

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

July 2005

Hardening the Target

Dial #399 for roadside assistance

On July 1, 2005, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the Los Angeles County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (LA SAFE) began operating a new non-emergency cell phone number that motorists can use for roadside assistance on Los Angeles County freeways.

The new number, #399, connects drivers to live operators who can assist them in obtaining appropriate service in response to their calls. With the implementation of this program, it is anticipated that the burden on the 911 emergency system will be reduced, and that #399 will be a more widely used number for reporting problems such as a flat tire or running out of gas.

The new number does not replace the 911 number for emergencies. Drivers should continue to dial 911 when requesting a medical, fire or law enforcement response or when reporting a freeway hazard. When you dial 911 on a cell phone, the call goes directly to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) dispatch center.

The Metro Freeway Service Patrol will provide service from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on weekends. The number of service trucks will increase from 33 to 44 during the week and from 28 to 42 on the weekends.

There will be no charge for using the #399 number other than airtime charges assessed by the caller's cell phone plan carrier.

Warm weather safety tips offered

With the arrival of summer and warmer weather, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center reminds residents that leaving doors and windows open to cool a house makes one vulnerable to residential burglary.

Thieves will look for the easiest way to enter a home. Don't provide them with an easy opportunity. Take the time to check that all windows and doors are closed and secured prior to leaving your residence.

Keep in mind that it is just as easy to cool your home by opening the windows and doors upon your return, rather than leaving them open and making yourself vulnerable to burglary.

Leaving garage doors open is also a common problem during the summer. During this time, patrol deputies and Volunteers on Patrol (VOPs) observe numerous garage doors open without any supervision.

Bicycles, lawn care products, tools and other items (such as garage

door openers from vehicles) can be quickly obtained by passersby in a matter of seconds. Even worse, a burglar could enter your garage, close the door and have plenty of time to pry open the inner door and gain entry into your home.

Residents are urged to maintain a constant presence whenever the garage door is open. Remain inside of the garage or in the front yard where activities can be effectively monitored. Don't walk next door, into the backyard or even into the house for more than few seconds.

Remember that a burglar is one who likes to be present when you are not. Do not hesitate to make eye contact with anyone you suspect may be casing your property. This makes burglars extremely uncomfortable. Mentally note a description of the individual, write down a license plate number if available and call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station immediately at (562) 860-0044.

Protect yourself from vehicle burglaries

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center encourages individuals to keep in mind the following tips to avoid becoming a victim of a vehicle burglary:

- When you park your car, whether at home or in a commercial lot, take all valuable items with you.
- Never leave your identification, wallet, credit cards or jewelry in your vehicle while visiting a fit-

ness center.

- If you absolutely must leave property in your car, lock it in the trunk.
- Before you leave your vehicle, take a second to look inside and make sure that nothing is visible from the outside that could attract a vehicle burglar.

For more safety tips, please visit www.safercerritos.com.

Monthly Crime Summary: June 2005

There were 91 Part I felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in June, compared to 119 such crimes reported in May. Decreases were noted in all categories with the exception of vehicle thefts. Calls for service averaged 336 per week in June, well below the weekly averages for the same period in 2003 and 2004. Normally, calls for service increase during the summer months.

Robberies

There were six robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in June, down from nine incidents investigated in May.

On Wednesday, June 15 at 3:30 p.m., a victim and suspect, both in their early teens, stepped off a bus at 183rd Street and Gerritt Avenue. The suspect pushed the victim to the ground and took his MP3 player.

On Wednesday, June 22 at 9:45 p.m. in the 13300 block of Ashworth Street, a male suspect produced a handgun and robbed three victims in the driveway of a residence.

Another robbery occurred on Sunday, June 26 at 12:10 a.m. when a fight broke out at a party in the 11300 block of Palm Street. A male suspect, who was one of the combatants, pushed a female victim to the ground and took her purse.

On Monday, June 27 at 6:30 p.m., a woman was walking in an

apartment complex in the 18900 block of Vickie Avenue when a male suspect grabbed her purse from behind. After a brief struggle, the suspect broke the victim's grip from her purse and fled with the bag.

A shoplifting incident escalated into a robbery on Thursday, June 30 at 6:55 p.m. A suspect attempted to leave a retail store in the 11900 block of South Street with stolen merchandise. The suspect struck an employee and fled.

Approximately one hour later, a woman was sitting in her car in a parking lot at the Los Cerritos Center when a male teenaged suspect robbed her of her purse with what appeared to be a handgun.

Residential Burglaries

Seven residential burglaries were reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in June, the lowest number of residential burglaries reported so far this year.

Three of the cases in June were attempts only, and involved no entry. There was an adjusted figure of 20 residential burglaries the previous month. The 2005 weekly average for residential burglaries is 4.5.

Nine of the cases in June involved open/unlocked doors or windows. One home was being tented for termite control. Stolen items consisted of credit cards, jewelry, a handgun, DVD recorders, computer components, cell phones, tires, rims, a

garage door opener remote control and cash.

Vehicle Burglaries

Deputies investigated 32 vehicle burglaries in June, the lowest number of vehicle burglaries reported in a month so far this year. There were 38 vehicle burglaries reported in May. The weekly average in 2005 was 9.2 at the end of June.

Commercial parking lots were the location for 20 incidents. Twenty of the vehicle burglaries involved either an SUV, pick-up truck or van. Stereo components were targeted in nine occurrences. MP3 players, CDs, credit cards, wallets, laptop computers, clothing, purses and tools were among the items reported stolen.

Vehicle Thefts

Thirty-four vehicle thefts were reported in June, an increase from 16 vehicle thefts reported in May. Although this is the highest number of vehicle thefts so far this year, it is still 22 percent lower than the number of vehicle thefts for the same period in 2004. There was a weekly average of 5.4 vehicle thefts.

Parking lots were the venue for 31 of these crimes. Eight Hondas and five Toyotas were among the vehicles stolen. A wide variety of makes and models were involved, indicating that perhaps a need for transportation was the primary motive for the thefts.

Participate in 22nd annual National Night Out

Cerritos residents are invited to participate in the 22nd annual National Night Out program on Thursday, August 4 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Heritage Park (18600 Bloomfield Avenue).

The event, which involves thousands of communities and millions of people throughout the nation, is designed to heighten

crime and drug abuse prevention awareness; generate support for local anti-crime programs; strengthen neighborhood spirit and police/community partnerships; and send a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

In conjunction with the City's Thursday Concerts Under the Stars

series at Heritage Park, members from the Cerritos Sheriff's Station will present crime prevention, safety, disaster preparedness and homeland security information to the public.

"Operation Kid Print" will be available for parents interested in maintaining a fingerprint card on their children.

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.