

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

January 2010

## Hardening the Target

### **Beware of criminals impersonating United States Census officials**

As the United States Census process is now underway, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft. Census workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 Census workers will attempt to count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data.

To differentiate between a legitimate United States Census official and a con artist, keep the following tips in mind:

- If an official Census worker knocks on your door, he or she will have a badge, a hand-held device, a Census Bureau

canvas bag and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see the person's identification and badge before answering any questions. In addition, never invite anyone you don't know into your home.

- Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information and will never ask for your Social Security number, credit card or banking information. If someone comes to your door asking for this private information, do not give them any information, and call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station.
- No matter what the person may ask you, for the Census you are only required to state how many people live at your address.
- While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range,

you are not obligated to answer questions about your personal finances.

- Census officials will not solicit donations. Any one asking for a donation is NOT with the Census Bureau.
- The Census Bureau has decided not to work with ACORN to gather information. If a worker from ACORN approaches you, saying he/she is with the Census Bureau, do not talk to him/her.
- Eventually, Census workers may contact you by telephone, mail or in person at your home. The Census Bureau will not contact you by e-mail, so be on the lookout for e-mail scams. If you receive an e-mail that claims to be from the Census Bureau, do not open it. Instead, delete the e-mail immediately.

### **Details on a new bank-related phishing scam**

Several customers of various banks have recently received a text message claiming to be from their financial institution. The message informs the customer that his/her account has been frozen. To "un-freeze" the account, the message asks customers to call the number provided in the text message and enter their debit card number, PIN number and expiration date. The text message is a new phishing scam. If you receive a similar text message, contact your bank's security division immediately.

In addition, if you have received an e-mail from any organization stating that your bank account has been suspended or in any way compromised, do NOT respond to the message. If there is a concern about your bank account, your bank will contact you directly by phone or mail, not through a text message or e-mail. Protect your privacy and do not give personal information to anyone you do not know.

There has also been a new phishing scam e-mail circulating among credit union members. The e-mail

appears to be sent from the California Credit Union League, and asks members to fill out their personal information for a chance to receive a free iPhone. Never respond to free prize or survey e-mails that appear to be from the California Credit Union League. The League will not directly contact credit union members and would never ask for personal information. If you have received any of these type of e-mails, notify your credit union.

For more internet safety tips, visit [www.onguardonline.gov](http://www.onguardonline.gov).

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# Monthly Crime Summary: December 2009

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station investigated 125 Part I felony cases in December, up from 95 in November. Theft-based cases traditionally increase during the holiday season, and December was no exception. Residential burglaries and vehicle thefts increased in December, and vehicle burglaries and robberies remained the same. Patrol personnel were handling a weekly average of 320 calls for service at the end of December, which is the ending weekly average for 2009.

## Robberies

There were three robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in December and three in November.

On Tuesday, December 8 at 3:45 p.m. two suspects struggled with loss prevention employees of a retail store in the Los Cerritos Center and fled with merchandise.

On Monday, December 14 at 10:00 a.m. two suspects allegedly

forced their way into a residence in the 16400 block of Holmes Place and took a driver's license and a small amount of cash.

On Tuesday, December 29 at 8:17 p.m. two male suspects removed merchandise from a retail store in the Towne Center and fought with loss prevention personnel attempting to detain them. Both suspects were subsequently arrested.

Cerritos averaged 0.7 robberies per week in 2009.

## Residential Burglaries

Thirteen residential burglaries were reported in December, an increase of one case over November. Ten burglaries were made possible by open/unlocked doors or windows. In addition, three windows were pried and three were shattered. Pots and pans, cash, comforters, passports, laptop computers, jewelry, gallons of paint and TVs were among the stolen items. The 2009 weekly

average in residential burglaries was 2.5 at the end of the year.

## Vehicle Burglaries

The same number of vehicle burglaries (32) were reported in December as they were in November. Twenty-four of the December incidents occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots, and 16 of the burglarized vehicles were SUVs. Stereo components were taken from four vehicles and GPS units were taken from seven. Clothing, comforters, ID, briefcases, tools, purses, MP3 players, wallets and a scanner were stolen. The 2009 weekly average in vehicle burglaries ended at 7.5.

## Vehicle Thefts

Twenty-two vehicle thefts were reported in December, up by one from November. Fourteen vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Seven SUVs and 14 Hondas were among the stolen vehicles. The final 2009 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 4.6.

## Learn how to spot and report a drunk driver

It is important to report all drunk drivers to the appropriate authorities. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers the following tips to help you spot and report a drunk driver.

### Spot a drunk driver

The following signs could indicate a drunk driver:

- Turning with a wide radius
- Straddling the center of the road or lane marker
- Appearing to be drunk (eye fixation, face close to the windshield, drinking in the vehicle, etc.)
- Almost striking an object or another vehicle
- Weaving or zigzagging across the road

- Driving on surfaces other than a designated roadway
- Swerving or abruptly turning away from a generally straight course
- Turning abruptly or illegally
- Driving slower than 10 mph below the speed limit
- Stopping without cause in a traffic lane
- Stopping inappropriately
- Following others too closely
- Drifting or moving in a straight line
- Erratic braking
- Driving into opposing or crossing traffic
- Signaling that is inconsistent with driving actions
- Slow response to traffic signals,

including sudden stops and delayed starts

- Driving with headlights off

### How to report a drunk driver

1. Call 911 if on the freeway or the seven-digit number of your local law enforcement agency and tell them you wish to report a drunk driver.
2. Give the exact location of the vehicle, including the name of the road or cross streets and the direction the vehicle is traveling.
3. Give a complete description of the vehicle, including make, model, color and license plate if possible.
4. Describe the manner in which the vehicle is being driven.

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.