



PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

COMMUNITY AWARENESS BULLETIN

CAB 005-16

October 3, 2016

RECENT THREATS TO PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOLS

(U//FOUO) A number of clown related social media posts were displayed this past weekend regarding threats towards school districts in Pennsylvania and throughout the country. Some threats stated that a clown would arrive at the school and “shoot all students and teachers,” while another threat stated they “weren’t clowning around.” Most of the social media posts were attributed to a “clown joke,” possibly linked to numerous clown sightings throughout the nation and the world.ⁱ *These sightings have not been validated and there are no known threats to schools in Pennsylvania. Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to their closest police department.*

(U//FOUO) Over the last few months, “creepy clowns” have been reported throughout the United States and the world. The media has reported incidents where clowns have stood on the street not moving or speaking, to incidents where creepy clowns attempted to lure children into wooded areas. These sightings have occurred in Wisconsin, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, Missouri, Colorado, Oregon, and Texas.

(U//FOUO) Many of these reported clown sightings have little to no evidence establishing their legitimacy, but it is fueling a clown panic throughout the country.ⁱⁱ Due to the media coverage of clown sightings, many people want to become involved in the phenomenon. Over the past two weeks at least 12 people were arrested in Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia for making false reports of clown threats or chasing people while costumed.ⁱⁱⁱ

(U//FOUO) This is not the first time a clown scare has occurred in this country. In the 1980s, clown sightings were reported in Boston, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Arlington Heights, among many other areas. Upon further investigation, police noticed that most, if not all the clown sightings, were witnessed only by children between the ages of five and seven.^{iv}

(U//FOUO) The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) is providing this bulletin for informational purposes only. The PSP encourages reporting of suspicious activity by calling the toll-free Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Terrorism Tip Line at (888) 292-1919, or via email at tips@pa.gov. Additionally, PSP launched the “See Something, Send Something” smartphone application (app) to help fight terrorism. The app allows suspicious activity to be captured as a photograph or written note and sent directly to PaCIC. Available at no cost to iPhone and Android users, the app also contains information on what to look for and when to report suspicious activity.^v

ⁱ Luciew, J. (2016, October 3). Clown threats made against Pa. schools. *Penn Live*. Retrieved 10/03/2016 from http://www.pennlive.com/news/2016/10/clown_threats_made_against_pa.html.

ⁱⁱ Carlson, A. (2016, September 30). Why you shouldn’t panic about this year’s ‘Clown Panic.’ *People*. Retrieved 10/03/2016 from <http://www.people.com/article/creepy-clown-sightings-2016-whats-happening-explainer>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Shankar, D. (2016, October 1). Spike in creepy clown sightings, with more arrests across U.S. *NBC News*. Retrieved 10/03/2016 from <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/spike-creepy-clown-sightings-hoaxes-lead-arrests-across-country-n657956>.

^{iv} Carlson, A. (2016, September 30). Why you shouldn’t panic about this year’s ‘Clown Panic.’ *People*. Retrieved 10/03/2016 from <http://www.people.com/article/creepy-clown-sightings-2016-whats-happening-explainer>.

^v Pennsylvania State Police launch new “see something, send something” app to help fight terrorism. (2013, January 10). *Pennsylvania State Police*. Retrieved 03/30/2015 from http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=4451&PageID=457781&mode=2&contentid=http://pubcontent.state.pa.us/publicshedcontent/publish/cop_public_safety/state_police/news/articles/pennsylvania_state_police_launch_new_see_something_send_something_app_to_help_fight_terrorism.html.