

Cerritos

Neighborhood

Watch Report

November 2011

Hardening the Target

Holiday safety tips offered

The approaching holidays tend to stimulate more shopping and the stockpiling of merchandise in our homes. Unfortunately, criminals recognize the holiday season as one of great opportunity. Always be aware of your surroundings and always try to shop and walk in parking lots in pairs. Statistics indicate that you are far more likely to become a victim of a crime if you are alone.

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

- If you must shop alone, never be afraid to make eye contact with someone. This displays confi-

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Stay safe when using an ATM

- Prepare any deposit slips before going to an ATM.
- Shield the keypad with your hand or body when entering your personal identification number (PIN).
- Take your ATM receipt with you.
- If you use a drive-up ATM, roll up all your car windows and lock the car doors.
- Be aware of your surroundings. If you notice anything suspicious, use another ATM or return later.
- If you absolutely must use an ATM at night, (and we do not recommend it), consider taking someone with you.

Be a responsible host this holiday season

If you serve alcoholic beverages in your home this holiday season, you are responsible for the welfare of your guests. If you neglect to pay attention to your partygoers, you risk very serious legal ramifications if an alcohol-related collision occurs. If your guests plan on drinking, remind them to make transportation arrangements ahead of time. Remember, people do not like to admit that they are impaired, and may argue that they are okay to drive. Share with your friends that impairment begins with the very first drink, and remind them of the penalties they face if convicted of driving under the influence.

If you are hosting a party this holiday season, the following safety tips are offered:

- Encourage guests to eat food if they are drinking.
- Offer alcohol-free beverages and make sure that all of your guests leave with a sober driver.
- If you serve an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base.
- Never serve alcohol to anyone less than 21 years of age.
- Don't ride in a vehicle with anyone who is impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- Have a designated driver for all party events.

Be cautious when donating to charities

During the holiday season, many people are in the spirit of giving, and criminals are more than willing to do the taking. Though there are many legitimate charities, criminals pretend to be from charities as well. The following tips are offered when considering a charitable donation:

- Be aware of charities soliciting personal information on the phone or by mail. This information can be used to deplete savings accounts, "max out" credit cards, and could ultimately lead to identity theft.
- Before you make a donation, check out the charity. If you do not recognize its name, do some research before donating or pledging money.

- Ask for written information, or consider only dealing with charities that you are familiar with. Legitimate charities will gladly send you information and will never insist that you donate immediately.
- If the caller is from a professional fundraising group, ask how much of the donation actually goes to the charity and how much the fundraising group keeps. You may prefer to give directly to the charity.
- Remember, you are the one making the donation and you have every right to obtain information and control the way you donate.

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Monthly Crime Summary: October 2011

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 121 Part I felony crimes in October, up from 100 in September. Robberies, vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts increased in October, while residential burglaries remained the same. At the end of October, patrol deputies were handling a 2011 weekly average of 272 calls for service.

Robberies

There were six robberies investigated by Cerritos deputies in October, compared to five in September.

On Thursday, October 6 at 1 p.m. a female victim was accosted in the 17500 block of Stark Avenue by a male suspect who forcibly took her purse. The suspect ran to an awaiting vehicle driven by a second suspect who drove away.

On Tuesday, October 11 at 11 p.m. a male was approached in a closed park by three suspects in the 7800 block of Denni Street. The victim was told to empty his pockets and a fight ensued. The suspects fled with the victim's jacket.

On Monday, October 17 at 11 p.m. a male suspect wielding a handgun

robbed a restaurant in the 12200 block of Artesia Boulevard.

At 12:25 a.m. on Saturday, October 22, two suspects with a knife held up a couple in the 16700 block of Judy Way.

On Friday, October 28 at 6:57 p.m. a woman was loading items into her trunk in the 11100 block of 183rd Street when a lone male suspect grabbed the purse off her shoulder and fled.

The final October robbery occurred at 9:05 p.m. that same evening when a male suspect wielding a handgun robbed a business in the 17500 block of Bloomfield Avenue.

Residential Burglaries

There were 22 residential burglaries recorded in October, the same total as in September. Open or unlocked doors and windows were the entry points in 13 of the September crimes. In addition, three windows were pried open, three windows were shattered, two doors were kicked in, and an attempt to breach a side garage door was made. Property reported stolen included jewelry, laptop computers, cash, blankets,

purses, coin collections, handguns and stress balls. The new 2011 weekly average in residential burglaries was 4 at the end of October.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-eight vehicle burglaries were logged in October, up from 33 in September. Twenty-six of the October cases occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots, and 27 of the burglarized vehicles were SUVs. Four victims reported GPS units taken and two had high-end stereo components stolen. Shoes, jackets, laptop computers, tools, sunglasses, purses, wallets, batteries, MP3 players and cell phones were among the items reported missing. SUVs were also targeted for their third-row seats. The new 2011 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 6.7.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts rose from 16 in September to 23 in October. Nineteen of the vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Six SUVs and seven Hondas were among the stolen vehicles. The current 2011 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 3.1.

Holiday safety tips offered

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dence and lessens the chance that a potential robber would be interested. Frequently look around, especially while you are walking outside. Look for familiar faces as you move from store to store. If you notice any, this may suggest that you are being followed.

- If you carry a purse, hold it tight to your body. While you are in a parking lot, consider walking between parked cars. Keep your purse away from passing traffic as there have been incidents of a passenger reaching out from a moving vehicle to grab a purse. Never get too close to a car if the occupant is asking for directions. Leave yourself a way out of any

area that you may find yourself in.

- When inside of a store or in a mall, try to keep a small area around yourself and don't let anyone have physical contact with you. If you use your credit card, don't lose sight of it. Be aware of the "double scan." This occurs when your card is passed through a credit card scanner and the cash register. It could be a way of obtaining your credit card number for an unlawful use. Don't display the contents of your purse or wallet. Thieves may be watching to see how much cash you have and how easy of a target you would be.
- Try not to make frequent trips to your car to place merchan-

dise inside before returning to a store. Thieves watch the parking lots and select desirable victims based on what they see. Never store anything in a visible location within the passenger compartment of your vehicle. This is an open invitation to theft.

- Finally, always look inside of your car before you get in, and have your key in your hand as you approach it. If there is someone loitering nearby, return to a location where there are other people and report it to law enforcement, security or store personnel. Use your own intuition. If something does not look right, act on your instinct and take evasive action.

Safety Contacts:
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To join Cerritos Neighborhood Watch, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center at (562) 916-1266.