

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

May 2008

Hardening the Target

Reduce your risk of burglary by securing all windows and doors

With the onset of warmer weather, many residents open windows and doors to ventilate their homes. However, leaving windows and doors open and unattended provides a would-be thief with the opportunity to inventory your belongings for future reference, or even gain access to your home. Leaving a second-story window open also increases your risk of burglary. Burglars often use the easiest point of entry to get inside a home, and an open window or door provides them with the perfect opportunity.

Cerritos Sheriff's deputies stress the need for a constant presence when your garage door is open. Many thieves are capable of stealing property in a very short amount of time. People who are walking or driving by a residence can obtain bicycles, lawn care products, tools

and other items in a matter of seconds. A thief can also steal a garage door opener from your vehicle. Even worse, a burglar could enter a garage, close the door and have more than enough time to pry open the inner door to a residence while remaining hidden from the street. If you need to ventilate your garage, remain inside of the garage or in the front yard where activities can be monitored.

An additional method of protection is the use of deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Side garage doors that are not visible from the street should be constructed of a solid core and should not contain any glass.

In Cerritos, there have been a few burglaries in which burglars stole items from homes while residents were sleeping. These burglaries are

often made possible by open windows. If you absolutely need to have ventilation at night, consider installing track locks on all sliding windows and doors or locking pins that keep the frames intact when the window or door is slightly open.

Don't hesitate to make eye contact with anyone you suspect may be "casing" your property. This makes burglars extremely uncomfortable. If you see a suspicious individual, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station immediately at (562) 860-0044. If possible, write down a description of the individual and the vehicle's license plate number.

Remember, it takes less time to open a window and cool down a home after you have returned to your residence than it does to replace all of your stolen property.

New laws regarding cell phone use in vehicles take effect July 1, 2008

New laws dealing with the use of cell phones while driving take effect July 1, 2008. The details of the laws are outlined below.

- All drivers will be prohibited from using a handheld wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle.
- Motorists 18 and over may use the speaker phone function or a hands-free device, although both ears may not be covered.
- Drivers under the age of 18 may not use a wireless telephone or hands-free device while operating a motor vehicle, even if the

hands-free device is built-in to the car.

- The law allows a driver to use a wireless telephone to make emergency calls to a law enforcement agency, a medical provider, the fire department or other emergency services agencies.
- The first offense will result in a \$20 fine, and subsequent offenses will each result in \$50 fines. With the addition of penalty assessments, the first offense is \$76 and subsequent offenses are \$190 each.

- The conviction will appear on the driving record, but a violation point will not be added.
- Out-of-state drivers whose home states do not have such laws will be subject to citation.
- A law enforcement officer can pull over an adult or a minor just for using a handheld wireless telephone. For drivers under the age of 18, using a hands-free device is considered a secondary violation, and may only be cited if the minor is pulled over for another violation.

Monthly Crime Summary: April 2008

Cerritos deputies investigated 134 Part I felony crimes in the month of April, up from the adjusted figure of 88 in March. In April an increase was noted in vehicle thefts, while robberies and residential burglaries decreased. Vehicle burglaries remained unchanged. At the end of April, field deputies were handling an average of 312 calls for service each week.

Robberies

There were four robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in April, compared to 10 incidents in March.

On Thursday, April 3 at 5:00 p.m. two male teens approached a lone teen victim as he was walking on Pioneer Boulevard at South Street. One of the two suspects demanded the victim's money, and the suspects fled with the victim's cash.

On Friday, April 11 at 5:15 p.m. two male teenaged suspects robbed another teen of cash, a cell phone and a backpack on Carmenita Road near 183rd Street.

On Saturday, April 12 at 9:00 p.m. in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue, a male suspect that had fought with loss prevention personnel after a shoplifting incident was arrested.

On Wednesday, April 16 at 10:00 p.m. two male suspects approached a man and displayed a handgun as the man was walking in a lot at the Towne Center. The victim's laptop was taken.

Residential Burglaries

Sixteen residential burglaries were reported in April, down from 18 in March. Half of the total cases were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. Windows were pried open in four instances, doors were kicked open in three and a shattered window was the means of entry in one incident. Property reported stolen included safes, bicycles, tools, cell phones, jewelry, currency, laptop computers and TVs. The 2008 weekly average in residential burglaries was 3.3 at the end of April.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-two vehicle burglaries were investigated in April, which is the same adjusted figure for the month of March. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 20 of the incidents. Fifteen victims had SUVs, and two reported that stereo items were targeted. The most commonly stolen item in April was GPS units that were attached to a windshield or the dashboard. Other stolen items consisted of purses, briefcases, laptop computers, tools, sunglasses and CDs. The weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of April was 8.6.

Vehicle Theft

Vehicle thefts were up to 21 in April compared to 15 in March. Nineteen of the vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Twelve SUVs, five Hondas and two Toyotas were among the stolen vehicles. The weekly average at the end of April for vehicle thefts was 4.7.

Swimming pool safety saves lives

Every year, hundreds of children drown or become physically incapacitated due to injuries from swimming pool accidents. With the return of warm weather and the swimming season, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to offer the following safety tips to protect swimmers:

- Install a 6-foot-tall fence surrounding the pool that is equipped with self-latching, spring-activated gates.
- Never leave a child, no matter how proficient a swimmer he or she is, unattended in the water or near a pool.
- Do not rely on inflatable toys or flotation devices to protect chil-

dren in the water.

- Post rules by the pool that prohibit running, pushing or dunking, and enforce them.
- Do not allow anyone to dive head first into the shallow end of the pool. Doing so can result in paralyzing injuries or drowning.
- Store pool chemicals in a secure, ventilated area, away from the reach of children.
- Install a phone or keep a cordless or cell phone poolside.
- Mount basic lifesaving equipment such as a pole, rope and personal flotation devices by the pool and know how to use them.
- If your pool cleaning and/or maintenance is done by a con-

tracted pool cleaner, make sure that the gate/fence perimeter is secure after they leave.



Safety equipment such as a life preserver and rope should be easily accessible near swimming pools.

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



To join Cerritos Neighborhood
Watch, call Management
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