

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

April 2013

Hardening the  Target

## Residential burglary prevention tips offered

Residential burglary is one of the most predominant forms of property crime, along with auto theft and vehicle burglary. To help residents prevent residential burglary, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following tips.

### Lock your doors and windows

Most residential burglaries in Cerritos are directly attributed to residents leaving doors or windows open or unlocked. This "open invitation" provides a quiet and effortless means of entry to a burglar.

A significant percentage of residential burglaries occur via open garages when people are home, but are either in the house or backyard. Keep your garage door closed as much as possible.

### Secure the perimeter of your home

Make sure that all windows and doors are secured before you leave. Use locking pins in sliding glass doors and windows as a means of keeping them from being pried from their tracks.

Install solid core doors, which are stronger in their construction than regular or glass doors. Consider purchasing double-pane windows, which are a proven burglar deterrent.

### Protect your master bedroom

Once inside, almost all burglars will go straight to the master bedroom. They know that many residents keep jewelry and cash there. Laptops, cameras, cell phones and credit cards are also commonly reported stolen items.

Find unique hiding places for any type of valuable keepsakes that cannot be replaced. You may want to keep such items in a bank safety deposit box.

Be creative in the manner that you store your valuable items. Laundry rooms, refrigerators, bathroom cabinets and the garage are places burglars rarely look. Consider using a non-distinct container such as a shoebox to store your items.

### Install an alarm system

Installing an alarm system in your home is a wise investment. If there is any indication that your home contains a dog or an alarm system, a burglar will almost always bypass it and look for another target.

Most systems emit a high-pitched tone that can be heard as soon as a door or window is broken or a motion detector picks up movement inside the home. You may be eligible for a reduction of home insurance rates after a system is installed.

### Be aware of "casing"

Residents are advised to be aware of a common method of reconnaissance, or "casing," used by suspects in residential burglaries. Lengthy door knocking and doorbell ringing are utilized in an attempt to determine if anyone is home.

When the door is answered, the suspect will claim to be lost, will solicit some type of service or product or may ask for someone that does not live there. If this happens to you, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at

once to report a suspicious person.

If you do not want to answer the door, always tell the person from behind the closed door that you cannot open it right now, or make a sufficient amount of noise inside to alert the person to your presence.

### When you are on vacation

Ask a trusted neighbor to pick up your mail and newspaper and check on your house periodically while you are away. You can also have your mail and newspaper delivery temporarily stopped. Create the illusion that you are home by installing timers on your lights and electronics.

You can also arrange for a Vacation Security Check by the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center Volunteers on Patrol by calling (562) 860-0044.

## Report suspicious activity

A well-informed public, equipped with the knowledge of how to take away a thief's opportunity to commit a crime, is a valuable tool for crime prevention. Alert neighbors are responsible for the majority of arrests made in residential burglary incidents.

If something appears out of the ordinary in your neighborhood to you, immediately contact the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044, or dial 911 to report a crime in progress.

# Monthly Crime Summary: March 2013

Part I felony investigations rose from 84 in February to 120 in March. Robberies, residential burglaries, vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts increased. At the end of the month, patrol personnel were responding to a weekly average of 274 calls for service in 2013.

## Robberies

There were two robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in March, compared to one in February.

At 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 14, a male suspect grabbed the purse of a female victim as she was walking on Gridley Road near Bertha Street. The suspect fled on foot.

A male shoplifting suspect fought with loss prevention personnel at a store in the Los Cerritos Center on

Saturday, March 23 at 3:10 p.m. The merchandise was recovered and the suspect fled on foot.

## Residential Burglaries

There were 20 residential burglaries recorded in March compared to 11 in February. Ten of the crimes in March were attributed to windows being broken. Seven entries were made via open/unlocked doors or windows. Two windows were pried open and one door was kicked in. Thieves took laptop computers, cash, jewelry and cameras. The new 2013 weekly average in residential burglaries is 5.1.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries increased by one compared to February, with 39 investigated. Twenty-one of the

burglaries occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots and 27 involved SUVs. Three stereo components and three GPS units were taken. Additional property reported stolen included sunglasses, clothes, backpacks, keys, pepper spray, iPads, toys, ID, checkbooks, cosmetics and third-row seats from SUVs. The new 2013 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 8.3.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts rose from six in February to 18 in March. Fourteen of the March cases occurred in high-volume commercial lots. Six SUVs were taken. Seven Hondas and two Toyota products were also stolen. The 2013 weekly average in vehicle thefts is now 3.1.

## Attend the Neighborhood Watch Town Hall meeting

The next Neighborhood Watch Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24 at 7 p.m. at Cerritos Park East (13224 E. 166th Street). Please note the change of venue from past meetings.

Members of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center will offer an in-depth presentation on crime in Cerritos. The major topics will be residential burglary prevention and neighborhood vigilance along with the current status of school safety in Cerritos.

For more information, call (562) 860-0044.

## Cerritos Sheriff's Station deploys Residential Burglary Team

During the past several years, daytime residential burglaries have increased in Cerritos and neighboring cities. In response to this crime trend, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station recently deployed a new Residential Burglary Team.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station reallocated resources to establish the team. The team's sole purpose is preventing burglaries and apprehending and prosecuting burglars in Cerritos. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station Residential Burglary Team consists of experienced patrol deputies, detectives and supervisors who are solely dedicated to abating residential burglaries. Their plan encompasses strategies that historically have proven successful in reducing the number of burglaries. The plan includes educating the public and station personnel regarding crime trends to target this ongoing issue.

In its first week of operation, the

team arrested two individuals for residential burglary. In addition, another suspect, who was arrested in Orange County, was identified as being in possession of property taken in a Cerritos burglary. Subsequent investigation by the Residential Burglary Team has confirmed that the suspect was responsible for an additional 15 burglaries in Cerritos.

For more information, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044. Crime prevention tips, including suggestions for preventing home burglaries, are available on the City's Safer Cerritos website at [safercerritos.com](http://safercerritos.com).

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



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.