

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

June 2008

## Hardening the Target

### Be a “park guardian”

As the warmer weather approaches, attendance in our parks increases for a variety of social events and recreational activities. Many residents use or pass by these neighborhood parks on a regular basis. Although there is an extremely low number of incidents reported at local parks, many reports occur after a crime has been committed, such as vandalism or graffiti.

As the “eyes and ears” of the Sheriff’s Department in Neighborhood Watch, we request that residents look at the activities from their homes or when passing by. If you are in a Cerritos park, take a moment to look a little closer at the facilities. If you notice any suspicious persons or vehicles, call the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station right away at (562) 860-0044. (Remember, using a cell

phone for a 911 call will connect you with the California Highway Patrol and cause an unnecessary delay in any local response.) If you see graffiti, please call the City’s Graffiti Hotline at (562) 916-1233.

While parks are an attraction for recreation and relaxation, they are also a lure for others that are looking for a place to congregate with less-than-legal intentions. Keep in mind that the parks within the City are closed from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. If you see someone in any closed park, please call the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station. Drinking alcohol or smoking is never permitted at any time in Cerritos parks.

By being a “park guardian,” you can help ensure that our parks will remain a safe place for our family, friends and neighbors to enjoy.

**Don’t forget! Starting July 1, all drivers will be prohibited from using a handheld cell phone while driving.**

### Fireworks ban in effect

As Independence Day approaches, residents are reminded that fireworks are not allowed in Cerritos, including the “safe and sane” varieties sold in neighboring cities.

Cerritos Sheriff’s deputies will strictly enforce the law, which has helped protect thousands of residents from injuries and property damage.

Residents are invited to enjoy a free aerial fireworks show at 9 p.m. on Friday, July 4 during the City’s 35th Annual Let Freedom Ring Celebration held at the Cerritos Civic Center.

### Learn gun storage and child safety tips

There are over 200 million guns in the United States. That’s nearly one gun for every man, woman and child in the country. Regardless of your position on gun ownership, we can all agree that guns pose a life-threatening hazard if not properly secured.

There are specific laws that apply to the unsafe storage of weapons, and you can be charged with a crime for failing to secure and store a weapon properly so it can’t get into the hands of a child.

Unfortunately, guns are rarely used for self-defense. A much more likely scenario is that someone in your family will be injured or killed by an

accidental or intentional discharge.

The majority of recent school shootings involved shooters who found the weapon in their own home or the home of a relative.

The following gun storage and child safety tips should always be practiced:

- Store guns unloaded and locked.
- Store and lock up ammunition in a separate place.
- Use a gun safe or locked box to house guns.
- Use a trigger, cable or chamber lock to make a handgun inoperable.
- Remove all guns from the home

if a member of the home is depressed, suicidal, using drugs or is violent toward family members.

- Be alert for signs of gang involvement with your children. A kid in a gang is much more likely to be exposed to guns and want a gun of their own.
- Reduce your chances of becoming a burglary victim by purchasing an alarm system or installing locking pins on sliding glass doors and windows, and deadbolt locks on solid core exterior doors.
- Remember that guns, jewelry, and cash are a primary target for burglars.

A publication of the City of Cerritos and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

Post Office Box 3130 ▪ Cerritos, CA 90703 ▪ [www.safercerritos.com](http://www.safercerritos.com)

# Monthly Crime Summary: May 2008

---

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 106 Part I felony crimes in May, down from 134 in April. Vehicle burglaries were up by one crime over April, robberies remained the same, and residential burglaries and vehicle thefts decreased. At the end of May, field deputies were handling an average of 313 calls for service per week.

## Robberies

Four robberies were reported in May. Four also occurred in April.

On Saturday, May 3 in the 16300 block of Norwalk Boulevard, a male was carrying a bag of groceries that was taken by two male suspects.

On Wednesday, May 7 at 5:15 p.m. two male teens approached another male teen on 183rd Street at Dumont Avenue. A handgun was shown and the victim was robbed of a shopping bag containing a bathing suit.

A female was robbed at gunpoint

by a lone male suspect in a lot near Gridley Road and 183rd Street on Monday, May 19 at 9:30 a.m.

A male shoplifter fought with loss prevention personnel on Thursday, May 29 at 2:50 p.m. in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue. The suspect was arrested and the stolen property was recovered.

## Residential Burglaries

Cerritos Sheriff's Station investigated 11 residential burglaries in May, down from 16 in April. Open or unlocked doors and windows were the entry points in nine of the crimes. Pried or shattered windows were used in the other five incidents. Items reported stolen included vehicles, cash, jewelry, tools, bicycles, cameras, credit cards, laptops and TVs. The 2008 weekly average in residential burglaries was 3.2 at the end of May.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-three vehicle burglaries

were recorded in May, compared to 32 in April. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in only 17 of the cases. The remaining 16 incidents occurred in residential neighborhoods, and many burgled vehicles were parked in driveways. This is an unusual shift, as the majority of vehicle burglaries usually occur in high-volume areas. The most frequently stolen items were GPS devices, followed by laptops, cell phones, purses and tools. The weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of May was 8.3.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 21 cases in April to 17 in May. Fifteen vehicles were taken from high-volume commercial parking lots. Nine SUVs, seven Hondas and a Toyota were stolen. The new weekly average at the end of April was 4.9.

## Prevent on-line sexual exploitation of children

During the summer months, children have a little more time to play and recreate. They also have more time to spend on-line. Use of the Internet has played a large role in the sexual exploitation of children, specifically in the distribution of sexually exploitative images of children.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the use of home computer technology has revolutionized the distribution of these images by increasing the ease and decreasing the cost of production and distribution. A greater number of child molesters are using computer technology not only to organize and maintain their collection of these images, but to add to and share them.

The Internet has also made finding potential victims much easier. While some offenders primarily collect and trade images, others

seek on-line face-to-face contact with children. Once contact is made, child molesters may use pornography to seduce their prey, lower the victim's inhibitions, and to serve as an authority figure claiming to the child that sex between an adult and a child is "normal."

Whether children come across pornography accidentally on-line or are deliberately exposed to it, viewing these images could result in devastating psychological effects.

Under federal law, it is illegal to possess, distribute, or manufacture pornographic images of children. To proactively combat this crime, undercover "sting operations" are being conducted nationally that combine the resources of local and federal law enforcement agencies. While these operations are useful tools, there is an additional component necessary to protect children

from the influence of such predators.

Parents must monitor the activities of their children while on-line. By making sure that the computer is in a location where there is a lack of privacy, this task can be simpler. There is nothing wrong with occasionally looking over the child's shoulder or purchasing software to reveal various sites visited and to retrieve information from exchanges with others.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center reminds parents that they are the frontline in preventing their children from being exploited. Parents should discuss the seriousness of these crimes with their children and share the need to be immediately notified in the event that a child is contacted in an inappropriate manner. Immediately report any inappropriate contact to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station.

---

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.