

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

August 2009

## Hardening the Target

### Home safety tips for older adults

The majority of older adults want to remain in their own homes. Treasured memories and a familiar location are hard to leave behind. Staying at home can be a viable choice if the home is made as safe as possible. A single-level home or ground floor condominium or apartment is the safest option. The following is a safety checklist for seniors living at home:

#### Indoor checklist:

- Can the older adult turn on lights without having to walk into a dark room?
- Are lamp, extension and phone cords out of the flow of foot traffic?
- Are passageways in the home



*All light switches should be easily accessible.*

- free from objects and clutter?
- Do carpets lie flat?
- Do small rugs and runners stay put (don't slide or roll up)? Removing rugs and runners is preferred, especially in the bathroom.
- Can older adults reach regularly used items easily?
- Are there working smoke detectors in bedrooms and all living areas?
- Can a light be left on at night between the bed and a bathroom?
- Does the shower or tub have a non-skid surface, such as a mat, decals, or abrasive strips? Also, is there a sturdy grab bar available and not just a towel rack?
- Is the hot water temperature set at 120 degrees or lower?
- Does the bathroom floor have a non-slip surface?
- Is the older adult able to get on and off the toilet easily?

#### Outdoor checklist:

- Do all entrances to the home

- have outdoor lights?
- Are walkways to the entry free from cracks and holes?
- Do all stairs have sturdy handrails on both sides that run the full length of the stairs?
- Are all of the steps in good repair (not loose, broken, missing or worn in places)?

#### Throughout the home:

- Is there an emergency exit plan in case of a fire?
- Are emergency phone numbers listed near the phone? It is also recommended that the list be placed on the outside of the refrigerator.

Adapting a home for an older adult who is struggling with decreasing capabilities and mobility does not have to be a dilemma. The more adaptations that can be made early on with a view toward future needs, the easier life will be for everyone involved.

### Beware of residential burglars “casing” your house

A common series of events typically precedes many residential burglaries, centering on the method the criminal uses to ascertain if anyone is at home.

The easiest is to simply knock on the front door for a period of time. Burglars are known to continue knocking until they feel comfortable that the home is unoccupied. At that point, the suspect(s) usually walk along the side of the home and enter the backyard through a gate. Now

they have the concealment to check windows that are open or unlocked, or force open a window or sliding glass door.

If an occupant of the home opens the front door to contact the potential burglar, it is common for the burglar to ask for someone by name or to pose as a solicitor. The person they ask for will obviously not reside in the home, and the services offered will not be accepted. The burglar will

then leave the area or locate another target in the neighborhood.

If the occupant chooses not to answer the door, the backyard scenario can become more of a reality, and a subsequent confrontation with the intruding burglar(s) may occur.

In addition, residential burglars have been known to look for homes with property visible on front porches or driveways. The Cerritos Sheriff's

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# Monthly Crime Summary: July 2009

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Cerritos Sheriff's Station deputies investigated 90 Part I felony crimes in July, down by 12 cases from the previous month. Robberies and residential burglaries increased and vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts decreased. At the end of July, field personnel were handling a weekly average of 322 calls for service.

## Robberies

There were six robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in July, compared to one in June.

On Wednesday, July 1 at 8:25 p.m. two males entered a residence in the 13400 block of Moore Street and demanded money. They left without any.

At 1:55 p.m. on Thursday, July 9 a male suspect displaying a handgun robbed a restaurant employee of a bank deposit in the Towne Center.

At 10 p.m. that same evening a male victim was walking in the 19300 block of Pioneer Boulevard when a vehicle pulled up beside him. A male suspect produced a handgun and demanded the victim's

laptop computer.

On Tuesday, July 21 at 2 p.m. a woman was loading groceries into her vehicle in the 13200 block of South Street when a male grabbed her purse and struggled with the victim to gain control.

Three teenaged suspects confronted another teen in the 13100 block of Semora Place on Thursday, July 23 at 10:20 p.m. The suspects attempted to take the victim's backpack but were fought off.

On Thursday, July 30 at 9:15 p.m. a handgun was displayed by one of three male suspects, which forced a male victim to relinquish a laptop computer in the 13400 block of Arteria Boulevard.

## Residential Burglaries

There were 13 residential burglaries reported in July compared to an adjusted total of nine in June. Open or unlocked doors or windows were the points of entry in eight cases, three windows were pried open, and two victims reported shattered windows. The stolen property in-

cluded checks, TVs, coin collections, cameras, jewelry and cash. The 2009 weekly average in residential burglaries was 2.3 at the end of the month.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries dropped from 43 in June to 21 in July. Seventeen of the vehicle burglaries occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Five SUVs were burglarized. GPS units were removed from six vehicles, and stereo items were removed from two vehicles.

Tools, wallets, purses, laptop computers, a suitcase and handguns were among the missing items. The 2009 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is now 7.8.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts also declined in July as 10 were reported, down from 16 in June. Nine of the vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Two SUVs and three Hondas were among the stolen vehicles. The new 2009 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 4.9.

## Beware of residential burglars "casing" your house

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Station/Community Safety Center strongly urges residents not to leave any personal property visible on porches or driveways. This includes umbrellas, toys, shoes or bicycles.

Staff at the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center certainly understands when a resident does not want to be bothered by an unfamiliar person knocking on the door. Most would rather not tell a solicitor that they are not interested in their product. However, it is in your best interest to let the person know that someone is at home. If you do open the door and are asked about a non-existent person, asked for directions, or find a solicitor who is not wearing a uniform or some form of identification, contact the

Cerritos Sheriff's Station right away. Be prepared to offer a good physical description of the visitor along with any vehicle he or she may have entered, and the direction of travel. If you do not want to answer the door, tell the visitor from behind the closed door that you cannot speak at the moment, or make some type of noise that will tell the person that the home is occupied. This could be turning up the volume on a radio or television, slamming a door or any other sound that will clearly be heard from the porch. Make sure that you watch where the person goes after leaving the porch, and if it is to the side of your home, call 911 immediately. Yelling may now be in order to alert the suspect to your presence.

If he or she does not flee, exit the home from the front and go to a neighbor's house while you wait for the responding deputies.

This information is also important to share with family members who may be in the home alone when these activities occur. Most residential burglaries are committed when residents are out of the home for work or school.

Remember that the timely communication with the Cerritos Sheriff's Station is vital in apprehending criminals. You, as the eyes and ears at the potential crime scene, are capable of providing useful information to responding deputies, which dramatically increases the chance that the suspect(s) will be arrested.

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



To join Cerritos Neighborhood Watch, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center at (562) 916-1266.