

Cerritos

Neighborhood

Watch Report

August 2008

Hardening the Target

Prevent the theft of GPS units from your vehicle

Southern California has not been exempt from the recent rash of GPS unit thefts. Normally a vehicle burglar is forced to walk up to a car to see what is inside and worth taking. Unfortunately, all too many people leave items such as laptop computers, cell phones, and MP3 players on seats, in center consoles, or on floorboards that can easily be seen when someone looks into the vehicle. With GPS units that are usually mounted on the dashboard or windshield, merely driving by will offer the proper view. By remaining in the moving vehicle until one of these units is spotted, the criminal can cover more ground in a shorter period of time. When the thief sees one, the window is smashed and the GPS unit is taken.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to remind residents that if they make an opportunity available for a thief, chances are it will be taken. Make sure that you lock all valuables, including GPS units, in the trunk of your vehicle or take them with you if you do not have secure trunk space. We have seen the vehicle burglary rate climb so far this year and these highly visible GPS units have contributed to that increase. Don't be a victim. Take the time to properly secure your property, including your GPS unit, so it will be there upon your return.

Prevent West Nile virus

West Nile virus is a mosquito-transmitted disease that can cause debilitating illness and death to humans as well as birds, horses and other wildlife. In 2007, the virus killed 21 people in California and sickened 359 others (43 infections and three fatalities were reported in Los Angeles County alone).

The rise in home foreclosures has heightened the risk of West Nile virus, as empty houses often harbor un-maintained swimming pools, spas, fountains and bird baths. These neglected bodies of water can provide the stagnant water needed for mosquitoes to complete their life cycle. Within the 1,330 square miles serviced by the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District, the number of service requests on abandoned swimming pools has increased 40 percent over last year.

The Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District encourages residents to take action to prevent the spread of West Nile virus. Follow these simple steps to reduce mosquito breeding around your home:

- Inspect your frontyard and backyard. To break the mosquito life cycle, eliminate standing water in clogged rain gutters, rain barrels, discarded tires, buckets, watering troughs or anything that holds water for more than a week.
- Ensure that swimming pools, spas and ponds are properly maintained.
- Change the water in pet dishes regularly and replace water in birdbaths weekly.

- Fix leaky faucets and sprinklers that may create puddles.
- Pick up free mosquitofish at the local vector control office at 12545 Florence Avenue in Santa Fe Springs. The fish should be placed in out-of-order swimming pools, spas and ponds to control mosquitoes. (Please note that containers for fish transportation are not provided, and residents should bring a plastic bag or bucket with a lid to transport the fish.)

To avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, the following precautions should also be taken:

- Avoid outdoor activities or wear long sleeve shirts and pants outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Keep tight-fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.

The public is also encouraged to be a West Nile watcher by reporting dead birds and squirrels to help with West Nile virus surveillance and control efforts. The California Department of Health Services' toll-free hotline is (877) WNV-BIRD (968-2473). The latest West Nile virus information may also be found at www.westnile.ca.gov.

For more information please call the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control Department at (562) 944-9656 or visit www.glacvcd.org.

Monthly Crime Summary: July 2008

Cerritos Sheriff's Station field personnel investigated 120 Part I felonies in each of the past two months. Robberies and residential burglaries increased while vehicle burglaries and thefts decreased. As of July 31, deputies were handling a weekly average of 331 calls for service.

Robberies

There were 11 robbery incidents reported in July, compared to five in June.

Loss prevention personnel at a retail store in the 10900 block of Alondra Boulevard struggled with two male shoplifting suspects on Tuesday, July 1 at 12:16 p.m. Both suspects fled with stolen property.

A victim reported that five female teens and three male teens forced their way into his home in the 20900 block of Thornlake Avenue on Sunday, July 6 at 3:15 a.m. and attempted to rob him. The suspects committed vandalism before leaving without any of the victim's property. Three were arrested by Cerritos deputies shortly after.

At 11:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 6 two male suspects approached a man who had just returned home in the 16400 block of Cherry Crest Circle and robbed him at knifepoint.

On Thursday, July 10 two suspects walked up to a teenaged male victim in a lot at the Towne Center and demanded his skateboard. After briefly wrestling, the victim was able to retain the skateboard and the suspects ran away.

On Sunday, July 13 at 2:10 a.m. on Sandy Rock Lane at Redwood Drive, two males were robbed by a lone suspect who produced a knife.

At 11:50 a.m. on Wednesday, July 16 a male suspect demanded money from a woman in the 12400 block of Oakcreek Lane. The woman stated that she did not have any money, and then chased the suspect, who managed to outrun her.

Ten minutes later, the same suspect (allegedly) pointed a screwdriver at a male victim who was retrieving mail in the 16200 block of Flatpeak Lane. As the victim backed up, he tripped on the curb onto the grass parkway and the suspect again fled without any money. One suspect (the driver of the getaway vehicle) was arrested shortly after the incidents.

On Wednesday, July 23 at 10:45 a.m. loss prevention personnel from a store in the 10900 block of Alondra Boulevard struggled with a shoplifting suspect they were attempting to detain. The male suspect was later arrested and the property was recovered.

At 12:26 a.m. on Thursday, July 24 two male suspects robbed two male victims in the 12700 block of Cuesta Street after a handgun was simulated.

On Tuesday, July 29 at 7:30 p.m. a male and female in their teens were robbed at gunpoint by three male suspects in a lot at the Los Cerritos Center. Cell phones were taken.

At 10:30 p.m. the same night, two

males attempted to rob two women in the 16800 block of Sierra Vista Way but let them go when they realized the victims had no money.

Residential Burglaries

Cerritos Sheriff's Station investigated seven residential burglary cases in July. Four cases were reported in June. The July incidents involved four open windows, two windows that were pried open and one shattered window. A television, jewelry, a laptop computer and cash were taken. The 2008 weekly average in residential burglaries was 2.8 at the end of July.

Vehicle Burglaries

There were 29 vehicle burglaries investigated in July, down from an adjusted figure of 37 in June. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 23 of the incidents. Twelve SUVs were involved and car stereo items were taken from four vehicles. GPS units were removed in eight of the incidents. Additional property reported stolen consisted of cash, cameras, cell phones, purses, ID and MP3 players. The weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of May was 7.9.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 27 in June to 21 in July. Twenty vehicles were taken from high-volume commercial parking lots. Eleven were SUVs and seven were Hondas. The new weekly average in vehicle thefts is 5.1.

Earthquake survival tips offered

Due to the risk of earthquake occurrences in California as recently evidenced by the magnitude 5.4 in late July, the City would like to offer residents and businesses the following earthquake preparedness tips presented by the California Office of Emergency Services. As most Californians live near an active earthquake fault, it is important to

be aware of the following tips if you experience an earthquake:

- If indoors, stay there. Get under a desk or table or stand in a corner.
- If outdoors, get into an open area away from trees, buildings, walls and power lines.
- If driving, pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses and power lines. Stay

inside your car until the shaking is over.

- If in a high-rise building, stay away from windows and outside walls. Get under a table. Do not use elevators.
- If in a crowded public place, do not rush for the doors. Crouch and cover your head and neck with your hand and arms.

Safety Contacts:
Community Safety Division -
(562) 916-1266
Sheriff's Station - (562) 860-0044



To join Cerritos Neighborhood
Watch, call Management
Analyst Mike Yach
at (562) 916-1258.