

How Lack of Call Authentication Impacts Emergency Services

NUMBER
PERSON
LOCATION
STORY

When caller identity becomes an operational risk

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First Responder | Founder, Smart Carrier

11:47 P.M.

A phone number can become an armed response in minutes.

“I’m inside 123 Main Street.
Three hostages. One person has been shot.”

Caller information appears to support the story.

What has actually been verified?

Composite scenario



One call carries four different claims

NUMBER	PERSON	LOCATION	STORY
Is the caller authorized to use it?	Who is actually speaking?	Where is the incident really happening?	Is the reported emergency true?

Authentication can strengthen one claim.

It does not prove the other three.

Evidence only helps if it reaches the call taker

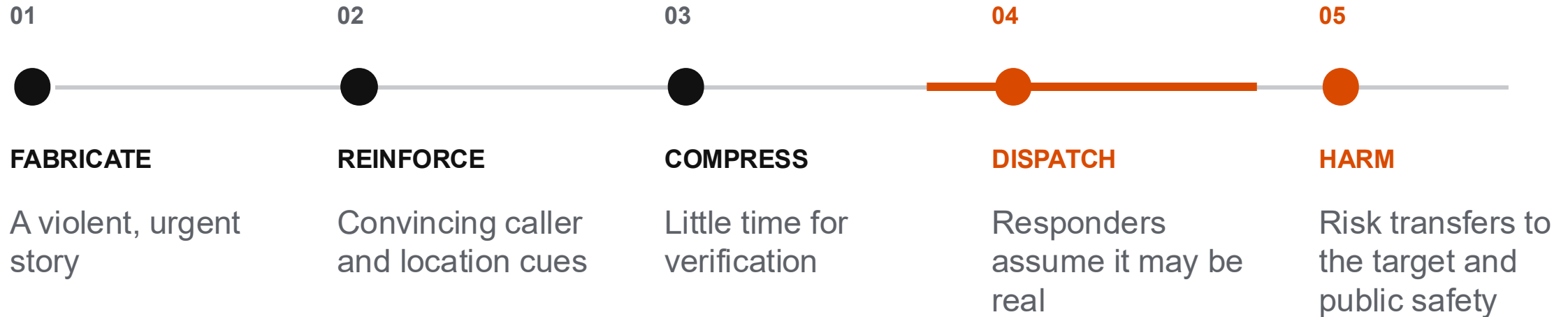
SIGNED IDENTITY EVIDENCE



Identity may be spoofed at entry. Evidence can be stripped by *a non-IP segment*, downgraded, or never surfaced in the console.

Swatting weaponizes the duty to act

A false report intended to trigger a high-risk emergency response against an unsuspecting target.



The emergency response becomes the weapon.

Swatting at scale...

600+

**incidents in the FBI's
voluntary tracker by
February 2024**

Cumulative tracker count

375+

**swatting, hoax and
threat calls admitted by
one offender**

Aug. 2022 - Jan. 2024

446

**false active-shooter
reports tracked at U.S.
schools in 2022–23**

Media-based school tracker

These figures are not additive and are not a national estimate.

Voluntary reporting + inconsistent coding = a lower bound, not a census.

One offender can manufacture hundreds of emergencies

375+

swatting, hoax and threat calls



One teenage offender:

Alan W. Fillion, from Lancaster, California. He was 16 years old when he started and 18 when sentenced.

The attacker's marginal effort was small. Each credible report could consume dispatch, patrol, tactical, fire, EMS and investigative capacity.

TARGETS

Schools • Universities • Religious institutions • Public officials • Private individuals

One false call can consume a real response

A documented Maryland swatting response

**The call was false.
The deployment, cost and
injuries were real.**

40+

officers

2.5+

hours

\$10,000+

in police costs

≈3

reconstructive surgeries

Federal cases also document at least two swatting-related deaths—this is not a national total.

The same trust gap produces different operational failures

01	TDoS + automated false calls	Queue starvation and unavailable call takers
02	False or misdirected location	Resources sent away from the real emergency
03	Agency-number impersonation	Legitimate callback trust is weakened
04	Synthetic voice + compromised devices	Deception becomes more credible and scalable

AI is an amplifier not the root issue.

A, B and C are chain of custody statements not threat scores



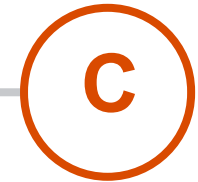
FULL ATTESTATION

**Customer authenticated
Right to use number
established**



PARTIAL ATTESTATION

**Customer authenticated
Right to use number not
established**



GATEWAY ATTESTATION

**Originator not authenticated
Call entered through a gateway**

None of them measures truth, intent or danger.

Authentication is evidence—not a verdict

IT CAN HELP PROVIDE

Number integrity
Provider attestation
Correlation + traceback anchor

IT CANNOT PROVE

The person speaking
The incident location
The truth or level of danger

Authenticated ≠ true

Unauthenticated ≠ false

The right model is layered confidence not a binary gate

- 01 Authentication result + reason
- 02 Location and routing consistency
- 03 Call history and attack patterns
- 04 Call-taker questioning
- 05 Provider coordination + traceback

EXPLAINABLE CONFIDENCE CUES

for human decisions

Never block, delay or deprioritize 911 solely because authentication is missing.

Five commitments the SIP ecosystem can make

01



PRESERVE

identity evidence
end to end

02



EXPOSE

status, attestation
and failure
reasons clearly

03



CORRELATE

authentication with
location, patterns
and traceback

04



PROTECT

legitimate PSAP
and agency
callbacks

05



TEST

with public-safety
users and
measure outcomes

OUTBOUND MATTERS TOO

Make legitimate public-safety callbacks recognizable and trustworthy.

THE TAKEAWAY

A phone number is not a person.

An authenticated number is not an authenticated emergency.

An unauthenticated call is not an illegitimate call.

Increase confidence. Never create a barrier to help.

Where does identity evidence disappear between your network and our console?

Q&A