

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

May 2012

Hardening the Target

Be a “park guardian”

During the summer, attendance in our parks increases for a variety of social get-togethers and recreational activities. Many residents use, walk by or drive by these neighborhood parks on a regular basis. Fortunately, there are an extremely low number of incidents reported in parks, and most of those reports usually occur after the fact, such as reports of vandalism and graffiti.

As the “eyes and ears” of the Sheriff’s Department in Neighborhood Watch, we are requesting that you make it a point to look at the activities in parks from your nearby residences or when passing by. If you are in the park, take a moment to look a little closer at the facilities. If you notice any suspicious persons or vehicles, call the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station right away at (562) 860-0044. To report a crime in progress, call 911. If you observe graffiti, call the City’s Graffiti Hotline at (562) 916-1233.

While parks are places for recreation and relaxation, they are also a lure for others 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. Drinking alcohol or smoking are not allowed in City parks.

By keeping an eye on our City parks, we can ensure that they remain a place for our family, friends and neighbors to safely enjoy.

Maintain house and curb numbers

Law enforcement, fire and rescue personnel constantly rely on visible house address numbers, including those painted on the curb, to arrive at the scene of an emergency in the quickest way possible. Often residents remove their house numbers, allow trees and bushes to cover them, or do not report when the curb numbers have been distorted. The law requires that address numbers be maintained on all existing buildings and be plainly visible from the street fronting the property. Numbers can be no less than three inches

in height and one inch wide. If the structure is over 150 feet from the roadway, the minimum sizes increase to five inches in height and no less than two inches wide. If your curb numbers need repair, call the City’s Public Works department at (562) 916-1220. The Cerritos Sheriff’s Station/Community Safety Center urges you to maintain these important identifiers because in an emergency, every second counts.

Prevent a home burglary

As warm weather approaches, many residents open windows and garage doors for ventilation. Cerritos Sheriff’s deputies and Volunteers on Patrol have observed an increasing amount of homes with open and unattended garage doors. This could provide a would-be thief with an opportunity to inventory belongings for future reference, or gain access to your home.

Burglars often use the easiest point of entry possible to get inside your home. Open or unlocked doors or windows provide this opportunity. Burglars can steal bicycles, lawn care products, tools and other items in a matter of seconds.

Even worse, a burglar could enter a garage, close the door and have more than enough time to pry open the inner door while staying hidden from the street.

Cerritos Sheriff’s deputies stress
Continued on the other side

Free vacation checks offered

The Sheriff’s Department Volunteers on Patrol (VOPs) offer free vacation security checks. Schedule the vacation security check by calling the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station/Community Safety Center at (562) 860-0044, coming in to the station or by filling out the form on the City’s safety website, safercerritos.com.

While you are on vacation, the VOPs will leave you a concealed notice of service on the first check and then log subsequent checks. You will be asked to provide a contact person’s information in the event that something needs attention at your home.

By taking a few precautions and making some arrangements before you leave, you will be able to return to your home as you left it.

Monthly Crime Summary: April 2012

There were 121 Part I felony investigations conducted by Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel in April, up from 95 in March. April increases were noted in vehicle burglaries, while residential burglaries and vehicle thefts declined. Robberies remained the same.

Robberies

Three robberies were investigated in April, the same total as in March.

A male suspect entered a bank in the 11800 block of South Street on Saturday, April 7 at 11:05 a.m. and presented a teller with a "demand note." The teller complied and the suspect placed the money in his jacket and fled on foot.

On Saturday, April 21 at 11:30 a.m. a male victim met another male to complete a sales transaction based on an Internet contact. While parked in the 16400

block of Stowers Avenue, the "seller" produced a handgun and robbed the buyer of his cash intended for the purchase.

A shoplifter was detained on Sunday, April 29 at 3:45 p.m. at a store in the 10700 block of South Street. The suspect pushed loss prevention personnel and attempted to escape but was ultimately taken into custody.

Residential Burglaries

Twelve residential burglaries were investigated in April, down from 15 in March. Six of the homes were accessed through open/unlocked doors or windows. In addition, five windows were pried open and one window was shattered. Property reported stolen included handguns, jewelry, cameras, cell phones, laptop computers, backpacks and cash. The new 2012 weekly average in residential burglaries is 4.2.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries increased from 29 in March to 50 in April. Forty-four of the April crimes occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots and 28 SUVs were burglarized. Two GPS units and four stereos were taken, in addition to tools, instruments, passports, ID, wallets, MP3 players, purses, credit cards, cell phones, clothes, sunglasses and third-row seats from SUVs. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 7.6.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 19 in March to nine in April. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in seven of the April incidents. Three SUVs, four Hondas and a Toyota were stolen. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 4.1.

Prevent a home burglary

Continued from the other side
the need for a constant presence when your garage door is open: remain inside it or stay in the front yard where activities can be monitored.

Don't hesitate to make eye contact with anyone you suspect may be "casing" your property. This makes them extremely uncomfortable. Note the description of the person(s), take down the license plate number and call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044 immediately.

In addition, protect your home with deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Side garage doors that are not visible from the street should be constructed of a solid core and be absent of any glass. Locking pins should be installed and used on all sliding windows and doors.

Remember that it is easier to cool your home by opening windows upon your return, rather than leaving them open and increasing your risk of becoming a victim.

If you can see it, thieves may steal it

Many people leave low-value items visible in their vehicles thinking that thieves are only interested in expensive items such as stereos and laptops. While most of us know that we should not leave expensive items in our cars, vehicle burglars steal more low-value items than you may realize.

Although you may not mind if someone steals your \$5 sunglasses, a smashed car window is not worth leaving items in plain sight. The following items stolen from vehicles were reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station from January 1 to April 30, 2012 and prove that vehicle burglars don't always go for the expensive items:

- backpacks
- a briefcase
- cameras
- cash and coins
- CDs
- cell phones
- checkbooks, wallets and purses
- clothing, gloves, baseball caps,

shoes and sunglasses

- cologne
- computers and laptops
- cooking utensils
- credit cards
- documents
- duffle bags
- DVD players
- fast food
- garage door openers
- GPS units
- groceries
- ID
- keys
- knives
- liquor
- medical equipment
- a medical kit
- MP3 players
- passports
- a parking permit
- prescription medications
- rear bucket and third row seats
- social security cards
- stereo accessories
- tools
- a TV

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.