

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

July 2012

## Hardening the Target

### Invest in a residential burglar alarm system

Preventing residential burglaries in Cerritos is a high priority for the Cerritos Sheriff's Station.

Many residents are unsure if residential alarm systems are a good investment and a crime deterrent. Statistics and debriefings with residential burglars reveal their worst enemies as dogs and alarm systems. Should one or the other exist, burglars will typically seek another residence where their presence will not be detected.

Alarm systems can be customized for the specific needs of the residents. Door and window contacts, motion detectors, smoke detectors and even surveillance cameras can be placed in and around the home for the desired coverage. Systems can be highly customized. Stand-

alone systems produce an audible alarm when a zone or portal has been breached, but it is safer to have a monitored system that can contact law enforcement if a problem arises.

Generally, burglars look for a way to get into a side or back yard where they can work without being seen. Attached side garage doors are also commonly used for entry.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center has long advocated the installation of alarm systems. In the cases where a residential alarm system had been breached, the burglars' efforts fell short as a quick get-away was necessary. Burglaries in homes without alarm systems are much more frequent.

### Open garage doors present opportunities for criminals

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Division wants you to be aware that Sheriff's Department Volunteers on Patrol have reported an increase in the amount of residential garage doors that are being left open during the day and at night. We urge you to consider the potential consequences of leaving garage doors open and unattended. Even when owners have been in the backyard, there have been incidents in which perpetrators entered the garage to steal items. Burglaries can happen that fast.

Make it a point to properly close your garage door if you are not

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### Avoid distractions while driving

Vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for people ages 15 to 20, and 20 percent of fatal car accidents are caused by teen drivers. The National Safety Council has determined that many inexperienced drivers are unaware that the following factors can contribute to an accident:

- distractions
- speed
- judging stopping and merging distances
- vehicle performance
- awareness of road conditions

Drivers of any age can suffer distractions behind the wheel. Many

motorists attempt to perform multiple tasks while driving, which places them and others on the road in great danger.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to remind you that driving requires your undivided attention. Without that focus, evasive action could be delayed or even impossible. The likelihood of a catastrophic event increases with inclement weather, darkness, higher speeds, etc.

The factor that distracts drivers the most is cell phone use. An estimated three out of five drivers use cell phones or other devices

to talk or text while driving. Talking or texting on a wireless phone is against the law unless you are using a hands-free device. Drivers often hold the phone in one hand which obstructs their vision on that side of the vehicle. With only one hand free, using turn signals is frequently neglected as drivers try to maintain control of the steering wheel. Drivers have also been seen gesturing while conversing on the phone, which takes both of their hands away from the steering wheel.

Cars have also been known to drift into adjacent lanes during

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# Monthly Crime Summary: June 2012

Cerritos Sheriff's Station deputies investigated 99 Part I felonies in June, down from 104 in May. In June, robberies and residential burglaries increased, and vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts decreased. At the end of June, field deputies were handling a 2012 weekly average of 266 calls for service.

## Robberies

There were four robberies reported in June, up from two in May.

On Monday, June 4 at 4:40 p.m. a male juvenile was riding his bicycle in the 16800 block of Judy Way when a vehicle containing three other juveniles pulled up beside him. Two suspects exited the car and pushed the victim to the ground. They took his shoes and helmet, then fled in the vehicle.

On Saturday, June 16 at 7 p.m. a male was sitting on a bench outside the Los Cerritos Center. Three males approached and demanded his property, which consisted of recent purchases. The victim complied and the suspects fled.

At 6:45 p.m. the following evening, a male shoplifting suspect fought with loss prevention person-

nel outside the Los Cerritos Center. The suspect was joined by a female companion, and both were ultimately arrested.

Two male suspects approached two juvenile victims in the 11600 block of 195th Street on Sunday, June 24 at 8 p.m. A metal pipe was displayed and the victims relinquished their cell phones.

## Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries increased from 17 in May to 27 in June. Open/unlocked doors or windows were used as entry points in 16 of the cases. In addition, windows or sliding glass doors were pried open in eight incidents and three windows were shattered. TVs, cameras, jewelry, laptop computers, cash, cell phones and cash were reported missing. The 2012 weekly average in residential burglaries is 4.5.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries decreased from 41 in May to 32 in June. Twenty-three of the June cases occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots and 20 SUVs were burglarized. GPS units were stolen from three vehicles and stereo systems were

stolen from three vehicles. Victims also reported the loss of gym bags, CB radios, credit cards, Social Security cards, laptop computers, wallets, purses, clothes, sunglasses, checkbooks and bowling balls. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 7.6.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 11 in May to seven in June. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in five of the June incidents. Three SUVs, three Hondas and a Toyota were stolen. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 3.4.

## Open garage doors present opportunities for criminals

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planning to maintain visual contact with the front of your home. If you see your neighbor's garage door open, try to contact them and pass on this important message. If you are unable to contact them, be a good neighbor and keep an eye on their property. You never know when an opportunistic would-be thief will be converted into a spontaneous criminal.

If you do see something suspicious, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044. To report a crime in progress or anything that you feel could be a crime in progress, call 911 immediately.

Scan this code to view the City of Cerritos' safety website, [safercerritos.com](http://safercerritos.com).



## Avoid distractions while driving

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phone calls. Many drivers become so involved in their conversations that they lose awareness of the flow of traffic and reduce their speed. This is very common on the freeway and is a significant factor leading to road rage incidents.

Keep in mind that while the first cell phone violation will only cost you \$20, with each subsequent violation costing \$50, these figures are just the base fines. In California, additional fees called penalty assessments bring the first violation fine to nearly \$160 and the subsequent violation fine to nearly \$260.

Other factors that commonly distract drivers include the following:

- eating food
- paying attention to other passengers or pets in the vehicle
- changing CDs or adjusting the radio
- reading while driving
- scenery

Whether you are on a congested freeway or a rural road, driving always requires your complete attention. Avoid these common distractions to keep you and the others around you safe.

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.