

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

May 2011

Hardening the Target

Pay attention to activity in local parks

As the warmer weather approaches, attendance in our parks increases for a variety of social events and recreational activities. Many residents use or pass by these neighborhood parks on a regular basis. Although there is an extremely low number of incidents reported at local parks, many reports occur after a crime has been committed, such as vandalism or graffiti.

Members of Neighborhood Watch are the “eyes and ears” of the Sheriff’s Department. If you are in or near a Cerritos park, take a moment to carefully observe the facilities and park activities. If you notice any suspicious persons or vehicles, call the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station right away at (562) 860-0044. (Remember, using a cell phone for a 911 call may cause an unnecessary delay in any local response.) If you see graffiti, please call the City’s Graffiti Hotline at (562) 916-1233.

While parks are an attraction for recreation and relaxation, they are also a lure for others that are looking for a place to congregate with less-than-legal intentions. Keep in mind that the parks within the City are closed from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. If you see someone in any closed park, please call the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station at (562) 860-0044. Drinking alcohol or smoking is never permitted in Cerritos parks.

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 would like to offer a few tips on how to recognize problem drivers and how not to provoke them. If someone is driving dangerously, call 911 immediately.

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 multiple lane changes
- Merging into on ramps through safety markings
- Failure to yield at ramps and intersections
- Railroad crossing violations
- Displaying or using a weapon

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 your 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 than one space
- 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 catalyst for road rage. If you must use a cell phone while driving, use a “hands-free” device.

Never leave open windows or doors unattended

With the onset of warmer weather, many residents open windows and doors to ventilate their homes. However, leaving windows and doors open and unattended provides a would-be thief with the opportunity to inventory your belongings for future reference, or even gain access to your home. Burglars often use the easiest point of entry to get inside a home, and an open window or door provides them with the perfect opportunity.

Cerritos Sheriff’s deputies stress the need for a constant presence when your garage door is open. Many thieves are capable of stealing property in a very short amount of time. During the warmer months patrol deputies and Volunteers on Patrol (VOPs) report seeing numerous garage doors open without anyone around. Bicycles, lawn care products, tools and other items can be quickly obtained by pedestrians

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Monthly Crime Summary: April 2011

Eighty-nine Part I felony crimes were investigated by members of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in April, up from 75 in March. Robberies increased in April, along with vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts. Residential burglaries decreased. At the end of April, patrol deputies were handling a weekly average of 257 calls for service.

Robberies

There were five robberies reported in April, an increase of one over March.

A shoplifting incident in the Towne Center on Saturday, April 9 at 1:30 p.m. turned into a robbery when the female suspect fought with loss prevention personnel in an attempt to escape. She was ultimately able to flee, but the merchandise was recovered and detectives have sound leads on the suspect's identity.

A business employee was robbed of a deposit bag on Monday, April 11 at 12:10 p.m. while in a lot at Artesia Boulevard and Norwalk Boulevard.

On Wednesday, April 13 at 2:35 p.m. a male shoplifting suspect was confronted by loss prevention personnel in the 10900 block of Alon-

dra Boulevard. The suspect swung an axe at the employees and fled, but was soon arrested by deputies.

The fourth case of the month occurred on Wednesday, April 20 at 12:15 p.m. at a store in the Los Cerritos Center. A female suspect took high-end perfume and attacked a loss prevention officer in an attempt to escape. The suspect was quickly arrested.

On Tuesday, April 26 at 10:30 p.m. two male suspects entered a residence in the 16000 block of Canyon Creek Road and demanded money. The suspects opened a safe but the victim is unsure of any loss. The suspects fled on foot.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries dropped from 15 cases in March to 12 in April. Two cases in April were "distraction burglaries" in which two suspects falsely represented themselves as utility workers that needed to check tap water for sand contamination. Seven of the April burglaries were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. In addition, one window was pried open, one was shattered and a side garage door

was kicked in. Items reported stolen included jewelry, TVs, bikes, cameras, coin collections and cash. The new 2011 weekly average in residential burglaries was 3.4 at the end of April.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries rose from 17 in March to 23 in April. Eighteen of the April burglaries occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots, and 15 of the burglarized vehicles were SUVs. GPS units were taken in two crimes, and stereo items were taken in three. Other property taken consisted of cell phones, backpacks, third-row seats from SUVs, bowling balls, insulin pumps, wallets, credit cards and MP3 players. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 5.2.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts increased from seven in March to 14 in April. High-volume parking lots were the crime scenes for 13 of the crimes. Five SUVs, three Hondas and three Toyotas were among the stolen vehicles. Two trailers were also stolen. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 2.4.

Never leave open windows or doors unattended

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or vehicle occupants in a matter of seconds. More importantly, the burglar could enter your garage, close the door, and have more than enough time to pry open the door into your house while concealed from the street. A thief can also steal a garage door opener from your vehicle.

If you need to ventilate your garage, remain inside of the garage or in the front yard where activities can be monitored. Don't walk next door, into the backyard, or even into the house for more than a few seconds.

An additional method of protec-

tion is the use of deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Side garage doors that are not visible from the street should be constructed of a solid core and should not contain any glass.

In Cerritos, there have been a few burglaries in which burglars stole items from homes while residents were sleeping. These burglaries are often made possible by open windows. If you absolutely need to have ventilation at night, consider installing track locks on all sliding windows and doors or locking pins that keep the frames intact when the window or door is slightly open.

Don't hesitate to make eye contact with anyone you suspect may be "casing" your property. This makes burglars extremely uncomfortable. If you see a suspicious individual, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station immediately at (562) 860-0044. If possible, write down a description of the individual and the vehicle's license plate number.

Remember, it takes less time to open a window and cool down a home after you have returned to your residence than it does to replace all of your stolen 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.