

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

November 2013

Hardening the  Target

Holiday shopping safety tips offered by the Cerritos Sheriff's Station

Holiday shopping often results in the stockpiling of gifts for friends and family in our homes. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to remind residents of methods for protecting yourself and your property as you shop and prepare for a very happy season.

Holiday shopping can affect both the property on your person and items left in your vehicle. Unfortunately, criminals recognize the season as one of great opportunity. Always be aware of your surroundings and always try to shop and walk in parking lots in pairs. Statistics indicate that you are far more likely to become a victim of a crime if you are alone. If you must shop alone, never be afraid to make eye contact with someone. This displays confidence and lessens the chance that a potential robber would be interested in making you a victim. A more timid person would be a more appealing victim. Frequently look around, especially while you are walking outside. Check if there are familiar faces as you move from

store to store. This may suggest that you have been followed. If you carry a purse, hold it tight to your body. While you are in a parking lot, consider walking between parked cars. Keep your purse away from passing traffic as there have been incidents of a passenger reaching out from a moving vehicle to grab a purse from a pedestrian. Never get too close to a car when the occupant is asking directions. Leave yourself a way out of every area where you shop or park.

When inside a store or a mall, try to keep a small area around yourself and don't let anyone have physical contact with you. Physical contact is a common method of a "pick-pocket." If you use your credit card, don't lose sight of it. Be aware of the "double scan." This occurs when your card is passed through a credit-card scanner and the cash register. It could be a way of obtaining your credit for an unlawful use. Don't display the contents of your purse or wallet. Thieves may be watching to see how much cash you have and if you would be an easy target.

Try not to make frequent trips to your car to place merchandise inside before returning to a store. Thieves watch the lots and select desirable victims based on what they see. Never store anything that is visible within the passenger compartment of your vehicle. This is an open invitation to theft.

Finally, always look inside your car before you get in and have your key in your hand as you approach it. If there is someone loitering nearby, return to a location where there are many other people and report it to law enforcement, security or store personnel. Use your own intuition. If something does not look right, act on your instinct and take evasive action.

As the holidays present opportunities for joyous times and memories, it is the Cerritos Sheriff's Station's desire to make sure that you know how to steer away from anything that could mar this special time of year. Please be safe and aware. This knowledge will not only guide you through the holiday season, but in your day-to-day activities all year.

Beware of charity scams during the holidays

The Holiday Season brings out a spirit of giving and criminals are more than willing to do some taking. Opportunistic criminals will even exploit a generous impulse to make charitable contributions. Be aware of charities soliciting personal informa-

tion on the phone or by mail. This information can be used to deplete savings accounts, "max out" credit card limits and could lead you to becoming a victim of identity theft.

Before you make a donation, check out the charity. If you do not

recognize the name of the charity, do a little research before donating or pledging money. Ask for written information. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station always recommends dealing with charities with which you are fa-

Continued on the other side

A publication of the City of Cerritos and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Post Office Box 3130 • Cerritos, CA 90703 • safercerritos.com

Monthly Crime Summary: October 2013

There were 107 Part I felony investigations conducted by members of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in October, up from 79 in September. October saw a rise in residential burglaries and vehicle burglaries. The number of robbery incidents remained the same, and vehicle thefts dropped. At the end of October, patrol deputies were handling a weekly average of 298 calls for service in 2013.

Robberies

There were two robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in October, the same as in September.

On Sunday, October 20 at 8:27 p.m., a male shoplifting suspect struck two loss prevention employees in an attempt to escape from a store in the 11500 block of South Street. He was ultimately taken into custody and the stolen

merchandise was recovered.

At 2:45 p.m. on Tuesday, October 22, a male suspect approached a female in the 20200 block of Pioneer Boulevard and told her that he had planted a bomb in a nearby restroom. He then took her iPad and purse and fled.

Residential Burglaries

There were 27 residential burglaries reported in October, up from eight cases in September. Open/unlocked doors or windows were the entry points in 16 of the October crimes. Five windows were shattered, four were pried open and two doors were kicked in. Property reported stolen included a vehicle, safes, jewelry, cash, laptop computers, iPads, cameras, a rifle and identification. The new 2013 weekly average in residential burglaries is 4.3.

Vehicle Burglaries

There were 28 vehicle burglaries logged in October, up from 21 in September. Twenty of the more recent cases occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Fourteen of the targeted vehicles were SUVs. Four victims reported stereo components taken and one reported a GPS unit stolen. The new 2013 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 6.3.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts decreased from 21 in September to 18 in October. Fifteen of the vehicles taken in October were from high-volume commercial parking lots. Eight were SUVs, five were Hondas and one was a Toyota. Commercial trucks were also stolen. The 2013 weekly average in vehicle thefts is now 4.4.

Beware of charity scams

Continued from the other side
miliar. Legitimate charities will gladly send information and never insist that you donate immediately. If the caller is from a professional fundraising group, ask how much of the donation actually goes to the charity and how much the fundraiser keeps. You may prefer to give directly to the charity.

Take your time. There should be no hurry for you to send in a pledge or money. Legitimate charities will be around next week, next month, and next year. Be suspicious if the solicitor tells you that you must give now and don't let them play upon your guilt. Remember, you are the one making the donation and you have every right to obtain information and to control that donation.

Be attentive when driving

The following driver safety tips are provided courtesy of the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, CTIA and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute.

- The number of people killed in distraction-affected crashes decreased slightly from 3,360 in 2011 to 3,328 in 2012. An estimated 421,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver; this was a 9 percent increase from the estimated 387,000 people injured in 2011.
- 11 percent of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
- For drivers 15-19 years old involved in fatal crashes,

21 percent of the distracted drivers were distracted by the use of cell phones.

- At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has held steady since 2010.
- Engaging in visual-manual subtasks (such as reaching for a phone, dialing and texting) associated with the use of handheld phones and other portable devices increased the risk of getting into a crash by three times.
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind.

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.