

If you see something, say something

The nationwide ***If You See Something, Say Something*** public awareness campaign has been around for several years and is considered a simple and effective program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime. It emphasizes the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the proper local law enforcement authorities. The campaign also underscores the concept that homeland security begins with hometown security. A recent CNN report highlights just how important it is to call authorities when you observe something that you know just isn't quite right.

A woman living in Wacesa, Minnesota, observed a young man for about 10 minutes as he, in her words, fiddled with the lock on a storage locker located in the rear of her apartment building. He finally managed to slip inside the locker and shut the door behind him. She called the police and 10 minutes later the man was in custody and his disastrous plan thwarted. The investigation by Wacesa police

revealed that the man had bomb-making materials in the locker and was planning to attack a local school. Gunpowder, pyrotechnic chemicals and a pressure cooker were removed from the locker. Police also found finished bombs, numerous weapons and ammunition in the man's residence.

The importance of ***If You See Something, Say Something*** was also demonstrated in the Kansas City area in April. Thanks to an alert resident, police were able to track down an armed motorist who had been shooting at other vehicles over a period of several weeks. The arrest was due largely to information phoned in by one woman who had observed another motorist driving erratically and in a threatening manner toward her. She was able to get a partial license plate number and called the police. The task force detectives that had been assembled to investigate the serial shootings took the information and were able to quickly identify and arrest the suspect.

These are just two examples of how important it is to alert local authorities to suspicious behavior. In Cerritos we have an additional reason to emphasize the importance of ***If You See Something, Say Something***. We have the benefit of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station located in the center of the city and serving only our community. A dedicated group of deputies along with our own 24-hour emergency dispatch center results in Cerritos residents receiving the fastest emergency response times of any station in L.A. County. Few burglars and professional thieves get caught in the act in any city, but when a Cerritos resident observes someone acting suspiciously in their neighborhood and calls the Sheriff's Station, the quick response by deputies almost always results in an arrest. Remember, in emergencies always call 9-1-1, but if something doesn't look right (***If You See Something, Say Something***) call (562) 860-0044 and let a deputy check things out.

Monthly Crime Summary: May 2014

There were 69 Part I felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in May, a slight increase over the 60 reported in April. The following is a summary of the total Part I crimes by category: one robbery, one aggravated assault, 12 residential burglaries, 10 commercial/other burglaries, 13 vehicle burglaries, 14 grand thefts and 18 auto thefts. It is worth noting that there were no robberies throughout the month until May 30. Most crime figures remained somewhat consistent with the exception of auto thefts. There were four reported in April, but that figure increased to 18 this past month.

Robberies

The single robbery in May occurred in the 12500 block of Oakcreek Lane. At approximately midnight, a Cerritos resident was standing outside of a residence where a party was taking place. He was approached by a lone male who

displayed a semiautomatic handgun and demanded his wallet. The suspect, described as a male between the ages of 20 and 25, 6 feet tall and about 150 pounds, made off with \$40 in cash.

Aggravated Assaults

The single felony assault occurred on Wednesday, May 7 at the LA Fitness on Alondra Boulevard. During a dispute over who was entitled to play on the indoor basketball court, a male picked up a 10-pound weight and struck the victim on the head. Despite a considerable amount of blood loss, the victim sustained only minor injuries and declined medical treatment. The suspect was able to flee prior to the arrival of Sheriff's deputies, but was later identified, and detectives have obtained a warrant for his arrest.

Residential Burglaries

The Sheriff's burglary suppression team

continues to work hard to reduce residential burglaries. By the end of May, one less residential burglary was reported than the previous month (13 versus 12). The days of the week when residential burglaries occurred varied, although only one burglary was reported on a Thursday, and most happened during daytime hours. Two front doors were kicked in as points of entry, but most burglars entered through rear windows or sliding doors. A pistol, jewelry and three iPads were among the property stolen. Unlike last month, no homes in the process of being fumigated were targeted by burglars. The following is a list of reported residential burglaries in May:

- 12400 block Oakcreek Lane (May 2)
- 12700 block Charwood Street (May 4-5)

Continued on other side ■ ■ ■

MONTHLY CRIME SUMMARY: May 2014

Continued from the other side

- 12300 block Willowbranch Lane (May 5-6)
- 17300 block Stowers Avenue (May 12)
- 18300 block Studebaker Road (April 15-May 9)
- 13200 block Briarwood Street (May 14)
- 17200 block Leal Avenue (May 15)
- 18300 block Winslow Place (May 20)
- 16800 block Parkville Street (May 20)
- 18900 block Stark Avenue (May 26)
- 11900 block Yearling Street (May 28)
- 19300 block Roseton Avenue (May 31)

