

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

June 2009

## Hardening the Target

### Be cautious of door-to-door magazine sales crews this summer

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) warns that deceptive door-to-door magazine sales crews are hitting the pavement and looking to earn a quick buck this summer. In the last 12 months alone, BBB has received 1,100 complaints from consumers in 46 states and the District of Columbia against more than 50 companies that are selling magazines door-to-door.

Many of these companies employ crews of high school and college-age people who are trying to earn money over the summer. These crews are sent to communities to knock on doors and sell magazines—sometimes without appropriate licensing. In the sales pitch, the representative might explain they are working to help get their lives back on track, raising money on behalf of a charity or for a school trip or even selling subscriptions to support troops in Iraq.

“Because sales representatives are typically high school or college-age, victims readily believe the potentially fictitious sales pitch and often pay several hundred dollars for the subscriptions by personal check given directly to the sales representatives,” said Paula Fleming, vice president of communications and marketing for BBB. “Most complaints against such companies allege that sales representatives took their check and the magazines never arrived, however, some complainants also allege being subjected to high-pressure and misleading sales tactics.”

In one example, a woman called the police after feeling threatened by a sales representative who became angry when she wouldn't buy a magazine. Some sales representatives have also allegedly told prospective customers that they would not be able to eat that day if the person didn't buy their magazines.

In addition to not receiving magazines they paid for, complainants allege sales representatives lied about being neighborhood youth who were trying to earn money for a school trip to Europe, while other customers were led to believe they were purchasing magazine subscriptions for troops deployed overseas.

Customers may not be the only victims of this scam; the young salespeople are sometimes forced to work long hours, endure substandard living conditions and have their wages withheld.

The BBB offers the following advice to avoid getting scammed by a door-to-door magazine sales representative.

- Always research the company with the local BBB for free at [bbb.org](http://bbb.org) before filling out a check for a magazine subscription.
- The Federal Trade Commission's Three-Day Cooling-Off Rule gives the customer three days to cancel purchases over \$25 that are made in their home or at a location that is not the seller's permanent place of business. Along with a receipt, salespeople

should also include a completed cancellation form that customers can send to the company to cancel the agreement. By law, the company must give customers a refund within 10 days of receiving the cancellation notice.

- Victims of fraudulent magazine sales can file a complaint with their local BBB at [bbb.org](http://bbb.org), the Cerritos Sheriff's Station, and state Attorney General offices.

### Coyote attack reported

Long Beach Animal Care Services Bureau reported that a coyote attack on a pet dog occurred Tuesday, June 2 around 8:30 p.m. in the Coyote Creek area. A Cerritos resident was walking two small dogs when the coyote grabbed one of the dogs, ran with it, and then dropped the animal when he was chased by the owner. The small dog died later at the veterinarian's office.

Please be reminded that we are in full wildlife season and will see more activity, particularly at night, through August. Please eliminate attractants (food, water and shelter), keep dogs on a leash at all times, and keep small animals inside at night.

California coyotes have adapted to residential neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces in urban and suburban areas, and have seemingly lost their fear of humans. This may be a result of behavioral changes

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# Monthly Crime Summary: May 2009

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Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 116 Part I felony crimes in May, up from 95 in April. Residential and vehicle burglaries increased and robberies and vehicle thefts decreased. At the end of May, field deputies were responding to a weekly average of 322 calls for service.

## Robberies

There were three robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in May, compared to six in April.

On Friday, May 8 at 5:40 p.m. a woman was sitting on a bench at 183rd Street and Best Place when a male suspect grabbed the cell phone that she was holding. The suspect ran to an awaiting vehicle driven by another male.

A female teen had a cell phone taken by two other teens in the 11800 block of Del Amo Boulevard on Monday, May 18 at 2:30 p.m.

## Cerritos deputies issuing cell phone tickets

During the first quarter of 2009 (January through April), Cerritos deputies wrote 161 citations for violations of the new hands-free cell phone law in Cerritos.

As a reminder, the California Vehicle Code prohibits all drivers from using a handheld wireless telephone while operating a motor vehicle. Drivers under the age of 18 may not use a wireless telephone or hands-free device while operating a motor vehicle.

## Neighborhood Watch signs available

Neighborhood Watch window signs are now available in limited quantities at the Community Safety Division window in the Cerritos Sheriff's Station. Residents may have one sign per household.

One suspect is in custody and the other has been identified.

On Thursday, May 21 at 3:05 p.m. a commercial truck was hijacked at gunpoint by multiple suspects in the 13000 block of Moore Street.

## Residential Burglaries

Thirteen residential burglaries were reported in May, compared to eight in April. Seven of the May crimes were made possible by open or unlocked doors or windows, and the remaining six were the result of sliding windows being pried open. Property listed as stolen included a coin collection, a handgun, purses, laptop computers, jewelry and cash. The 2009 weekly average in residential burglaries was 2.3 at the end of the month.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries rose to 36 over the 23 reported the previous

month. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 22 of the May incidents. Twenty-four of the cases involved SUVs, nine targeted stereo components, and five GPS units were taken. Additional items taken included backpacks, DVD players, cameras, MP3 players, personal identification, checkbooks, laptop computers, cell phones, an LCD TV and a guitar. The 2009 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is now 8.1.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts declined by 10 crimes in May as 11 were investigated. Only one of the thefts occurred in a residential area. The remaining vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Three SUVs, five Hondas and one Toyota were taken. The new 2009 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 5.7.

## Coyote attack reported

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that have occurred over several generations of coyotes, in localities where predator control is no longer practiced. Coyotes thrive in such areas because food, water and shelter are abundant, and coyotes living in these environments may come to associate humans with food and protection. Once attracted to suburban areas, they prey on the abundant rodents, rabbits, birds, house cats and small dogs that live in residential habitats. They also eat household garbage, pet food, and seeds and fruits of many garden and landscape plants. In some localities, this has resulted in the development of local coyote populations that seemingly ignore people, while a few coyotes have become increasingly aggressive toward humans. Some coyotes have stalked and even attacked children or adults, or have attacked pets being walked on a leash by their owners.

Cerritos residents who see a

coyote in their neighborhood should attempt to frighten it away by shouting, throwing rocks, squirting it with a water hose, blowing portable air horns, or otherwise acting aggressively in order to reinforce the coyote's fear of people. Motion-sensitive lights on houses or outbuildings may also deter coyotes from approaching.

If you or your pets are approached by an aggressive or fearless coyote, consider the following tips:

- Shout in a deep voice.
- Wave your arms.
- Throw objects at the animal.
- Look the coyote directly in the eyes.
- Stand up if you are seated.
- If you are wearing a coat or vest, spread it open like a cape so that you appear larger.
- Retreat from the situation by walking slowly backward so that you do not turn your back on the coyote.

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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.