

Cerritos

Neighborhood

Watch Report

May 2006

Hardening the Target

Warm weather safety tips offered to residents

With the onset of warmer weather, many residents like to open windows and garage doors for home ventilation. Cerritos Sheriff's deputies and Volunteers on Patrol have reported an increasing amount of homes that have been observed with open and unattended garage doors.

Leaving windows and garage doors open and unattended provides a would-be thief with the opportunity to inventory belongings for future reference, as well as gain access to a home. Generally speaking, burglars will use the easiest point of entry to get inside a home.

Many thieves are capable of stealing property in a very short amount of time. Passersby or

vehicle occupants can quickly obtain bicycles, lawn care products, tools and other items in a matter of seconds.

Even worse, a burglar could enter a garage, close the door and have more than enough time to pry open the inner door to a residence while concealed from the street.

Cerritos Sheriff's deputies stress the need for a constant presence when your garage door is open. If your garage is open, remain inside of the garage or in the front yard where activities can be monitored. Keep in mind that a burglar is someone who likes to be present when you are not.

Don't hesitate to make eye contact with anyone you suspect may be

"casing" your property. This makes burglars extremely uncomfortable. Note a description of the suspicious individual, take down a license plate number of his or her vehicle and then immediately call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044.

In addition, protect your home with deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Side garage doors that are not visible from the street should be constructed of a solid core and should not contain any glass. Locking pins should be installed and used on all sliding windows and doors.

Remember that it is easier to cool your home by opening windows upon your return, rather than leaving them open and increasing your risk of becoming a victim.

Jury duty scam leads to identity theft

Authorities in Michigan, Ohio, Texas, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Oregon and Washington have reported a scam that is intended to reveal personal information that can then be used in identity theft.

The way the scam works is that someone calls claiming to work for the local court, and informs the intended victim that they failed to report for jury duty. Because the victim is caught off guard and concerned that a warrant could be issued for his or her arrest, he or she is much less likely to be vigilant in protecting sensitive information.

The caller will then start asking questions for "verification purposes." These might include asking for the

victim's driver's license number, Social Security number and other personal information. Sharing that data with the wrong person can lead to many credit problems.

Court workers will never call you to ask for your Social Security number or any other personal information. Most courts use the U.S. mail service to follow up on any issues.

Confidential information should be protected no matter who the calling party is. Never hesitate to ask for a call back number. Protect your personal information and don't reveal it unless you are absolutely sure that you know who you are dealing with.

For more information on identity theft, visit www.safercerritos.com.

Volunteers on Patrol wanted

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station is seeking Volunteers on Patrol (VOPs). Patrolling the City in distinctly marked vehicles, VOPs assist with crime suppression in the city, traffic control, vacation checks, special events and park security checks. They serve as additional "eyes and ears" for the Sheriff's Department, and also train as first responders in the event of a major emergency or disaster.

If you are interested in helping Cerritos maintain its reputation as a safe place to live and work, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station encourages you to

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Monthly Crime Summary: April 2006

Cerritos deputies investigated 104 Part I felony crimes in April. There was an adjusted figure of 117 of these crimes reported in March. Decreases in April compared to March were noted in residential and vehicle burglaries. There was a substantial increase in vehicle thefts and a slight increase in robberies. At the end of April, deputies were handling a weekly average of 306 calls for service.

Robberies

There were nine robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in April, compared to seven cases investigated in March.

On Friday, April 7 at 9:28 p.m., an armed suspect robbed a fast food restaurant in the 17200 block of Norwalk Boulevard.

At 2:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 9, a man was standing in a lot in the 11200 block of 183rd Street when a vehicle approached with three occupants. A man in the car displayed a handgun and attempted to take the victim's wallet, but was unsuccessful. The suspects then fled in the vehicle.

The next case occurred at 2:51 p.m. on Sunday, April 9 and involved a shoplifting incident that elevated into a robbery. A male suspect struggled with loss prevention personnel at the Los Cerritos Center and was subsequently arrested.

On Wednesday, April 12 at 12:53 p.m., a female victim was walking in a lot in the 18400 block of Gridley Road when a male suspect grabbed her purse and ran to an awaiting car.

On Wednesday, April 19 at 9:35 a.m., a woman was entering her vehicle in a lot near South Street and Gridley Road when a male suspect displayed a handgun and robbed her of a business bank deposit.

Later that evening at 7:46 p.m., a male and female were getting into a parked car in the 19000 block of Pioneer Boulevard when a gun-wielding male suspect entered their car and told them to drive to the

11400 block of South Street. When they stopped, the suspect fled on foot with the female victim's purse.

On Tuesday, April 25 at 8:55 p.m., a male suspect entered a store in the 17500 block of Bloomfield Avenue and produced a handgun. He subsequently fled before robbing the establishment.

On Wednesday, April 26, a male teen suspect approached a motorist in a Los Cerritos Center parking lot at 12:17 p.m. and took money and a cell phone.

The last case occurred on Friday, April 28 at 11:41 a.m., when a male and female robbed a bank in the 11400 block of South Street.

Residential Burglaries

Eight residential burglaries were reported in April. Twelve occurred each month in January, February and March. The weekly average in this category is currently 2.6, which is down more than 55 percent compared to the same period one year ago.

An open/unlocked window made one incident possible. Other entries were made by shattering or prying open windows, and kicking in garage doors. Cameras, computers, plasma televisions, tools, jewelry, cash, handguns, savings bonds and video games were stolen.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-four vehicle burglaries were investigated in April. There was an adjusted figure of 54 vehicle burglaries in March. The 2006 weekly average for vehicle burglaries was slightly more than eight at the end of April. In 2006, vehicle burglaries are down nearly 18 percent compared to the first four months of 2005.

Parking lots were the venue in 21 of these crimes in April. Eighteen involved either an SUV, van or a pick-up truck, and six targeted stereo items. Other property reported lost included SUV seats, CDs, a handgun, briefcases, purses, cell phones, a tire jack, golf clubs,

glasses, cameras, an air compressor and laptop computers.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts increased to 45 in April compared to 24 reported in March. This is a more than 64 percent increase compared to the same period one year ago. The current weekly average for vehicle thefts in 2006 is 7.4.

Twenty-eight of the vehicles stolen in April were taken from commercial parking lots. Thirteen were Hondas. Ten Hondas were stolen during the April 10 through 16 reporting period alone. Five of the stolen cars in April were Toyotas. Tractor/trailers, motorcycles, SUVs and a variety of other sedans were also taken.

Volunteers on Patrol wanted

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apply to be a VOP. For more information, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center at (562) 916-1252, or visit the Cerritos Sheriff's Station to obtain an application. An orientation for new VOPs is scheduled for Saturday, June 10 at 9 a.m. A VOP application must be completed and approved in order to attend orientation.

Save the date

The next Crime Prevention Town Hall meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 12 at 7 p.m. at the Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park.

Cerritos residents, community members and Neighborhood Watch Block Captains are invited to attend. Participants will be briefed on crime in the city, learn how to protect themselves from crime and be taught how to prepare for a natural disaster.

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.