

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

October 2005

## Hardening the Target

### Prevent charity fraud

With the recent hurricane disasters and the upcoming holiday season, there are many organizations seeking donations from the public. While most of these charities are legitimate, there are individuals who will attempt to solicit funds for their own personal gain. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following tips for potential donors to ensure their money is used for its intended purpose.

- Be familiar with the charity to which you are making a donation.
- Keep careful records of all of your donations so that you can identify who you have and have not donated to in the past. This can be helpful if you are ever approached by a charity that claims you made a pledge in the past that you cannot remember making.
- Ask for the charity's tax-exempt letter indicating its Internal Revenue Service (IRS) status. You cannot claim a tax-deductible

donation if the charity is not recognized as such by the IRS.

- Never give cash. Make your contribution using a check payable to the full name of the charity.
- Give out your credit card number only if you are certain that you are dealing with a legitimate charity. Make sure that the numbers will be encrypted for your protection.
- Never give your Social Security number to a charity. A charity does not need that information in order for you to claim a tax deduction.
- Report to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station any suspicious person going door-to-door seeking funds or property. This is a common method to fraudulently obtain monies or goods, and is also used as a means to scout around or "case" potential victims for residential burglaries. Deputies have the ability to check these people out and determine whether they are credible or not.

### Crime Prevention Town Hall meeting planned

Cerritos residents, community members and Neighborhood Watch Block Captains are invited to attend the next Crime Prevention Town Hall Meeting on Wednesday, November 9 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. A Red Cross emergency preparedness expert will share lessons learned from recent disasters, and deputies will be available to address attendees' 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).

### How to report charity fraud

It is a federal felony for anyone to engage in mail fraud, wire fraud or credit card fraud. Most of these crimes are investigated by local authorities such as the Cerritos Sheriff's Station and the United States Postal Service. If you feel that you are a victim of charity fraud or were about to become one, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044. You can also report charity-related fraud to the following agencies:

- California Department of Justice (DOJ) (<http://caag.state.ca.us>)
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) ([www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov))
- Local Better Business Bureau (BBB) ([www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org))
- Internet Crime Complaint Center ([www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov))
- National Fraud Information Center ([www.fraud.org](http://www.fraud.org))

### Check smoke alarms

Daylight saving time ends on Sunday, October 30. When you set your clocks back one hour, remember to also check the batteries in your smoke alarms. A properly functioning smoke alarm can greatly reduce your risk of dying or being injured in a fire.

October is National Crime Prevention Month. Get to know your neighbors and help "Harden the Target" in your neighborhood.

# Monthly Crime Summary: September 2005

Cerritos deputies investigated 102 Part I felony crimes in September. There were 86 such crimes in August. By the end of September, deputies were handling an average of 340 calls for service per week.

## Robberies

There were 10 robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in September, compared to two robbery incidents investigated in August.

On Monday, September 5 at 8 p.m., a male juvenile suspect attempted to escape from loss prevention personnel after shoplifting merchandise from a store in the 11900 block of South Street. He was taken into custody.

On Wednesday, September 7 at 5 p.m., a van carrying tourists experienced tire problems while on the 605 Freeway. After the van stopped on Gridley Road near 195th Street so the driver could make repairs, a vehicle pulled up and two suspects emerged, one with a handgun. A bag was taken from the front seat of the van and the suspects fled. Detectives believe that the van had been followed from LAX after a tire had been punctured.

The next incident occurred on Tuesday, September 13 at 9:41 p.m. when a male suspect approached a female victim near a bus stop at Pioneer Boulevard and South Street. After asking the woman a question, the male suspect grabbed her purse and fled to an awaiting car.

On Thursday, September 15 at 8:45 p.m., another purse snatching incident occurred in the 19900 block of Pioneer Boulevard near a bus stop. While similar in modus operandi (MO) to the previous crime, the two incidents have not yet been connected.

On Monday, September 20 at 12:08 a.m. in a parking lot near 183rd Street and the 605 Freeway, an armed suspect confronted a victim and demanded the keys to his vehicle. After an unsuccessful attempt to start the vehicle, the

suspect located another victim in the same lot and took his keys, wallet and vehicle at gunpoint.

On Monday, September 26 at 5:40 p.m., a male bicyclist was resting on the San Gabriel riverbed trail near Artesia Boulevard when he was approached by a male suspect demanding money. The suspect then assaulted the victim and took his bike and backpack.

At 8:30 p.m. the following night, a male shoplifting suspect struggled with loss prevention personnel at a department store in the Cerritos Towne Center. The suspect was arrested.

Another bicyclist was confronted by two passing suspects on Wednesday, September 28 at 9:40 p.m. while riding on 166th Street near Redwood Drive. One of the suspects simulated a handgun and took the victim's wallet.

Two suspects robbed a man at gunpoint as he was seated in a car parked in a lot in the 10800 block of Alondra Boulevard on Thursday, September 29 at 12:57 p.m.

## Residential Burglaries

There were 26 residential burglaries investigated in September. There were 30 such burglaries investigated in August. The 2005 weekly average for residential burglaries was 4.7 at the end of the month.

Ten cases were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. Nine incidents involved the prying open of either a sliding glass door or window. Items reported stolen consisted of credit cards, digital cameras, jewelry, cash, handguns, MP3 players, computer components, cell phones and passports.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Deputies handled 42 vehicle burglary investigations in September. There were 32 reported in August. The 2005 weekly average in this category was 8.8 at the end of September. This figure is nearly 18 percent lower than the same nine-month period in 2004.

Twenty-four of the incidents recorded in September occurred in commercial lots. Six cases occurred in the same condominium complex on a mid-week night. Twenty-four of the total vehicle burglaries involved an SUV, van or pick-up truck.

Stereo items were targeted in nine of these crimes. Other stolen property reported included briefcases, backpacks, SUV car seats, CDs, credit cards, wallets, laptop computers, clothing, purses, golf clubs and miscellaneous paperwork.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts increased from 17 in August to 24 in September. The weekly average for the year is 8.8.

Half of the cases reported occurred in commercial parking lots. There was a higher than normal amount of vehicle thefts from residential neighborhoods.

Only three Hondas and one Toyota were stolen last month, whereas normally more thefts of these type of vehicles occur. The 2005 weekly average for vehicle thefts was 5.4, down nearly 25 percent from 2004.

**Have a safe and festive Halloween! The City's annual Halloween festivities will be held on Monday, October 31 at Cerritos Regional Park, and offer an alternative to having your child trick-or-treat door-to-door.**

**For a list of Halloween safety tips, please visit [www.safercerritos.com](http://www.safercerritos.com), click on "Crime Prevention and Safety Tips," then "Tips for Halloween Safety."**

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.