

# Cerritos

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# Neighborhood

# Watch Report

May 2005

**H**ardening the  **T**arget

## **Avoid falling victim to identity theft**

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center has recently received inquiries regarding numerous solicitation requests received through e-mail from senders requesting information on Washington Mutual, Smith Barney, Regions Bank and South Trust Bank accounts.

The public should be aware that these messages are fraudulent, and that banking institutions do not request this type of information from their customers.

In an attempt to gain account information from unsuspecting customers, criminals will solicit this information by using an e-mail message that appears to be from a legitimate institution. You will be asked to "update" or "confirm" data to "allow technical staff to perform a system upgrade" or something to that effect.

Do not open any attachments or click on any links provided in such messages. You could be launching a virus.

Do not provide any information such as an account number, PIN or any other personal information the sender may be requesting. This is a ruse to make you supply information that will lead to identity theft and fraud.

The best course of action to take if you receive these messages is to be aware of these scams, and to delete the message at once.

## **Swimming pool safety saves lives**

As we enter the swimming season, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to remind the public of the many tragic events recorded nationwide related to swimming and swimming pools that could easily be avoided.

Make this season a safe one around your pool by noting the following and taking appropriate action:

- All pools must have a 6-foot-tall fence surrounding the pool and be equipped with self-latching, spring-activated gates.
- No child, no matter how proficient a swimmer, should be left unattended in a pool.
- The adult left in charge of watching children in or around a swimming pool should be a proficient swimmer.

- Do not allow anyone to dive head first into the shallow end of the pool.
- If your pool is equipped with a diving board, do not allow swimmers to engage in contests to dive the farthest out into the pool. The rise between the deep end and the shallow end of the pool bottom is steep, and there exists the possibility of diving headfirst into this rise, resulting in paralyzing injuries or drowning.
- Store pool chemicals in a secure, ventilated area and away from the reach of children.
- If your pool cleaning and/or maintenance is done by a contracted pool cleaner, make sure that the gate/fence perimeter is secure after they leave.

## **Public invited to Crime Prevention Town Hall meeting**

Cerritos residents, community members and Neighborhood Watch Block Captains are invited to attend the next Crime Prevention Town Hall Meeting on Wednesday, June 15 at 7 p.m. at the Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park.

Those in attendance will be briefed on crime in the City, learn how to protect themselves from being victimized by crime, and be taught how to prepare for a natural

disaster. In addition, Cerritos Sheriff's deputies will be available to speak to attendees about their safety concerns.

The meeting is sponsored by the City's Community Safety Division. For more information, call (562) 916-1266. For crime prevention tips, emergency preparedness information and community safety links, log on to [www.safercerritos.com](http://www.safercerritos.com).

# Monthly Crime Summary: April 2005

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There were 81 Part I felony crimes recorded in April, compared to an adjusted figure of 95 in March. Deputies handled an average of 333 calls for service per week during the first four months of 2005. This is lower than the figures for the past two years during the same reporting period.

## Robberies

There were three robberies investigated by Cerritos deputies in April, down from 17 incidents investigated in March. This was the lowest monthly total for robberies in more than 18 months.

On Thursday, April 21 at 3:05 p.m., a shoplifting incident at a retail store in the 11500 block of South Street escalated into a robbery when two suspects threatened loss prevention personnel with bodily harm if they intervened. One suspect has since been arrested and the other identified.

The second robbery occurred on Sunday, April 24 at 3:50 p.m. when one of three teenaged suspects produced a knife and demanded skateboards and MP3 players from three other teenagers at Cerritos Regional Park.

Another shoplifting incident turned into a robbery on Monday, April 25 at 11:06 a.m. when

employees at a store located in the 11900 block of South Street attempted to detain a suspect. They ceased their efforts after the suspect raised his shirt and told them he had a gun. The suspect was quickly located and arrested by deputies.

## Residential Burglaries

There were 22 residential burglaries reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in April, compared to an adjusted figure of 16 the previous month. The 2005 weekly average for residential burglaries is 5.5.

Twelve of the cases in April involved open/unlocked doors or windows. Construction materials were taken in one case and later recovered after detectives made arrests pursuant to warrants in two separate counties.

Another incident involved a male suspect believed to be under the influence of drugs. He was arrested and determined to be in a paranoid state.

Six suspects were in custody in another incident, and an ex-boyfriend was suspected in yet another burglary.

Additional items reported stolen in April included cash, credit cards, jewelry, computer components,

kitchen appliances, DVDs, cameras and tools.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Deputies investigated 35 vehicle burglaries in April. The last time there were fewer vehicle burglaries recorded was in November 2003. There were 56 incidents in March.

The 2005 weekly average for vehicle burglaries is 10.3. Commercial lots were the location for 29 incidents. Twenty-one of the incidents involved either an SUV, pick-up truck or van.

Stereo components were targeted in 10 cases. Cell phones, laptop computers, golf clubs, social security cards, credit cards, backpacks, wallets, purses and tools were among the items reported stolen.

## Vehicle Thefts

There were 16 vehicle thefts reported in April, down from 28 incidents in March. The last time there were less than 16 vehicle thefts reported in a month was in 2002.

The weekly average of vehicles stolen each week so far in 2005 was 4.9 at the end of April. Thirteen of the crimes occurred in parking lots. Eight Hondas and three Toyotas were among the vehicles stolen.

## Join the Virtual Block Club (VBC) on-line

For the past 30 years, communities across America have discovered that neighborhood crime reduction is best achieved through the constant sharing of information between the community and its police.

With this in mind, Cerritos residents and the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center have joined together to form the Virtual Block Club (VBC).

If you are concerned about neighborhood safety, have Internet access in your home or business, and are willing to receive and share crime and safety information, you

are invited to join the VBC.

As a member of the VBC, you will receive:

- Immediate BOLOs (Be on the Lookout) when appropriate
- Weekly crime summaries and maps
- Regular crime prevention tips
- Emergency preparedness training
- Homeland security training
- Volunteer opportunity information

As a VBC team member, you will serve as the "eyes and ears" of the community for Cerritos Sheriff's deputies; share crime trend and

prevention information with family, friends, neighbors and co-workers; monitor your neighborhood and report suspicious people and vehicles; report graffiti and neighborhood quality of life problems; perform neighborhood disaster response and homeland defense duties; support the City's Volunteers on Patrol in emergencies; and participate in Citywide disaster response exercises.

To join the Virtual Block Club, please visit [www.safercerritos.com](http://www.safercerritos.com) and fill out and submit the on-line form.

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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.