

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

November 2008

## Hardening the Target

### Safety tips for the holiday season

With the holidays just around the corner, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following tips to help holiday shoppers remain safe this season:

- Always be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- Never fight over parking spaces. It is not worth inciting someone to violence. In addition to putting your personal safety at risk, your car could also be vandalized as a result.
- Always park in a well-lighted area. Remember this even when parking in daylight. Look for landmarks and remember where you parked so that you are not roaming the parking lot looking for your car after shopping.
- Always try to walk with someone else. Robbers focus on solo shoppers.
- Carry your purse and belongings on the side of your body that is on the opposite side of traffic.
- Obtain cash during the day and never use an ATM at night.
- Never leave packages, bags, cell phones, purses or other valuable items inside the passenger compartment of your vehicle.
- Look around and under your car as you approach it. Have your keys in your hand so you can enter your vehicle and close the door quickly.
- When arriving at your vehicle, place your purse in the car first, preferably on the rear seat floorboard.
- When loading packages or children into your car, always be aware of your surroundings. Keep an eye on purses, packages and property. Be aware of anybody that approaches you from behind.
- Never buy any items from someone who approaches you in a parking lot. These items are often stolen, substandard or fake.
- Keep your purse zipped and/or your wallet pocket buttoned up. Don't hang your purse on a fitting room hook. Place it on the bench where you can see it.
- When shopping, don't put your bags on the floor to try something on or to walk around the store. Keep all bags and purses within your sight at all times.
- Don't look or act like a victim, and chances are you will not become one.

### Trash pilfering article update

To avoid trash pilfering, last month's Neighborhood Watch Report advised residents to consider placing all three barrels or just the recyclable barrel out by 7:30 a.m. on the day of the trash collection.

As CalMet starts trash collection at 7:00 a.m., residents should make sure their barrels are out by 7:00 a.m., not 7:30 a.m.

### Be a responsible party guest or host

The holiday season is one of the busiest on the nation's roadways and also one of most dangerous, due to a high incidence of alcohol related crashes. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center wishes to remind everyone to always designate a sober driver before each holiday event involving alcohol consumption.

Nationally, over 14,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes during 2007. Hundreds of thousands more are injured each year. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash

at some point in their lives. Designating a sober driver in advance is just one of several simple steps to ensure that those who have been drinking will arrive at their destination safely and avoid risking arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol.

The following holiday safety tips are offered:

- Don't even think about driving if you have been drinking.
- If you are impaired, call a cab, use mass transit or call a family member or friend to come pick you up.
- Consider staying where you are and sleep until you are sober.

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# Monthly Crime Summary: October 2008

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 146 Part I felony crimes in October, up from 122 in September. Robberies, residential burglaries, vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts increased in October. Field personnel were handling an average of 319 calls for service per week as of the end of September.

## Robberies

Cerritos deputies investigated eight robbery incidents in October, compared to six in September.

On Friday, October 10 at 1:55 p.m. a male suspect approached a man and a woman in a lot on South Street near Pioneer Boulevard and produced a handgun. After robbing the couple, the suspect fled to an awaiting vehicle, which drove westbound on South Street. One of the victims noted the license plate number and the driver was later taken into custody and the vehicle was impounded.

On Monday, October 13 at 9:30 p.m. a male victim was exiting his vehicle in the 10700 block of Hedda Place when he was approached by two male suspects. The suspects began going through the victim's pockets after telling him they had a gun. Cash and a cell phone were taken before the suspects fled on foot.

On Tuesday, October 21 at 11:30 p.m. four males were robbed by two male suspects at gunpoint in

the 13600 block of Acoro Street.

At 12:02 a.m. on Saturday, October 25, a female was standing in a parking lot located in the 18800 block of Carmenita Road when a male ran up behind her and grabbed her purse. A struggle ensued but the suspect ultimately gained control of the purse and fled on foot.

A shoplifting incident escalated into a robbery at 11:00 a.m. that same morning. A male exited a store in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue without paying for merchandise and fought with loss prevention personnel as they attempted to detain him. The suspect was arrested.

Thirty-five minutes later another shoplifting incident escalated into a robbery outside a store in the Los Cerritos Center. That suspect was also arrested and the merchandise was recovered.

The last two incidents of the month occurred in the parking lot of the Los Cerritos Center on Thursday, October 30. The first was reported at 6:55 p.m. after three males robbed another male at gunpoint as the victim stood next to his vehicle.

The second robbery took place at 8:45 p.m. when two males displayed a handgun and took the victim's vehicle. The vehicle ran out of gas in a nearby city and the same suspects were arrested after attempting another car-jacking.

## Residential Burglaries

Twenty-one residential burglaries were investigated in October, an increase of five cases from September. Nine incidents in October were made possible by open/unlocked doors or windows. Seven windows or doors were pried open and five windows were shattered. Items reported stolen included passports, cash, jewelry, safes, handguns, coin collections, credit cards, suitcases and laptop computers. The 2008 weekly average in residential burglaries was 3.1 at the end of October.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-five vehicle burglaries were logged last month, up from 31 in September. High-volume commercial parking lots were involved in 21 cases. Fifteen SUVs were burglarized, nine GPS units were stolen and three stereos were taken. Stolen items included TVs, medical supplies, door handles, cameras, laptop computers, MP3 players, clothing, tools and cell phones. The weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of October was 7.6.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts rose by nine crimes over September as 34 (20 SUVs and 12 Hondas) were recorded in October. Twenty-seven vehicles were taken from high-volume commercial parking lots. The 2008 weekly average in vehicle thefts was 5.4 at the end of September.

## Be a responsible party guest or host

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- If you are sober and your friend is impaired, take the keys and do not let the friend leave your sight.

If you serve alcoholic beverages in your home this holiday season, you are responsible for the welfare of your guests. If your guests plan on drinking, remind them to make transportation arrangements ahead of time. Responsible party-goers should never have to regret something that happened while under the influence of alcohol. Remember, people do not like to admit that they are impaired, and may argue that they are okay

to drive. Share with your friends that impairment begins with the very first drink, and remind them of the penalties they face if convicted of driving under the influence.

The following holiday safety tips are offered:

- Encourage guests to eat food if they are drinking.
- Offer alcohol-free beverages and make sure that all of your guests leave with a sober driver.
- If you serve an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base.
- Never serve alcohol to anyone

less than 21 years of age.

- Don't ride in a vehicle with anyone who is impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- Have a designated driver for all party events.

Driving impaired or riding with someone that is impaired is simply not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be really significant.

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