

US: Shooting reported at Northwestern University turns out to be 'swatting' hoax

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Evanston Police said a call to police reporting shots fired at Engelhart Hall, a graduate student residence, was a "swatting" hoax. The term describes when someone calls in a false report in the hopes of prompting a SWAT team to respond.

US: Shooting reported at Northwestern University, police call it 'hoax'

Chicago: A report of a gunman at a Northwestern University residence hall and shots fired was a hoax, a suburban Chicago police official said Wednesday.

Evanston Police Commander Ryan Glew said a call to police reporting shots fired at Engelhart Hall, a graduate student residence, was a "swatting" hoax. The term describes when someone calls in a false report in the hopes of prompting a SWAT team to respond.

Heavily armed Evanston police and university police officers rushed to the dormitory, and the call prompted Northwestern to urge people in the area to "shelter in a safe place and stay until further notice."

Glew said the student who the caller reported had been shot was later located unharmed.

Police said the call came from an area southeast of Rockford, about 70 miles northwest of Evanston. The apartment that police responded to Wednesday had been vacant since around Thanksgiving.

Such "swatting" calls can be dangerous. In December, Wichita, Kansas, police officers who responded to such a hoax call fatally shot a man as he answered his door.

The alert at Northwestern came shortly after hundreds of university students participated in the National School Walkout. The students gathered to support calls for tighter regulations on guns sales in the wake of the shooting at a Parkland, Florida, high school that left 17 dead.

- AP