

Resisting Police Surveillance of Activists

A briefing for 'Reclaim the Power' 2014

Who are the Police Intelligence Gatherers?

Forward Intelligence Teams (FIT)

FIT officers take notes of people's behaviour, appearance and associations and, where possible, record their identity. They may be in ordinary police uniform and therefore less obvious than members of an Evidence Gathering Team.



Evidence Gathering Team (EGT) Officers



Police Liaison Officers (PLOs)

Evidence Gathering Teams (EGT)

EGT officers (usually in teams of two, with a photographer or video camera operator and a spotter) film or photograph individuals and crowds for evidence and intelligence purposes.

Police Liaison Officers (PLOs)

PLOs wear distinctive blue bibs and obtain information by 'engaging' with protesters and having 'friendly chats'. Senior officers described their role in gathering intelligence at last year's Reclaim the Power camp in Balcombe as 'crucial'.

Netpol strongly advises that you do not engage with Police Liaison Officers at any time.

All information gathered – including conversations with PLOs – is shared with a Intelligence 'Bronze Commander'. It is also likely to end up on a criminal intelligence database and can be kept and shared with the National Domestic Extremism and Public Order Intelligence Unit.

Resisting Surveillance

Wearing a mask

It is lawful to wear a face mask. If a Section 60AA (Criminal Justice Act 1994) order is in place, a police officer is able to demand that any item you are wearing that is mainly used to conceal your identity, is removed.

This authorisation can be given only if there is a threat of violence / disorder or if police have reason to believe people are carrying weapons.

Frustrating intelligence gatherers

There is nothing to stop protesters from frustrating the activities of intelligence gathering officers. You can:

- Take photos of them. They really don't like this but it is not illegal. With any photos it is always good to either try and get the officer's number in the shot, or note it down. You can share your photos at www.flickr.com/groups/netpol/pool/
- Hold large banners in front of photographers. This is particularly effective with double sheets on sticks, which can block a camera from a distance.
- Follow Forward Intelligence Team officers. Pick a team and tail them. Turn their tactics onto them – everything time they send a text message, try to look over their shoulder, listen to their phone conversations, look at what they're writing in their notebooks.
- Watch out for group huddles, especially with senior officers. Go and unobtrusively stand by them. This disrupts their briefings and there's always the possibility you might learn some useful information.

Inside a kettle – key things to remember

If the police hold you in a kettle, they often demand that protesters pose for police photographs or provide personal details as a condition of release. **You have a right to refuse** – and as the kettle can only lawfully continue whilst there is a threat of a 'breach of the peace', we encourage people to always refuse.

Stop and search – key things to remember

You do not have to give your name and address under any search power (unless you are driving a vehicle).

Under section 50 of the Police Reform Act 2002, the police CAN demand your name and address but ONLY if they have reason to believe you have been involved in anti-social behaviour. Unless you are distressing or frightening people, **protest is NOT anti-social behaviour**. You should ask the police what they suspect you of doing and who 'was likely to suffer harassment, alarm and distress'? If they can't answer these questions, don't give them your personal details.

Stop and search powers do not give the right to demand your name and address, read your personal documents or look through your mobile phone or camera. The police have **no right** to ask you to delete photos from your camera or mobile.

You **cannot be forced to cooperate with police filming or photography** if you are stopped and searched.