

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

March 2008

## Hardening the Target

### Take precautions when leaving a child home alone

Many parents must choose between leaving their children home alone during the day while they are at work or busy with other commitments, or finding alternative care. If you must leave your children home alone, there are precautions you can take to ease your worries and help protect your children when they are home alone.

#### What parents can do

- Stay in touch. Call children throughout the day to ask how they are and what they are doing. Ask children to check in before they leave the house and to call again when they return.
- Keep kids connected. Post important numbers by the telephone, including parents' work and cell phone, the doctor's office, and a neighbor or a nearby relative who can help children quickly if they need it.
- Practice what to do in an emer-

gency. Teach children how to dial 911 or "0" and when to do it. Ask questions like "If someone is trying to get in the house, what should you do?" "If you get hurt, what should you do?" and "If you want to play at a friend's house, what should you do?"

- Set firm rules. Make clear what children are allowed to do and what they aren't allowed to do. Can they use the Internet when home alone? Can they invite a friend over? Can they invite several friends over?

#### Make sure your children are ready

All children mature differently, so there is no precise age when they are ready to stay home alone. This makes the decision to leave children alone even harder for parents. Many states have laws concerning the legal age when children can be left unsupervised, but there is no guarantee that when children reach

this age they will be ready. However, there are questions parents can ask themselves to help determine if their children are ready.

#### Can your children. . .

- Be trusted to go straight home after school or after playing at a neighbor's house?
- Easily use the telephone, locks and kitchen appliances?
- Follow rules and instructions well?
- Handle unexpected situations without panicking?
- Stay home alone without being afraid?
- Say their full name, address and telephone number?

If you feel comfortable leaving your children home alone and feel that they are ready, discuss it with them and start practicing what they should and shouldn't do. Role play different scenarios to prepare them for anything that might happen when they are home alone.

### LA County's 2-1-1 service now available from cell phones

Los Angeles County's 2-1-1 service, which provides callers with free information relating to health and human services, is now available to cell phone users.

The "211 LA County" service is available to all Los Angeles County residents, and can be accessed by simply dialing 2-1-1 from a landline or cell phone. Callers to the system will be connected with a live Community Resource Advisor with access to and information for over 4,000 agencies offering over 28,000 health and social services and programs.

When a caller accesses the system, the Community Resource Advisor will identify the caller's immediate and long-term service needs. The Community Resource Advisor will then search a comprehensive database to locate agencies, programs and services to assist the caller. The Community Resource Advisor will attempt to locate free or low cost resources available in the caller's community. The caller will then receive a variety of possible solutions and referrals, along with the applicable addresses and phone numbers.

Through the 2-1-1 system, LA County residents can obtain information related to emergency shelters, income assistance, protective services for adults and children, food, counseling, tax and legal assistance, utilities, and a variety of other topics.

The system is free, and is available 24 hours a day, seven-days-a-week. It is available in over 140 languages, and is accessible to the hearing impaired.

For more information about the "211 LA County" program, visit [www.211LACounty.org](http://www.211LACounty.org).

# Monthly Crime Summary: February 2008

---

Cerritos Sheriff's Station field personnel investigated 119 Part I felony crimes in February, down from an adjusted figure of 133 in January. Robberies, residential burglaries, vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts declined in February. At the end of February, deputies were handling a weekly average of 305 calls for service.

## Robberies

There were seven robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in February, down from 10 incidents in January.

On Saturday, February 2 at 10:40 p.m. a street robbery occurred on Norwalk Boulevard near Palm Street. Two male suspects pulled up next to a bicycling victim and one produced a handgun. The victim was robbed of cash.

On Tuesday, February 19 at 9:30 a.m. a male was working in his garage in the 20100 block of Bader Circle when a male walked in and threatened the victim. The suspect left with cash.

At 1:30 p.m. that same day in the 10700 block of South Street, a shoplifting event escalated into a robbery when the female shoplifting suspect fought with loss prevention personnel in an attempt to escape.

An attempted robbery occurred on Wednesday, February 20 at 5 a.m. when a vehicle pulled up beside a female preparing to enter her workplace in the Cerritos Towne Center. The passenger of the vehicle got out and lunged at the victim, who was able to close a door for safety.

Two armed suspects robbed an armored car on Friday, February 22 at 9:30 a.m. in a Los Cerritos Center parking lot.

A bank in the 11900 block of South Street was robbed at 5:55 p.m. that same afternoon after a male suspect reached into a cash drawer and took an undisclosed amount of money.

The final case occurred in a Towne Center lot on Sunday, February 24 at 2:30 p.m. when a passenger leaned out of a passing vehicle and took a woman's purse after a brief struggle.

## Residential Burglaries

Eighteen residential burglaries were reported in February, up from six cases in January. Open/unlocked doors or windows were the points of entry in 13 of the burglaries. In addition, four windows were shattered and one window was pried open. Computers, cell phones,

jewelry, cash, DVD players, cameras and a vehicle were taken. The 2008 weekly average in residential burglaries was 2.8 at the end of February.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries decreased from 55 in January to 27 in February. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 21 of the break-ins. Eighteen of the incidents involved SUVs, and four victims reported car stereo items stolen. Other items reported stolen included laptop computers, CDs, DVDs, ID, cash, wallets, make-up, purses, GPS units, sporting goods, tools, water bottles, credit cards and clothing. The weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of January was 9.3.

## Vehicle Thefts

Nineteen vehicle thefts were reported in February, down from an adjusted figure of 23 in January. High-volume commercial parking lots continued to be the most common locations; 13 vehicles were stolen from such lots in February. Ten SUVs were taken, along with four Hondas and two Toyotas. The weekly vehicle theft average at the end of February was 5.1.

## Protect your property by recording serial numbers

Many products contain a serial number, including electronics, tools and cameras. The serial number can be stamped on a plate and attached to the item, indented in plastic or printed on a tab that sticks on the item. While these numbers serve both the purchaser and manufacturer in identification for warranty issues, they are also vital to law enforcement.

A national system exists where property can be entered into an automated database when it is reported stolen. When a peace officer wants to confirm the status of an

item bearing a serial number, that information is input into the system. If the item shows up in the system as stolen, the person in possession of the item can be arrested.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center asks for your help in protecting your investments by being prepared to furnish product serial numbers in the event that items are stolen.

Maintaining a separate file containing a description of the item, brand name, model number, and serial number will increase your chances of having that property

returned to you if it is taken. Update this list whenever a new item is received.

California law prohibits anyone from buying, selling, receiving, concealing or possessing any item where the manufacturer's serial number, identification number, or any other distinguishing number or marking has been removed, altered, defaced or covered. Keep this in mind during a transaction and make sure that the item and the receipt bear the same serial number.

---

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.