

Cerritos

Neighborhood

Watch Report

September 2006

Hardening the Target

Ensure child passenger safety while driving your vehicle

According to the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, motor vehicle injuries remain one of the leading causes of death and hospitalization among children in Los Angeles County. Between 1993 and 2003, 3,361 children ages 12 and under were injured in vehicle collisions, and 264 died. Riding unrestrained is the greatest risk factor for death and injury among child passengers.

It is estimated that 82 percent of children who are placed in a child safety seat are improperly restrained. According to the California Highway Patrol (CHP), more than 80 percent of children under the age of 4 who were killed in vehicle crashes since 1990 would have survived if they had been properly buckled up in a child restraint seat. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Journal of the American Medical Association, when used properly, child safety seats can reduce the risk of fatal injury by 70 percent for infants, 55 percent for toddlers and 59 percent for those riding in booster seats.

The California Vehicle Code (CVC) requires children to be properly secured in a child seat or booster seat until they reach the age of 6 or weigh 60 pounds. The CVC also requires children under 16, but at least 6 years of age or 60 pounds to ride in a restraint system (car seat, booster, harness or other product certified to meet federal

safety standards) or a properly fitted safety belt (lap belt touching the thighs and shoulder belt resting on the child's shoulder, not under the arm or behind the back).

Car Safety Tips

- Make sure every passenger is buckled up for safety and that all children are properly restrained.
- Children 12 and under should always ride properly secured in the back seat. The front seat is a dangerous location for them. Upon deployment, air bags can seriously hurt or even kill children.
- Always read the child safety seat instruction manual and your motor vehicle owner's manual to ensure proper installation of your child safety seat.
- Contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Auto Safety Hotline at (888) 327-4236, or the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at (800) 638-2772 or visit www.cpsc.gov to learn about recalls or safety notices on child safety seats. Always return product registration forms so that you can be notified of any recalls.
- Most child safety seats and vehicles manufactured after September 1, 2002 are equipped with LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tether for Children). The bottom of the safety seat is connected by straps with hooks to two bars in the crack of the vehicle seat cushion. If LATCH is not available, use the vehicle belt

instead. In either case, the top tether strap should be attached for forward-facing seats.

Seating Your Child Safely

Infants up to 12 months of age should ride in the back seat of the car, rear-facing in an infant-only or rear-facing convertible seat until they are at least 1 year of age and weigh at least 20 pounds. Make sure that the harness straps are at or below the infant's shoulder and fit snugly against the infant without slack. You should not be able to pinch the strap between your thumb and finger. The harness chest clip should be placed at the infant's armpit level to keep harness straps positioned properly on the infant's shoulders. Since most babies outgrow an infant-only safety seat at 6 to 9 months, they should continue riding in rear-facing convertible child safety seats rated for heavier infants.

Children ages 1 to 4 may ride in a forward-facing child safety seat. They should continue to ride in a safety seat with a harness, in the back seat of the car, until they weigh 40 pounds. This is usually around the age of 4. Make sure that the harness straps are threaded through the top slots, unless the instructions indicate that center slots may be used for forward-facing seats. Make sure that the harness straps are at or above the shoulder of the child and that they fit snugly against him or her without slack. You should not be able to pinch the strap between your thumb and finger. The harness

(continued on back)

Monthly Crime Summary: August 2006

There were 99 Part I felony crimes investigated by Cerritos deputies in August. There was an adjusted figure of 122 for the month of July. Deputies handled a weekly average of 336 calls for service by the end of August.

Robberies

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

On Tuesday, August 1 at 9:30 p.m., a male suspect entered a restaurant in the 11500 block of South Street and produced a handgun. He ordered three employees into a storage room, but did not make any demands for money or property. The case is being handled as an attempted robbery based on the method used by the suspect, which is consistent with other robberies.

Two male suspects were arrested after a shoplifting incident on Wednesday, August 2 at 7:40 p.m. As they exited a store in the 11200 block of 183rd Street, they displayed a knife after being confronted by loss prevention personnel. Deputies took both suspects into custody from a bus that they had boarded.

The next case occurred on Friday, August 4 at 9 p.m. in a parking lot at the Los Cerritos Center when a male suspect grabbed the purses of two women walking together. After struggling with the victims, the suspect was able to free the purses from their grips and flee to a vehicle driven by another suspect.

On Thursday, August 10 at 8:55 p.m., two gun-wielding male suspects robbed a restaurant in the 11300 block of South Street.

On Thursday, August 17 at 11 a.m., two female suspects took merchandise from a store in the Los Cerritos Center and struggled with loss prevention personnel in their attempt to flee. Both of the suspects were arrested.

At 12:20 a.m. on Sunday, August 20, a group of teenaged suspects robbed three other teens at gunpoint

near South Street and Carmenita Road. Shots were fired when one victim attempted to fight one of the suspects to retain his wallet.

On Wednesday, August 23 just after midnight, a male suspect brandishing a firearm entered a video store in the 12600 block of Artesia Boulevard as employees were attempting to close. The suspect fled with the contents of the cash registers.

On Monday, August 28 at 4 p.m., a male suspect entered a store in the 10900 block of Alondra Boulevard, produced a handgun and robbed a clerk of cash register contents.

At 2:15 p.m. on Thursday, August 31, another male suspect displayed a handgun in a parking lot at the Los Cerritos Center and took a woman's purse.

Residential Burglaries

Ten residential burglaries were reported in August. This is three fewer cases compared to an adjusted figure for July. The 2006 weekly average in this category remained at 2.8, down more than 40 percent compared to the first eight months of 2005. Only one case in August was made possible by an open window. Five cases involved windows that were pried open, three were

attributed to shattered windows and one incident involved a front door being kicked in. A floor safe, laptop computers, cash, jewelry, cell phones, televisions and a handgun were among the items stolen.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-six vehicle burglaries were investigated in August. This is the second lowest monthly total in 2006. Sixty-three vehicle burglaries were reported in July. The 2006 weekly average for vehicle burglaries was 8.7 at the end of this reporting period. Commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 23 cases in August. Eighteen cases involved an SUV or van, and stereo items were stolen in seven incidents. Rear bench seats (from SUVs), tools, clothing, a handgun, CDs, laptop computers, cell phones, purses, wallets and credit cards were taken.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 34 in July to 24 in August. The 2006 weekly average for this crime was 6.7 at the end of the month. Commercial lots were the venue in 22 cases. Seven Hondas and one Toyota were reported stolen. There continues to be a rise in the theft of Chevrolet Tahoes, GMC Yukons and Cadillac Escalades. These are often recovered minus seats and wheels.

Ensure child passenger safety while driving

(continued from front)
chest clip should be placed at the child's armpit level to keep harness straps positioned properly on his or her shoulders.

Children ages 4 to 8 must ride in the back seat of a car in a booster seat and be restrained with a lap/shoulder belt. Take the five step test below and if you answer "no" to any of the questions, your child must be in a booster seat.

- Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
- Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?

- Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
- Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
- Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If your car only has lap belts (no shoulder belt) in the back seat, you cannot use a booster seat. However, you can contact the car manufacturer to see if a retrofit shoulder belt can be installed, or contact SafetyBeltSafe at (800) 745-SAFE or visit www.carseat.org for special products with harnesses for children weighing more than 40 pounds.

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.