

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

June 2012

Hardening the Target

Fireworks warning

The months of January and July are often associated with the use of fireworks to celebrate the New Year and Independence Day. While some area municipalities allow “safe and sane” fireworks and the sale of fireworks within city limits, fireworks are not allowed in Cerritos. Sheriff’s deputies will issue citations where appropriate in the event they encounter someone using any type of fireworks. Please help us maintain the safety of the community and avoid the use of fireworks within the City limits.

Residents are invited to enjoy the City’s 39th Annual Let Freedom Ring Celebration starting at 4 p.m. in the Cerritos Civic Center. The event will culminate with a free aerial fireworks show at 9 p.m.

National Night Out set for August 9

On Thursday, August 9 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station and the City of Cerritos will observe the 29th National Night Out. The event will be held in conjunction with the Concert in the Park at Heritage Park.

At the event, Sheriff’s Department personnel will present crime prevention, safety, disaster preparedness and homeland security information. “Operation Kid Print” will be available for parents who would like fingerprint cards for their children.

Help prevent the on-line sexual exploitation of children

During the summer months, children have a little more time to play and recreate. They also have more time to spend on-line. Use of the Internet has played a large role in the sexual exploitation of children, specifically in the distribution of sexually exploitative images of children.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the use of home computer technology has revolutionized the distribution of these images by increasing the ease and decreasing the cost of production and distribution. A greater number of child molesters are using computer technology not only to organize and maintain their collection of these images, but to add to and share them.

The Internet has also made finding potential victims much easier. While some offenders primarily collect and trade images, others seek on-line face-to-face contact with children. Once contact is made, child molesters may use pornography to seduce their prey, lower the victim’s inhibitions, and to serve as an authority figure claiming to the child that sex between an adult and a child is “normal.”

Whether children come across pornography accidentally on-line or are deliberately exposed to it, viewing these images could result in devastating psychological effects.

Under federal law, it is illegal to possess, distribute, or manufacture pornographic images of children.

To proactively combat this crime, undercover “sting operations” are being conducted nationally that combine the resources of local and federal law enforcement agencies. While these operations are useful tools, there is an additional component necessary to protect children from the influence of such predators.

Parents must monitor the activities of their children while on-line. By making sure that the computer is in a location where there is a lack of privacy, this task can be simpler. There is nothing wrong with occasionally looking over the child’s shoulder or purchasing software to reveal various sites visited and to retrieve information from exchanges with others.

The Cerritos Sheriff’s Station/Community Safety Center reminds parents that they are the frontline in preventing their children from being exploited. Parents should discuss the seriousness of these crimes with their children and share the need to be immediately notified in the event that a child is contacted in an inappropriate manner. Immediately report any inappropriate contact to the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station.

Safety tip:

Never leave personal items visible in the passenger compartment of your vehicle.

Monthly Crime Summary: May 2012

Cerritos Sheriff's Station conducted 104 Part I felony investigations in May, down from 121 in April. Residential burglaries and vehicle thefts increased in May, and robberies and vehicle burglaries decreased. At the end of May, patrol deputies were handling a weekly average of 267 calls for service.

Robberies

There were two robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in May, compared to four in April.

A male suspect entered a fast food restaurant in the 17200 block of Norwalk Boulevard on Thursday, May 10 at 3:12 a.m. and pointed a handgun at an employee while announcing a robbery. The suspect then unexpectedly fled without obtaining anything.

A cell phone was forcefully taken by a male suspect from his es-

tranged spouse on Thursday, May 24 at 4 p.m. in the Los Cerritos Center. The suspect was arrested, the phone was recovered, and the crime was reclassified from a robbery to a domestic matter by the District Attorney's Office.

Residential burglaries

Seventeen residential burglaries were investigated in May, up from 12 in April. Ten of the May crimes were facilitated by open/unlocked doors or windows. In addition, two windows were pried open, four windows were shattered and one door was kicked in. Jewelry, cameras, TVs, Social Security cards, coins, handbags and laptop computers were among the stolen items. The 2012 weekly average in residential burglaries is 4.2.

Vehicle burglaries

Vehicle burglaries dropped from

50 in April to 41 in May. Thirty-five of the May cases occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. SUVs were targeted in 26 of the crimes and stereo items were taken from four vehicles. Other property reported stolen included third-row seats from SUVs, backpacks, clothes, ID, wallets, purses, sunglasses, laptop computers, passports, tote bags and cases of bottled water. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 7.7.

Vehicle thefts

Vehicle thefts rose from nine in April to 12 in May. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in nine of the May incidents. Three SUVs and three Hondas were among the stolen vehicles. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 3.6.

Conduct an "exit check" before leaving your home

Open or unlocked doors and windows allow easy access to your home. Most burglars will seek out an open or unlocked door or window before attempting to force entry.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center encourages you to conduct an "exit check" every time you leave your residence. Walk into each room and make a quick inspection of all external doors and windows, and make sure that they are all locked.

Locking pins or hardware designed to keep a closed window held tightly to the frame will inhibit any lateral or vertical motion. This motion is what a burglar relies upon when using a prying tool. Solid core doors equipped with deadbolts also make it very difficult for a burglar to break in.

Every year, hundreds of children drown or become physically incapacitated due to injuries from swimming pool accidents. With the return of warm weather and the swimming season, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to offer the following safety tips to protect swimmers:

- Install a 6-foot-tall fence surrounding the pool that is equipped with self-latching, spring-activated gates.
- Never leave a child, no matter how proficient a swimmer he or she is, unattended in the water or near a pool.
- Do not rely on inflatable toys or flotation devices to protect children in the water.
- Post rules by the pool that prohibit running, pushing or dunking, and enforce them.
- Do not allow anyone to dive head first into the shallow end of the pool. Doing so can result in paralyzing injuries or drowning.

Swimming pool safety saves lives

- Store pool chemicals in a secure, ventilated area, away from the reach of children.
- Install a phone or keep a cordless or cell phone poolside.
- Mount basic lifesaving equipment such as a pole, rope and personal flotation devices by the pool and know how to use them.
- If your pool cleaning and/or maintenance is done by a contracted pool cleaner, make sure that the gate/fence perimeter is secure after they leave.

Scan this code to view the City of Cerritos' safety website, safercerritos.com. The code will be included in future issues of the "Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report" for your convenience.



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.