

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

October 2007

Hardening the Target

Protect yourself and your family with these crime prevention tips

October is National Crime Prevention Month. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center treats every month as if it is Crime Prevention Month by disseminating information on how to better protect yourself and your neighbors from becoming victims of crime. Cerritos residents are encouraged to practice the following two-step approach to crime prevention.

Remove the opportunity

In order for a crime to be committed, there must be an opportunity available to the potential criminal. These opportunities come in the forms of open doors or windows at a residence or valuable items left visible on dashboards and seats of vehicles. An opportunity can be exploited when a person walks away from a stroller or shopping basket that contains a purse, checkbook or wallet. Using an ATM at night by yourself also presents an opportunity to criminals.

The first step for successful crime prevention is to remove these opportunities by thinking about the security of your personal property and the safety of yourself and your family. Simple things such as securing all doors and windows before leaving your home and never leaving items in plain sight in your vehicle can greatly reduce your risk of becoming a victim. Never leave an open garage door unattended, and do not leave property where it can be easily taken. When you shop at night, have someone accompany you, and when

you walk in a parking lot, always look around to see who or what is near you. Constantly be aware of your surroundings and the conditions you create that can make you or your property vulnerable.

Be the eyes and ears of law enforcement

The second step to preventing crime is to be the eyes and ears of law enforcement in the community. With approximately 54,000 people in Cerritos, there are not enough Deputies to be in all areas of the City at once. This is the case in every city in Southern California. While patrol personnel assigned to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station are proactive in their duties and make many contacts that result in quality arrests, they may not always be aware of every suspicious activity occurring in the City. By being the eyes and ears of law enforcement, residents can play a key role in assisting the Cerritos Sheriff's Station by reporting any circumstances that should be investigated. Deputies can drive down street after street and observe many people and vehicles. They do not necessarily know if those people and vehicles belong in the neighborhood. However, the residents of the block often know which people and vehicles are out of place.

Unfortunately, many citizens dismiss suspicious activities or vehicles as not being significant enough to call the Sheriff's Department, or they are simply embarrassed to do so. Please do not hesitate to contact the Sheriff's Department if you feel un-

easy about a certain situation. Deputies want to be directed to situations like these as their contact can stop a crime before it happens or determine that the individual(s) involved are acting in a law-abiding manner. Either way, the Deputies can better protect the community by knowing the information provided by the local residents.

We are all responsible for helping to maintain a safe City. By removing the enticement of a potential criminal to victimize us, by calling suspicious activity to the attention of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station, and by letting the professional peace officers do their jobs, we can make National Crime Prevention Month a spirit to maintain 365 days a year.

Town Hall Meeting Planned

The next Neighborhood Watch Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 14 at 7 p.m. at the Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park at 12340 South Street.

Shopping safety tips will be discussed along with a presentation by Long Beach Animal Control on animals seen in local neighborhoods, such as raccoons, coyotes, and opossums. There will be an update on the City's disaster preparedness status and a briefing on recent crime trends in Cerritos. A question and answer period will also be included.

Monthly Crime Summary: September 2007

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 91 Part I felonies in September, compared to an adjusted figure of 138 in August. Robbery cases were at the lowest point in over a year and residential burglaries decreased in September. Vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts increased. Deputies were handling a weekly average of 331 calls for service at the end of September, compared to 330 a year ago.

Robberies

Two robberies were investigated by Cerritos deputies in September, compared to 10 incidents in August.

On Sunday, September 23 at 9:55 p.m. a male suspect brandishing a firearm walked into a fast food business in the 12500 block of South Street and robbed the cashier. A small amount of cash was obtained.

On Saturday, September 22 at 12:01 a.m. a male was walking near Business Circle and Studebaker Road when two suspects allegedly

drove up and robbed the victim of a cell phone at gunpoint. The crime was reported four days later after the victim was told by his phone provider that a police report was required to replace the phone for free.

Residential Burglaries

Seventeen residential burglaries were reported in September, down from 24 in August. Twelve cases were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows, four involved windows pried open, and one side garage door was kicked in to allow access. Four of the crimes were "cat burglaries," or entries made during the night while the residents were sleeping. Cash, jewelry, laptop computers, purses, wallets, credit cards, TVs and cell phones were reported stolen. The 2007 weekly average in residential burglaries was 3.5 at the end of September.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-nine vehicle burglaries were investigated in September, up from

an adjusted figure of 28 in August. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 21 of the cases. SUVs were targeted in 25 of the burglaries, and stereo items were reported stolen in two incidents. Third-row seats from SUVs continue to be stolen in a rising number of these crimes. Other items taken in last month's burglaries included GPS units, MP3 players, cameras, cash, tools, CDs, purses and briefcases. The 2007 weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of August was 7.2.

Vehicle Thefts

Thirty vehicle thefts were recorded in September, up slightly from 26 in August. Parking lots were the venue in 24 of the thefts. Ten SUVs, six Hondas and two Toyotas were among the stolen vehicles. The weekly average in vehicle thefts at the end of September was 6.3.

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 Wednesday, October 31 from 5-9 p.m. at Cerritos Regional Park.
- Your child's costume should be non-restrictive and constructed of a fire retardant material. Make sure that masks do not hinder breathing.
- When going door-to-door, be sure to 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 dis-

playing a porch light; the residents are indicating that they do not want to be disturbed.

- Exercise caution and obey all traffic laws. Keep your group together, and remember that many children can 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 any pets, remove all obstructions from the path to your porch and avoid using any open flame near the door.

Have a safe and fun Halloween!

Be Sure to Insure

The following information explains the California Department of Motor Vehicles' recent changes in vehicle liability insurance requirements:

- Insurance companies are required to report insurance status to the DMV for all private use vehicles.
- Law enforcement and court personnel have access to DMV records to verify that your California registered vehicle is currently insured.
- Your vehicle registration is subject to suspension if the liability insurance is canceled, OR if your insurance company has not electronically provided evidence of insurance when you purchase and register your vehicle, OR if you provide the DMV with false insurance information.
- Motorists must carry proof of insurance in their vehicle at all times.

These changes ensure that fewer uninsured vehicles will be on California's roadways.

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