

Cerritos

Neighborhood

Watch Report

February 2006

Hardening the Target

Protect yourself from becoming a victim of residential burglary

Last month we were reminded of the various methods used by residential burglars when selecting a home to victimize. In one case, a resident was inside when an individual began knocking on the front door. The resident chose not to answer, and the person continued knocking for a few more moments. Soon after, he pried open a side garage door and entered the home. The suspect came face-to-face with the resident and subsequently fled. Fortunately, the occupant was not harmed.

The practice of continuously knocking on a front door is a common method burglars use to first determine if someone is inside before attempting entry. This form of reconnaissance or "casing" has been used on a number of occasions in Cerritos in the past few years. Exactly how often this occurs cannot be determined, as the information comes from those inside at the time

of the attempted entry. It's possible that many completed residential burglaries started out this way.

Oftentimes residents will not answer the front door to avoid uncomfortable contact with a solicitor. In other instances they may peer through the peephole and not recognize the individual on their porch and not open the door to find out what the person's business is. Burglars may interpret either incident to mean that no one is at home, and since burglars prefer to be non-confrontational, an attempt to enter could follow.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center recommends that if you do not want to answer the door, make sure that you somehow let the person at your front door know that someone is at home.

Make some noise that you know can be heard at the front door. This could include playing loud music,

turning on the television, shutting a door or even hitting two pans together. There is also nothing wrong with approaching the front door from the inside and announcing that this is not a good time for you and that you are not interested in whatever the person has to say or sell. Both of these methods tell the caller that the home is occupied and not a good target for a residential burglary.

After informing the caller of your presence, watch the person so you will know if he or she comes around to the side of the home, makes an attempt to open a gate, goes next door, etc. If the person does not go away, call 911 immediately and be prepared to provide a description of the suspect to Sheriff's desk personnel. Do not call 911 on a cell phone. This will delay reporting, as the call will not be immediately received by the Cerritos Sheriff's Station. Make sure that you call 911 from your house phone. If you only have access to a cell phone, call (562) 860-0044. Listen to the directions given, which may include leaving the home.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station has taken steps to reduce the rate of residential burglaries, however, catching burglars depends on a partnership and effort between law enforcement and residents. Do not hesitate to call (562) 860-0044 whenever you observe a suspicious or unfamiliar person going door-to-door. This individual could be someone casing your neighborhood.

Opt out of prescreened credit offers

Are you receiving prescreened credit offers in the mail? These offers are based on information in your credit report that indicates you meet certain criteria and are desirable to companies wanting to extend you credit.

While these offers may be flattering in regards to what they imply about your financial responsibility, they can also make you vulnerable to identity theft. Thieves are known to look for these offers and apply in

your name, but at a different address. Soon, charges in your name are being amassed without your knowledge.

If you do not want to receive prescreened offers of credit, call the consumer reporting agencies toll free at (888) 5-OPT-OUT (567-8688), or write them separately at:

- Experian Target Marketing, P.O. Box 919, 701 Experian Parkway B2, Allen, TX 75013

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Monthly Crime Summary: January 2006

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station investigated 89 Part I felony crimes in January. This is down from 107 such crimes investigated the previous month. Deputies have so far handled an average of 317 calls for service per week in 2006.

Robberies

There were seven robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in January, compared to five incidents investigated in December.

On Tuesday, January 10 at 3:30 p.m., three shoplifting suspects were detained by loss prevention personnel from a store in the 11900 block of South Street. One of the suspects struck an employee and the three fled.

The next robbery occurred on Friday, January 13 at 5 p.m., when three male juveniles approached a lone male juvenile in the 18600 block of Bloomfield Avenue and demanded his property. The victim ran away from the suspects without further incident.

On Saturday, January 15 at 11:30 a.m., a woman was sitting in her car in a parking lot at the Los Cerritos Center when a male suspect walked up to her and demanded her purse. Fearing that he was armed, the victim complied.

On Wednesday, January 18 at 3 a.m., a lone female victim was returning from a casino when her car was bumped from the rear in the 13300 block of South Street. When she exited to inspect the damage,

one of the three suspects in the other car grabbed her cell phone and knocked her against her vehicle. She ran away and saw the suspect's vehicle and her own vehicle being driven away. The victim's car was located shortly after in a neighboring city.

On Monday, January 23 at 6:45 p.m., a male victim was attempting to back out of a parking stall in a Los Cerritos Center parking lot when a vehicle pulled up behind him and blocked his path. A male suspect exited the other car, displayed a handgun and robbed the victim of his wallet containing cash and credit cards.

On Thursday, January 26 at 5:35 p.m., a woman was placing groceries in her car that was parked in a lot on Norwalk Boulevard at Artesia Boulevard. A male suspect grabbed her purse, and she was dragged several feet until she let go of her purse. The suspect fled.

The last robbery incident occurred on Monday, January 30 at 7:35 p.m. Two suspects entered a video store in the 16400 block of Norwalk Boulevard and one brandished a handgun. Contents of the cash register were relinquished and the suspects left the location without further incident.

Residential Burglaries

There were 12 residential burglaries investigated in January. This is the lowest monthly figure for these crimes since June 2005. There was an adjusted figure of 21

residential burglaries in December. The 2006 weekly average for this category is 2.4.

Acquaintances and ex-mates were identified as suspects in some of these crimes. Six of the crimes were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. Jewelry, cash, computers, checks, credit cards, bicycles, tools, golf bags and cameras were among the items reported stolen.

Vehicle Burglaries

There were 28 vehicle burglaries reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in January. This is the lowest monthly figure in more than a year. There were 40 vehicle burglaries in December. The 2006 weekly average for this category is 5.8.

Parking lots were the venue for 18 of the vehicle burglaries. SUVs, pick-up trucks or vans were involved in 12 cases, and nine cases had stereo items targeted. Other stolen property consisted of purses, briefcases, laptop computers, cash, clothing, gym bags, identification, credit cards, tools, GPS systems, backpacks, purses, wallets, cell phones, golf clubs, television monitors, DVD players, SUV rear seats and jewelry.

Vehicle Thefts

Thirty-one vehicle thefts were recorded in January, compared to 34 recorded in December. The 2006 weekly average at the end of the month was 6.4. Parking lots were involved in 24 of the vehicle thefts in January, and 11 of the stolen vehicles were Hondas. No Toyotas were among the vehicles stolen in January.

Opt out of prescreened credit offers

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- Equifax Options, P.O. Box 740123, Atlanta, GA 30374-0123
- Trans Union Corporation, Attention: Marketing Opt-Out, P.O. Box 97328, Jackson, MS 39288-7328

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, March 8 at 7 p.m. at the Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park. The meeting will also be videotaped for a later presentation on Cerritos TV3.

The meeting will feature a presentation from the Sheriff's Department

Task Force for Regional Auto Theft Prevention (TRAP) relating to vehicle theft crime prevention. Attendees 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.

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.