

Cerritos

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Neighborhood

Watch Report

June 2005

Hardening the Target

Help keep parks safe

Many residents will use our local parks this summer. Others will walk or drive by these neighborhood parks on a regular basis. Although there are an extremely low number of crime incidents reported at City parks (those incidents that do occur usually involve vandalism and graffiti), the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center asks for your help in keeping our parks safe.

Be aware of activities that take place in parks near your residence. If you are in a park, take a moment to observe the facilities. If you notice any suspicious individuals or vehicles, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station immediately at (562) 860-0044. (Dialing 911 from a cell phone will connect you with the California Highway Patrol and cause an unnecessary delay in any local response.)

If you see graffiti, please contact the City's Graffiti Hotline at (562) 916-1233, or submit a graffiti removal request form on-line at www.ci.cerritos.ca.us/citygov/publicworks/graffitiform.html.

Keep in mind that parks in the city are closed from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Alcohol consumption is not allowed on the premises of any City park.

By remaining aware of the surroundings at neighborhood parks, you can help keep Cerritos' parks safe for family, friends and neighbors to enjoy.

Protect yourself from road rage

Over the past several years, there has been an increase in road rage incidents. Some cases have resulted in serious injury and even death. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following tips on how to recognize an aggressive driver and how to minimize the potential danger involved.

Characteristic Aggressive Driving Behavior

- Following too close
- Passing on the right
- Cutting in and out of traffic
- Speeding beyond the flow of traffic
- Failing to signal while engaging in multiple lane changes
- Crossing safety markings while merging onto on ramps
- Failing to yield at ramps and intersections
- Violating railroad crossings
- Passing a stopped school bus
- Displaying or using a weapon

Strategies to Minimize Danger

- Don't react to provocation
- Stay away from erratic drivers

- Avoid eye contact with an aggressive driver
- Use your horn sparingly
- Don't flash your high beams
- Don't make obscene gestures
- Don't switch lanes without signaling
- Don't tailgate
- Don't block lanes
- When parking, don't occupy more than one space
- Avoid conflict; allow plenty of time to reach your destination
- Be polite and courteous, even if other drivers are not
- If you must use a cell phone, use a hands-free model. Cell phone users commonly have difficulty maintaining awareness of speed and surrounding traffic conditions. This is an increasing catalyst for road rage.

Remember that when you dial 911 on a cell phone, the call goes directly to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). If you become a victim of a highway-related crime, contact the closest law enforcement agency or the CHP immediately.

Fireworks ban to be enforced

Residents are reminded that fireworks are not allowed in Cerritos, including "safe and sane" varieties sold in neighboring cities.

Cerritos Sheriff's deputies will strictly enforce the law, which has helped protect thousands of residents from injuries and property damage.

Please help maintain the safety of the community by not using fireworks within city limits.

Residents are invited to enjoy a free aerial fireworks show at 9 p.m. on Monday, July 4 during the City's 32nd Annual Let Freedom Ring Celebration at Cerritos Park East.

Monthly Crime Summary: May 2005

There were 104 Part I felony crimes recorded in May. There was an adjusted figure of 103 crimes recorded in April. Total Part I crimes are down more than 13 percent in 2005 compared to the same period one year ago. Deputies handled an average of 334 calls for service per week during the first five months of 2005.

Robberies

There were nine robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in May, up from three incidents in April.

On Tuesday, May 3 at 9:40 p.m., a female suspect used pepper spray on a woman who was walking in a parking lot at the Los Cerritos Center. The victim's purse was taken. The suspect in this case was subsequently arrested.

On Thursday, May 5 at 9:20 p.m., a purse was pulled from the shoulder of a woman as she walked through a parking lot at the Cerritos Towne Center. The male suspect fled in an awaiting vehicle.

Another incident occurred on Friday, May 6 at 12:20 a.m. when a male and female sitting in a car at Heritage Park were robbed of a purse, camera and cell phones. The two male suspects drove away in a white car.

On Wednesday, May 11 at 1:05 a.m., three women were robbed as they sat in a car in a parking lot at Regional Park. One of the two male suspects displayed a handgun and took the victims' purses and cell phones.

Detectives followed leads in these last two cases and made multiple arrests.

Another case occurred on Thursday, May 12 at 3:12 p.m. at Del Amo Boulevard and State Road. A male victim stopped to ask directions from a man who produced a knife and took the driver's cash.

On Wednesday, May 18 at 1 p.m., a residential burglary was elevated to a robbery in the 16800

block of Coral Reef Circle. When the resident returned home and opened the garage door, a male suspect and his vehicle were parked inside. The suspect fled in his car after bumping into the victim's vehicle.

At 11:20 p.m. that night, three male suspects confronted a lone male near Bertha Street and Gridley Road. After a handgun was produced and a shot fired, the suspects fled with a small amount of the victim's cash. While this was initially reported as a robbery, detectives are looking into other possible scenarios.

On Thursday, May 26 at 7:45 p.m., two males entered a business in the 11300 block of South Street and inquired about services. Both then produced handguns and took money from the cash register.

The final robbery occurred on Sunday, May 29 at 11 p.m. A male juvenile was walking near Aclare Street and Alexander Avenue when a vehicle pulled up beside him. The passenger exited, punched the victim several times and fled with one dollar.

Residential Burglaries

There were 19 residential burglaries reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in May. There was an adjusted figure of 22 residential burglaries reported the previous month. The 2005 weekly average for residential burglaries is five.

Ten of the cases in May involved open/unlocked doors or windows. Two homes were under some form of construction where tools, drapes, and appliances were taken. Other stolen items consisted of credit cards, jewelry, DVD recorders, computer components, cell phones and cash.

Vehicle Burglaries

Deputies investigated 36 vehicle burglaries in May. There were 39 vehicle burglaries reported in April.

Although vehicle burglaries are the leading felony crime in the City of Cerritos, the total in May was

lower than any single month in more than two years. The weekly average for vehicle burglaries in 2005 was 10 at the end of the month.

Commercial lots were the location for 25 incidents. Twenty incidents involved either an SUV, pick-up truck or van. Stereo components were targeted in 12 cases. MP3 players, CDs, credit cards, wallets, laptop computers, clothing, purses and tools were among the other reported items stolen.

Vehicle Thefts

There were 22 vehicle thefts reported in May, up from 12 thefts reported in April. April's total was unusually low, contributing to a weekly average of five vehicle thefts so far this year.

Vehicle thefts this year are nearly 30 percent lower compared to the same period in 2004. Parking lots were the venue in 21 crimes. Five Hondas and two Toyotas were among the vehicles stolen. This is well under the monthly averages for these most commonly stolen vehicles.

Got Safety?

Log on to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center web site for valuable crime prevention information. Located at www.safercerritos.com, the site offers breaking news, personal safety tips, weekly crime summaries, traffic safety tips and information on various programs such as Neighborhood Watch and the Virtual Block Club. Emergency preparedness information is also available on the web site, along with valuable links to other local enforcement agencies.

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.