

Cerritos

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Neighborhood

Watch Report

November 2010

Hardening the Target

Holiday safety tips offered

The approaching holidays tend to stimulate more shopping and the stockpiling of merchandise in our homes. Unfortunately, criminals recognize the holiday season as one of great opportunity. Always be aware of your surroundings and always try to shop and walk in parking lots in pairs. Statistics indicate that you are far more likely to become a victim of a crime if you are alone.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following holiday safety tips:

- If you must shop alone, never be afraid to make eye contact with someone. This displays confidence and lessens the chance that a potential robber would be interested. Frequently look around, especially while you are walking outside. Look for familiar faces as you move from store to store. If you notice any, this may suggest that you are being followed.
- If you carry a purse, hold it tight to your body. While you are in a parking lot, consider walking between parked cars. Keep your purse away from passing traffic as there have been incidents of a passenger reaching out from a moving vehicle to grab a purse. Never get too close to a car if the occupant is asking for directions. Leave yourself a way out of any area that you may find yourself in.
- When inside of a store or in a mall, try to keep a small area around yourself and don't let anyone have physical contact with you. If you use your credit card, don't lose sight of it. Be aware of the "double scan." This occurs when your card is passed through a credit card scanner and the cash register. It could be a way of obtaining your credit card number for an unlawful use. Don't display the contents of your purse or wallet. Thieves may be watching to see how much cash you have and how easy of a target you would be.
- Try not to make frequent trips to your car to place merchandise inside before returning to a store. Thieves watch the parking lots and select desirable victims based on what they see. Never store anything in a visible location within the passenger compartment of your vehicle. This is an open invitation to theft.
- Finally, always look inside of your car before you get in, and have your key in your hand as you approach it. If there is someone loitering nearby, return to a location where there are other people and report it to law enforcement, security or store personnel. Use your own intuition. If something does not look right, act on your instinct and take evasive action.

Avoid a vehicle theft

According to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the ten most reported stolen vehicles in the State of California in 2009 are as follows:

1. 1991 Honda Civic
2. 1995 Honda Civic
3. 1989 Toyota Camry
4. 1994 Acura Integra
5. 1994 Nissan Sentra
6. 2007 Toyota Corolla
7. 1995 Saturn SL
8. 1997 Nissan Altima
9. 1997 Ford F150 pick-up
10. 1986 Toyota 4x4 pick-up

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center and the NCIC urge motorists to follow the "layered approach" to auto theft prevention. By employing these simple, low-cost suggestions, your vehicle will be less attractive to thieves.

Common sense

Lock your car and take your keys.

Alarm system

Use a visible or audible alarm system to deter thieves.

Immobilizing device

Immobilizing devices such as "kill" switches, fuel cut-offs and smart keys are extremely effective. A steering wheel locking device is a great visual deterrent.

Tracking device

A tracking device emits a signal to the police or to a monitoring station when the vehicle is stolen. Some systems combine GPS and wireless technologies to allow remote monitoring of a vehicle.

Monthly Crime Summary: October 2010

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel conducted 112 Part I felony investigations in October, up by one crime over September. Robberies and vehicle thefts increased, residential burglaries remained the same, and vehicle thefts decreased. At the end of October, patrol deputies were handling a 2010 weekly average of 299 calls for service.

Robberies

Five robberies were logged in October, up from two in September.

On Saturday, October 2 at 10:05 p.m., three suspects entered a store in the 12800 block of South Street. One produced a handgun and demanded money. The clerk shut the cash register drawer, which prompted one of the suspects to rip a gold chain from the clerk's neck. All three suspects fled to an awaiting vehicle.

A lone gunman robbed a bank in the 11800 block of South Street on Thursday, October 14 at 10:45 a.m. The suspect was identified and arrested two weeks later.

At 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, October 20, three female suspects

stole merchandise from a retail store located in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue. When confronted by loss prevention personnel, a struggle ensued and the suspects fled. Detectives have good investigative leads in this case.

Two male suspects accosted a male juvenile at 193rd Street and Bechard Avenue on Monday, October 25 at 7:40 p.m. One suspect displayed a handgun and the victim was robbed of cash and a cell phone.

The final October case occurred on Thursday, October 28 at 11:40 a.m. in a lot located in the 13300 block of Alondra Boulevard. A male suspect grabbed a money bag from a female victim and fled on foot.

Residential Burglaries

There were 21 residential burglaries reported in October, the same total as in September. Eleven of the October crimes were facilitated by open/unlocked doors or windows, five were the result of pried windows, three front doors were kicked in, and two windows were shattered.

Jewelry, cash, TVs, cameras and laptop computers were among the items stolen. The new 2010 weekly average in residential burglaries is 2.8.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries increased from 29 cases in September to 38 in October. Twenty-six of the October crimes occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. SUVs were involved in 27 of the burglaries.

Three GPS units and four stereos were reported stolen, in addition to third-row seats from SUVs, purses, credit cards, wallets, checkbooks, MP3 players, Social Security cards, duffle bags, cell phones, golf clubs and laptop computers. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is now 7.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 21 in September to 17 in October. Fifteen of the vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Twelve SUVs, three Hondas and a Toyota were among the stolen vehicles. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle thefts remains at 4.6.

Avoid a residential burglary

One crime that has a lingering affect on us is when a stranger breaks into our home, goes through our personal property and steals items that are dear to our hearts. There are steps that can be taken to avoid becoming a victim of a residential burglary, or at the very least, to make it more difficult for someone to break into our homes.

Residential burglaries are predominately a daytime crime. Houses are generally targeted by thieves who have either observed the neighborhood activity prior to the crimes, or make an attempt to determine if there is anyone home just before entry. This is usually done by knocking at the door for a period of time

or even walking around the exterior of the residence. If you observe a person going door-to-door, in a yard, or a vehicle parked that you do not recognize, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station immediately. Note the description of the pedestrian, the type and color of the vehicle, the license plate number, and any occupants.

To help prevent a residential burglary, the following tips are offered:

- Use a monitored alarm system that produces an audible alert when a door or a window is breached.
- Install locking pins or similar hardware that holds all sliding glass doors or windows securely to the frames so they cannot be

pried open.

- Make sure all doors and windows (second story included) are secured prior to leaving the residence, even if you plan to be gone only a short period of time.
- Keep your garage door closed unless you are monitoring it.
- Install a front door and side garage door constructed of a solid core wood or metal, and equipped with sturdy deadbolts and strike plates that attach to reinforced frames.
- Lock your side gate.
- Report suspicious persons or vehicles to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044.

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.