

Cerritos

Neighborhood

Watch Report

March 2002

April is earthquake preparedness month

To help residents prepare for earthquakes, the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management has developed a "Family Steps to Survival" program with 12 steps that may help your family avoid tragedy.

- Develop a complete family earthquake plan and review it regularly with every member of your household.
- Identify safe spots in every

room, such as under sturdy desks and tables and by interior walls and corners, where you will be safe from falling objects or broken windows.

- Identify danger spots, including windows, tall furniture, heavy objects on shelves, appliances, hanging mirrors or plants, pictures, ceiling lights and unbraced chimneys.
- Secure all objects in place.

- Locate exits and alternative ways to leave your home, such as through windows.

- Show everyone where the shut-offs for water, gas and electricity are located and teach them how to use them.
 - In addition to food, water and first aid supplies, consider other special needs your family members may have, including seniors, family members with disabilities, children, people who take special medications, people who don't speak English well and pets.
 - Store necessary items in a place with easy access.
 - Set a meeting place in case you and your family members are separated during a quake.
 - Designate an out-of-state contact each of you can call to share news.
 - Know the policies of your children's schools and daycare centers regarding emergency shelter, transportation and care for children after a quake.
 - Designate someone to pick up your children if you are unable, and make sure that person is listed on your child's emergency contact card in the school office.
- For more information on earthquake preparedness log onto <http://www.oes.ca.gov/>, <http://www.redcross.org>, <http://www.lafd.org/eqindex.htm>, or <http://www.scecdc.scec.org/eqcountry.html>.

Hardening the



Telephone/e-mail scam warning

Beware of a telephone/e-mail scam that can add hundreds and even thousands of dollars to your telephone bill. Phone companies are advising people about an expensive crime that targets unsuspecting victims by sending a telephone or e-mail message informing the recipient that a family member is seriously ill. Some messages have also claimed that a family member has been arrested or that a valuable prize has been won. In each case the message directs people to call an 809 area code, and many unsuspecting victims quickly return the call.

What victims soon learn is that the 809 area code is in the British Virgin Islands and calls can be

charged to the victim's telephone account much like a 900 number. Unfortunately, unlike U.S. regulations governing 900 calls, foreign telephone companies are not required to notify you of charges and rates, and victims who return these calls have been charged as much as \$2,400 for a single call. Unless you know someone who is in an 809 area code, disregard this type of message. It is important to avoid becoming a victim of this scam, since trying to fight the charges can be difficult and time consuming. A good source of prevention information is available at AT&T's website at www.att.com.

Monthly Crime Summary: February 2002

Citywide crime statistics (mostly felony crimes), are down by 20 percent this year. Residential burglary, vehicle burglary, and robbery are the areas where the most significant reduction has been noted. Vehicle theft, however, has only dropped 1 percent. Sheriff's Station personnel logged a weekly average of 328 calls for service. This figure is down from the 361 weekly average recorded for the same period in 2001.

Seven robbery incidents were investigated. One occurred in a retail setting where force was used in an attempt to escape store personnel. In another incident, a victim that had been standing in his driveway approached a parked car to answer a question for an occupant and was robbed of his cash after a handgun was produced. A wallet was taken from a victim in a park restroom although no weapon was seen. A donut shop was the scene of a late night hold-up, and another wallet was reported stolen by a group of teens. A purse snatching and what appeared to be an attempted robbery were also recorded. In the latter case, there is a possibility that the victim was followed from work.

If you suspect someone is following you, alter your usual route. Look in your rearview mirror and see if the same car or pair of headlights is still behind you. If this is the case, drive to a Sheriff's Station or a well-lighted and well-occupied parking lot.

There were 16 residential burglaries in February. Typically, master bedrooms were the primary

target, and jewelry, camera equipment, and electronic devices were the most frequently stolen items. In one of these cases, an alert neighbor was responsible for stopping thieves from taking anything. After she saw a strange car in the driveway and walked outside to get a better look, the suspects fled. One burglary was thwarted by an alarm, and another by a barking dog. Open or unlocked doors and windows are the easiest point of entry, and were used by burglars in the majority of these incidents. It is clear from continual analysis of burglaries that the chances of becoming a victim decrease dramatically when a burglar alarm system is installed and properly used and deadbolt locks and locking window pins are also used.

Last month, 38 vehicle burglaries occurred. Of those burglaries, 80 percent involved high-end car stereo components. The other items were visible within the passenger compartment and included purses, briefcases, cell phones, and tools. High volume parking lots continue to be the most likely venue for these crimes.

In February, 35 vehicle thefts were investigated. Nearly half of the vehicles have since been recovered. Honda and Toyota vehicles located in high volume parking lots accounted for 75 percent of the thefts. Owners are urged to take the necessary steps to keep their cars safe. If you have a steering wheel locking device, the car thief will look for an easier car to take. Do not solely rely on an audible alarm system. This alarm sound

has become common and does not attract the attention it used to.

Remember, you know your own neighborhood better than law enforcement. If you see something or someone that is suspicious, immediately contact the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044. To report a crime in progress, dial 911. The Sheriff's Department relies on you to be the "eyes and ears" of the community.

Cerritos Sheriff's Station celebrates 5th Anniversary

Celebrate the 5th Anniversary of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center at an open house on April 27. The celebration will be part of the Community Fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. located in the Cerritos Civic Center. The open house will include displays featuring specialized Sheriff's units including Bomb Squad, Special Weapons and Tactics Unit (S.W.A.T.), Volunteers on Patrol, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), Star Unit, Neighborhood Watch, Long Beach Animal Control, Code Enforcement, Explorers and the Mounted Enforcement Detail.

Guests will also be able to tour the Sheriff's Station and gather information on crime prevention, emergency preparedness and volunteer opportunities.



Community Safety Division: (562) 916-1266

Sheriff's Station: (562) 860-0044