

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

August 2010

## 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 miles per hour. 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.

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 is 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: July 2010

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 118 Part I felony crimes in July, up from 97 in June. With the exception of robberies, all crime categories reported in this summary increased in July. At the end of the month, field deputies were handling a 2010 weekly average of 301 calls for service.

## Robberies

There were three robberies investigated by Cerritos deputies in July, compared to four in June.

A male suspect grabbed deposits from an employee of a local business on Saturday, July 3 at 11:30 a.m. in the lot at Norwalk Boulevard and Artesia Boulevard and fled.

At 10:56 p.m. that same evening, two males attempted to rob a retail store in the Towne Center but ran away

before they could complete the crime.

In the third incident, a male suspect entered a bank in the 17300 block of Carmenita Road on Monday, July 26 at 10:44 a.m. Threats were made and a teller relinquished money.

## Residential Burglaries

There were 12 residential burglaries investigated in July, up from three in June. Eight of the homes were entered through an open/unlocked door or window. In addition, three homes had pried windows and one garage door was kicked in. Purses, laptops, jewelry, firearms and electronics were among the stolen items. The new 2010 weekly average in residential burglaries is 2.1.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries also increased from nine in June to 41 in July. High-

volume commercial parking lots were the scenes of 35 of the crimes. Twenty-two involved SUVs, three victims reported GPS units taken, and five stereos were stolen. Other items reported missing included cash, cameras, sporting goods, purses, CDs, cell phones, MP3 players, cosmetics, third-row seats (from SUVs), food and wallets. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is now 7.

## Vehicle Thefts

Twenty-one vehicle thefts were investigated in July, an increase from 15 in June. Twenty vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Fifteen SUVs, three Hondas and two Toyotas were among the stolen vehicles. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle thefts was 4.7 at the end of July.

## Beware of foreclosure scams

The ongoing mortgage crisis has left the door open for fraudulent foreclosure "rescue" professionals who use half-truths or outright lies to sell phony services. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) offers the following tips to help you recognize a foreclosure scam.

Foreclosure rescue firms use simple and straightforward messages, such as "Stop Foreclosure Now!" Once they have your attention, they will attempt to get your money.

### Phony counseling

In phony counseling scams, the scam artist tells you that he can negotiate a deal with your lender to save your house if you pay a fee first. You may be told not to contact your lender, lawyer or credit counselor, and to let the "negotiator" handle the details. Once you pay the fee, the scam artist takes off with your money.

### Bait and switch

In a bait and switch scheme, you think you are signing documents for a new loan to make your existing mortgage current. However, you could be signing documents that surrender the title of your house to a scam artist in

exchange for a "rescue" loan.

### Rent-to-buy scheme

In a rent-to-buy scheme, you are told to surrender the title of your home as part of a deal that allows you to remain in your home as a renter, and buy it back during the next few years. The terms of these deals are usually so burdensome that buying back your home becomes impossible. You lose your home and the scam artist walks off with all or most of your home's equity. Worse yet, when the new borrower defaults on the loan, you are evicted.

### Bankruptcy foreclosure

A smooth talker may promise to negotiate with your lender or to get refinancing on your behalf if you pay a fee up front. Instead, this scam artist pockets the fee and files a bankruptcy case in your name—sometimes without your knowledge.

### Finding legitimate help

If you are having trouble paying your mortgage or have already gotten a foreclosure notice, contact your lender immediately. You may be able to negotiate a new repayment schedule.

## Be the "eyes and ears" of law enforcement

With approximately 51,500 people in Cerritos, there are not enough Deputies to be in all areas of the City at once. 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 reporting any circumstances that should be investigated. Residents often know which people and vehicles are out of place in their neighborhoods.

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. We are all responsible for helping to maintain a safe City.

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.