

How to Do Secret Chats in Telegram

Telegram supports 'Secret Chats', but you have to use a mobile device to initiate, participate in or view them.

Advantages of Secret Chats

1. Secret Chats are end-to-end encrypted to make them secure against being read by anyone *en route* from sender to recipient. No-one other than the intended recipient – whether Telegram themselves, criminals, police or security services – can read them.

This makes them more secure than 'Cloud Chats', which are decrypted at the Telegram server and then re-encrypted before being sent on from the server to the ultimate recipient, so can be read by a 'man in the middle' who has access to the Telegram server.

2. Secret Chats keep your data under your own exclusive control, not that of any third party. They are stored only on the sender's and recipient's computers, not in the Cloud.
3. Secret Chats support Forward Secrecy, so you can arrange for any message you send to self-destruct – on both your own and your correspondent's computers – after a time interval that you specify.

Disadvantages of Secret Chats

1. You have to take additional steps (see below) when starting a Secret Chat. If you forget, it will just go as an ordinary Cloud Chat.
2. You have to use a mobile device for Secret Chats. For lengthy messages, this may be less convenient and comfortable than a desktop computer.
3. If you want to keep records of your secret chats, you have to do it by hand; there is no automatic back-up. You must not logout from Telegram until you have made the backup.
4. To use a Secret Chat, both parties must be online at the same time. There is no 'store and forward' facility, such as those in e-mail or in Telegram's Cloud Chats.

Starting a Secret Chat Thread

(See also: <https://telegram.org/faq#secret-chats>)

Note: you must do this on a mobile device.

1. Open your Contacts list:

☰ menu (at top LHS of screen) → Contacts

then select the contact you want to chat to.

2. Open your contact's profile:

click on the face or icon (top centre of screen)

contact's profile window pops up.

3. Choose to start a secret chat:

☰ menu (at top RHS of profile window) → 'Start Secret Chat'

Dialogue box inviting you to START or CANCEL Secret Chat pops up.

4. In 'Secret chat' dialogue click on START

Type your message in the text box (at bottom RHS of screen).

If you are told that your contact has been invited to chat but you can't type anything in the text box, it is probably because they are offline; you will have to wait for them to get online.

This will create a new thread for your Secret Chat, separate from the threads for other chats, with its own entry in the LH column of the screen. The contact's name will be in green and will have a locked padlock symbol next it to show that it is a Secret Chat.

Replying to or Continuing a Secret Chat Thread

Note: you must do this on a mobile device, otherwise you won't be able to see any Secret Chat threads.

1. Click on the entry for the Secret Chat you wish to contribute to, in the LH column of the screen.
2. Click on the message you wish to reply to then, in the drop-down menu that appears, choose 'Reply'. There is no need to specify that you want the reply to be secret; once a Secret Chat thread has been started, Telegram automatically makes all further messages in that thread secret.
3. Type your reply in the text box (at bottom RHS of screen).

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