

# Cerritos

## Neighborhood

### Watch Report

September 2005

## Hardening the Target

### Protect yourself from becoming a carjacking victim

The rate of carjacking incidents in Cerritos is very low, despite the many attractions and people passing through the city. While areas with many people and vehicles are often-times more appealing to a criminal, residential areas are not exempt from such crimes.

Carjacking victims are rarely given any warning, as suspects act quickly and often irrationally. The reasons for taking a vehicle by force or fear can vary, but may involve a need to escape immediately after committing a crime. Whatever the reason, suspects who commit a carjacking, which is a robbery, are extremely dangerous, and are not afraid to violently confront someone and forcibly take their property.

The most important thing to remember if confronted by a carjacker is to never resist the suspect's efforts to take your vehicle. You should however, do everything possible to

avoid being forced to accompany the carjacker.

Following are some tips to help make yourself less vulnerable to a carjacking.

When you are driving, keep all of your doors locked and close all of the windows if you can. Drive with a companion whenever possible, as people in groups are statistically less likely to be approached by a robber.

Plan your route before a trip and always travel by freeway or on well-lighted, frequently used surface streets. When you stop your vehicle in traffic, leave enough room to see the tires of the vehicle ahead. This extra room allows you maneuverability should you need to escape.

If you are "bumped" by another vehicle and suspect it was intentional, don't stop or get out of your vehicle. Instead, signal to the other driver to follow you, and locate a secure and reasonable place to ex-

change information where there are many people present.

When parking, select well-lighted areas. Use commercial garages with attendants if possible. Take a quick look at your surroundings before you get in or out of your vehicle. If something doesn't look right, trust your instincts and keep driving, especially if there is someone loitering nearby.

When you approach your car, quickly scan the interior to make sure everything is in order. Have your keys in your hand and be ready to unlock and enter your vehicle immediately. Once you enter your vehicle, lock all of the doors.

By paying attention to your surroundings and taking a few precautions, you can minimize the risk of becoming a carjacking victim. If you ever do find yourself the victim of a carjacking, remember that a vehicle is just a piece of property that can be replaced.

### Back to school traffic safety tips offered

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following tips to help make our school zones safer and improve traffic safety.

Please remember to exercise a heightened awareness in and around a school zone. Potential hazards are much easier to perceive if you are driving at or below the school zone speed limit of 25 mph. Special attention must also be paid to buses displaying flashing red

lights when on an undivided two-lane roadway. In these instances, you are required by the California Vehicle Code to stop and wait until the flashing red lights are turned off before passing a bus.

Parents who allow their children to ride bicycles to school should keep in mind that a helmet is required for those under the age of 18. In addition, children riding bicycles must travel with the flow of traffic.

Follow these simple suggestions

to help make our school zones safer:

- Don't speed.
- Don't impede traffic by dropping children off in the middle of the street.
- Don't double park.
- Don't block intersections or driveways if you park your vehicle.
- Don't make U-turns.
- Always make sure that your children are wearing seatbelts when transporting them to and from school.

# Monthly Crime Summary: August 2005

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Cerritos deputies investigated a total of 86 Part I felony crimes in August. This is a very low figure for a summer month. There were 109 such crimes in July. At the end of August, deputies were handling an average of 342 calls for service per week. This average is down by at least 10 calls per week compared to the past two years.

## **Robberies**

There were only two robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in August, compared to six robbery incidents investigated in July. August had the lowest number of robberies in more than four years.

On Wednesday, August 3 at 6:45 p.m., a teenager took the bicycle of another teenager in the 12400 block of Cuesta Drive.

Another bicycle was taken from a teenager on Sunday, August 7 at 4 p.m. in Cerritos Regional Park.

## **Residential Burglaries**

Residential burglaries increased in August when 30 cases were investigated, compared to 13 in July. Four of the total residential burglaries in August were attempts only where no actual entry was

made. The 2005 weekly average for residential burglaries is 4.6.

Eighteen of the residential entries in August were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. This is a high number, and is a result of residents wanting to ventilate their homes during hot weather.

Six of the cases last month involved sliding glass doors or windows being pried open. Windows were shattered in two of the incidents. A window-mounted air conditioning unit was dislodged in one of the crimes, allowing entry through the window.

Stolen items in the August residential burglaries consisted of credit cards, jewelry, a case of cigars, computer components, cell phones, a vehicle, plasma televisions, a safe box and cash.

## **Vehicle Burglaries**

Deputies investigated 24 vehicle burglaries in August, the lowest number of vehicle burglaries reported in a one-month period in two years. An adjusted figure of 43 vehicle burglaries was reported in July. The weekly average for vehicle burglaries in 2005 was 8.9 at the end

of the month.

Commercial lots were the location of 18 incidents. Nine of the burglaries involved an SUV, pick-up truck or van. Stereo components were targeted in seven occurrences.

Property reported stolen consisted of SUV car seats, CDs, credit cards, wallets, laptop computers, briefcases, clothing, purses, social security cards, tote bags, a garage door opener and tools.

## **Vehicle Thefts**

Nineteen vehicle theft incidents were reported in August, with a weekly average of 5.5 incidents. There were two attempted crimes among this total. This is a decrease from 30 vehicle theft incidents in July.

Parking lots were the venue in 14 crimes. This type of venue continues to be a preferred location for auto thieves. Four Hondas and three Toyotas were stolen last month. The other cases involved a wide variety of makes and models including tractor/trailers and a forklift. While cargo is often an occasional target, transportation appears to be the primary cause of the thefts.

## **CERT training starts soon**

Cerritos residents 18 years and older are invited to become a member of the City's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) by attending CERT training classes and earning a certificate.

The next CERT training course is scheduled for Saturday, October 8, 15 and 22 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will be held at the Cerritos Sheriff's Station.

The CERT program is designed to help residents in the event of a disaster or other emergency. Participants are required to complete 24 hours of training taught on three consecutive Saturdays.

The training includes first aid and basic disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, light fire

suppression techniques and disaster management.

When emergencies occur, CERT members are able to provide critical support to first responders, give immediate assistance to victims and organize volunteers at a disaster site.

Training is free and conducted by the Los Angeles County Fire Department. A minimum of 24 participants is required for the course. Failure to meet the minimum requirement will result in the cancellation of the training.

Interested individuals can register on-line at [www.ci.cerritos.ca.us](http://www.ci.cerritos.ca.us) (Registration #92860), or by calling the Recreation Services Division at (562) 916-1254.

## **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.

The meeting is sponsored by the City's Community Safety Division. For more information, call (562) 916-1266. For safety tips, visit [www.safercerritos.com](http://www.safercerritos.com).

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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  
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