

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

January 2006

Hardening the Target

2004 auto theft statistics released

The Auto Theft Task force of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) recently released statistics on the most frequently stolen vehicles in California in 2004. Toyotas and Hondas dominated the list. The top 10 are as follows:

- 1) 1989 Toyota Camry
- 2) 1988 Toyota Camry
- 3) 1990 Toyota Camry
- 4) 1991 Honda Accord
- 5) 1990 Honda Accord
- 6) 1991 Toyota Camry
- 7) 1987 Toyota Camry
- 8) 1992 Honda Accord
- 9) 1995 Honda Civic
- 10) 1994 Honda Accord

These data are consistent with national figures from 2003 as well as figures of vehicles stolen in Cerritos.

Camrys and Accords are frequent targets because they have a high resale value, especially when they are stripped for parts. A 2000 Honda Accord LX that cost approximately

\$22,365 when it was new would cost \$68,065 if it were built entirely from Honda replacement parts.

Quick transportation is also a known cause of auto theft. There has been a growing trend in the state that involves teenage joyriders removing anything inside of a car that is valuable and then abandoning it. Many SUVs are stolen and stripped for parts such as seats and built-in DVD players.

Slowing or deterring a would-be thief is one of the best approaches to retaining your vehicle. Installing and using alarms, securing all of the windows and doors, and using steering wheel locking devices are just a few actions you can take to help prevent auto theft. Utilizing tracking devices is also helpful, as they assist law enforcement in locating a vehicle after it has been stolen and the devices are activated.

February 12-18 is National Child Passenger Safety Week

National Child Passenger Safety Week is February 12 through 18. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to remind the public that in California, a child riding in a vehicle is required to be in a rear child-passenger safety or booster seat with restraints until reaching the age of 6 years old or the weight of 60 pounds. Ideally, most children should remain in child-passenger safety or booster seats

until they are 8 years old or older.

Other considerations, such as the child's seating position and his or her ability to sit still, may come into play when determining whether a youngster is ready for rear-seat safety belts.

Take the following quiz to determine what is the safest method of travel for a child:

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Verify credit card and bank records

Now that the holidays are over, bills and statements reflecting all of the transactions that occurred during the past couple of months will begin to arrive.

Many people check their accounts on-line, which is becoming an increasingly more secure and faster method of monitoring accounts. Others rely on a mailed statement each month. Whichever way you check your statements, be sure and pay close attention to each recorded transaction and confirm that the information is correct. With so much activity occurring during the holidays, it can be easier to miss an unauthorized credit or debit card transaction.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center recommends that you carefully review your bills and on-line accounts each month, and that you do this on a regular basis throughout the year.

A free annual credit report can be obtained that will provide you with a
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Save the date

The next Neighborhood Watch Town Hall meeting will be held at the Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park (12340 South Street) on Wednesday, March 8 at 7 p.m.

Those in attendance will be briefed on crime information in the area and will learn how to prepare for a natural disaster and better protect themselves from being victimized by crime.

Monthly Crime Summary: December 2005

Cerritos deputies investigated a total of 107 Part I felony crimes in December. This is up slightly from an adjusted figure of 105 Part I felony crimes in November. The year ended with deputies handling an average of 339 calls for service per week.

Robberies

There were five robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in December, the same number of incidents investigated in November.

On Saturday, December 3 at 12:45 p.m., the passenger of a passing vehicle reached out and grabbed a female victim's purse as she was walking in a lot at the Los Cerritos Center. This caused her to fall to the ground as she attempted to hold on to it.

On Tuesday, December 13 at 7 p.m., a male suspect wrestled a cell phone away from a male victim in the Los Cerritos Center.

At 9:10 p.m. the following night, two male suspects approached two male victims in a parking lot in the 11800 block of Del Amo Boulevard, displayed a handgun and robbed them of cell phones, cigarettes, a lighter and an MP3 player.

A male and a female suspect attempted to steal merchandise from a grocery store located in the 13300 block of South Street on Thursday, December 15 at 3 p.m. A struggle ensued with store personnel and the male was able to escape. The female was arrested and the property was recovered.

The last robbery of the month was reported on Friday, December 30 at

4:55 p.m. A male juvenile suspect grabbed a cell phone from the hands of a female victim as she stood near a store in the Los Cerritos Center. The suspect fled after dropping the phone and was arrested shortly after by deputies.

Residential Burglaries

Forty residential burglaries were reported in December. There were 34 reported in November. The 2005 weekly average for residential burglaries was 5.3.

Open/unlocked doors or windows were responsible for 12 of the residential entries. Property reported stolen included cash, computer components, credit cards, jewelry, passports, identification, cell phones, cameras, a bicycle, tools and a coin collection.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries rose slightly in December to 40 cases, compared to 37 vehicle burglaries reported in November. A weekly average of 8.8 of these crimes was investigated in 2005. This figure is more than 21 percent lower than the weekly average in 2004.

Twenty-eight of the cases in December occurred in commercial parking lots. Twenty-one involved an SUV, pick-up truck or van, and stereo items were targeted in 12 cases.

Other property reported stolen included purses, briefcases, laptop computers, cash, clothing, identification, garage door openers, credit cards, tools, GPS systems, backpacks, purses, wallets, cell

phones, golf clubs, electrical switches and jewelry.

Vehicle Thefts

Thirty-four vehicle thefts were reported in December, compared to an adjusted figure of 27 in November. A weekly average of 5.7 of these crimes was reported in 2005.

The year ended with a reduction in vehicle thefts of nearly 25 percent, compared to the total in 2004.

Twenty-four vehicles were stolen from commercial parking lots in December. Of the total, nine were Hondas and five were Toyotas.

Know how to shut off the gas to your home

The Southern California Gas Company would like to emphasize the importance of knowing where your gas meter is located before an emergency occurs. It could be located underground, in a cabinet or alongside or under your house. Keep a 10-inch or 12-inch adjustable crescent wrench with your emergency supplies, or next to your valve.

Turn off your gas meter only if you smell gas or hear the hissing sound of gas escaping. If you do not know how to shut off the gas or how to safely restore your gas service, call a qualified service provider such as the Gas Company or a licensed contractor. You can also find emergency gas shut-off instructions in the front pages of most telephone directories, or in the safety section of the Gas Company's web site located at www.socalgas.com.

February 12-18 is National Child Passenger Safety Week

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- 1) Does the child sit all the way back against the seat?
- 2) Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the seat?
- 3) Is the lap belt below the child's abdomen, touching the thighs?

- 4) Is the shoulder belt centered on the child's shoulder and chest?
- 5) Can the child remain seated like this for the entire ride?

If you answered no to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to ride safely in a vehicle.

Verify records

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synopsis of any account opened in your name. This is another way to help you spot unauthorized activities before they affect your credit rating. Reports can be obtained through www.annualcreditreport.com.

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.