

Conceal Your Location Use a Cutout Phone

From time to time operational security (OPSEC) may dictate that you conceal your physical location from someone with whom you speak on the telephone. For example, you may remain in contact with a member of a mutual assistance group (MAG), but not want someone to be able to use that person's phone records to trace your whereabouts. One way to do this is to employ a "cutout phone."



To start, you'll want to acquire a throw-away prepaid phone that supports call forwarding as your cutout phone. Inexpensive prepaid phones such as an LG 800G Trac Fone or a Samsung R355C Net 10 phone are available from many retailers, including Walmart and Target. You can purchase the phone and load it with talk time for cash; you'll want to load it up with plenty of talk time.

Next, set up call-forwarding or call divert on your prepaid phone, so that calls to your phone get automatically forwarded to your target's phone number (in this example, to the phone of your MAG member). Typically, this is done by dialing *72 followed by your friend's phone number. When your friend answers, call forwarding is set up. If the line is busy or if your friend does not answer, you must try again, dialing *72 plus his number until someone answers.

Depending on your provider, the actual procedure to setup call forwarding may vary, so check. For GSM feature phones, for example you might dial *21*<targetnumber># to forward all calls; for 4G cell phones, the feature is probably accessed via a menu on the phone.

Next, discard your prepaid cutout phone or destroy it and dispose of the broken pieces. The call-forwarding is handled by the telephone network, not the actual phone. This arrangement will last as long as there remains talk time on your break phone, and as long as that talk time does not expire. Please make sure you understand how to extend the "use by" date of your prepaid phone provider's talk time; typically, the more time you load on your phone, the longer you can operate before that time expires--but only up to about one year.

Now, any time you dial that prepaid phone's number (may it rest in peace), your call will be forwarded to your target number. Your friend's phone's caller ID and phone bill detail will show the phone number of your cutout phone, not the phone you actually use.

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