

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

December 2011

Hardening the Target

Homes must have a carbon monoxide detector installed

As a reminder, California's Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act of 2010 requires that all residential properties with a fossil fuel (such as natural gas) burning appliance or fireplace or an attached garage be equipped with an approved carbon monoxide alarm.

Only carbon monoxide alarms approved by the California State Fire Marshall and having the Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) Certification may be used.

Carbon monoxide alarms are available at local hardware and home improvement stores.

Single family homes were required to have a detector installed by July 1, 2011. All other residential units must have the detectors installed by January 1, 2013.

Penalties for non-compliance are punishable by a maximum fine of \$200 for each offense. However, a property owner must first receive a 30-day notice to correct the violation.

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, tasteless, invisible gas that results from the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, such as wood, gasoline, propane, natural gas and oil.

Where is carbon monoxide found?

Low levels of carbon monoxide are present in the air. Inside, the gas is formed from incomplete combustion from any flame-fueled device, including ranges, ovens, clothes dryers, fireplaces, space heaters, vehicles, and improperly ventilated furnaces

and water heaters. Open flames from ovens and ranges are the most common sources of the gas, while vehicles are the most common cause of carbon monoxide poisoning.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center urges residents to never use ovens, ranges or portable outdoor barbecues to heat their homes. These appliances are not meant for heating.

Have your gas appliances inspected annually by a licensed, qualified professional or by Southern California Gas Company.

For more home appliance safety information, please visit the Southern California Gas Company website at socialgas.com/safety/appliance-safety.shtml or the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission website at cpsc.gov.

How do carbon monoxide detectors work?

Carbon monoxide detectors are designed to alarm before potentially life-threatening levels of carbon monoxide are reached. The detectors require a continuous power supply, so if the power cuts off, the alarm becomes ineffective. However, models are available that offer backup battery power.

Why is carbon monoxide dangerous?

Carbon monoxide interferes with the oxygen transport and gas exchange abilities of red blood cells, therefore starving the body of oxygen. Low levels of poisoning cause

flu or cold-like symptoms, while higher levels of exposure lead to dizziness, mental confusion, severe headaches, nausea and fainting on mild exertion. Ultimately, carbon monoxide poisoning can result in unconsciousness, brain damage and death.

Where to place the detector

Detectors should be placed on a wall about five feet above the floor or on the ceiling. Do not place the detector right next to or over a fireplace or flame-producing appliance. Keep the detector out of the way of pets and children. Each floor of a house needs a separate detector. A single carbon monoxide detector should be placed near your sleeping area. Make certain the alarm is loud enough to wake you up.

What to do if you hear the alarm

Don't ignore the alarm! It is intended to go off before you experience symptoms. Silence the alarm, take your family outside, and ask whether anyone is experiencing any of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. If anyone is experiencing symptoms, call 911. If no one has symptoms, ventilate the building, identify and remedy the source of the carbon monoxide before returning inside, and have appliances or chimneys checked by a professional as soon as possible.

Be aware that the average life span of many carbon monoxide detectors is three to five years. The "test" feature on many detectors checks the functioning of the alarm and not the status of the detector.

Monthly Crime Summary: November 2011

Cerritos deputies conducted 102 Part I felony investigations in November, down from 121 in October. Crimes in all categories reported in this summary decreased, with the exception of vehicle thefts. At the end of November, patrol deputies were handling a 2011 weekly average of 271 calls for service.

Robberies

There were two robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in November, compared to six in October.

A 17-year-old male victim drove over 70 miles to Cerritos to purchase a small amount of marijuana in the 11340 block of South Street on Monday, November 7 at 6:45 p.m. The arrangement had been made via a website, and upon arrival, two male suspects robbed the victim at gunpoint of cash, an

iPhone and his shoes.

In a business transaction turned bad, a male was robbed by another male at gunpoint on Monday, November 28 at 4:20 p.m. in the Los Cerritos Center. The object of the sale was diamonds.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries dropped from 22 in October to 16 in November. Open/unlocked doors or windows were used to gain access to 14 of the homes. In addition, one window was pried open and one window was shattered. Reported stolen items included cell phones, GPS units, TVs, cash, laptop computers, handguns, jewelry and cash. The new 2011 weekly average in residential burglaries was 3.9 at the end of November.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries decreased from

38 in October to 35 in November. Thirteen of the November cases occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots and SUVs were targeted in 16 crimes. Two GPS units, a stereo, third-row seats from SUVs, tools, cameras, a passport, clothing, sunglasses, CDs, mp3 players, purses and cash were reported stolen. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 6.8.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts rose from 23 in October to 25 in November. Seventeen of the vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Seven SUVs, two Hondas and a Toyota were stolen, in addition to commercial trucks and trailers. The current 2011 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 3.3.

Inexpensive safety-related items outlined

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center often reminds residents of simple and inexpensive ways to avoid becoming a victim of crime, such as the use of deadbolt locks and locking pins in sliding glass windows and doors to prevent a burglar from easily entering your home. The following inexpensive safety-related items are also recommended for purchase.

Steering wheel locking device

For \$20 to \$30, a steering wheel locking device serves as a great visible deterrent to any auto thief. Auto thieves are commonly pressed for time, and seeing a steering wheel locking device will often make them find another vehicle to target.

Document shredder

A document shredder is crucial for the destruction of documents that may contain personal account information, Social Security numbers or

any other data that can be used by a criminal to obtain goods, services or money in your name. Document shredders can be purchased for as little as \$40, and many will shred up to six sheets of paper at a time, CDs, DVDs and diskettes. Shredders for single sheet destruction are even less expensive.

Law enforcement frequently encounters "dumpster divers," or individuals who rummage through trash receptacles in search of pre-screened credit offers or any other personal documents that have been discarded by careless citizens. Social Security numbers, account numbers and driver's license numbers are then sold to individuals who use the information to establish accounts or make purchases on existing accounts. Before discarding personal information, make sure it is shredded.

Prevent the theft of third-row seats

If you own an SUV, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center recommends that you use some type of cable lock to secure your vehicle's third-row seats to keep them from being stolen. Theft of third-row seats from SUVs has increased dramatically, and with expensive replacement costs, protecting your property can save you time and money.



Cable locks like the one pictured above can be purchased at hardware stores, and are an inexpensive way to protect your property.

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.