

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

April 2011

Hardening the Target

Cerritos to receive public safety grant

The City of Cerritos will soon receive a \$16,338 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) from the Department of Justice to prevent or reduce crime and violence.

Cerritos' allocation of JAG funds will be used to establish a Cerritos Sheriff's Station bicycle patrol program. The bicycle patrol program will make Sheriff's deputies more approachable to the public and allow for more informal interactions. Bicycles also allow deputies to access areas that patrol cars cannot access, such as community parks or flood control channel bike paths.

Deputies assigned to the bicycle patrol program will attend training to learn advanced riding skills, defensive and offensive riding strategies and general bicycle maintenance. The bicycle patrol program will also include educational presentations to the community about bicycle safety.

The JAG funds will be used to purchase nine bicycles and miscellaneous supplies for the bicycle patrol program, including bicycle racks for patrol vehicles, bicycle racks for storage, tools, spare parts and equipment. Uniforms, helmets and training will be provided by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.



Beware of criminals impersonating local government utility workers

Most people don't think twice about opening the door to a uniformed city or federal worker. However, a uniform is no guarantee that a government employee is authentic. ID badges and even some equipment can be duplicated by expert impersonators. An unsuspecting, vulnerable person is an easy target for criminal activity.

Recently, three residential burglaries occurred in Cerritos after the suspects pretended to be City of Cerritos Water Department employees. The suspects informed the resident that they needed to check the resident's water supply for sand contamination. While inside, one of the suspects entered the bedroom and took valuables.

Cerritos water department employees rarely need to enter residences because water meters are at the street. If an official City of Cerritos Department of Water and Power employee knocks on your door, he or she will be wearing a uniform, carrying a photo ID and driving a city vehicle.

Ask to see the person's photo identification before answering any questions. In addition, never invite anyone you don't know into your home.

If a person claiming to be a Cerritos Department of Water and Power employee has identification and you still feel uncomfortable, call the City's water department at (562) 916-1223 to verify an appointment and/or the water department's presence in your neighborhood.

Pedestrian safety tips offered

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

- Always cross a street at a corner, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Stand clear of buses, hedges, parked cars or other obstacles before crossing so drivers can see you.
- Don't rely solely on pedestrian signals; try to make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them. Do not assume that because you

can see the driver, the driver can see you.

- Look across all lanes you must cross and visually clear each lane before proceeding. Just because one motorist stops, do not presume drivers in other lanes can see you and will stop for you.
- Look left, right and left again when crossing, and keep looking as you cross. Walk, do not run, across the street.
- Walk on sidewalks or paths. If

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Monthly Crime Summary: March 2011

There were 75 Part I felony investigations conducted by Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel in March, down from 80 in February. Robberies and residential burglaries increased slightly, while vehicle thefts and vehicle burglaries declined. At the end of March, field deputies were handling a 2011 weekly average of 256 calls for service.

Robberies

Four robberies were reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in March, up from three in February.

On Sunday, March 6 at 5:15 p.m., a male juvenile was confronted by another male juvenile in the 18100 block of Dumont Avenue. The victim relinquished his cell phone, wallet and keys.

On Friday, March 18 at 9 a.m. a male suspect was stealing motorcycle accessories in a lot at the Towne Center when the victim walked up to him. The suspect ran to his vehicle and drove toward the victim, causing the victim to jump out of the way.

The last two cases of the month

were both shoplifting incidents. On Monday, March 28 at 3 p.m. a loss prevention employee from a retail store in the Towne Center was attempting to detain a shoplifting suspect when the male suspect pushed the employee and fled through the lot.

The final incident occurred at 1:21 p.m. on Wednesday, March 30 at another store in the Towne Center. An employee attempted to detain two male shoplifters but they pushed him down and fled to an awaiting vehicle.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries increased from 13 cases in February to 15 in March. Two of the March incidents were "distraction burglaries" in which two suspects represented themselves as utility workers who claimed the need to check the residents' tap water for sand contamination. Eight of the March burglaries were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. In addition, three windows were pried open and two windows were shattered. Property

stolen included cameras, laptops, jewelry, cell phones, firearms, cash and computer games. The new 2011 weekly average in residential burglaries is 3.8.

Vehicle Burglaries

Seventeen vehicle burglaries were investigated in March, down from 22 in February. All of the burglaries occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Twelve of the vehicles involved were SUVs. Thieves targeted stereo products in three cases and one GPS unit was taken. Other property reported stolen included third-row seats from SUVs, gift certificates, shoes, MP3 players, sunglasses, wallets, purses, cash, ID and computers. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 5.1.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 11 in February to seven in March. Six vehicles were stolen from high-volume parking lots. Three SUVs and a Honda were among the stolen vehicles. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 2.2.

Pedestrian safety tips offered

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there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.

- Be a safe pedestrian around cars. Watch for cars that are turning or backing up.
- Wear clothing and accessories incorporating reflective materials.
- Cross in a well-lit area at night.
- Never walk on freeways or in restricted zones.
- Carry a flashlight when walking at night.
- Be alert to engine noise or backup lights on cars when in parking lots and near on-street parking spaces.
- Don't wear headphones or talk on a cell phone while crossing.

Safety tips for children

- Parents and children should

hold hands in parking lots.

- Never allow children under age 10 to cross streets alone. Adult supervision is essential until you are sure a child has good traffic skills and judgment.
- Children should walk on direct routes with the fewest street crossings.
- Make sure children know to cross 10 feet in front of a school bus, never behind, and to wait for adults on the same side of the street as the school bus loading or unloading zone.
- Teach your child never to run out into a street for a ball, a pet or any other reason.
- Make sure your child plays in safe places away from motor vehicles, such as yards, parks and playgrounds and

never in the street. Fence off play areas from driveways and streets.

Safety tips for drivers

- Stop for pedestrians who are in a crosswalk, even if it is not marked. When you stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk, stop well back so that drivers behind you or in the other lanes can also see the pedestrian in time to stop.
- When you are turning, you often have to wait for a break in traffic. Beware that while you are watching for that break, pedestrians may have moved into your intended path.
- Check frequently for pedestrians when backing out of a driveway or a parking space.
- Be especially attentive around schools and in neighborhoods.

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.