

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

December 2013

Hardening the  Target

Avoid telemarketing fraud with tips from the FBI

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) offers tips on recognizing telemarketing fraud.

When you send money to people you don't know or give personal or financial information to unknown callers, your chances of becoming a telemarketing fraud victim increases.

Here are some things fraudulent callers may say:

- "You must act 'now' or the offer won't be good."
- "You've won a 'free' gift, vacation, or prize." But you have to pay for "postage and handling" or other charges.
- "You must send money, give a credit card or bank account number, or have a check picked up by courier."
- "You don't need to check out the company with anyone."
- "You don't need any written information" about the company or its references.
- "You can't afford to miss this 'high-profit, no-risk' offer."

If you hear similar lines from a telephone salesperson, just say, "No, thank you" and hang up.

Tips for Avoiding Telemarketing Fraud:

Before buying anything over the telephone, remember:

- Don't buy from an unfamiliar company.

- Always ask for written material about any offer or charity. If you get brochures about costly investments, ask someone you trust to review them. But remember, just because something is written doesn't make it legit.
 - Always check out unfamiliar companies with your local consumer-protection agency, Better Business Bureau, state attorney general, the National Fraud Information Center, or other watchdog groups. Note, however, that not all questionable businesses can be identified through these organizations.
 - Obtain and verify the accuracy of a salesperson's name, business identity, telephone number, street address, mailing address, and business license number before any transactions.
 - Before you give money to a charity or make an investment, find out what percentage of the money is paid in commissions and what actually goes to the charity or investment.
 - Before sending money, ask yourself: "What guarantee do I have that this solicitor will use my money in the manner we agreed on?"
 - Pay for services only after they are delivered.
 - Be wary of companies that want to send a messenger to your home to pick up money.
 - Always take your time making a decision.
 - Don't pay for a "free prize." If a caller tells you the payment is for taxes, he or she is violating federal law.
 - Before you receive your next sales pitch, set your limits regarding the kind of financial information you will and won't give out over the phone.
 - Discuss any big investments with a trusted friend, family member, or financial advisor.
 - Never respond to an offer you don't understand thoroughly.
 - Never send money or give out personal information – such as credit card numbers and expiration dates, bank account numbers, dates of birth, or social security numbers – to unfamiliar companies or unknown persons.
- Be aware that your personal information is often brokered to telemarketers through third parties.
- If you have ever been victimized, be wary of people offering to help you recover your losses for a fee paid in advance.
- If you have information about a fraud, report it to state, local, or federal law enforcement agencies.

Monthly Crime Summary: November 2013

Cerritos Sheriff's Station deputies investigated 92 Part I felony crimes in November, down from 107 in October. Robberies remained the same in November as in October. However, residential burglaries, vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts were lower. At the end of November, patrol deputies were responding to a 2013 weekly average of 295 calls for service.

Robberies

Two robberies were reported in November, the same as in October.

On November 4 at 9:54 p.m., a male suspect entered a store in the 19400 block of Pioneer Boulevard and produced a handgun. The store clerk relinquished cash and the suspect fled on foot.

A female victim was jogging in the San Gabriel Riverbed behind Liberty Park on November 18 at 1 p.m. when a male suspect grabbed the gold

chain around her neck and jumped over a fence to a waiting vehicle.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries dropped from 27 to 25 last month. Suspects entered 14 via opened or unlocked doors or windows. Five windows were pried open, four were shattered, and one side door was kicked in. There was one distraction burglary when a suspect lured a victim into the backyard for a landscape maintenance estimate while another suspect entered the home.

Property reported stolen included Xboxes, bicycles, skateboards, iPads, laptop computers, cash, handguns, briefcases, jewelry, televisions and purses. The new 2013 weekly average in residential burglaries is 4.4.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries dropped from 28 to 25 in November. High-volume com-

mercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 18. Nineteen of the targeted vehicles were SUVs. Stereo items were stolen in four incidents and GPS units were taken in five.

Victims reported the loss of an LCD projector, wallets, purses, cameras, ammunition, ID, shoes, medicine, sunglasses, CDs, laptop computers, cell phones and third-row seats (from SUVs). The 2013 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 6.3.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts were also down slightly from 18 in October to 17 in November. Eleven vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Nine were SUVs and five were Hondas. Commercial trucks were also stolen. The 2013 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 4.4.

Beware of distraction burglaries

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center reminds residents to be aware of their surroundings and to report suspicious people and vehicles to the Sheriff's Station immediately. Last month, a victim reported a residential distraction burglary after a suspect engaged the resident in a conversation about landscaping. While the victim was in the backyard with the suspect, at least one other suspect entered the house and stole money and jewelry.

There are variations of this ploy.

Sometimes the resident is told that tree maintenance is being performed at an adjacent property and "workers" wanted to ensure that falling branches would not damage the victim's property. Other tactics involved suspects posing as utility or City workers who "need to inspect" gas or water leaks or to perform a water quality test. Regardless of the ruse employed, the suspects' aim is to enter your home. Don't fall for it. Tell them to come back at a later time. Then call the Sheriff's Station immediately.

Be a responsible host

Serving alcoholic beverages in your home brings with it responsibility for the welfare of your guests. People do not like to admit that they are impaired and may argue that they are fine to drive. Remind them of the penalties they face if convicted of driving under the influence. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) offers the following suggestions:

- Set a drink limit and don't push drinks. Offer food and non-alcoholic beverages instead.
- If you serve an alcoholic punch, make it with a non-carbonated base.
- Never let your guests drink and drive.
- Never serve alcohol to anyone under 21 years old.
- Don't ride in a vehicle with someone who is impaired by alcohol.
- Have a designated driver for all events.

PREVENT VEHICLE BURGLARY AND NEVER LEAVE ITEMS OF VALUE IN YOUR CAR. IF YOU MUST, LOCK THEM UP IN THE TRUNK.

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.