

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

December 2005

Hardening the Target

Use a designated driver at holiday parties and events

The holiday season is one of the busiest on the nation's roadways, and also one of most dangerous due to a high incidence of alcohol-related crashes. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center is joining with national, state and other local agencies to remind the public to always designate a sober driver before each holiday party or event involving alcohol consumption.

Nationally, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes in 2003. Every 15 minutes, someone in the United States dies in an alcohol-related collision. Hundreds of thousands more are injured each year. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), approximately three out of every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.

Designating a sober driver in

advance of a party or event is just one step you can take to ensure that those who have been drinking will arrive at their destination safely, and will avoid arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol. Other steps to take include:

- Do not even consider driving if you have been drinking.
- If you are impaired, call a cab, use public transportation or call a family member or friend to come and get you.
- Stay where you are until you are sober.
- If you think a friend is about to drive while impaired, take the keys and do not let him or her out of your sight.

If you are hosting a party, remind your guests to make transportation arrangements ahead of time. Offer alcohol-free beverages during the event, and make sure that all of your guests leave with a sober

driver. As a host, you have a duty to your guests to make sure they arrive home safely. Serious legal ramifications can result if an alcohol-related collision occurs.

Since 1981, December has been proclaimed "National Drunk Driving Prevention Month" to encourage the use of designated drivers and sober ride programs and to help prevent the occurrence of drunk driving.

During December and especially on New Year's Eve, there is a significant increase in state and local law enforcement efforts to combat impaired driving by using sobriety checkpoints and a higher number of patrols. Cerritos is no exception.

Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is not worth the potential risks. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be significant.

Protect your serialized property

Many gifts such as electronics, tools and cameras contain a serial number. The serial number can be stamped on a plate and attached to an item, indented in plastic or printed on a tab. While these numbers serve both the purchaser and the manufacturer in identification purposes relating to warranty issues, they are also vital to law enforcement.

A system exists nationally where property can be entered into an au-

tomated database when it is reported stolen. When an officer wants to confirm the status of an item bearing a serial number, that information is entered and if it comes up as stolen, the person in possession of the item can be arrested.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center asks for your help in protecting your gifts and property by furnishing these serial numbers in the event your property

is stolen. Maintaining a file with a description of the item, brand name, model number and serial number will increase the chances of having your property returned if it is taken.

California law prohibits anyone from buying, selling, receiving, concealing or possessing any item where the manufacturer's serial number or identification number has been removed, altered, defaced or covered.

Monthly Crime Summary: November 2005

Cerritos deputies investigated a total of 102 Part I felony crimes in November. This is down from an adjusted figure of 123 in October. Deputies were handling an average of 341 calls for service per week at the end of November.

Robberies

There were five robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in November, compared to 10 in October. November had the second lowest total number of robberies in 2005.

An attempted robbery occurred on Sunday, November 6 at 9:20 p.m. Three suspects approached a lone victim at a bus stop in the 18800 block of Gridley Road and tried to physically remove his jacket. When the victim fought back, the suspects fled on foot through a parking lot.

A male adult suspect robbed a bank located at South Street and Gridley Road on Wednesday, November 23 at 1:05 p.m. No weapon was seen and the suspect fled on foot with cash.

On Friday, November 25 at 1 p.m., two teens demanded money from four juveniles near Del Amo Boulevard and Coyote Creek. A cell phone was taken. One of the two suspects was arrested a short time later.

The next case also involved teenaged suspects and a victim. A sale of video game systems turned

into a robbery in the 13700 block of Destino Place on Friday, November 25 at 11:30 p.m. Three male suspects took the video games and a cell phone from the lone victim.

The final incident took place on Monday, November 28 at 7:45 p.m. Four juveniles in the 16900 block of Maria Avenue accosted two young male victims. The suspects demanded money, and the victims relinquished cigarettes and a skateboard before running away. Deputies arrested three of the four suspects a short time later.

Residential Burglaries

Thirty-four residential burglaries were reported in November. There were 40 in October. The 2005 weekly average at the end of the month in this category was 5.3.

Open/unlocked doors or windows were responsible for 15 of the burglaries, and another six involved doors or windows being pried open. Window-mounted air conditioning units were pushed through the windows in two cases.

Property reported stolen included jewelry, handguns, cash, computer components, credit cards, passports, identification, safes, cameras, mountain bikes, tools and plasma televisions.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries remained about the same in November as October, with 37 cases in November

compared to 36 cases the previous month. The 2005 weekly average of these crimes remains at 8.8.

The number of vehicle burglaries remains down nearly 22 percent compared to the first 11 months of 2004. Nineteen of the cases in November occurred in commercial parking lots. Twenty-one cases involved an SUV, pick-up truck or van, and stereo items were targeted in seven incidents. In one case, a trailer was burglarized and 20 cases of cell phones were stolen. Other property reported taken included purses, cash, credit cards, tools, GPS systems, backpacks, purses, wallets, briefcases, laptop computers, cell phones, clothing, identification, garage door openers and jewelry.

Vehicle Thefts

Twenty-nine vehicle thefts were investigated in November. There was an adjusted figure of 23 recorded in October. The 2005 weekly average of vehicle thefts remained at 5.6 at the beginning of December, still nearly 25 percent lower than the total one year ago. This is significant, as several other regional cities have reported an increase in vehicle thefts this year.

Twenty-three of these crimes in November occurred in commercial parking lots. Eight Hondas and six Toyotas were among those stolen. A cargo trailer and a tractor/trailer were also taken.

Take extra safety precautions during the holiday season

Many people like to display their Christmas tree in the front window of their home where it can be seen by neighbors and those walking by. Keep in mind that observers can also include potential thieves who are looking for visible items in your house or under the tree.

Stereo items, jewelry, computer components, expensive sporting goods equipment and toys are commonly displayed out in the open

after being unwrapped. These are the very items that are taken from many homes on a regular basis. If you display valuable property and create an opportunity for a thief to take advantage of it, you are making his or her job extremely easy.

Trash day is also an occasion when a thief takes notice. Similar to the way gifts are displayed under a tree, boxes and wrappers are openly discarded and are a telling sign of

what is now inside of a residence.

Take the time to cut up any boxes and if possible, place them in closed containers. If this is not practical, tie the boxes in bundles where the print cannot be seen from the outside.

Use discretion in the items you display. There is no reason to openly advertise the contents of your home to anyone, and being discreet just may help you avoid becoming a victim.

Safety Contacts:
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To join Cerritos Neighborhood
Watch, call Community
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