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RESOURCES

[Mitigation Strategies and Reporting Procedures](#)

[Anonymous Tip Reporting Service](#)

[California Comprehensive School Safety Plan](#)

QUESTIONS

[Email PRISM Risk Control](#)

or call 916.850.7300

Swatting in Schools

by Scarlett Sadler

Swatting is a dangerous and illegal hoax that involves making a false report of an emergency or threat of violence intended to prompt an immediate tactical law enforcement response. Unfortunately, swatting has become increasingly common, and school districts are finding out they are not immune to the dangerous practice. Swatting can have serious consequences for those who are targeted, including the potential for physical harm and emotional trauma.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of these hoaxes, they cannot be ignored. However, there are some proactive steps that school districts can take to reduce risk, including the following:

- Providing training to staff on how to identify fake emergency calls
 - Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) has posted "[Mitigation Strategies and Reporting Procedures](#)" adapted from NJ Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell that provides guidance on identifying indicators of potential swatting and some mitigation strategies that can be used when working with suspected swatting.
- Encouraging staff, students, and the public to report any knowledge of potential hoaxes or threats
 - School Districts are encouraged to utilize a tip line or [anonymous tip reporting service](#) that allows anyone to anonymously make a report without fear of reprisal. School Districts should monitor and investigate all tips and ensure prompt escalation to law enforcement when necessary.
- Educating students and parents on the dangers and consequences of swatting
 - School Districts should educate students and parents on the seriousness of swatting and the consequences that a student or parent could face if they are involved in swatting.
- Promoting a culture of safety and security within the organization
 - Under [California Comprehensive School Safety Plan](#), school districts must conduct regular drills to include training procedures on how to respond to criminal incidents. It is recommended that school

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districts ensure that these practices are routinely reviewed for effectiveness. Employees and students should be able to follow all emergency protocols effectively, without hesitation. The clearer the plan, the easier it is to implement.

- Any activation of emergency protocols (whether due to swatting or otherwise) presents an opportunity to complete an after-action report to determine if there are any areas of the emergency protocols that need to be modified or if there is room for improvement.
- School districts should communicate with local law enforcement agencies to develop a coordinated response to swatting incidents; this may include establishing a protocol for verifying emergency calls, sharing information and resources, and working together to investigate and prosecute swatters.

Swatting can be frustrating for all public agencies involved; however, all calls must be treated as legitimate and investigated for authenticity. For questions or additional information on swatting, please contact [Risk Control](#).

