

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

October 2008

## Hardening the Target

### Prevent charity fraud

During the holiday season, there are many organizations seeking donations from the public. Many of these charities are well established and legitimate. However, there are also people who take advantage of tragedies and a joyful holiday season to solicit funds for their own personal gain.

#### How to avoid becoming a victim of charity fraud

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following tips to ensure your donation is used for its intended purpose.

- Be familiar with the charity you are making a donation to.
- Keep careful records of all of your donations so you can identify scams that claim you made a pledge that you do not remember making.
- Ask for the charity's tax-exempt letter indicating its Internal Revenue Service (IRS) status. You

cannot claim a tax-deductible donation if the charity is not recognized as such by the IRS.

- Never give cash. Make your contribution in the form of a check payable to the full name of the charity.
- Give out your credit card number ONLY if you are certain that you are dealing with a legitimate charity. Make sure that the numbers will be encrypted for your protection.
- NEVER give out your Social Security number. Sharing the number is not necessary for you to claim a tax deduction.

Report any suspicious person going door-to-door seeking funds or property to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station. This is a common method used to fraudulently obtain money or goods, and is also used as a means to find or "case" potential victims for residential burglaries. Deputies have

the ability to check these people out to ensure your financial safety.

#### How to report charity fraud

It is a federal felony for anyone to engage in mail fraud, wire fraud or credit card fraud. Most of these crimes are investigated by local authorities such as the Cerritos Sheriff's Station and the United States Postal Service. If you feel that you have either become a victim or were about to, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044. You can also report charity-related fraud to the following agencies:

- California Department of Justice (DOJ) - <http://caag.state.ca.us>
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)
- Better Business Bureau (BBB) - [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)
- Internet Crime Complaint Center - [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov)
- National Fraud Information Center - [www.fraud.org](http://www.fraud.org)

### Law enforcement is cracking down on buckling up

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department will be aggressively enforcing California's vehicle occupant laws as part of the state's 2008 Click it or Ticket mobilization between November 17 and November 30, 2008. The campaign relies on heavy enforcement and public education to help California achieve the highest seat belt use rate in the nation.

Cerritos deputies will be on the lookout for motorists and their passengers to ensure that everyone is properly restrained. Law enforce-

ment personnel will not accept excuses or give warnings.

California has a primary seat belt law which requires that every passenger in every car, including the driver, is required to wear a seat belt at all times. If a motorist is stopped and is found to be in violation, deputies will issue citations. Tickets for the first seat belt violation range from \$80 to \$91 for adults and \$330 to \$401 for children under 16 years old, depending on the county.

In California, nearly 95 percent

of people are buckling up, which is the fourth highest rate in the nation. That's 1.5 million more people protected from death and injury by using a seat belt since the Click it or Ticket campaign started in 2005. While the buckle up rate for adults has continued to climb in recent years, California's teen seat belt use rate lags behind the general population at 88.9 percent in 2007, well below the state rate of 94.6 percent for adults.

Funding for deputy over-time pay  
*Continued on the other side*

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# Monthly Crime Summary: September 2008

Cerritos Sheriff's deputies investigated 122 Part I felonies in September, down from an adjusted figure of 130 in August. Field personnel were handling an average of 319 calls for service per week as of September 30.

## Robberies

There were six robberies investigated by Cerritos deputies in September, compared to four in August.

At 8:40 p.m. on Wednesday, September 17, a female sitting in her vehicle was robbed at gunpoint in the 19800 block of Bloomfield Avenue by a male suspect.

A man walking his bicycle in the San Gabriel River bike path near Artesia Boulevard on Friday, September 19 at 1:15 p.m. was confronted by a male suspect who ran up behind the victim and took the bike. As the victim began to chase the suspect, the suspect said he had a knife and rode away.

The third case occurred on Saturday, September 20 at 5:40 p.m. when a male shoplifting suspect struggled with loss prevention personnel outside a store in the 11500

block of South Street before being taken into custody.

On Saturday, September 27 at 5:00 p.m. a male juvenile took items from a retail store in the Los Cerritos Center and struggled with loss prevention personnel after they attempted to detain him.

A male and female fought with loss prevention employees after another shoplifting incident the following day at 2:30 p.m. outside a store in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue.

The suspects in the last two incidents were arrested and the stolen merchandise was recovered.

The final incident occurred on Monday, September 29 at 2:20 p.m. when a male suspect entered a restaurant in the 12500 block of Artesia Boulevard, produced a handgun and robbed the manager. The suspect fled to an awaiting vehicle driven by a female.

## Residential Burglaries

Sixteen residential burglaries were reported in September, up from 13 in August. Open/unlocked doors or windows were used as entry points in 10 of the September

crimes. Pried sliding glass windows or doors were involved in the other six. Property reported stolen included computers, DVD players, jewelry, a vehicle, laptop computers, bicycles and cash. The 2008 weekly average in residential burglaries was 2.9 at the end of September.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries increased from 24 in August to 31 in September. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 20 cases. Ten involved SUVs and six victims reported stereo items missing. Additional stolen property included briefcases, purses, clothing, wallets, ID, cell phones, cash, cameras, sunglasses and three GPS units. The weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of September was 7.7.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts rose by two crimes over August as 25 were recorded in September. Nineteen vehicles were taken from high-volume commercial parking lots. Eight were SUVs and eight were Hondas. The 2008 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 5.4.

## It is illegal to tamper with trash receptacles

Recently, the City of Cerritos converted to a three barrel trash system that requires residents to separate regular trash, yard waste and recyclables. This system benefits the environment and lessens the volume of items destined for landfills. Unfortunately, the recyclable barrels also attract individuals who pilfer for self-gain.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center has recently received complaints of late night trash-rummaging in various parts of the City the night before the trash pick-up day.

Cerritos Municipal Code Section 6.08.070 (d) reads as follows:

"No person, other than the owner thereof, his agents or employees or an officer or employee of this city or any person holding a contract with this city for the collection or disposal of refuse, his agents or employees authorized for such purposes, shall tamper or meddle with any refuse or rubbish container or the contents thereof, or remove the contents of any container or remove any container, from the location where the same shall have been placed by the owner thereof or his agent."

Trash pilfering is a misdemeanor. Deputies have been issuing citations in these matters and will continue to do so. Contact the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044 to report these incidents. Please be able to describe the person(s) involved along with a vehicle description (if applicable) and the direction the suspect(s) went. Residents may want to consider placing all three barrels or just the recyclable barrel out at 7:30 a.m. on the day of the trash collection. This reduces the timeframe for pilfering and drastically lowers the chances of it occurring.

## Law enforcement cracking down on buckling up

*Continued from the other side*  
to support California's Click it or Ticket campaign will be provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



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.