

### April is Earthquake Preparedness Month

Last month's moderate 4.5 magnitude earthquake outside of Tokyo, Japan, caused minimal damage to property or injuries to people, and received relatively little media attention. It seems that oftentimes earthquakes are not taken seriously unless they cause mass destruction or result in compelling visuals that can be broadcast on the news. Preparedness efforts are frequently forgotten once the shaking stops and the media move on. The unfortunate reality is that many people are unlikely to take the appropriate steps to prepare for the "Big One" until after it occurs. For many, that will be too late.

There are numerous websites and other places to obtain earthquake and emergency preparedness tips and information. However, when an earthquake hits and the shaking starts, few people are thinking about their earthquake kits, stored water and supplies or their family emergency response plan. With that in mind, this month's newsletter offers tips on what to do when you feel the ground start to shake. These tips are easy to practice and should be memorized, especially if you live in an earthquake-prone area such as

Southern California.

- **Public places:** Drop, cover and hold on. If you are sitting in a restaurant or office building, get under a sturdy table or counter. Lights, signs and other hanging objects often fall and can cause injury. It is important to get away from large windows, cabinets and tall furniture. Breaking plate glass windows can be deadly. **DO NOT RUN OUTSIDE!** Façades and window glass falling from tall buildings are the first things to go flying in a major earthquake.
- **Indoors:** Drop, cover and hold on, similar to as if you were in a public place. Take cover under a sturdy table and protect your head and neck with your arms. If you are not near a table, drop to the floor against an interior wall. Avoid exterior walls, windows, hanging objects, mirrors, tall furniture, large appliances, heavy objects and glass. Be especially aware of old television sets that may fall, as they are heavy. Again, do not run outside.
- **If you are in bed:** Hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow

unless there is an armoire close by, something hanging above your bed or nearby shelves with heavy objects. If you have lots of shelves and items that can go flying, move into the hallway and drop down against an interior wall.

- **Outdoors:** Move to a clear area if you can safely do so. Avoid power lines, trees, signs, buildings (remember, things fall off), vehicles and other hazards.
- **Driving:** Pull over to the side of the road, stop and set your parking brake. Avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signal poles, signs and trees. Stay inside your vehicle until the shaking is over. If a power line falls on your car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.
- **In a stadium or theater:** Stay in your seat and protect your head and neck with your arms. Do not leave until the shaking is over. Walk out slowly, watching for anything that could fall in an aftershock.

Following are some website resources with more information about earthquake safety: [espfocus.org](http://espfocus.org), [ready.gov](http://ready.gov), [fire.lacounty.gov](http://fire.lacounty.gov), [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) and [earthquakecountry.org](http://earthquakecountry.org).

### Monthly Crime Summary: March 2015

There were 82 Part I felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in March, a marginal increase compared to the 80 similar crimes reported in February. Only one armed robbery and one strong-arm robbery occurred within the City this month, which is noteworthy considering that there are nearly 2,000 businesses and a popular regional shopping center that is visited by hundreds of thousands of patrons each month within the City's borders. Overall, the City's violent crime rate is down 39.1 percent during the first quarter of 2015 compared to the same period last year.

Although residential burglars did strike 19 Cerritos homes this month, those types of disturbing property crimes were actually down 29.7 percent from the previous month. Do

not let the one-month reduction rate cause you to lower your guard, because the rate of burglaries has actually increased throughout the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) jurisdiction by 3.0 percent (3,142 incidents) overall year-to-date.

Many fine automobiles are sold, driven and parked in the City – and criminals know this. To date, 41 vehicles have been stolen from the City in 2015; vehicle theft has increased by 10.8 percent this month. In comparison, there have been 2,799 vehicles reported stolen throughout the LASD's jurisdiction year-to-date (a 22.1 percent increase from the same period last year).

#### Robberies

Armed robberies are a rare occurrence in the City of Cerritos. There was only one armed

robbery reported in the City this month, which brought the year-to-date total to three incidents.

The March armed robbery occurred when a trusting victim used the Internet to identify a car he wanted to purchase and then arranged to meet the "seller" at the seller's "home" to examine the car before completing the transaction. When the victim arrived at what he thought was the seller's home, he was robbed at gunpoint by a second suspect. The "seller" lured the victim to a particular house that was unoccupied and that the "seller" had no association with. Both suspects remain at large.

The strong-arm robbery occurred when a shoplifter entered Home Depot, placed several saw blades in his pants and then walked out

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## MONTHLY CRIME SUMMARY: March 2015

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of the store without paying for the items. The suspect fought with loss prevention agents when they attempted to detain him. The suspect was arrested and charged with strong-arm robbery.

