

Cerritos

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Neighborhood

Watch Report

July 2004

Hardening the  Target

Is someone “phishing” for your information?

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has issued a warning that affects you and the way you conduct business on the Internet.

Internet scammers casting about for people’s financial information have a new way to lure unsuspecting victims: they go “phishing.” Phishing is a high-tech scam that uses spam to deceive consumers into disclosing their credit card numbers, bank account information, Social Security numbers, passwords and other sensitive personal information.

According to the FTC, the latest phishing scam involves e-mails that claim to be from regulations.gov, a real web site where consumers can participate in government rule making by submitting comments.

The e-mail subject line typically reads “Official information” or “Urgent information to all credit card holders!” The message’s text claims, “Due to recent changes in rules and regulations, it is required by law for all Internet users to identify themselves in compliance with CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) to create a secure and safer Internet community.” The e-mail includes a link to a web site that mimics regulations.gov and asks readers to provide their personal and financial information.

In fact, there is no law requiring all Internet users to register with the government. Furthermore, regulations.gov does not collect financial information or charge consumers a fee for submitting

comments. Consumers who provide their financial information in response to an unsolicited e-mail could be at risk for becoming a victim of identity theft.

If you receive an unsolicited e-mail that claims to be from the federal government asking for your information, do not respond. Forward the spam to the FTC at uce@ftc.gov so that it can be made available to law enforcement.

Avoid e-mailing personal and financial information. If you receive an unexpected e-mail from a company or a government agency asking for your personal information, contact the company or the agency cited in the e-mail using a telephone number that you know to be genuine, or type in the web address that you know to be correct in order to verify the information contained in the e-mail.

If you have recently shared your credit card or bank account information in response to an unsolicited e-mail that claimed to be from regulations.gov, notify your credit card company or bank immediately and discuss whether you should cancel your accounts. In any event, you should carefully monitor your accounts.

If you have provided your Social Security number, you should contact one of the three national consumer reporting agencies, ask that a fraud alert be placed on your accounts and obtain copies of your credit reports.

You should also visit the FTC’s identity theft web site at www.consumer.gov/idtheft to file a complaint and learn more about how to minimize your risk of damage from identity theft. If you notice any irregular activity on your credit report, contact your local law enforcement agency as well.

Regulations.gov is operated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in association with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Archives and Records Administration/Office of the Federal Register, and the Government Printing Office. The FTC and other federal agencies use the regulations.gov portal to receive comments from the public regarding proposed rules and regulations.

The FTC works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid such practices.

The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft and other fraud related-complaints into Consumer Sentinel. This is a secure, on-line database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the United States and abroad.

To file a complaint or receive free information on consumer issues, visit www.ftc.gov or call toll-free (877) FTC-HELP (382-4357); TTY: (866) 653-4261.

Monthly Crime Summary: June 2004

There were 99 Part I felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in June, compared to an adjusted figure of 91 in May. Robberies increased slightly, as did "other structure" burglaries. Compared to June, decreases were noted in residential burglaries, vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts. The 2004 weekly average of calls for service handled by deputies was 345 at the end of June. While this figure generally increases during the summer months, the 2004 weekly average is down 10 to 20 calls per week compared to the two previous years.

Robberies

There were nine robbery-related incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in June, up from an adjusted figure of seven incidents in May.

On Friday, June 4 at 9:05 a.m., a male victim made a cash withdrawal at a bank and was returning to his vehicle in the parking lot at South Street and Carmenita Road when a lone suspect approached, produced a handgun and robbed the victim of the cash. The suspect, described as a male Hispanic, 20 to 25 years old, approximately 5 feet 8 inches tall and weighing between 180 and 200 pounds with brown eyes, walked behind a nearby business and out of sight.

The next incident occurred on Wednesday, June 9 at 3:24 p.m. Three male suspects repeatedly knocked on the door of a residence in the 17800 block of Noran Circle, then entered through the rear of the house. A female juvenile was inside and was confronted by the suspects. After demanding money and not receiving any, all three suspects fled.

On Thursday, June 10 at 10:30 p.m., two males were robbed at gunpoint by two male suspects in front of a fast food business in the 11700 block of South Street.

Another case occurred on Friday, June 11 involving a male suspect continuously knocking on the door

of a residence in the 11900 block of 195th Street. A female resident inside spotted the suspect in a bedroom talking on a walkie-talkie. The victim was able to flee the residence, as did the suspect.

On Saturday, June 12 at 10:15 p.m., a suspect entered a fast food restaurant in the 11300 block of 183rd Street while another waited outside. The suspect produced a handgun and employees relinquished cash from the register.

On Saturday, June 13 at 11:50 p.m., a male suspect approached a check stand in a video rental store located in the 13200 block of South Street. After simulating a handgun and demanding and receiving cash, the suspect fled on foot.

On Tuesday, June 15 at 1 p.m., a woman was walking in a lot at the Los Cerritos Center when a male suspect ran up behind her and grabbed the purse from her shoulder. He fled to a waiting Ford Expedition driven by another male. The vehicle was a newer model, either blue or light green.

Another incident occurred on Friday, June 18 at 10:30 p.m. at a fast food restaurant located in the 13300 block of Artesia Boulevard. A lone gunman confronted employees and took cash from the register.

The final case occurred on Wednesday, June 23 at 10 p.m. when an employee at a store in the Cerritos Towne Center heard an emergency exit activated. Two suspects were observed loading stolen merchandise into a vehicle just outside the door. One of the suspects saw the clerk and began walking toward him with a baseball bat. The employee immediately closed the door and the suspects fled in the vehicle.

Residential Burglaries

Thirteen residential burglaries were investigated in June, down from an adjusted figure of 17 in May. An average of 3.2 of these crimes has been reported weekly in 2004. Residential burglaries are down by nearly 15 percent com-

pared to the same period in 2003. The majority of these incidents occur during the daytime, with entry commonly made possible by open/unlocked doors and windows. Items continue to be removed from open garages as residents leave the door open for ventilation. Bicycles, vehicles and tools were taken from open garages. Other property reported stolen included laptop computers, currency, VCR/CD players, jewelry, personal identification, coin collections, toys and cameras.

Vehicle Burglaries

There were 48 vehicle burglaries reported in June. Adjusted figures of 52 were investigated in May. Slightly more than 10 of these crimes have occurred each week in 2004, which reflects an increase of nearly 23 percent compared to the same period one year ago. Vehicle burglaries are up considerably in virtually all reporting jurisdictions in Southern California. Smashed windows are the most frequent means of entry. Parking lots dominate the locations involved, and there have been an influx of these crimes in fitness center parking lots. Vehicle burglaries recorded in residential areas are the result of citizens leaving valuable property inside the passenger compartment overnight.

Vehicle Thefts

Cerritos deputies investigated 28 vehicle theft cases in June, which is down from 31 cases reported in May. Although the 2004 weekly average was 7.0 at the end of June, there has been an overall reduction of more than eight percent compared to the same period one year ago. Parking lots continue to be the most popular location for these crimes, and transportation is still the primary motive. While the makes and models of vehicles stolen has varied somewhat compared to a year ago, we still see many Hondas and Toyotas manufactured from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s reported lost.

Safety Contacts:
Community Safety Division -
(562) 916-1266
Sheriff's Station - (562) 860-0044



To join Cerritos Neighborhood
Watch, call Community
Mobilization Officer Mike Yach
at (562) 916-1258.