

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

June 2010

Hardening the Target

Thwart burglars with proper safety measures

Don't be a target

Have you ever been locked out of your home, but were able to get inside anyway? If so, it's just as easy for someone else to break in. Many intruders will spend no more than 60 seconds trying to break into a home. The best prediction of a future burglary is a past burglary. Therefore, it is important to take preventive measures now. Strong locks and good neighbors who look out for one another can be effective deterrents to burglars.

The following tips can help you keep you and your property safe and secure.

Check your locks

Make sure every external door has a strong, well-installed dead bolt lock. Key-in-the-knob locks are not enough.

Sliding glass doors offer easy access to burglars if they are not properly secured. You can secure them by putting a broomstick or dowel in the inside track to jam the door, or by installing commercially available locks. To prevent the door from being lifted off the track, drill a hole through the sliding door frame and the fixed frame, then insert a pin in the hole. Lock double-hung windows with key locks or "pin" your windows by drilling a small hole at a 45 degree angle between the inner and outer frames, then insert a nail that can be removed. Never hide keys around the outside of your home. Instead, give an extra key to a neighbor you trust. When you

move into a new house or apartment, re-key the locks.

Check your doors

While we all like to feel that once we close and lock our doors we're safe and secure, a lock on a flimsy door will not prevent a burglary. All outside doors should be metal or solid wood. Install a peephole or wide angle viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door. Door chains break easily and don't keep out intruders. If your doors don't fit tightly in their frames, install weather stripping around them.

Check the outside

Take a look at your home from the outside:

- Burglars hate bright lights. Install outside lights and keep them on at night. Motion-detector lights can be particularly effective.
- Keep your yard clean. Prune shrubbery so it doesn't hide windows or doors. Cut back tree limbs that a burglar could use to climb to an upper-level window.
- If you travel, create the illusion that you are home by installing timers that will turn lights (and perhaps a television or radio) on and off in different parts of your home throughout the day and evening hours. Lights burning 24 hours a day are an indicator of an empty house.
- Leave shades, blinds and curtains in normal positions.
- Don't let your mail and/or news-

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Beware of grant deed scam

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Division would like to warn residents about a grant deed scam that has been gaining popularity.

The Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs reports that various private companies are sending mailings to property owners stating that "due to high foreclosures and loan modifications" in the local area, the property owner is at high risk of having his or her home stolen. The company then offers to provide an official copy of the property owner's grant deed (which would supposedly prevent the property owner's house from being stolen). These companies charge upwards of \$100 for the grant deed. However, you should already have a copy of your grant deed, and it is not true that someone can steal your home overnight if you don't have the grant deed in your possession.

If you need an official copy of your grant deed, you can obtain one for a nominal cost from the Los Angeles County Recorder/County Clerk at 12400 Imperial Highway in Norwalk.

If you or someone you know receives an illegal solicitation, or if you need additional information, contact the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs at (800) 593-8222 or visit www.dca.lacounty.gov.

Monthly Crime Summary: May 2010

There were 124 Part I felony crimes investigated by Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel in May, up from 104 in April. Vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts increased, and robberies and residential burglaries declined.

Robberies

Four robberies were investigated by Cerritos deputies in May, compared to eight in April.

At 8:40 p.m. on Thursday, May 13 a male suspect knocked on the front door of a residence in the 16300 block of Monica Circle. When the female victim answered, the suspect produced a handgun and demanded money. The victim slammed the door and the suspect fled on foot.

At 12:13 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18 a male suspect entered a bank in the 13200 block of South Street and handed a teller a note that announced a robbery. The teller walked away from the window after activating the alarm and the suspect

fled without anything.

On Saturday, May 22 at 6:30 p.m. a male teen accosted another male teen in a lot located in the 11100 block of 183rd Street and demanded the victim's cash. The victim complied and the suspect fled on foot.

On Monday, May 24 at 6 p.m. a male exiting a restaurant in the 11500 block of South Street was attacked by three suspects who eventually took his wallet and cell phone.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries dropped from 14 in April to nine in May. Open or unlocked doors and windows were the entry points in seven of the crimes. In addition, two residences had front doors kicked in. Computers, jewelry, garage remotes, cameras, cell phones, cash and cuff links were reported missing. The new 2010 weekly average in residential burglaries is 2.2.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-six vehicle burglaries were

logged in May, up from 20 in April. Thirty of the May cases occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Nineteen of the vehicles were SUVs, nine victims reported stereo components taken, and GPS units were the reported loss in seven cases. Other property stolen included MP3 players, tools, cell phones, purses, wallets, laptops, checkbooks, credit cards, ID and third-row seats from SUVs. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is now 6.6.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts also increased in May to 21 from 17 in April. All of the May thefts occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Ten SUVs, six Hondas and two Toyotas were stolen. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle thefts was 4.7 at the end of May.

Text messaging while driving is not allowed

Writing, sending or reading a text-based communication while driving is against the law in California.

The law applies to electronic wireless communications devices used to manually communicate with any person using text-based communication, including, but not limited to, communications referred to as a text message, instant message or electronic mail.

Violating this law is punishable by a base fine of \$20 for a first offense and \$50 for each subsequent offense. Penalty assessments can more than triple the base fine amount.

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

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papers pile up. Call the post office and newspaper to stop delivery or have a neighbor pick them up.

- Make a list of your valuables, such as DVD players, stereos, computers and jewelry. Take pictures of the items and list their serial numbers and description. This will help police if your home is burglarized.
- When getting work done on your vehicle, leave only the vehicle key for the service personnel. The same goes for car park attendants and valets. If you are having work done on your vehicle, give the service station your business address instead of your home address if possible.
- Never leave a message on your answering machine that indicates that you may not be

at home, or that you live alone. Instead, say, "We're not available right now."

Burglars are capable of additional crimes

While most burglars prefer to strike when no one is home, intruders can commit other crimes such as rape, robbery and assault if they are surprised by someone entering the home, or if they pick a home that is occupied. If something looks questionable (a slit screen, broken window, or open door), don't go inside. Call the police from a neighbor's house, a cell phone or a public phone. At night, if you think you hear someone breaking in, leave safely if you can, then call the police. If you can't leave, lock yourself in a room with a phone and call the police. If an intruder is in your room, pretend you are asleep.

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.