

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

October 2010

## Hardening the Target

### Help prevent crime in Cerritos

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to remind residents of the "two-pronged" approach to crime prevention.

#### Removing the opportunity

In order for a crime to be committed, there must be an opportunity available to the potential criminal. These opportunities come in the forms of open doors or windows at a residence or valuable items left on dashboards and seats of vehicles that can be seen by anyone looking in. An opportunity can be exploited when a person walks away from a stroller or shopping basket that contains a purse, checkbook or wallet, or is alone when using an ATM in hours of darkness.

Our first "prong" is to remove those opportunities by thinking in a sense of security for our personal property and safety for ourselves and family. The following tips are offered:

- Make sure all doors and windows are secured before leaving your home.
- Never leave valuable items in your car. Place them in a covered trunk if possible, leave them at home, or take them with you (especially if you own a van, SUV or a pick-up without secure storage).
- Never leave an open garage door unattended
- Never leave property where it can be easily taken.

Additional tips are included in the

other article on this page.

#### "Eyes and ears"

The second "prong" is to be the eyes and ears of law enforcement in the community. With approximately 51,000 people in Cerritos, there is a limited amount of deputies to patrol the City. 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 cannot be everywhere at the same time. By being the eyes and ears of law enforcement, you have the opportunity to call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station and report circumstances that should be investigated.

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 don't feel this way. Deputies want to be directed to situations like these as their contact can stop a crime before it is committed or determine that the individual(s) involved are acting in a law-abiding manner. Either way, that's their job and they have to rely on information provided by citizens to better protect the community.

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 help keep Cerritos safe.

### Don't let your gadgets distract you from your surroundings

Local police are reporting higher numbers of thefts involving victims distracted by iPods or cell phones.

Los Angeles Police Department Lt. Paul Vernon told local news station ABC 7: "People are walking around the street in public with their head down texting and thinking about a conversation, rather than up looking around them, and it's given criminals an opportunity to snatch these cell phones and iPods out of people's hands in broad daylight."

In Los Angeles, approximately 18 percent of robberies and grand thefts are related to cell phones and iPods.

Avoid a digital distraction by following these tips:

- If you are walking to a vehicle, have your keys ready in your hand.
- If you feel you are being followed as you walk to your vehicle, do not go to your vehicle. Continue to a populated area and summon help.
- Keep to well-lit, commonly traveled routes. Avoid shortcuts and dark, isolated areas.
- Pay attention to where you are and who is around you.
- If you need to shop at night, take a friend with you.

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A publication of the City of Cerritos and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

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# Monthly Crime Summary: September 2010

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 111 Part I felonies in September, an increase of 10 cases over August. Residential burglaries, vehicle thefts and vehicle burglaries were up, while robberies declined. Field personnel handled a 2010 weekly average of 300 calls for service.

## Robberies

There were two robberies investigated by Cerritos deputies in September, compared to five in August.

On Friday, September 17 at 1:25 p.m. one male and one female suspect entered a store in the Towne Center where they hid shoes among their possessions and attempted to leave the store. After being confronted by loss prevention personnel, a fight ensued. The suspects dropped the merchandise and fled to an awaiting vehicle driven by a

third suspect.

On Saturday, September 18 at 7:10 p.m. another attempted shoplifting incident occurred in the Towne Center. Another male and female combination stole items and fought with employees. Both were eventually detained until deputies arrived to take them into custody.

## Residential Burglaries

Twenty-one residential burglaries were reported in September, up from 17 in August. Open/unlocked doors or windows were the entry points in 13 of the September cases. In addition, six windows were pried open and two windows were shattered. Cameras, air compressors, laptop computers, jewelry, cell phones and cash were stolen. The new 2010 weekly average in residential burglaries is 2.6.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries increased from 25 cases in August to 29 in September. Twenty-three of the September crimes occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. SUVs were involved in 25 incidents. Six GPS units and four stereos were reported stolen, in addition to third-row seats from SUVs, purses, debit cards, credit cards, wallets, MP3 players, cell phones and laptop computers. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 6.9.

## Vehicle Thefts

Twenty-one vehicle thefts were investigated in September, up from 16 in August. Nineteen vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Nine SUVs, eight Hondas and one Toyota were taken. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 4.6.

## Avoid distractions when driving

During a recent two-day campaign, officers from the California Highway Patrol and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department aggressively sought out drivers violating the "hands free" cell phone laws that have been in effect since 2008.

Although cell phones are the most familiar form of distraction, The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Virginia Tech Transportation Institute define distracted driving as "anything that diverts the driver's attention away from the primary tasks of navigating a vehicle and responding to critical events."

In a written statement, California Highway Patrol (CHP) Commissioner Joe Farrow said: "Impaired driving is a dangerous and irresponsible behavior that results in hundreds of victims killed and thousands of others injured in California every year."

In 2008, the CHP reported that more than 30,000 drivers in Califor-

nia were involved in traffic collisions in which inattention played a role. More than 1,000 drivers involved in these accidents identified cell phones as the cause of distraction.

Locally, the fine for first-time distracted drivers is \$156 and a moving violation puts a point on a driver's record (a cell phone violation does not result in a point on the record).

When you are distracted by a cell phone while driving, your reaction time to any hazard is delayed. In some cases you may not perceive the hazard at all. The second a driver takes to look down and see who's calling could be the time necessary to avoid a collision.

Additional distractions in the vehicle can also be eliminated - unless you are stopped, never look down to change the radio station or pick up something that fell. It is critical to focus on your driving at all times. This not only improves your own driving, but helps keep you safe.

## Insure your vehicle

The following insurance information is provided by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV):

- All insurance companies are required to report insurance status to the DMV for all private use vehicles.
- Law enforcement and court personnel have access to DMV records to verify that your California registered vehicle is currently insured.
- Your vehicle registration is subject to suspension if the liability insurance is cancelled, or if your insurance company has not electronically provided evidence of insurance when you purchase and register your vehicle, or if you provide the DMV with false insurance information.

These changes help ensure that fewer uninsured vehicles will be on California's roadways. Remember, you must carry proof of insurance in your vehicle at all times.

Safety Contacts:  
Community Safety Division -  
(562) 916-1266  
Sheriff's Station - (562) 860-0044



CERRITOS SHERIFF'S STATION

COMMUNITY SAFETY CENTER



To join Cerritos Neighborhood Watch, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center at (562) 916-1266.