

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

November 2006

Hardening the Target

Protect yourself this holiday season

As the holidays approach, people will be shopping more and storing gifts in their homes to be distributed to friends and family. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to offer residents the following tips to protect their property as they shop and prepare for the holiday season.

Retail establishments experience a noticeable increase in shopping during this time. When you shop, the amount of valuables that you carry on your person and in your vehicle likewise increases. Unfortunately, criminals are aware of the fact that this time of year presents them with a wealth of opportunities.

Always be aware of your surroundings and try to shop and walk through parking lots in pairs. Statistics indicate that you are far more likely to become a victim of a crime if you are alone.

If you must shop alone, never be afraid to make eye contact with someone. This shows confidence and lessens the chance that a potential robber will be interested in victimizing you. A timid person is more appealing to a robber.

Look around frequently, especially while you are walking outside. Be aware of familiar faces as you move from store to store, and make sure that you are not being followed.

If you carry a purse, hold it tightly against your body. While you are in a parking lot, consider walking between parked cars. Keep your purse away from passing traffic, as there have been incidents of passengers

reaching out from moving vehicles to grab a purse from a pedestrian.

Never get too close to a car when an occupant is asking for directions. Always be aware of an exit path for yourself out of any area that you may find yourself in.

When you are inside of a store or a mall, try and maintain a small area of empty space around yourself. Do not let anyone come in physical contact with you. "Pick-pockets" will commonly use this method to surreptitiously lift property off of you.

If you use your credit card, never lose sight of it. Be aware of the "double scan." This occurs when your card is passed through a credit card scanner more than once. It could be a way of obtaining your credit information for illegal use.

Don't display the contents of your purse or wallet. Thieves may be watching to see how much cash you have and how easy of a target you could be.

Try not to make frequent trips to

your vehicle to place merchandise inside before returning to a store. Thieves often scout out parking lots and select victims based on what they see.

Never store anything of value within the visible areas of the passenger compartment of your vehicle. This is an open invitation to theft.

Finally, always look inside of your vehicle before you get in, and have your key in your hand as you approach it. If there is someone loitering nearby, return to a location where there are many other people present, and report the individual to law enforcement, security or store personnel. Always use your intuition. If something does not look or seem right to you, act on your instinct and take evasive and protective measures.

Please be safe and aware this holiday season. The information above will not only help protect you this season, but also in your day-to-day activities all throughout the year.

Be aware of charity scams

The holiday season brings out a spirit of giving. Unfortunately, criminals take advantage of the holiday spirit of generosity. If you are considering making charitable contributions this year, protect yourself from those who may have less-than-honorable intentions.

Be aware of charities soliciting personal information on the phone or by mail. This information can be used to access your savings ac-

counts and "max out" your credit cards, and could lead to you becoming a victim of identity theft.

Before you make a donation, check out the charity. If you do not recognize the name of a charity, conduct some research before donating or pledging money. Ask for written information or materials, or only deal with charities that you are familiar with. Legitimate charities will gladly

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Monthly Crime Summary: October 2006

There were 95 Part I felony crimes investigated by Cerritos Sheriff's deputies in October. A total of 97 were handled in September. Increases were noted in robberies, vehicle thefts and vehicle burglaries. Decreases occurred in residential and commercial burglaries, and other theft-related cases. Deputies responded to an average of 330 calls for service each week in 2006 by the end of the month.

Robberies

There were 12 robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in October. Seven cases were reported in September.

On Monday, October 2, a female was walking in a parking lot at the Los Cerritos Center at 6 p.m. when a male displayed a handgun and robbed her.

The following day at 1:45 p.m., another case was reported from the same parking lot involving a female victim and a male suspect who wrestled her purse away.

On Wednesday, October 4 at 4:20 p.m., loss prevention personnel from a store located in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue struggled with a shoplifter who fled with merchandise.

A male suspect struck a female victim and fled with her purse as she was waiting for a bus near Cerritos Corporate Drive and Marquardt Avenue on Thursday, October 4 at 6:05 p.m.

Later that evening at 10:30 p.m., two females were in a parked vehicle in the 13300 block of South Street when an argument ensued with another woman and a man. The male suspect held one of the females from the vehicle on the ground as the female suspect took an envelope containing cash from the car.

On Monday, October 9 at 7:21 a.m., a couple with a previous relationship was arguing in the 17100 block of Norwalk Boulevard when the suspect grabbed the victim's purse and fled.

At 11:38 that same morning, a

woman was walking on Studebaker Road near Bos Street when a male suspect yanked her purse away and ran to an awaiting vehicle.

A shoplifter was arrested on Thursday, October 12 at 5:10 p.m. near a store in the Cerritos Towne Center after stealing merchandise and fighting with loss prevention personnel.

On Saturday, October 14 at 7:40 p.m., a teenaged suspect forcefully took a cell phone from a teenaged victim in a parking lot located in the 11100 block of 183rd Street.

Another robbery occurred that same evening at 10:45 p.m. in the 18600 block of Gridley Road. Three male suspects confronted a lone victim after he made a withdrawal from an ATM and stole his money.

The final cases were reported on Monday, October 30 and both involved banks. At 3:10 p.m., a lone suspect entered a bank in the 11800 block of South Street and produced a handgun. He fled with an undisclosed amount of cash.

At 5:50 p.m. that same afternoon, a male suspect handed a teller a note at a bank in the 18600 block of Gridley Road, but eventually fled without any money when the manager walked towards the window.

Suspects are in custody for six of the robberies last month.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries decreased from 12 in September to eight in October. Of that total, five burglaries were made possible by open/unlocked doors or windows, and two involved sliding windows that were pried open. One incident was an attempted burglary only. Known suspects and family members were involved in some of these crimes.

The weekly average in this category for 2006 was 2.6 at the end of the month. Residential burglaries are down more than 40 percent compared to the first 10 months of 2005. Items stolen last month included jewelry, home appliances,

tools, cash, computers, cell phones and documents.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-four vehicle burglaries were investigated last month, up from an adjusted figure of 27 in September. This makes October the third lowest month of vehicle burglaries in 2006. The weekly average in this category at the end of the month was 8.2.

Commercial parking lots were the sites in an overwhelming 22 cases. Twenty-one involved an SUV, pick-up truck or van, and stereo items were stolen in eight incidents. Clothing, laptop computers, sunglasses, backpacks, cash, purses and jewelry were among the items reported stolen.

Vehicle Thefts

Thirty-one vehicle theft incidents were handled by deputies in October. Four of those cases were attempts only. An adjusted figure of 22 was recorded in September. The 2006 weekly average at the end of October was 6.6. Twenty-nine cases originated from commercial lots. SUVs were taken in 14. Six Hondas, two Toyotas, a motorcycle and two tractor-trailers were also among those vehicles taken.

Be aware of charity scams

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send you information and will never insist that you donate immediately. If a caller is from a professional fundraising group, ask how much of your donation will actually go to the charity and how much the fundraiser will keep. You may prefer to give directly to the charity.

Take your time. There should be no hurry for you to send in a pledge or money. Be suspicious if a solicitor tells you that you must give now. Remember that you are the one making the donation and you have every right to obtain the information you need.

Safety Contacts:
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To join Cerritos Neighborhood
Watch, call Management
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