

Cerritos

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Neighborhood

Watch Report

February 2011

Hardening the Target

911 assistance available in multiple languages

In Cerritos, there have been incidents in which residential burglars operating during daytime hours encounter non-English speaking senior citizens inside a home. This has occurred after the burglar(s) attempted to determine if anyone was inside the residence by knocking on the front door for a period of time and not receiving a response. In some of these instances, after the crime was completed, the senior victims called their children, who in turn contacted the Cerritos Sheriff's Station to report the crime.

If someone is knocking on your door and you do not want to answer it, say something or make a noise that will let the person know that the home is occupied: turn the volume up on a radio or television, slam a door or make any other sound that can be heard from the porch.

In the event of a crime, it is important to call 911 immediately. Non-English speakers can receive immediate language assistance by announcing their language ("Mandarin," "Korean," "Tagalog," etc.) when the operator answers. The dispatcher will immediately connect the caller to an interpreter to ensure a rapid response by deputies.

Please share this information with non-English speaking family members so they can receive the prompt emergency service the Cerritos Sheriff's Station provides.

Take precautions when leaving a child home alone

Many parents must choose between leaving their children home alone during the day while they are at work or busy with other commitments, or finding alternative care. If you must leave your children home alone, there are precautions you can take to ease your worries and help protect your children while they are home alone.

What parents can do

- Stay in touch. Call children throughout the day to ask how they are and what they are doing. Ask children to check in before they leave the house and to call again when they return.
- Keep kids connected. Post important numbers by the telephone, including parents' work and cell phones, the doctor's office, and a neighbor or a nearby relative who can help children quickly if they need it.
- Practice what to do in an emergency. Teach children how to dial 911 or "0" and when to do it. Ask questions like "If someone is trying to get in the house, what should you do?" "If you get hurt, what should you do?" and "If you want to play at a friend's house, what should you do?"
- Set firm rules. Make clear what children are allowed to do and what they aren't allowed to do. Can they use the Internet when home alone? Can they invite

a friend over? Can they invite several friends over?

Make sure your children are ready

All children mature differently, so there is no precise age when they are ready to stay home alone. This makes the decision to leave children alone even harder for parents. Many states have laws concerning the legal age when children can be left unsupervised, but there is no guarantee that when children reach this age they will be ready. However, there are questions parents can ask themselves to help determine if their children are ready.

Can your children. . .

- Be trusted to go straight home after school or after playing at a neighbor's house?
- Easily use the telephone, locks and kitchen appliances?
- Follow rules and instructions well?
- Handle unexpected situations without panicking?
- Stay home alone without being afraid?
- Say their full name, address and telephone number?

If you feel comfortable leaving your children home alone and feel that they are ready, discuss it with them and start practicing what they should and shouldn't do. Role play different scenarios to prepare them for anything that might happen while they are home alone.

Monthly Crime Summary: January 2011

There were 101 Part I felony investigations reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in January, down from 121 in December. While robberies increased in January, residential burglaries, vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts decreased. At the end of January, patrol deputies were handling a weekly average of 264 calls for service.

Robberies

There were four robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in January, compared to two in December.

Two male juvenile suspects approached another male juvenile on Wednesday, January 5 at 3:30 p.m. at the intersection of Norwalk Boulevard and Palm Street. The suspects grabbed the victim's cell phone and fled on foot.

A male shoplifting suspect struggled with loss prevention personnel on Sunday, January 16 at 7:35 p.m. after attempting to flee a store in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue. He was eventually detained until deputies arrived.

Three suspects wielding hammers smashed jewelry displays in the Los

Cerritos Center on Sunday, January 30 at 11:50 a.m. and escaped with three watches.

An attempted robbery was investigated on Monday, January 31 at 1:45 p.m. after a lone male suspect attempted to wrestle away a bank deposit bag from a victim in the 12200 block of Artesia Boulevard. The suspect fled without any property.

Residential Burglaries

Twenty residential burglaries were logged in January, down from 22 in December. Eleven of the homes were accessed through open/unlocked doors or windows. In addition, five windows were shattered, two doors were kicked in and two garage door openers were removed from vehicles parked in the driveway, allowing access to the garage, and in turn, the home. Cell phones, tools, documents, home furnishings, cash, jewelry and laptop computers were among the property listed as stolen. The new 2011 weekly average in residential burglaries was 4.2 at the end of January.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries dropped from 34 in December to 26 in January.

Eighteen of the crimes occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Twenty-one SUVs were burglarized. GPS units were stolen from three vehicles and stereo components were stolen from two vehicles. In addition, third-row seats from SUVs, credit cards, TVs (from a trailer), DVD players, cell phones, wallets, purses, passports and tools were stolen. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 6.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 19 in December to nine in January. Eight vehicles were taken from high-volume commercial parking lots. Four SUVs, two Hondas, a Toyota and a golf cart were among those taken. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle thefts is currently 2.5.

Avoid a vehicle burglary

The number one felony crime committed in Cerritos is vehicle burglary. However, most vehicle burglaries could have been prevented if the victim hadn't left property visible inside the vehicle.

The safest place to leave items inside of a vehicle is in your locked garage. Remember that wherever you park, you become "fair game" to any thief who can look inside of your vehicle and observe valuable property. Whether you park on a street, in a parking lot, or even your own driveway, the thin window that separates your property from a thief will not protect your personal items. Window smashes are the most reported points of entry in vehicle burglaries. SUVs, pick-ups and vans do not have trunk space, which makes criminals look even closer. Never leave property visible inside your vehicle.

Passing a school bus displaying flashing red lights is often prohibited

Section 22454(a) of the California Vehicle Code prohibits passing a school bus when the bus is stopped for the purpose of loading or unloading children. Vehicles may not pass while the bus is displaying a red flashing light signal and a stop signal arm (if equipped with a stop arm). All vehicles must remain stopped behind the bus until the red flashing signal (and stop arm) ceases operation.

If you are driving in the same direction of the bus when it stops and activates flashing red lights and/or a signal arm, you must stop behind the bus no matter which lane you are

in. If you are driving in the opposite direction and approach a bus that has flashing red lights you must stop before reaching the bus unless there is more than one lane in each direction or the roadway has a divider.

If convicted of violating Section 22454(a), the first offense will result in a fine and penalties of more than \$700. The second conviction will cost you over \$2,000 and results in a point on your driving record. A third conviction within three years of the first two convictions results in a driver's license suspension for one year and a fine of over \$2,000.

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.