



# Informational Bulletin

## Swatting

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Approved By: Kalvyn W. Smith, Fire Rescue Chief

During the mid-morning hours of April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, A Fauquier County Residence, and our Public Safety Agencies fell victim to a trend which while not new, is increasing in popularity nationwide.

“Swatting” is the term used to describe the action of someone making a hoax phone call to report serious crimes to public safety agencies. Offenders carry out these types of pranks to trick public safety personnel into sending resources to respond to supposed emergency events.

This could be done for various reasons, such as the thrill of seeing the response, an intention of serious harm to someone, or as a diversion for another crime. Our intention in responding to events should be to treat each event as if a true emergency until proven otherwise. Personnel shall follow established policies and procedures which correlate to the emergency type as reported by Communications Personnel.

As the event on April 18<sup>th</sup> unfolded, it was apparent that our public safety personnel are prepared to meet the challenges which are presented to us each day. Sheriff’s office personnel quickly established a perimeter around the residence, assembled SERT personnel, and worked with Fire and Rescue Command Staff to set-up a Unified Command. These actions were all conducted quickly, but methodically, which led to a successful and safe outcome to the event.

This event exemplifies why continuing training and education with personnel at the station level is paramount to the success of our organization.

Below are links to recent events of swatting which have occurred throughout the country:

<https://www.npr.org/2024/02/02/1228541386/growing-list-of-public-and-private-people-are-being-targeted-by-swatting-attempt>

<https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/swatting-whats-hate-got-do-it>

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240419-us-swatting-pranks-stoke-alarm-in-election-year>

Questions regarding this informational bulletin should be directed to your chain of command.