

Cerritos

Neighborhood

Watch Report

October 2006

Hardening the Target

Beware of new identity theft scam known as vishing

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to warn Internet users of a new kind of identity theft scam called "vishing." The scam involves thieves using easy to obtain VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephone numbers to trick Internet or telephone users into making a phone call and then sharing personal account information.

Akin to phishing scams, the new scheme feeds off of warnings to Internet users not to click on hyperlinks in unsolicited e-mail messages. Instead of including hyperlinks in e-mail messages, vishing scams include cheaply obtained VoIP numbers presented as credit card or financial services telephone numbers, in hopes that users will dial them.

In one vishing case, scammers targeted PayPal users by including a phone number in a spam e-mail. In another case, criminals configured an automatic telephone dialer to dial phone numbers. When a phone was answered, an automated recording was played stating that the user's credit card had recorded fraudulent activity. The recording then asked the customer to call a number with a bogus caller ID to rectify the problem. When the user called, he or she was then asked to provide personal account information.

Part of what contributes to the success of these vishing scams is the ease of obtaining credit on-line or over the phone. Consumers have become comfortable with obtaining credit on-line or by dialing automated

phone numbers.

Protect yourself from vishing by keeping the following in mind:

- Credit card companies normally refer to customers by their full name. If an e-mail or phone call does not refer to your full name, it

may be a scam.

- Do not call a number provided in an e-mail or a phone message regarding possible security issues with any credit card or bank account. Call the number on the
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Halloween safety tips offered

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers parents and children the following tips to help ensure a safe and festive Halloween:

- If you do not want your child going door-to-door, consider other alternatives such as planning or attending an organized party. The City's annual Halloween festivities will be held on Tuesday, October 31 at Cerritos Regional Park.
- Pay close attention to the costumes that your children will be wearing. Costumes should be non-restrictive to allow free movement and uninhibited vision. They should also be constructed of a fire retardant material. Make sure that masks do not hinder a child's breathing.
- If a youngster is going to be outside, provide adequate warm clothing under the costume to protect against the cold weather.
- Always remain in familiar territory.
- When going door-to-door, travel in groups with at least one responsible adult.
- Use flashlights, "Glo-sticks" or lighted wands to help you see and be seen.

- Avoid homes that are not displaying a porch light; the residents are indicating that they do not want to be disturbed.
- Use your discretion in determining which homes children should approach.
- Exercise caution and obey all traffic laws as they relate to pedestrians. Cross at intersections and consider the existing street lighting. Keep your group together, and remember that many children can easily get caught up in the excitement of the evening and be inclined to run ahead of the group.
- Carefully inspect all items received before anything is eaten, and throw away any candy or treat that is not securely wrapped by the manufacturer.
- Consider only eating candied apples or other homemade treats if you know the person that prepared them.
- If you will be passing out candy, secure your pets, remove all obstructions from the path to your porch and avoid using any open flame near the door.

Monthly Crime Summary: September 2006

There were 97 Part I felony crimes investigated by Cerritos deputies in September. This is lower than an adjusted figure of 114 such crimes investigated in August. As the summer ended, calls for service also declined, averaging 332 per week for 2006 at the end of the month.

Robberies

There were six robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in September, compared to nine cases investigated in August. One case was determined to be a false report.

On Saturday, September 2 at 7 p.m., two suspects robbed a man of his watch at gunpoint in a Los Cerritos Center parking lot.

Two male suspects confronted four victims at a residence in the 2100 block of Mapes Avenue on Sunday, September 3 at 10:30 p.m. A vehicle and a cell phone were taken.

On Wednesday, September 6 at 9:27 p.m., three suspects with a handgun entered a closed business in the 11000 block of 183rd Street and robbed employees of purses, cell phones and keys to a vehicle that was then used to flee the scene. All three are in custody after search and arrest warrants were served by Cerritos detectives.

On Tuesday, September 12 at 7

p.m., a male victim was sitting in his parked vehicle at Cerritos Regional Park when a male suspect displayed a handgun, robbed the victim and fled on foot.

A female teenaged victim was walking on Gridley Road at Bertha Street on Saturday, September 23 at 9 p.m. when a vehicle allegedly pulled up beside her. The driver displayed a handgun and robbed her of cash. She did not report this incident for several days and later recanted. She explained that the story was made up to get even with her boyfriend.

The final robbery occurred on Wednesday, September 27 at 3:45 p.m. A woman was walking in a parking lot at the Los Cerritos Center when another woman grabbed the victim's purse and ran away.

Residential Burglaries

Twelve residential burglaries were reported in September. There was an adjusted figure of 11 residential burglaries in August. The weekly average for this category in 2006 dropped to 2.6 and is more than 35 percent lower than the first nine months of 2005.

In September, open/unlocked doors or windows were accessed for six of the crimes and four involved a sliding glass door or window being

pried open. Construction equipment, plasma televisions, computer components, cash and jewelry were among the items taken.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries decreased in September to 25, the lowest monthly total so far in 2006. Forty-seven were investigated in August. At the end of September, the 2006 weekly average for vehicle burglaries was 8.2. Commercial parking lots were the sites of 18 of the crimes. SUVs were targeted in 15 cases, and stereo items were taken in six.

Visible property within the passenger compartments of vehicles continued to dominate the type of items stolen, including laptop computers, cell phones, wallets, purses, gym bags, tools and sunglasses.

Vehicle Thefts

There were 26 vehicle theft incidents reported in September, including five cases that were attempts only. There were 20 vehicle theft incidents in August. The new 2006 weekly average for vehicle thefts is 6.6. Twenty cases in September involved commercial parking lots. Among the stolen vehicles were seven Hondas and three Toyotas.

Beware of vishing

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back of your credit card or bank statement instead to report or inquire about any security concerns.

- If anyone claiming to be a credit card provider calls and requests your card number, hang up and call the phone number on the back of your credit card to report the attempt. If the call was legitimate, the credit card provider will have knowledge of the situation.
- Caller ID may show the name of an individual or a company, but that is no guarantee the information is correct.

Neighborhood Watch Town Hall meeting to be held

Cerritos residents, community members and Neighborhood Watch Block Captains are invited to attend the next Crime Prevention Town Hall Meeting on Wednesday, November 8 at 7 p.m. at the Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park.

Those in attendance will be briefed by representatives from the Los Cerritos Center on mall operations planned for the upcoming holiday season. In addition, shopping safety tips will be discussed and local crime trends will be reviewed

by Cerritos Sheriff's Station Captain Daryl Evans. Law enforcement and Community and Safety Services personnel will be available to speak to attendees about their safety concerns.

The meeting is sponsored by the City's Community Safety Division. For more information, call (562) 916-1266.

For crime prevention tips, emergency preparedness information and community safety links, log on to www.safercerritos.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.