

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

January 2008

Hardening the Target

Prevent personal information from falling into the wrong hands

As mail theft continues to be a problem across the country, it is important to ensure the safety of your personal information.

Thieves know that mailboxes frequently contain correspondence with personal information. Some of the information that a thief could use to establish new accounts in your name include your Social Security number, credit card numbers, driver's license number, cancelled checks and even health insurance cards and billing information.

A change of address can be requested on an existing account or after a new account is established, and it could take a long time for you

to become aware of the problem.

Tips to help keep your personal identification information out of the hands of the wrong people follow:

- If possible, pick up your mail when it is delivered.
- Consider dropping off outgoing mail at the post office.
- Pay attention to your billing cycles and review all statements carefully.
- Always shred documents that contain personal information.
- Give your Social Security number out only when necessary.
- Keep items with personal information in a safe place and shred them when you do not need

them anymore.

- Obtain a credit report every year to monitor activity on your various accounts. This is how many people discover that they have become victims. The FTC offers consumers a free annual credit report through www.annualcreditreport.com. This web site is the only authorized online source for you to get a free credit report under federal law. The report will show information for the three main credit reporting agencies; Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

New California Vehicle Code laws take effect

The following list includes a small sample of the California Vehicle Code changes to existing traffic-related laws that took effect on January 1, 2008 unless indicated otherwise.

Under SB 7, motorists could be charged fines of up to \$100 for smoking in a vehicle containing a person under the age of 18, although the traffic stop would have to be made for another offense, such as speeding, before a vehicle's occupant could be cited for smoking.

AB 1531 limits the maximum consecutive number of times a person can renew a temporary disability placard and increases fines for second and third violations related to illegal parking in disabled spaces.

SB 1542 requires automakers to

provide, at any time, the key codes necessary for a licensed and registered locksmith to make a replacement key for vehicles sold or leased in California on or after January 1, 2008. Exceptions include automakers that sell fewer than 2,500 vehicles annually, and manufacturers that make their own keys, such as BMW and Mercedes-Benz, who have until 2013 to comply with the law provided that, in the interim, they send a replacement key by overnight mail.

AB 801 makes it illegal to sell or use a product that obstructs or impairs the recognition of a license plate by an electronic device operated by police or toll authority, such as a red-light camera.

AB 321 allows local jurisdictions to adopt an ordinance establishing

a speed limit of 15 miles per hour in a school zone. The 15-mph speed limit must be posted and applies up to 500 feet from the school. A 25-mph limit will apply at a distance of 500 to 1,000 feet from the school.

SB 67 reauthorizes a law allowing police to impound a vehicle for 30 days when a person is arrested for street racing, exhibition of speed or reckless driving.

A ban on the use of hand-held cell phones while driving takes effect July 1, 2008. For drivers under the age of 18, the prohibition will extend even to hands-free use of cell phones.

To access the entire 2008 California Vehicle Code and the DMV driver handbook, visit www.dmv.ca.gov and click the "Publications" button in the upper left hand corner.

Monthly Crime Summary: December 2007

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 107 Part I felony crimes in December, up from 97 in November. Cerritos deputies ended the year handling an average of 329 calls for service per week.

Robberies

There were five robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in December compared to six incidents in November.

As a woman was loading packages into her vehicle in the 11300 block of South Street on Wednesday, December 12 at 1:30 p.m., a male suspect grabbed her purse. The two struggled for control and the suspect ultimately stole the purse and fled to an awaiting vehicle.

At 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 19, an elderly woman was walking in a lot at the Los Cerritos Center when a male suspect in his mid-teens approached and fought to gain control of her purse. The suspect fled in a vehicle that contained three other young teens.

On Friday, December 28 at 8:50 p.m. two male suspects robbed a grocery store in the 11400 block of South Street but were observed fleeing by a passing deputy. The suspects later abandoned their stolen vehicle and attempted to escape

into a neighborhood where one suspect was captured with the cash from the store.

At 9 p.m. that same evening two armed suspects conducted a "take-over" robbery of an office and warehouse in the 15900 block of Distribution Way. The suspects fled with cash and cell phone headsets.

The final robbery occurred on Saturday, December 29 at 1:30 p.m. when a jogger was confronted by a male suspect in the Coyote Creek Channel near Del Amo Boulevard. The suspect struck the victim in the face and fled with his watch.

Residential Burglaries

Sixteen residential burglaries were reported in December compared to nine in November. Eleven of the burglaries in December were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. In addition, four windows were pried open and one door was kicked in. Two homes were entered from upstairs bathroom windows, and three of the cases in December were "cat burglaries," or entries made when the home was occupied. Three of the burglaries were the result of two suspects that fled from deputies after a robbery had occurred. Property reported stolen

included jewelry, cash, computers, DVD players, guitars, cameras, ID, clothing and a vehicle. The 2007 weekly average in residential burglaries at the end of the year was 3.4.

Vehicle Burglaries

There were 39 vehicle burglaries recorded in December, up from 16 in November. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in an overwhelming 31 of the break-ins. Twenty-three of the incidents involved SUVs, and five victims reported car stereo items stolen. Victims reported the loss of purses, wallets, cash, ID, laptop computers, clothing, tools, CDs, DVD players, third-row seats from SUVs, cell phones, guitars, credit cards, backpacks and briefcases. The weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of 2007 was 7.1.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 31 in November to 27 in December. High-volume commercial parking lots were again the venues of choice for the thieves as 23 were stolen from these locations. Eighteen SUVs and 10 Honda products were among the vehicles stolen. The weekly average at the end of 2007 was 6.5.

Join the Virtual Block Club (VBC) on-line

For the past 30 years, communities across America have discovered that neighborhood crime reduction is best achieved through the constant sharing of information between the community and its police.

With this in mind, Cerritos residents and the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center have joined together to form the Virtual Block Club (VBC).

If you are concerned about neighborhood safety, have Internet access in your home or business, and are willing to receive and share

crime and safety information, you are invited to join the VBC.

As a member of the VBC, you will receive:

- Immediate BOLOs (Be on the Lookout) when appropriate
- Weekly crime summaries and maps
- Regular crime prevention tips
- Emergency preparedness training
- Homeland security training
- Volunteer opportunity information

As a VBC team member, you will serve as the "eyes and ears" of the community for Cerritos Sheriff's deputies; share crime trend and

prevention information with family, friends, neighbors and co-workers; monitor your neighborhood and report suspicious people and vehicles; report graffiti and neighborhood quality of life problems; perform neighborhood disaster response and homeland defense duties; support the City's Volunteers on Patrol in emergencies; and participate in Citywide disaster response exercises.

To join the Virtual Block Club, please visit www.safercerritos.com and fill out and submit the on-line form.

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



To join Cerritos Neighborhood
Watch, call Management
Analyst Mike Yach
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