Robberies within the LASD's jurisdiction have increased slightly during the past year. There were 872 robberies reported in the LASD's jurisdiction for the first quarter of 2015. That number represents a 1.3 percent increase in this type of crime.

### Aggravated Assaults

There were two reports of aggravated assault in Cerritos this month, which brings the total number of aggravated assaults in the City this year to eight. That is the same number of reported assaults as last year for the same time period. Both reports of aggravated assault involved suspects with mental health issues. The first assault occurred at LA Fitness when the victim was confronted by a person with mental health issues. The suspect began yelling profanities and punched the victim for no apparent reason. The suspect was arrested and charged with aggravated assault. The second assault occurred at College Hospital and involved two individuals who were under psychiatric treatment. There were 1,728 reported aggravated assaults throughout the LASD's jurisdiction year-to-date, which is a 6.5 percent increase from last year.

### Residential Burglaries

Law enforcement has recorded an increase in residential burglaries throughout Los Angeles County. There were 3,142 burglaries reported in the LASD's jurisdiction during the first quarter of 2015; that number represents a 3 percent increase in reported burglaries. This month 19 residential burglaries were reported in the City, bringing the total to 66 year-to-date. The majority of the burglars forced entry into homes from the rear yard during daylight hours. Only two of the burglaries occurred on the weekend and only two of the burglaries occurred on Friday.

Those statistics reaffirm what we hold to be generally true – burglars avoid areas where they can be observed. That is why the best defense against burglars is a watchful neighbor who alerts deputies to suspicious persons or vehicles in their neighborhood. Two burglaries this week highlighted the value of residential burglar alarms. On both occasions the audible alarms sent the would-be burglars scurrying off. Combating residential burglaries is a top priority of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station. The station utilizes the skills of a crime analyst to expose crime patterns and trends. That information is then passed along to patrol deputies and a group of seven deputies who are specifically assigned to a burglary suppression team.

### Commercial/Other Structure Burglaries

There were six reported burglaries in this category during March. That number represents a 6.9 percent increase compared to last year. This month thieves took advantage of two trusting homeowners who left their detached garage doors open. Frequently, an open garage door signals an irresistible opportunity to passing thieves. The four commercial burglaries occurred at businesses during late night hours on both weekdays and weekends. The suspects used various methods to force entry into the buildings, including prying open doors, shattering windows and breaking through sheetrock drywall. The suspects were primarily searching for portable electronics. These types of thefts reinforce the need to back up all critical data on remote or secured storage devices.

### Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicles remain attractive targets for thieves because the interiors can be easily viewed and an automobile's glass can be easily breached. This month 21 vehicles were burglarized in the City. That statistic represents a 5.9 percent reduction compared to last year. Cerritos deputies have noticed an increase in the number of stolen SUV third-row seats. Third-row seats are being stolen

primarily from General Motors products. These types of thefts can be easily avoided by utilizing a cable lock to secure the removable seat to the vehicle's floor mount. Methods for securing SUV third-row seats can be found in greater detail at [safercerritos.com](http://safercerritos.com). Six trusting motorists had their personal property stolen out of their cars after they left their vehicles unattended and failed to cover or conceal expensive items.

### Grand Thefts Auto

Instances of automobile theft are up by 22.1 percent in the areas policed by the Sheriff's Department during the first quarter of 2015. Last year 9,734 vehicles were stolen throughout the LASD's jurisdiction. Cerritos had 23 vehicles stolen from its borders this month. That number represents a 10.8 percent increase compared to the same period last year. There were 16 vehicles stolen from commercial parking lots and seven vehicles taken from residential streets. Pre-2004 Honda vehicles proved to be the most popular vehicle stolen this month (34.7 percent).

### Fraud

Thefts that stem from fraud can be the most irritating types of crime because they involve deception and dishonesty and violate trust relationships. Two different Cerritos residents fell victim to fraudulent schemes this month. The first victim was called and told that she had won the Australian lottery and that she needed to purchase a PayPal debit card in order to have the winnings released to her. When the "Australian Lottery officials" received her payment, the victim learned that she had been swindled. The second fraud victim thought she was purchasing a vehicle from a legitimate eBay Internet service. The victim received what she believed to be legitimate instructions from "eBay" via an Internet message that provided instructions for payment. After the victim provided payment for the car, she learned that she had fallen victim to an Internet fraud.

For more crime information and prevention tips, visit [safercerritos.com](http://safercerritos.com).

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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.