed
- Bluetooth tracker alerts from Apple, Android, or other tracker-safety systems
 - Unknown tracker alerts may come from Apple, Android, or other Bluetooth-tracker safety systems; follow the phone's built-in instructions before moving or disabling the tracker.
- Phone battery draining rapidly or overheating
- New apps you did not install
- These signs do not always confirm surveillance, but they warrant investigation.

Bugs, Cameras, and Trackers – Do This First

Prioritize Personal Safety

Treat suspected surveillance as a safety issue first.

Act quickly if:

- You are being threatened or stalked
- The suspected device is linked to an abusive or controlling person
- Your routines, location, or private conversations appear known
- Surveillance coincides with escalation or intimidation

If any of the above are present, call 911.





Do Not Confront the Suspected Person

- Do not accuse or confront someone you suspect
- Do not remove devices immediately if you may need evidence
- Do not discuss your suspicions on phones or devices you believe may be compromised

Confrontation can escalate risk and alert the perpetrator.

Preserve Evidence Carefully

If you discover or suspect a device:

- Take photos or videos of:
 - The device
 - Where it was found
 - Any serial numbers or markings
- Record:
 - Date and time
 - Location found
 - When you first noticed suspicious behavior
- Do not destroy or tamper with devices before getting guidance.

Secure Yourself and Your Environment

Change How You Communicate (Temporarily)

- Use a trusted friend's device for sensitive conversations
- Avoid discussing plans or concerns near suspected areas
- Disable smart assistants if unsure

Check for Physical Trackers

Inspect:

- Vehicles (wheel wells, under seats, trunk)
- Bags, coats, or children's belongings
- Pay attention to tracking alerts from your phone

If a tracker is found, do not discard it immediately; preserve it as evidence if it is safe to do so.

Check for Digital Surveillance

- Review devices for unknown apps or settings
- Look for unfamiliar admin permissions
- If unsure, stop and seek professional help
- Spyware removal can be complex and mishandling may worsen risk.





Get Professional Help

When to Seek Immediate Help

- You find a hidden camera, microphone, or tracker
- Surveillance is linked to stalking, threats, or abuse
- A child or vulnerable adult may be involved

Report the Incident

Local law enforcement, a victim advocate, or a domestic violence hotline may be the better first contact for physical tracking or domestic-abuse surveillance.

- Law Enforcement
 - Call 911 for immediate danger
 - Otherwise, contact your local police department to document findings
- National Reporting
 - FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3)
 - <https://www.ic3.gov>
 - (Appropriate for stalking, surveillance, or electronic harassment)
- Ohio Resources
 - Ohio Attorney General – Victim Services & Cybercrime
 - <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov>
 - Victim Assistance / Consumer Protection Hotline: 800-282-0515
 - Ohio law may address stalking, menacing, and unlawful surveillance, including electronic means.
- Geauga County
 - Geauga County Sheriff's Office
 - <https://www.geaugasheriff.org>
 - Local police non-emergency line for documentation and follow-up

If the Suspected Person Is Someone You Know

If surveillance may involve:

- A current or former partner
- A family member
- A roommate or coworker

Do not confront them alone.

Recommended steps:

- Preserve evidence quietly
- Seek law-enforcement or victim-advocate guidance
- Create a safety plan before taking action
- Consider protective orders if advised





Emotional & Crisis Support

Being secretly monitored can cause fear, hypervigilance, anxiety, and loss of trust.

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
- If you may hurt yourself or feel unable to stay safe, call or text 988.

Your reaction is valid. Ask for support.

Recovery – Ongoing Safety

- Continue documenting suspicious behavior
- Reassess physical and digital security regularly
- Avoid sharing plans publicly
- Lean on trusted support systems
- Surveillance often escalates, early action protects you.

How to Reduce Surveillance Risk

- Trust your instincts, patterns matter
- Silence and documentation protect you
- Ask for help early, don't investigate alone
- Your safety matters more than certainty

