

# School Shooting Threats: Consequences of Swatting & Active Shooter Hoaxes

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Within just a three-week span in September 2022, more than 90 school shooting threats were made—all of which were fake calls. That is just a small snapshot of the burgeoning crisis school districts have faced when it comes to active shooter hoaxes.

This year, another huge wave of threats was made to schools in California, Michigan, Vermont, and Florida, leaving officials at a loss of how to handle this evolving trend.



## WHAT IS SWATTING?

"Swatting" is when a person makes a hoax call to cause a large police or SWAT team response. Essentially, it is a fake shooting threat.

Years ago, the swatting trend surfaced among the online gaming community, which eventually led to the tragic death of an innocent man in 2017. Although these threats are fake, they create serious dangers and put everyone involved at risk.

With many communities already on edge from the rise of actual school shooting events (there was a total of 302 reported school shootings in 2022—the most compared to any other year), these fake threats had very real consequences.



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## WHAT ARE THE DANGERS OF SCHOOL SHOOTING THREATS?

Fake school shooting threats aren't just a matter of inconvenience. They have serious outcomes that mirror the same negative effects of a real active shooter incident.

Outcome	Active Shooter Hoax	Real Active Shooter Incident
Fear and Chaos	✓	✓
Disruption	✓	✓
Resources & Tax Dollars	✓	✓
Post-Event Trauma	✓	✓
Casualties	Increased risk of injury or even death due to police mistakenly shooting innocent person(s)	Loss of Life and/or serious injury

For anyone who has experienced a hoax threat, the experience can be described as being "completely real until it wasn't."

This is why it's so critical to provide law enforcement with as much situational awareness as possible—they need the intel to confidently determine whether a threat is false or real. Until that determination is made, everyone involved is at great risk.

**ZeroEyes** provides situational awareness to help avoid unintentional false alarms, de-escalate threats, and mitigate risks.

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While a solution to prevent fake school shooting threats from happening doesn't exist, providing school administration, on-site security, and law enforcement with advanced situational awareness can solve two important challenges.

### **SOLUTION #1: HELPS AVOID UNINTENTIONAL FALSE ALARMS**

Sometimes school shooting threats happen because of rumors. A student brings in a toy gun, shows it off, and false rumors spread fast. This scenario could end badly, with unnecessary calls made to law enforcement—increasing the level of hazard for innocent students.

With the ZeroEyes solution, a gun detection alert would route to our operations center once a potential gun becomes visible on a school security camera. Our military-trained analysts would be able to verify that it's a fake gun and appropriately notify school administration.

**One real-life example of how we helped one of our education clients avoid a false alarm that could have easily gotten out of control:** two male students were pretending to shoot each other with an app on their phones. The app emitted realistic gunshot sounds, and their phones looked like small handguns from afar. Students quickly started posting this on social media and rumors began to spread.

Luckily, ZeroEyes detected this potential gun and our analysts were able to verify that no real weapons were involved. Our analysts notified school administration of this event and let them know that there was no need to call law enforcement.

## SOLUTION #2: IMPROVES RESPONSE AND MITIGATES RISKS

Many incoming hoax calls report a person actively shooting with multiple victims on campus. When law enforcement arrives at the scene, this is what they are anticipating, and their response matches the level of threat.

However, if law enforcement knew there have not been any guns visible on the hundreds of security cameras across campus for the past few hours, they now have better situational awareness and can investigate accordingly.

School officials can also better communicate the situation to parents. With better situational awareness, they can communicate the true scope of the situation and provide reassurance that SROs and law enforcement will be instantly aware should a gun become visible on campus.

**Key Takeaway:** Advanced situational awareness can help tremendously in threat assessment, improving the response for active shooter threats (real or fake).

Situational awareness can help tremendously in threat assessment. But, let's also consider that the threat is not a hoax. Should a bad actor bring a gun on campus, ZeroEyes can provide law enforcement with the intel they need to act quickly—sometimes even before shots are fired.

In an active shooter training event, Rancocas Valley Regional High School was able to improve officer response time by nearly two-thirds. The response time for officers to reach the “gunman” without implementing ZeroEyes was 3 minutes and 13 seconds. With ZeroEyes, officers responded and made first contact in 1 minute and 15 seconds.

Additionally, knowing exactly whom to look for reduces the level of hazard for students. In the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, over 130 calls to 911 were made with conflicting information. If law enforcement does not know what the shooter actually looks like, this increases the level of hazard for everyone involved.

# Reduce the Threat and Impact of School Shootings With Proactive Gun Detection

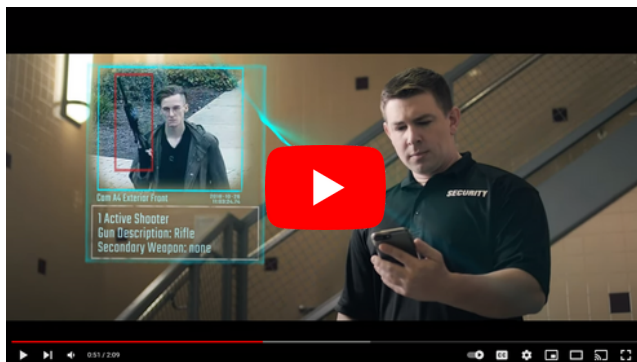
ZeroEyes' proactive gun detection software is a layer of security that detects, verifies, and alerts authorities of visible guns in as fast as 3-5 seconds. Learn how you can get ZeroEyes in your schools by scheduling a demo today.

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## About ZeroEyes

ZeroEyes delivers a proactive, human-verified A.I. gun detection software solution that integrates into existing security cameras and mitigates mass shootings and gun-related violence by reducing response times, providing actionable intelligence with images and delivering clarity among chaos – ultimately saving lives. ZeroEyes' patented solution has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as a promising anti-terrorism technology and is the first video analytics technology to receive SAFETY Act DT&E Designation.

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