The burglary on Briarwood Avenue had a familiar theme and an important lesson. About 1 p.m. on Wednesday, May 14, a resident heard someone pounding loudly on her front door. She looked out, did not recognize the man and did not say anything or answer her door (she speaks limited English). About 10 minutes later she heard something at the rear of her home and observed the man coming through her rear slider door. Fortunately, when the resident screamed, the intruder quickly exited the residence and ran away. Unfortunately, the Sheriff's Station was not called until the next day.

There are two important lessons in this incident to keep in mind. First, it is recommended that when home alone, don't answer your door, but do make some noise to let the person know that someone is in the residence. ("We can't come to the door right now" or "we aren't interested" might give the impression that more than one person is home.) Turning up the volume on the television or making some type of noise is also suggested.

The second lesson is our constant theme, ***If You See Something, Say Something.*** Burglars are never caught in the act unless an alert resident sees something suspicious in the neighborhood and immediately calls the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044.

Commercial/Other Structure Burglaries

There were 10 non-residential burglaries reported at various locations in May. Copper

wire was stolen from a vacant warehouse on Arthur Street; another storage unit was broken into and tools were stolen at the Cerritos Self Storage facility on Valley View Street; Whitney High School lost some sports equipment from a storage building; a wallet and cash were stolen from a locker at LA Fitness on Alondra Boulevard; a large amount of computer equipment was stolen in a very sophisticated burglary at a wholesale business on Fabrica Way; an employee at a business at the Los Cerritos Center lost a purse that she had stored near the cash register; and a window was shattered and a cash register drawer stolen from BJ's Restaurant.

Grand Thefts

Fourteen grand thefts were reported in May, which is one less than the previous month. Charter Communications lost a couple of cable amplifiers from residential parkways; the Victoria's Secret (twice) and True Religion (once) at Los Cerritos Center had clothing valued at more than \$1,000 stolen; and a compressor valued at \$8,000 was stolen from a construction site on Artesia Boulevard.

Other grand thefts involved an employee who was arrested for stealing more than \$2,000 in merchandise at the Toys 'R' Us; a teenage suspect arrested for stealing three cell phones from the AT&T store at the Cerritos Towne Center; and another suspect arrested in a housing tract near Norwalk Boulevard and Artesia Boulevard after he grabbed a cell phone from a woman sitting at a bus stop. This arrest was possible because an alert witness observed the crime occurring and immediately called the Cerritos Sheriff's Station. Deputies quickly responded, and when they received a second call from a resident living in a nearby residential tract about a noise in her backyard, they located and arrested the felony suspect. This incident is a great example of the importance of ***If You See Something, Say Something.***

Vehicle Burglaries

Nine of the 13 vehicle burglaries reported in May occurred in commercial parking lots. A rear window was shattered and a purse was

stolen from a Toyota Prius that was parked in a lot near Artesia Boulevard and Dumont Street. Golf Clubs were stolen from a pick-up truck at the Home Depot lot on Alondra Boulevard. Three GMC Yukon SUVs – two in residential areas and one at the Cerritos Towne Center – lost third row seats. Thieves also targeted vehicles on three occasions (one was an attempt) in the 13400 block of Village Drive, with sunglasses being the items lost. Another pick-up truck was targeted at the Home Depot and a backpack and sunglasses were stolen. Finally, a driver's window was shattered and an iPad was stolen from a pick-up truck in an industrial park in the northern area of the City.

Vehicle Thefts

The good news in May was the long stretch when no robberies were reported. But the other news was a significant increase of auto thefts from the four reported in April to 18 last month (the monthly average in 2014 is about 12). Only two vehicles were stolen from residential areas (a Toyota Camry and a Toyota 4Runner), and the rest were taken from commercial lots, including four at the Los Cerritos Center and one from the Home Depot lot on Alondra Boulevard. Part of the increase was due to the theft of three large trailers from a business on Carmenita Road.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH WORKS

**If you see something,
say something.**

(562) 860-0044



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



(562) 916-1266
Cerritos Community Safety Division

(562) 860-0044
Cerritos Sheriff's Station

CERRITOS SHERIFF'S STATION
COMMUNITY SAFETY CENTER

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