

# Cerritos

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# Neighborhood

# Watch Report

September 2004

## Hardening the Target

### Perform “exit check” before leaving home

Open and unlocked doors and windows assist a burglar by allowing easy access to your home. Most burglars will seek out an open or unlocked door or window before attempting to force entry into a residence.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center encourages you to develop a routine known as an “exit check”

every time you leave your residence, and regardless of how long you intend to be gone. Walk into each room and make a quick inspection of all external doors and windows, and make sure that they are all locked.

Locking pins or any hardware designed to keep a closed window held tightly to the frame will inhibit any lateral or vertical motion. This

motion is what a burglar relies upon when using a prying tool. Solid core doors equipped with deadbolts also make it very difficult for a burglar to force entry into a home.

By taking just a couple of minutes to check the perimeter of your home, you can save yourself a great deal of trauma and avoid victimization.

### Home safety tips for older adults

Oftentimes family caregivers pressure their elderly loved ones to move into a different home out of concern for their safety. Most of the time, older adults prefer to remain in their own homes, for both sentimental and practical reasons. As long as they are not a danger to themselves or to others, the elderly have the right to make their own choices and decisions regarding where they will live. Staying at home can be a viable option for them, as long as the home is made as safe as possible. A single-level home or ground floor condominium or apartment is the best type of residence for an older person. The following is a list of other items to consider when safeguarding a residence for an older adult.

#### Indoor Checklist

- Can the elderly person turn on lights without having to walk into a dark room?
- Are lamp, extension and phone cords out of the way of foot traffic?

- Are passageways in the home free from objects and clutter?
- Do carpets lie flat?
- Do small rugs and runners stay in place (and not slide or roll up)? Removing them altogether is preferred, especially in the bathroom.
- Can older adults reach regularly used items without having to climb to get them?
- Are there working smoke detectors in bedrooms and all living areas?
- Can a light be left on at night between the bed and a bathroom?
- Does the shower or tub have a non-skid surface such as a mat, decals or abrasive strips? Is there a sturdy bar available for them to grab and not just a towel rack?
- Is the hot water temperature set at 120 degrees or lower?
- Does the bathroom floor have a non-slip surface?
- Is the older adult able to easily get on and off the toilet?

#### Outdoor Checklist

- Do all entrances to the home have outdoor lights?
- Are walkways to the entry free from cracks and holes?
- Do all stairs have sturdy handrails on both sides that run the full length of the stairs?
- Are all of the steps in good repair (and not loose, broken, missing or worn in places)?

#### Throughout the Home:

- Is there an emergency exit plan in case of a fire?
- Are emergency phone numbers listed near the phone? It is also recommended that the list be placed on the refrigerator.

Adapting a home for an older adult struggling with decreasing capabilities does not have to pose a problem. The Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association (the organization that provided this information), states that the more adaptations that can be made early on in anticipation of future needs, the easier life will be for everyone involved.

# Monthly Crime Summary: August 2004

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The preliminary figure for Part I felony crimes investigated by Cerritos Sheriff's deputies in August was 97 incidents. This is down substantially from an adjusted figure of 150 incidents in July. (Subsequent investigation can reveal information to increase crime totals, and late reporting by victims will also alter previous numbers, resulting in an "adjusted figure.")

There was one additional robbery in August compared with July, but incidents in all other felony categories were down. At the end of August, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station had handled a weekly average of 351 calls for service. This figure was the same in July.

## Robberies

There were five robbery-related incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in August, up one from the number of incidents investigated in July.

On Wednesday, August 4 at 3:15 p.m., two male suspects approached a lone male on 183rd Street and Studebaker Road and demanded the victim's wallet. The victim ran to a nearby business while being chased by the suspects. Both were subsequently taken into custody by arriving deputies.

On Saturday, August 14 at 2:50 p.m., a female victim was walking in a lot at the Los Cerritos Center when a late model blue Ford F-150 pick-up with tinted windows pulled up beside her and a male suspect reached out from the passenger side of the vehicle and grabbed her purse. Approximately one hour later, the same suspects committed another purse snatching in a lot at Bloomfield Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard using the same method.

Another robbery incident occurred on Sunday, August 15 at 11 p.m. behind a fast food restaurant in the 11400 block of South Street. An employee was emptying the trash when two male suspects displaying a handgun and a knife approached. After

demanding and receiving the victim's wallet, the suspects threw him into a dumpster.

The final incident occurred on Wednesday, August 18 at 6:40 p.m. when a resident in the 12200 block of Silva Place confronted a suspect that was burglarizing his car. The suspect pulled out a knife and the victim backed off. Shortly after fleeing on a bicycle, the suspect was arrested by deputies.

## Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries decreased from 20 incidents in July to 15 incidents in August. Four of these cases were attempts only. An average of 3.3 residential burglaries has been reported weekly in 2004. This figure has not changed in the past 30 days.

Eight of the completed burglaries last month were facilitated by unlocked/open doors and windows. One incident involved a home under construction, and another burglary occurred after a garage door remote control was taken from an unlocked car in the driveway and used to gain access into the home. In another case, a rusted security bar was pried open at the weld, and entry was made through an open window. Small, concealable items were reported stolen including jewelry, cash, credit cards and cell phones. Tools and yard maintenance equipment were taken in one case.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries decreased from 54 cases in July to 28 reported cases in August. The 2004 weekly average of these crimes was 10.5 at the end of August. Vehicle burglaries in Cerritos as well as the region are up nearly 25 percent compared with the same period in 2003.

Fitness center parking lots continue to be a popular target for thieves, where many patrons who are reluctant to leave valuable items in the lockers leave them in the passenger compartment of their vehicles instead. In general, lots are the most susceptible venues for vehicle burglaries due to the amount of potential targets and the ability of thieves to screen more victims in a shorter time frame. Items reported stolen in these vehicle burglary cases included wallets, purses, identification, checks, credit cards, Social Security cards, currency and tools.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts also decreased from 48 cases in July to 35 incidents in August. An average of 7.5 of these crimes has been reported each week in 2004. As with vehicle burglaries, parking lots are the most frequent location of these crimes. Hondas, Toyotas and a variety of other vehicles including motorcycles and cargo trailers were reported stolen in August.

## New Community Safety Center opens

The new Community Safety Center at the Los Cerritos Center opened in August. The new center will provide an enhanced police presence and help improve overall safety at the Los Cerritos Center.

The center is located in the corridor between Robinson's-May and Red Robin Restaurant. The 1,200-square-foot space includes a front lobby/reception area, an office for assigned mall deputies and a meeting room. Crime prevention materials and other information

about City services, rules and ordinances are available. A "kidprint" service is also offered, which provides parents with a copy of their child's fingerprints for safekeeping in the event of a future emergency or criminal incident.

Operating hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. The City has a full service Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center in the Civic Center.

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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.