



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

Date: August 4, 2020

Prepared by: Brittany Kershaw

Phone and Email: (386) 586-2637; bkershaw@flaglersheriff.com

Release #: 153

FCSO Responds to "Swatting" Prank Calls

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) responded to the "C" Section of Palm Coast around 1:33 a.m. on August 2nd after receiving a call on the non-emergency line from a man stating he had just shot his mother in the head with a shotgun.

Numerous members of the FCSO along with paramedics and fire rescue rushed to the scene. Flagler County's Emergency FireFlight helicopter was put on standby. The line disconnected with the caller and attempts to call the number back went unanswered. FCSO's Communications Center was able to locate a phone number for the homeowner and made contact. It was determined that the initial call was a swatting call and no one had been injured.

Swatting calls are prank calls used to trigger an emergency law enforcement response against a target victim under false pretenses. Swatters do this by making phone calls to emergency lines like 9-1-1 and falsely reporting a violent emergency situation such as a shooting or hostage situation.

A similar swatting call came in on July 10th in the "F" Section of Palm Coast. A male called the non-emergency line reporting that he had just shot his mother following an argument. First responders reached the scene, set a perimeter around the residence and attempted contact with anyone inside. In this case, no one was home. Deputies eventually made contact with the homeowner to gain access to the residence and confirm that no one was injured inside.

On May 26, FCSO Units were dispatched to an address in the "B" Section of Palm Coast after the Suicide Hotline contacted FCSO's Communication Center to report a call to the hotline from a suicidal individual claiming to have several firearms. FCSO Deputies made contact with occupants of the home who reported that a male on a social media app threatened to "SWAT" an occupant of the home after she refused to speak with him. Earlier in the day, the same man had pizzas delivered to the home, which residents did not order.

"Sometimes swatting calls are made to retaliate against someone for whatever reason and sometimes they are completely random. We have seen both recently in Palm Coast," Sheriff Rick Staly said.

Proudly Serving the Community Since 1917
A Four Diamond Accredited Law Enforcement Agency



“Unfortunately the types of calls are so serious that a large police response is required and there is no way for deputies or first responders to know that the call is fake until an investigation is completed. In the meantime, resources are diverted from other calls for service while they investigate a call that turns out to be a prank. It’s not funny and it is illegal and dangerous. ”

Swatting calls can be expensive due to the large response required for what turns out to be a false report. It can also be dangerous for the residence of the swatting call as first responders believe they are responding to a serious crime and the response is elevated.

If the person responsible for initiating the calls is identified, he or she can face charges including filing a false police report. Anyone with information regarding these calls or similar swatting calls in Flagler County should call FCSO at 386-313-4911 or email TIPS@flaglersheriff.com. To remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers at 1-888-277-TIPS (8477). You could be eligible for a reward up to \$5,000.00.

###

Proudly Serving the Community Since 1917
A Four Diamond Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

