

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

August 2011

Hardening the Target

Prevent telemarketing fraud targeting seniors

Many legitimate companies and charities solicit consumers by phone as an effective way to raise money or increase company business. Unfortunately, some criminals will also contact people by phone under the guise of being a legitimate company. The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) believes that seniors can prevent telemarketing fraud by being educated consumers.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, nearly 25 million Americans are victims of consumer fraud each year. Senior citizens continue to be a rapidly increasing segment of the population, and that can make them a prime target for con artists and thieves.

Studies have shown that senior citizens are more at risk to be targeted by telemarketing scams than other age groups, with fraudulent telemarketers directing up to 80 percent of their calls to older Americans. These con artists believe that senior citizens are vulnerable and more susceptible to their tricks. However, NCPC is helping many seniors to be shrewd and savvy citizens by offering the following fraud prevention tips:

- Offers too good to be true usually are. If you are being offered a special prize or offer, ask for the information in writing so you can read it carefully before making a commitment.
- Never give out your personal information over the phone or

Internet unless you initiated the contact. Legitimate business callers will never ask you for your personal information over the phone.

- If a caller asks you to pay for an offer in advance or asks for your credit card number or Social Security number, tell the person you don't give out personal information over the telephone.
- Remember that legitimate telemarketers won't be turned off if you use these techniques. They will appreciate dealing with an educated consumer.

Beware of phony job placement firms

If you're looking for a job, you may see ads for job placement firms that promise results. Many of these firms may be legitimate and helpful, but others may misrepresent their services, promote outdated or fictitious job offerings, or charge high fees in advance for services that may not lead to a job.

Before you spend money responding to placement firms or completing placement contracts, observe the following tips:

- Reject any company that promises to get you a job.
- Be skeptical of any employment-service firm that charges first, even if it guarantees refunds.
- Get a copy of the firm's contract

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Protect yourself from road rage

Over the past several years, there has been an increase in road rage incidents. Some have resulted in serious injury and even death. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following tips on how to recognize a problem driver and how not to provoke one.

Characteristic aggressive driving behavior

- Following too close
- Passing on the right
- Cutting in and out of traffic
- Speeding beyond the flow of traffic
- Failure to signal for multiple lane changes
- Merging into on ramps through safety markings
- Failure to yield at ramps and intersections
- Railroad crossing violations
- Passing a stopped school bus
- Displaying or using a weapon

Strategies to minimize potential danger

- Don't react to provocation
- Stay away from erratic drivers
- Avoid eye contact with an aggressive driver
- Use your horn sparingly
- Don't flash high beam lights
- Do not make obscene gestures
- Don't switch lanes without signaling
- Do not tailgate
- Don't block lanes
- When parking, don't take more

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Monthly Crime Summary: July 2011

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station investigated 105 Part I felonies in July, up from 90 in June. In July, vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts increased, and robberies and residential burglaries decreased. The 2011 weekly average in calls for service handled by patrol personnel was 273 at the end of July.

Robberies

There were two robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in July, compared to three in June.

On Thursday, July 14 at 11:30 a.m. a landscaping crew was working in the 17700 block of Studebaker Road when they observed three suspects loading one of their lawnmowers into a van. As they ran to stop the theft, one of the suspects produced a handgun and the workers backed off and allowed the suspects to flee with the property.

On Thursday, July 28 at approximately 9:45 p.m. a male juvenile was riding a bike on 176th Street near Cortner Avenue when another male juvenile ran up behind the victim, pushed him down, and fled with the bicycle.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries dropped from 17 in June to 14 in July. Open/unlocked doors or windows were the entry points in eight of the July crimes. In addition, four windows were pried open and two front doors were kicked in. Bikes, TVs, laptop computers, jewelry, cash, business suits, X-Box gaming systems and credit cards were among the items reported stolen. The 2011 weekly average in residential burglaries remained at 3.6 through July.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries increased from

27 in June to 39 in July. Thirty-four of the July cases occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Twenty-four involved SUVs. GPS units were stolen from five vehicles and stereo items were stolen from two vehicles. Third-row seats from SUVs, credit cards, purses, wallets, clothing, MP3 players, suitcases, boots, sunglasses, laptop computers and cell phones were reported stolen. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 6.2.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts rose from 10 in June to 21 in July. Eighteen of the July thefts were from high-volume commercial parking lots. Five were SUVs and eight were Hondas. Motorcycles, trailers and a golf cart were also stolen. The 2011 weekly average in vehicle thefts remained at 2.9.

Beware of phony job placement firms

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and read it carefully before you pay any money. Understand the terms and conditions of the firm's refund policy. Make sure you understand what services the firm will provide and what you'll be responsible for doing. If oral promises are made, but don't appear in the contract, think twice about doing business with the firm.

- Take your time reading the contract. Don't be caught up in a rush to pay for services. Stay away from high-pressure sales pitches that require you to pay now or risk losing out on an opportunity.
- Be cautious about purchasing services or products from a firm that's reluctant to answer your questions.
- Be aware that some listing services and "consultants" write their ads to sound like they are jobs when they're only selling general information about getting a job.
- Follow up with the offices of any company or organization mentioned in an ad, or in an interview by an employment service to find out if the company is really hiring.
- Be wary of firms promoting "previously undisclosed" federal government jobs. All federal positions are announced to the public on www.usajobs.gov.
- Check with your local consumer protection agency, state Attorney General's Office, and the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed about a company with which you

intend to do business. You also may contact these organizations if you have a problem with an employment-service firm.

Protect yourself from road rage

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than one space

- Avoid all conflict and allow plenty of time for your trip
- Be polite and courteous, even if other drivers are not

Cell phone users commonly have difficulty maintaining their awareness of speed and surrounding traffic conditions. This is an increasing cause of road rage. If you must use a cell phone, California law dictates that it must be used "hands-free."

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.