

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

August 2006

Hardening the Target

Monitor all of your accounts

In the past, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center has stressed the need for individuals to secure an annual credit report from the three major credit reporting agencies. If you suspect that you have been victimized by identity theft or other unauthorized use of credit cards, etc., there is an even greater need for you to monitor your accounts on a regular basis. This will allow you to dispute any charges in a timely manner. Debit cards are no exception, as the numbers on each card link directly to an account.

After obtaining account numbers, thieves oftentimes begin pilfering an account in very small amounts. This may go unnoticed by the account

holder or be such a small amount (even as little as one cent) that the account holder will not immediately dispute the charge, or may dismiss it entirely. Subsequent charges then begin to appear.

Many people pay bills and do their banking on-line. If you have access to these services, take advantage of them. They provide a means to constantly monitor your accounts, and allow you to act immediately on any discrepancies.

The three credit reporting agencies and their phone numbers are: Equifax (800) 685-1111, Experian (888) 397-3742 and TransUnion (800) 680-7293.

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 will be held on three consecutive Saturdays beginning September 30 through October 14 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 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 that 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, or by calling the Recreation Services Division at (562) 916-1254.

Beware of new carjacking scheme

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) has reported a new method of carjacking that has been occurring more frequently.

The typical scenario involves a victim walking across a parking lot, unlocking his or her vehicle and getting inside. After the doors are locked, the engine is started and the vehicle is placed in reverse, the driver turns around to begin backing out when he or she notices a piece of paper stuck in the middle of the rear window. The driver places the vehicle in Park, unlocks the doors and exits to retrieve the paper. Once the driver is outside of the car, a carjacker appears, jumps into the vehicle and drives off. Chances are that the driver has left a purse, wallet, identification, keys, credit cards, cash or other valuables inside of the vehicle, which are now stolen.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center advises individuals who find any type of obstruction on their rear window after entering their car to **not** exit the car to remove it. Keep the doors locked and drive to a safe place prior to removing the obstruction. If you notice an obstruction on your window when approaching your car, walk in a different direction away from the car until you can determine that it is safe to approach.



CLICK IT OR TICKET

Buckle up for safety!



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Monthly Crime Summary: July 2006

Cerritos deputies investigated 100 Part I felony crimes in July. There were 75 such crimes in June. Calls for service averaged 333 per week at the end of July.

Robberies

There were 11 robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in July, compared to six cases investigated in June.

On Saturday, July 1 at 4 p.m., a woman was standing in a lot near Bloomfield Avenue and Artesia Boulevard when a male suspect brandished a box cutter and demanded the woman's purse. The suspect fled to an awaiting vehicle.

On Thursday, July 6 at 1 a.m., two armed suspects entered a store in the 17200 block of Norwalk Boulevard and forced employees into a secluded area. Two employees were able to escape and called the Cerritos Sheriff's Station, but not before the suspects fled with alcohol, a small amount of cash and cigarettes.

At 10 p.m. on Tuesday, July 11, a man was riding a bike in the 20000 block of Pioneer Boulevard when he was approached by two male suspects, one displaying a handgun. The victim relinquished his wallet.

On Thursday, July 13 at 10:15 p.m., a male suspect grabbed a female victim as she was walking on 183rd Street near the 605 Freeway, and took her cell phone and keys.

A knife was brandished when two suspects accosted two male victims in the 12300 block of Sandy Creek Lane on Sunday, July 14 at 11:50 p.m. Cigarettes were taken from the victims.

On Sunday, July 16 at 6 p.m., a man was standing in the Los Cerritos Center when another man grabbed his cell phone. A struggle ensued and the suspect fled with the phone.

That same night at 7:30 p.m., a female victim exited a store in the Los Cerritos Center when a male attempted to grab her purse and a

struggle began. The suspect ultimately gained control of the purse and fled.

At 10:50 p.m. the following night, two male teens confronted another teenager in the 19600 block of Horst Avenue and threatened to hurt him if he did not relinquish a cell phone. The victim complied.

On Tuesday, July 25 at 1:30 a.m., a male teen was walking in the 19200 block of Studebaker Road when he was assaulted by a male suspect that took the victim's wallet.

On Thursday, July 27 at 11 p.m., two suspects robbed a male victim at gunpoint in the 17500 block of Eric Avenue.

The final case occurred on Sunday, July 30 at 4:15 p.m. when a male bicyclist was struck with a rock by two suspects as he rode in the area of the San Gabriel River and Artesia Boulevard. His wallet was taken.

Residential Burglaries

Thirteen residential burglaries were reported in July. This is down by one case compared to the adjusted figure for June. Eight of these crimes were committed by the same suspects. The suspects were arrested and many property items were recovered. The 2006 weekly average in this category is 2.8, and down by nearly 40 percent compared to the first seven months of 2005. Four cases in July were

made possible by open/unlocked doors or windows, and seven cases involved sliding glass doors or windows being pried open to gain entry into the residence. Checkbooks, laptop computers, cash, jewelry and computer items were among the items stolen.

Vehicle Burglaries

Fifty-nine vehicle burglaries were recorded in July. There was an adjusted figure of 45 vehicle burglaries in June. The 2006 weekly average in vehicle burglaries was 8.5 at the end of July. Fifty-one cases occurred in commercial parking lots, 34 involved an SUV or pick-up truck, and nine involved stereo items being taken. Rear bench seats continue to be stolen from SUVs. Wallets, purses, cash, backpacks, identification, credit cards, cell phones, laptop computers and golf clubs were also reported stolen.

Vehicle Thefts

Thirty-four vehicle theft cases were investigated in July, compared to 23 the month before. Parking lots were the crime scenes in 26 cases. Eight Hondas and three Toyotas were among those reported stolen last month. There has been an increase in the theft of Chevrolet Tahoes, GMC Yukons and Cadillac Escalades. The 2006 weekly average for vehicle thefts was 6.8 at the end of the July.

Avoid aggressive driving

Aggressive driving is a serious problem that is responsible for many preventable vehicle crashes. Hot weather can contribute to an increase in these situations. Do not let stress and frustration get the best of you when you are on the road. Exercise the following precautions while driving:

- Be patient and courteous.
- Do not drive when angry, overtired or upset.

- Allow extra time to reach your destination.
- When possible, change your schedule to avoid traffic congestion.
- Listen to relaxing music or books on tape.
- Give other drivers the benefit of the doubt, as all drivers make mistakes.
- Avoid all conflict even if you are right.

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.