

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

January 2013

## Hardening the Target

### Protect your children at home alone

Many parents are faced with the choice of having to leave their children home alone during the day or finding alternative care. Parents often worry when their children are home alone, but there are precautions they can take to ease their minds and help protect their children when they're not around.

#### What Parents Can Do

- Stay in touch. Call children throughout the day to ask how they are and what they are doing. Ask children to check in before they leave the house and to call again when they return.
- Keep kids connected. Post important numbers by the telephone, including those for parents' work and cell phones, doctor's office and a neighbor or nearby relative who can help the children quickly if needed.
- Practice what to do in an emergency. Teach children how to dial 911 or "0" and when to do it. Ask questions such as the following:
  - If someone is trying to get in the house, what should you do?
  - If you get hurt, what should you do?
  - If you want to play at a friend's house, what should you do?
- Set firm rules. Make clear what children are and are not allowed to do. Can they use the Internet when home alone? Can they invite a friend over? Can they invite several friends over?

#### Make Sure Your Children Are Ready

All children mature differently, so there is no precise age when children are ready to stay home alone. This makes the decision regarding whether to leave children home alone even harder for parents. Many states have laws concerning the legal age when children can be left unsupervised, but there is no guarantee that when children reach this age that they will be ready. However, there are questions parents can ask themselves to help determine if their children are ready.

Ask yourself if your children can do the following:

- Be trusted to go straight home after school or after playing at a neighbor's house
- Easily use the telephone, locks and kitchen appliances
- Follow rules and instructions well
- Handle unexpected situations without panicking
- Stay home alone without being afraid
- Say their full name, address and telephone number

If you feel comfortable leaving your children home alone and feel that they are ready, discuss it with them and start practicing what they should and should not do. Role play different scenarios to prepare them for anything that might happen when they are home alone.

### Install a monitored alarm system

The year 2012 was an active period for residential burglaries in Cerritos and in many other municipalities statewide. Theories about the reasons for this activity are abundant. Could it be due to the mandated release of state inmates to ease overcrowding? Could it be that residential burglary is a property crime and worth taking a chance on because it is not considered a "violent" crime that warrants a more serious sentence? Could it be the result of a struggling economy and higher jobless rate? The theories are plentiful, but in the meantime, what can be done to help prevent us from becoming victims?

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station has developed strategies for patrol deputies to help minimize these crimes, but they cannot do it by themselves or without residents' help. When you see something that seems out of place or suspicious in your neighborhood, don't hesitate to call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station. Examples of occurrences that should warrant your attention include unfamiliar cars parked with unfamiliar people in them, door-to-door solicitors and strangers in your neighbor's yard or driveway. Sheriff's deputies patrol many neighborhoods and cannot be acquainted with all of them and their residents, so don't hesitate to call the Sheriff's Station when you make an observation

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# Monthly Crime Summary: December 2012

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Part I felony crime investigations rose from 119 in November to 136 in December. Residential burglaries and vehicle burglaries increased in December compared to the previous month, while robberies remained the same. Vehicle thefts declined. At the end of December, field deputies were handling a weekly average of 272 calls for service in 2012.

## Robberies

On Tuesday, December 4 at 9:20 a.m., a male victim was walking on Del Amo Boulevard at Avenida Pamplona when he was pushed to the ground by a male suspect. The suspect took the victim's backpack and fled to a vehicle being driven by an additional suspect.

At 12:13 p.m. that same day, four shoplifting suspects struggled with a loss prevention officer at a retail store in the Los Cerritos Center and fled with approximately 40 shirts.

A shoplifting incident escalated into a robbery on Tuesday, December 11 at 5:25 p.m. when a female suspect attempted to hit and bite loss prevention personnel outside of a retail store in the 11200 block of 183rd Street. The suspect was arrested.

At 8 p.m. the same evening, a male was riding a skateboard on 166th Street near Studebaker Road

when three males confronted him with a knife. The victim relinquished a small amount of cash.

On Thursday, December 13 at 8 p.m., four suspects approached a male victim in the 13100 block of 166th Street and robbed him at knifepoint. Keys and a cell phone were taken.

A female victim struggled with a purse snatcher on Friday, December 21 at 11:15 a.m. in a lot located in the 11800 block of Del Amo Boulevard. The suspect and a driver were arrested later in the day.

On Monday, December 24 at 7:10 p.m., a female victim was walking in a lot near Pioneer Boulevard and South Street when a male suspect grabbed her purse and fled with it.

On Tuesday, December 25, a male suspect entered a service station in the 13300 block of South Street, produced a handgun and robbed the clerk of cash.

Three shoplifting suspects struggled with loss prevention employees at a retail store in the 11500 block of South Street on Thursday, December 27 at 4:06 p.m. The suspects fled, but the property was recovered.

## Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries increased from 26 in November to 43 in De-

cember. Eighteen of the December break-ins were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. Twelve windows were shattered, nine were pried open and four doors were kicked in. Victims reported purses, electronic games, guns, televisions, jewelry, figurines, cash, cameras, passports and laptop computers stolen. The final 2012 weekly average in residential burglaries was 5.6.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries also increased in December, with 33 recorded compared to 27 in November. Of the December incidents, 31 occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots and 23 involved SUVs. Eight victims reported stereo items missing and six GPS units were taken. Other stolen property reported included third-row seats from SUVs, cell phones, wallets, tools, credit cards, laptop computers, amplifiers and gifts. The final 2012 weekly average in vehicle burglaries was 6.9.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 24 in November to 19 in December. There were 16 vehicles stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots in December. Five were SUVs, eight were Hondas and one was a Toyota. The final 2012 weekly average in vehicle thefts was 3.6.

## New Year's resolutions should include installing an alarm system

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that doesn't seem right to you. Call (562) 860-0044 to report suspicious activity and 911 to report a crime in progress.

Another important tool in preventing residential burglaries is a monitored alarm system. Many people wait until after their homes are burglarized before considering an alarm system. An alarm can provide you with peace

of mind while you are away. Data also suggest that burglars will avoid a home protected by an alarm system when there is some indication an alarm is in use. This can be accomplished by displaying an alarm company sign in front of the home and by placing alarm company window stickers or decals on side and rear doors or windows. Burglars that are performing reconnaissance of a neighborhood,

or "casing," will most likely not take a chance on entering your home if they think there is even the slightest possibility that it is protected by a monitored alarm system.

Let's all pitch in and do our part to reduce crime in our neighborhoods. Call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station when you see something suspicious and equip your home with an alarm system BEFORE you become a victim of a residential burglary.

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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.