

Combating Swatting Attempts

Election Officials and Law Enforcement: Working Together to Combat Swatting

Election officials and law enforcement have already faced bomb threats and various swatting incidents aimed at election officials around the country.

Swatting, where false emergency calls are made to draw a heavily armed police – or “SWAT team” – response to a specific location, is dangerous and disruptive.

Law enforcement plays a critical role in identifying and mitigating reports so as to reduce danger to those involved and to minimize the overall impact these types of reports can have on the victim. Swatting attempts to intimidate and silence targeted individuals, and poses a risk to the democratic process and public safety.

Steps to Combat Swatting	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure your elections office establishes a dialogue with a local police or sheriff representative who may be designated as the elections liaison.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide the liaison with the names and physical home addresses of election officials and key or higher risk staff, specific locations of voting centers and counting facilities, and any other relevant election-related locations within your jurisdiction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask law enforcement if it's possible to have a flag put into their computer-aided dispatch system to alert 9-1-1 staff and responding officers of the nature of those locations, with a specific note about concerns regarding swatting.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide police and 9-1-1 staff with 24-hour cell phone numbers for critical elections staff who can be reached in the event of possible false reports.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage police to confer with federal authorities such as the FBI or DHS on current trends in swatting, as well as ways to spot indicators of swatting calls/reports.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish protocols for communication between elections staff at the local, regional and state levels to share information in the event that one or more jurisdictions experience a swatting call so that others can be alerted to be on the lookout for similar incidents within their jurisdiction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Train your staff to remain calm in the event of such an episode in your jurisdiction and consult with your local police on an area-specific protocol to quickly and succinctly relay to responding officers that everyone is safe.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain best protocols to ensure security plans remain confidential for the safety of the public.