



NORTH TEXAS FUSION CENTER

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS BULLETIN
NTFC # SAB 2023-04-18.6

18 April 2023

(U//FOUO) Situational Awareness- Recent School Shooting Hoaxes

(U) **FIRST AMENDMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** *NTFC recognizes that Americans have constitutionally protected rights to assemble, speak, and petition the government. NTFC safeguards these rights and reports on only those activities where potential use of rhetoric and/or propaganda could be used to incite acts of violence. Regarding the signs of terrorism and/or criminal activity, NTFC highlights that we do not profile individuals – we profile behaviors.*

(U//FOUO) **SCOPE:** The North Texas Fusion Center (NTFC) has prepared the following Situational Awareness Bulletin to inform our stakeholders regarding recent hoax threats targeting multiple jurisdictions and schools throughout the state, as well as nationally. This bulletin is intended to support law enforcement personnel, organizations, and security planners in evaluating and responding to potential school shooting events as well as provide an updated assessment on recent events. The information in this bulletin is accurate as of 18 April 2023.

(U) **DETAILS:** Last Thursday (13 April 2023), the NTFC was made aware of multiple false reports of active shootings occurring on campuses across Texas.¹ Additionally, on Wednesday (12 April 2023), there were several false reports of school threats in Illinois.² The calls were determined to be hoaxes and there were no shots fired or active shooters on-site at the schools.

(U//FOUO) In early April, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) put out a Public Safety Awareness Report regarding hoax active shooter threats, also known as swatting.³ The FBI noted that multiple states have reported an increasing number of hoax calls and active shooter reports. The FBI report also discussed the negative impact of swatting calls, including the misdirection of law enforcement resources from actual safety needs and the potential to create uncertainty regarding the validity of future threats.³

(U) At this time, the NTFC is aware of the following school threat hoax calls in Texas on 13 April 2023¹:

- Baylor University, Waco
- Collin College, Plano
- Del Mar College, Corpus Christi
- Galen College of Nursing, San Antonio



Photo [Source](#)

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- Texas A&M, College Station
- Texas Wesleyan University, Fort Worth
- Tyler Junior College, Tyler

(U//FOUO) **KEY FINDINGS: The NTFC is not aware of any current, specific or credible threats to educational institutions in our region.** The FBI noted in their previously mentioned report that school threat hoax calls are not limited to a singular individual, group, or organization.³ School threat hoax calls are an ongoing issue in Texas and in multiple states across the nation. The NTFC notes that it is not uncommon for school threats to escalate after high-profile schools shootings and it is possible that these recent hoax calls are, in part, due to recent events in Nashville, TN. After a shooting at Oxford High School in Michigan in November 2021, one researcher found that more than 150 shooting threats/hoaxes occurred in just a week following the attack.⁵

(U) Furthermore, with the development and evolution of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is plausible that AI is being used to make a portion of these false calls and may sometimes include gunshots to make the call sound more realistic and urgent.⁴ There is no evidence at this time indicating that the above mentioned incidents were carried out utilizing this methodology though investigations are ongoing.

(U//FOUO) **AVAILABLE RESOURCES:** Given law enforcement and schools take all threats seriously, the resulting response and allocation of assets can create a dramatic strain on available resources to address other potential issues. Furthermore, educational institutions will undoubtedly be affected by lockdowns, closures, concerned family members, and the media. Communication is critical but the balance between informing the public, responding to the threat and determining the appropriate response remains uncertain and varies based on context and the issue at hand. To assist in mitigating these issues, the NTFC serves as a resource to our school and law enforcement partners and can provide information upon request. Additionally, there are many local, state and federal resources that provide information related to active shooter response, including:

- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency offers a number of resources including [Planning and Response to an Active Shooter: An Interagency Security Committee Policy and Best Practices Guide](#); and [First Responders and Security Professionals Tools and Resources](#).
- [The Federal Bureau of Investigation offers Active Shooter Safety Resources](#).
- Texas State University offers [ALERRT](#) active shooter training and resources to both law enforcement and business, corporate and education organizations.
- iWatchTexas Website ([link](#)) or iWatchTexas App

(U//FOUO) Anyone with information regarding similar incidents is requested to contact and/or forward that information to the North Texas Fusion Center at 214-491-6800 or ntfc@co.collin.tx.us.

(U//FOUO) In addition to reviewing the above resources, NTFC reminds first responders, event organizers, security personnel and/or officials that they should consider the totality of the circumstances in evaluating indicators of a potential attack. Indicators include:

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(U//FOUO)***Suspicious Activity Behaviors and Indicators***

- Unauthorized entry to restricted area.
- Unusual or prolonged interest in or attempts to gain sensitive information about security measures of personnel, entry and exit points, peak days and hours of operation, and access controls. Persons may also ask about facility security measures, such as barriers, restricted areas, cameras, and intrusion detection systems without a reasonable explanation.
- Unusual observation of security reaction drills or procedures, multiple false alarms, or fake emergency calls to the same location or similar venues without a reasonable explanation.
- Discreet use of cameras, video recorders, UAS, sketching or note-taking consistent with preoperational surveillance.
- Social media traffic discussing event vulnerabilities or opportunities to disrupt the event.
- Acquisition of suspicious quantities of weapons and ammunition or materials that could be used to produce explosives.
- Suspicious or illegally parked vehicles near an event or where crowds gather prior to or following an event. The vehicle may also appear to be overloaded or have the appearance of fluid leaking, or have a strong odor emanating from it near an event location.
- Persons may attempt unauthorized access to rooftops near a secured event location or other potentially sensitive areas.
- Persons in crowded areas wearing unusually bulky clothing without a reasonable explanation that might conceal weapons or explosives.
- Bags, packages, strollers or other suspicious equipment left unattended in open areas or hidden in trash receptacles could be used to conceal explosives.
- Theft of uniforms, such as security companies, law enforcement or first responders. Persons can misrepresent one's affiliations to cover possible illicit activity by presenting false insignia, documents and/or identification.

(U) TRACKED BY: HSEC-1; HSEC-8; NTFC SIN 3; NTFC SIN 5; NTFC SIN 7**(U) Sources**

- 1 (U) <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/texas-news/texas-colleges-respond-to-rash-of-hoax-shooting-calls/3235930/>
- 2 (U) https://thesouthern.com/news/local/education/schools-across-southern-illinois-plagued-with-swatting-calls-on-wednesday/article_a51a73d3-a182-596b-8215-b05cb184fb3e.html
- 3 (U) FBI Public Safety Awareness Report [OPE-23-SA-010]
- 4 (U) [A Computer Generated Swatting Service Is Causing Havoc Across America](#)
- 5 (U) [School Threats and Social Media Hoaxes are Forcing Closures, Time-Consuming Investigations](#)

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