

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

April 2012

Hardening the Target

Prevent identity theft

Identity theft is a common crime that shows no signs of ever going away. Identity thieves most commonly use the following tactics.

Dumpster diving

Thieves rummage through trash looking for bills or other documents that contain your personal information. Always shred any personal documents before throwing them away.

Skimming

Thieves steal credit or debit card numbers by using a special storage device when processing your card.

Phishing

Thieves pretend to be financial institutions or companies and send spam or pop-up messages to get you to reveal personal identification information. Companies rarely contact you through e-mail. Call the company directly if you suspect a thief is pretending to be a company representative.

Changing your address

Thieves divert your billing statements to another location by completing a "change of address" form.

"Old-fashioned" stealing

Thieves steal wallets and purses, mail (including bank and credit card statements), pre-approved credit card offers, new checks or tax information. They also steal personal records from their employers or bribe other employees who have access to information.

For more information about identity theft, visit ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/.

Passing a school bus displaying red flashing lights could earn you a hefty ticket

Section 22454(a) of the California Vehicle Code (CVC) prohibits drivers from passing a school bus when the bus is stopped for the purpose of loading or unloading school children and is displaying a red flashing light signal. Vehicles must remain stopped behind the bus until the red flashing signal ceases operation.

If you are driving in the same direction of the bus when it stops and activates flashing red lights, 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 come to a complete 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) CVC, the fines are as follows:

- For the first conviction: \$720
- For the second conviction: \$1,900 plus a point on your driving record
- A third conviction within three years of the first two convictions will result in a driver's license suspension for one year in addition to the \$1,900 fine.

Report ANY suspicious activities in your neighborhood to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044. This includes vehicles that may be parked and occupied for a period of time, unfamiliar people in or around your residence or a neighbor's residence, door-to-door salespeople and curb painters. Always dial 911 if you see a crime in progress.

Traffic collision information offered

The following traffic collision prevention tips are offered for your safety.

If you're stopped at a red light and the signal turns green, pause a moment and look for cross traffic before proceeding into the intersection. Running red lights is one of the leading causes of traffic accidents.

Don't speed. The faster you drive, the less time you have to react to hazards, mistakes by other drivers and your own inattention.

Don't drive distracted. Don't use your cell phone while driving. If you drop food or drink on the passenger seat or the floor, safely pull over, stop and then retrieve it.

Wear your seatbelt. This is the simplest way to increase your odds of surviving a traffic accident.

If you're involved in a traffic accident, the following tips are offered:

The first thing to do is stop. If you
Continued on the other side

Monthly Crime Summary: March 2012

Ninety-five Part I felonies were reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in March, one less than in February. March saw increases in vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts, but a decrease in robberies and residential burglaries. At the end of the month, field deputies were handling a 2012 weekly average of 259 calls for service.

Robberies

There were three robberies investigated by Cerritos deputies in March, compared to seven in February.

A lone male entered a bank in the 11300 block of South Street on Wednesday, March 14 at 3:39 p.m. and advised a teller that he had a gun. The suspect fled on foot.

On Thursday, March 15 at 9:20 p.m. a male robbed a fast-food restaurant in the 12500 block of South Street.

A lone male suspect approached a male victim in a bank parking lot in the 18600 block of Gridley Road on Saturday, March 31 at 12:39 p.m. The suspect simulated a handgun and robbed the victim of a small

amount of cash.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries dropped from 21 in February to 15 in March. Ten of the March crimes were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. In addition, three homes had windows smashed and two had doors kicked in. Property reported stolen included bicycles, iPads, laptops, jewelry, a dishwasher, a stove, cameras, TVs, golf clubs, coins and backpacks. The new 2012 weekly average in residential burglaries is 4.5.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries increased from 26 in February to 29 in March. High-volume commercial parking lots were the scenes for 22 of the March crimes. SUVs were targeted in 23 crimes and only one stereo was stolen. Victims reported the loss of third-row seats from SUVs, skateboards, tools, books, tax forms, credit cards, eyeglasses, purses, wallets, ID and cash. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 6.3.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts also rose from 15

in February to 19 in March. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 16 of the March cases. Eight SUVs and seven Hondas were stolen, in addition to commercial trucks and trailers. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 4.7.

Traffic collision information offered

Continued from the other side
leave without contacting the involved party, you may be prosecuted for hit and run.

If you hit an object, contact law enforcement and report the accident as soon as possible. If you collide with a parked vehicle, leave a note on the vehicle with your contact information.

If you're involved in an accident with another moving vehicle, bicyclist or pedestrian, stop and check if people are injured and need medical treatment. If people are hurt, call 911.

Call law enforcement to report the collision. If the involved vehicles are blocking the street, take photos (cell phone photos work well), then move the vehicles to the side of the road if possible. Make note of the date and time of the accident and other relevant details.

Law enforcement agencies have different policies regarding the reporting of traffic accidents. If possible, have the collision investigated and a report written to document the facts and evidence of the incident.

Always exchange driver and insurance information with the other party, even if you don't believe the accident is your fault.

If there is at least \$750 of damage to your vehicle, or if anyone was injured, you must report the collision to the DMV via the DMV SR-1 form available on the DMV website and at DMV offices. Failure to report the collision to the DMV can result in the suspension of your driver's license.

Beware of air duct maintenance scam

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Division would like to warn residents about an air duct maintenance scam that was recently reported by a Cerritos resident.

A Cerritos resident recently received a phone call from a company offering air duct maintenance services. The company falsely claimed that the City of Cerritos endorses its services. The City of Cerritos does not endorse any air duct maintenance company.

The company also falsely claimed that the Environmental Protection Agency recommends that people have their home's air ducts cleaned. The EPA has the following air duct cleaning information on its website: "Knowledge about air duct cleaning is in its early stages, so a blanket

recommendation cannot be offered as to whether you should have your air ducts in your home cleaned... Duct cleaning has never been shown to actually prevent health problems. Neither do studies conclusively demonstrate that particle (e.g., dust) levels in homes increase because of dirty air ducts. This is because much of the dirt in air ducts adheres to duct surfaces and does not necessarily enter the living space." For more information, visit epa.gov/iaq/pubs/airduct.html.

If you or someone you know receives a similar call from an air duct maintenance company, write down as much information from the call as you can and report the information to the Community Safety Division at (562) 916-1266.

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.