

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

September 2009

## Hardening the Target

### Back to school traffic safety tips offered

With another school year starting, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to offer the following tips to help make school zones safer and improve traffic safety.

With school in session, there is significantly more traffic. Pedestrians, bicyclists, buses and parents all contribute to school zone congestion. Most schools in Cerritos and other Southern California cities are faced with traffic issues such as double parking, speeding, unsafe U-turns, jaywalking and more.

In addition, children do not always follow the rules of the road. Oftentimes they enter the street from between two cars, attempt to get their bikes through an intersection before the light turns red, and skateboard into traffic.

Please remember to exercise a heightened awareness in and around a school zone. Potential hazards are much easier to perceive if you are driving at or below the school zone speed limit of 25 mph. Special attention must also be paid to buses displaying flashing red lights when on an undivided two-lane roadway. In these instances, you are required by the California Vehicle Code to stop and wait until the flashing red lights are turned off before passing a bus.

Parents who allow their children to ride bicycles to school should keep in mind that a helmet is required for those under the age of 18. In addition, children riding bicycles must travel with the flow of traffic.

When considering whether to allow your child to ride a bike to school, also think about the effect that a bulky backpack may have on your child's balance while he or she is riding a bike.

Follow these simple suggestions to help make our school zones safer for everyone:

- Don't speed.
- Don't impede traffic by dropping children off in the middle of the street.
- Don't double park.
- Don't block intersections or driveways if you park your vehicle.
- Don't make U-turns.
- Always make sure that your children are wearing seatbelts when transporting them to and from school.

In addition, make sure that your child has adequate supervision if he or she arrives home before you do. While this may be difficult for some, any form of organized activity, or the immediate availability of a trusted adult, can provide the necessary guidance to help ensure your child's safety and also give you peace of mind.



*A helmet is required for bicyclists under the age of 18.*

As a reminder, the illegal and unsafe loading and unloading of schoolchildren from cars on to roadways near schools is subject to a \$135 citation.

As an additional reminder, Cerritos Municipal Code Section 10.12.020 states the following:

- No driver may stop, park or leave his or her vehicle for the purpose of loading or unloading passengers unless the vehicle is legally parked in accordance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, including related signs and curb markings.
- No driver may stop, park or leave any vehicle in the roadway across from or adjacent to any public or private school for the purpose of loading or unloading anyone attending schools in grades K-12, where in order to reach the school or grounds from the vehicle or reach the vehicle from the school or grounds, it is necessary for a pedestrian to walk across a roadway. This section would be inapplicable where traffic is controlled by a traffic officer, a school crossing guard, an official traffic control sign or signal, or where there is a marked pedestrian crosswalk that the pedestrian walks on.

When transporting children to and from school, parents are encouraged to park legally and escort their children across the street at a marked crosswalk. For more information, call the Cerritos Community Safety Division at (562) 916-1266.

# Monthly Crime Summary: August 2009

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Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 95 Part I felony crimes in August, up from 90 in July. Vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts rose in August, while robberies remained the same. Residential burglaries decreased. At the end of August, field deputies were handling a weekly average of 323 calls for service.

## Robberies

For the second consecutive month, there were six robberies reported.

On Sunday, August 2 at 1 a.m. three teens attempted to rob two other teens in a lot at Bloomfield Avenue and 195th Street, but the suspects fled without any property.

A teenage female suspect grabbed an elderly woman's purse in a lot in the 17200 block of Norwalk Boulevard on Monday, August 3 at 2 p.m. As the suspect was running away, she tripped, dropped the purse, and continued to run without it. The victim retrieved the purse and called the Cerritos Sheriff's Station.

On Monday, August 10 at 5:20 p.m. a man was standing next to his vehicle near Cedarcrest Drive and Crystal Creek Lane when

another male approached him, used pepper spray on the victim, and fled with the victim's laptop computer.

Two male suspects took an MP3 player by force from a teenage victim on Tuesday, August 11 at 7:30 p.m. in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue.

Another robbery occurred at 9:20 p.m. the same evening in the 18800 block of Carmenita Road where three suspects robbed three victims of cell phones, credit cards, keys and ID.

On Sunday, August 30 at 5:05 p.m. a male suspect approached two male juveniles in the 19800 block of Bloomfield Avenue and demanded their bicycle. After a brief struggle, the suspect temporarily gained control and fled on the bicycle. The suspect then abandoned the bicycle and ran away when the victims ran after him.

## Residential Burglaries

Ten residential burglaries were logged in August, down by three crimes from July. Only two of the 10 reported open/unlocked doors or windows as the points of entry. Six windows were pried open and two were shattered. Victims reported

the loss of TVs, jewelry, cash, a dresser, a lamp, two beds, purses, laptop computers and cameras. The 2009 weekly average in residential burglaries was 2.3 at the end of the month.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries rose by nine cases to 30 in August. Twenty-five of the vehicles were burglarized in high-volume commercial parking lots. Two commercial trailers were also targeted. Nine SUVs were burglarized. GPS units were removed from four vehicles. Cell phones, clothes, purses, ID, cash, plumbing equipment, laptop computers, third row seats from SUVs and a baseball bat were among the items reported stolen. The 2009 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is now 7.7.

## Vehicle Thefts

Fourteen vehicle thefts were investigated in August, up from 10 reported in July. All of the stolen vehicles were taken from high-volume commercial parking lots. Six SUVs, five Hondas and one Toyota were among the stolen vehicles. The new 2009 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 4.6.

## Be the eyes and ears of law enforcement

An important crime prevention measure is to be the eyes and ears of law enforcement in the community. With approximately 51,488 people in Cerritos, there are not enough Deputies to be in all areas of the City at once. This is the case in every city in Southern California. While patrol personnel assigned to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station are proactive in their duties and make many contacts that result in quality arrests, they may not always be aware of every suspicious activity occurring in the City. By being the eyes and ears of law enforcement, residents can play a key role in assisting the Cerritos Sheriff's Station by report-

ing any circumstances that should be investigated. Deputies can drive down street after street and observe many people and vehicles. They do not necessarily know if those people and vehicles belong in the neighborhood. However, the residents of the block often know which people and vehicles are out of place.

Unfortunately, many citizens dismiss suspicious activities or vehicles as not being significant enough to call the Sheriff's Department, or they are simply embarrassed to do so. Please do not hesitate to contact the Sheriff's Department if you feel uneasy about a certain situation. Deputies want to be directed to situations

like these as their contact can stop a crime before it happens or determine that the individual(s) involved are acting in a law-abiding manner. Either way, the Deputies can better protect the community by knowing the information provided by the local residents.

We are all responsible for helping to maintain a safe City. By removing the enticement of a potential criminal to victimize us, by calling suspicious activity to the attention of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station, and by letting the professional peace officers do their jobs, we can make National Crime Prevention Month (held in October) a spirit to maintain 365 days a year.

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.