

Cerritos

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ighborhood

Watch Report

June 2004

Hardening the Target

Warm weather safety tips offered to residents

During the summer months, many residents like to open their windows and garage doors to achieve better home ventilation. Cerritos Sheriff's deputies and Volunteers on Patrol (VOPs) have reported an increased number of homes with open and unattended garage doors.

While the intention of residents may be to seek some form of relief from the heat, this practice also provides would-be thieves with the opportunity to quickly steal property, inventory your belongings for future reference or gain access to your home with little effort.

Many people leave their garage door open while running a quick errand, only to return and find that they have been victimized. Burglars, by nature, are sneaky and do not like to confront victims. They are also opportunists who are capable

of securing expensive property in a very short amount of time.

Bicycles, lawn care products, tools and other items (such as garage door openers from vehicles) can be quickly obtained from your garage by passersby or vehicle occupants. A burglar could even enter your garage, close the door and have more than enough time to pry open your inner door while concealed from the street.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to encourage residents to maintain a constant presence when the garage door is open. Be inside of the garage or in the front yard where activities can be effectively monitored at all times. Don't walk next door, into the backyard or even into the house for more than few seconds. In an effort to minimize

opportunities for criminals, VOPs have been instructed to stop and make contact with the resident when they observe an open garage door.

Remember, a burglar is someone who likes to be present when you are not. Don't hesitate to make eye contact with anyone you suspect may be "casing" your property. This makes burglars extremely uncomfortable. Take a mental description of the suspect, jot down a license plate number and call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at once at (562) 860-0044 if you see anyone suspicious in your neighborhood.

Always remember that you can easily cool off your home by opening windows and doors upon your return, rather than leaving them open and risking the chance that you will be burglarized.

Cell phone reminder: dial (562) 860-0044 in the event of emergencies

This summer, many people will be outside enjoying the weather and will be away from their "hard line" telephone service inside the home. However, most people will likely have a cell phone with them.

When an emergency occurs, people may be inclined to automatically dial 911 on their cell phone to report an accident or a crime in progress. What many people do not know is that 911 calls made on a cell phone go directly to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) at a central location in Los Angeles. By the time the call is answered, the

jurisdiction determined and the call transferred to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station, precious time has been wasted.

We encourage you to enter and save in your cell phone the seven-digit number of the law enforcement agency in the city of your residence and employment. This will guarantee that the call is answered by the local agency responsible for addressing your urgent needs. In Cerritos, the number to call is (562) 860-0044. This number will connect you directly to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station Communications Center,

and to the same individuals who answer 911 calls within the City. They will be the most effective contacts to provide you with immediate emergency assistance.

GOT SAFETY?

- A little paranoia is good!
- Live defensively!!
- Harden the target!!!

www.safercerritos.com

Monthly Crime Summary: May 2004

There were 91 Part I felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station during the month of May, compared to 73 in April. Increases were noted in robberies, residential and commercial burglaries, and vehicle thefts. At the end of May, the 2004 weekly average of calls for service handled by deputies was 323.

Robberies

There were seven robbery-related incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in May, up from four incidents in March. However, this figure is still down by more than 25 percent compared to the same period one year ago.

On Tuesday, May 4 at 4:18 p.m., five juveniles near Del Amo Boulevard and Los Coyotes Creek approached a teenager riding a bicycle. One of the five grabbed the victim's handlebars and demanded cash. The victim complied.

Another incident occurred on Friday, May 7 at 6:40 p.m. A truck driver was seated in his vehicle in the 16600 block of Commerce Way when a male suspect drove up beside the victim, produced a handgun and demanded cash and jewelry.

On Wednesday, May 11 at 9 p.m., two male teenagers were riding bikes in Regional Park when two other males who had exited a vehicle approached them. One of the males placed a finger in the stomach of a cyclist, pushed him from the bike and ran away with it. When the second victim went to the aid of the first, the other suspect stole his bicycle. The suspects were arrested several days later.

On Monday, May 17 at 11:25 a.m., a male victim drove into the bank parking lot at Artesia Boulevard and Carmenita Road to make a deposit for his employer. As he exited the vehicle, two male suspects bearing guns approached. The victim reentered his car and locked the doors, but the suspects opened fire, striking him multiple times. The money was removed

from the interior of the car and the suspects fled. At the time of this report, the victim was in serious but stable condition.

An attempted robbery occurred on Sunday, May 23 at 3:37 p.m. Two women were parked in a lot located near a restaurant in the Best Plaza shopping center on 183rd Street when another vehicle pulled up beside them. A male exited the car, produced a handgun and demanded the women's purses. Both refused and the suspect drove away.

On Friday, May 28 at 9:27 p.m., a male suspect entered a fast food restaurant in the 10900 block of South Street, simulated a gun under his shirt and demanded cash. An employee complied, and the suspect fled on foot.

The final incident occurred on Sunday, May 30 at 1:45 p.m. when a female victim was walking in a lot located in the 12700 block of Towne Center Drive. A vehicle containing two suspects approached her from behind, a passenger leaned out and grabbed the purse from her shoulder, and the car sped away.

Residential Burglaries

Sixteen residential burglaries were investigated in May, up from an adjusted figure of 12 in April. An average of 3.2 residential burglaries has been reported weekly in 2004. There has been a drop of nearly seven percent in this category compared to the first five months in 2003.

The majority of these incidents occurred during daytime hours, with most entries made possible by open/unlocked doors and windows. Items are also being removed from garages, as residents leave the door open for ventilation purposes during the warmer weather. (See this month's "Hardening the Target" article on the front page.)

Property reported stolen included laptop computers, currency, VCR/CD players, jewelry, personal identification, clothing, telephones, handguns, safes and tools. Bicycles

and recreational items were taken from open garages. Tools and equipment were removed in hours of darkness from two homes under construction.

Vehicle Burglaries

There were 45 vehicle burglaries reported in May. An adjusted figure of 46 vehicle burglaries were investigated in April. Slightly more than 10 of these crimes have occurred each week in 2004, an increase of 13 percent compared to the same period one year ago. This is consistent with other jurisdictions in the region. Thirty eight of the vehicle burglaries in May occurred in parking lots, with most vehicle entries achieved by breaking windows. Items reported stolen were visible within the passenger compartment and included cameras, cell phones, credit cards, laptop computers, camcorders, briefcases, cash, ATM cards, auto accessories and backpacks.

Vehicle Thefts

Cerritos deputies investigated 31 vehicle theft cases in May, up from 24 cases in April. Although the 2004 weekly average was 7.2 at the end of May, this figure represents an overall reduction of more than 13 percent compared to the same five month period in 2003. Parking lots were the venue in 24 of the stolen vehicle cases in May. Transportation is still the primary motive in auto thefts. There have been a variety of vehicles reported stolen in May that suggests a lack of vehicle security devices being used to help prevent these crimes.

Crime Prevention Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday, June 23
7 p.m., Cerritos Senior Center
(12340 South Street)
(562) 916-1266

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.