



PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

COMMUNITY AWARENESS BULLETIN

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SPOOFING AND SWATTING

The Pennsylvania State Police reminds Pennsylvanians to remain vigilant against spoofing and swatting attacks.

Spoofing uses technology to change caller ID information, so the call appears to come from the local area. *Swatting* occurs when someone spoofs another person's phone number and calls police to report a serious emergency at the victim's residence, with the goal of prompting an enhanced response from law enforcement.

Spoofing is illegal if it is done with the intent to defraud or cause harm. Swatting, or otherwise making false reports to law enforcement, is also against the law with serious criminal and civil penalties possible for violators.

The Pennsylvania State Police is aware of swatting incidents occurring in the Commonwealth, but the issue is not widespread. There are steps you can take to further minimize your risk.

- Google yourself to find websites that have your personal information, such as addresses and phone numbers. There are websites that sell this information to anyone who wants it, but they should have opt-out procedures to remove your information from their database. Do this for every site you find.
- Review your social media profiles to maximize your security. Make posts visible to friends or existing contacts only. Never share addresses or phone numbers on social media, regardless of the platform's privacy settings.
- Notify local law enforcement if someone threatens swatting. Screenshot relevant social media posts, instant messages, and text messages because they can sometimes be deleted by the sender.
- The free *See Something, Send Something* smartphone application provides another avenue for individuals to report suspicious activity by capturing a photograph, screenshot, and other information to send it directly to the Pennsylvania State Police.
- Additionally, the Pennsylvania State Police maintains the Terrorism Tip Line (888) 292-1919 and email account tips@pa.gov which are monitored 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, to report suspicious activity and behavior.

