

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

March 2013

Hardening the Target

Common ways identity theft happens

Identity theft can be a devastating crime. Following are some of the common ways that identity thieves steal personal information.

1. Dumpster Diving – Rummaging through trash looking for bills or other documents that contain personal information of the potential victim.
2. Skimming – Stealing credit/debit card numbers by using a special storage device when processing a victim's card.
3. Phishing – Pretending to be a financial institution or company and sending spam or pop-up messages to get victims to reveal personal identification information.
4. Changing Your Address – Diverting victims' billing statements to another location by completing a "change of address" form.
5. "Old-Fashioned" Stealing – Stealing wallets and purses, mail (including bank and credit card statements), pre-approved credit card offers, new checks or tax information. Thieves will also attempt to obtain personal records from employers or bribe other employees who have access to such information.

To avoid becoming a victim of identity theft, shred credit card offers, check your financial statements closely, monitor bank accounts, initiate regular credit checks and never provide personal information via phone or the internet unless you are absolutely sure who you are dealing with. Also, think about paying with cash, through online bill centers or by using a credit card. A credit card may cover any unauthorized charges that might be made.

Beware of fraudulent business opportunities

Fraud promoters develop fake business opportunities and work-at-home scams that induce consumers to invest their own funds in start-up enterprises. These scammers typically place work-opportunity ads in the classified sections of newspapers or advertise on the internet.

Consumers who contact these advertisers then are sold "business plans" for enterprises such as operating vending machines, distributing products or servicing pay phone and fax machines. Individuals can supposedly capitalize on and operate these businesses with minimal training to produce substantial earnings.

The very amount of capital requested from the consumer can contribute to the illusion that the business opportunity is a legitimate investment. Victims of these scams often believe they are investing in highly developed businesses. In fact, scam artists take the consumers' investments as profits and commissions, then provide them unprofitable business plans in return.

The injuries to consumers can be devastating; not only in terms of the dollars they lose, but also in the time they invest in unprofitable enterprises. One victim in a recent Federal Trade Commission case estimates that he spent \$75,000 in an attempt to make such a business opportunity profitable.

Cerritos Sheriff's Station among top scoring stations in Police Station Visitors Week 2012

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station was the third-highest scoring station in the United States among stations evaluated in the Police Station Visitors Week 2012 program (Police Week), according to the Vera Institute of Justice.

The Vera Institute of Justice partners with the Altus Global Alliance to implement a Police Week in which community members are invited

into local police stations to rate their stations.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station received an overall score of 97.5 percent. The station's scores included Community Orientation – 98.75 percent; Physical Conditions – 92.5 percent; Equal Treatment of the Public – 98.75 percent; Transparency and Accountability – 98.75

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Monthly Crime Summary: February 2013

There were 84 Part I felony crimes investigated by members of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in February, compared to 125 in January. February vehicle burglaries increased while incidents in all other categories decreased. At the end of February, patrol deputies had responded to a 2013 weekly average of 268 calls for service.

Robberies

There was one robbery reported in February compared to four in January.

A male pushed a female to the ground on Saturday, February 9 at 6:45 p.m. at a business in 11500 block of South Street and took her cell phone. The parties are known to each other.

Residential Burglaries

There were 11 residential burglaries investigated in February, down from 37 in January. Three of the February cases were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. Three windows were pried open, two were shattered and one was forced open. A garage door opener was taken from a vehicle and used to gain entry into a residence. Victims reported the loss of cash, coins, handguns, jewelry, a backpack, laptop computers and an iPad. The new 2013 weekly average in residential burglaries was 5.6 at the end of February.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries rose by three cases in February, with 38 cases re-

ported. Twenty-four of those crimes were committed in high-volume commercial parking lots. Twenty-three of the vehicles targeted were SUVs. Stereos were stolen in five cases and GPS units in three. Property taken included televisions, MP3 players, purses, wallets, CDs, checkbooks, clothing, cosmetics, briefcases, laptop computers, shoes and third-row seats (from SUVs). The new 2013 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 8.4.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 15 to six in February. Two of those six thefts occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Three cases involved SUVs. The 2013 weekly average in vehicle thefts is now 2.7.

Cerritos Sheriff's Station among top scoring stations in Police Station Visitors Week 2012

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percent; and Detention Conditions – 98.75 percent.

"We are grateful for the honor," Sheriff Lee Baca said, "It is another example of how the Sheriff's Department employees show our tradition of excellence and we couldn't do this without the full support of the City of Cerritos."

Police Week is organized by Altus and Vera Institute of Justice to assess the quality of services delivered in the participating police departments. The program identifies the best practices in use by police to strengthen the accountability of police to local citizens and to promote human rights standards.

Police Week was conducted at more than 1,000 police stations and departments in 17 countries. Cerritos Sheriff's Station rated third overall among 20 different stations and departments evaluated in the United States.

The visitors use a kit developed by Altus to guide their visit, following protocols that are the same around the world. The scores are based on visitors' individual perceptions about the police stations. Expectations for police service vary across countries and within localities. As a result, the scores measure the extent to which visitors perceive the police in particular stations to be meeting or even exceeding local expectations in globally comparable areas of service.

The Vera Institute of Justice is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit center for justice policy. The organization provides expertise in research, demonstration projects and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety. Altus is a global alliance working across continents and from a multicultural perspective to improve public safety and justice.

Neighborhood Watch Town Hall meeting announced

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.

Scan this code to view the City of Cerritos' safety website, safercerritos.com.



Safety Contacts:
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(562) 916-1266
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To join Cerritos Neighborhood Watch, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center at (562) 916-1266.