

Monthly Crime Summary: April 2015

There were 91 Part 1 felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in April, a 9.9 percent increase compared to 82 similar crimes reported in March. The primary reason for the increase in Part 1 crimes is due to the rise in reported property crimes. Property crimes have increased throughout Los Angeles County. During the month of April, 586 Part 1 property crimes occurred within the City compared to 508 Part 1 property crimes reported during the same period last year (a 15.3 percent increase). The good news is that the City's reported Part 1 violent crime rate is down 33.3 percent when compared to the same period last year.

Robberies

Armed robberies continue to be a rarity within the City. There was only one reported armed robbery in Cerritos during the month of April. The event brings the total number of reported armed robberies in the City this year to three.

There were three strong-arm robberies reported in the City this month, including one that was related to a shoplifting incident. Year-to-date, 10 robberies have occurred in the City compared to 19 robberies that occurred last year during the same time period (a decrease of 47.3 percent).

One of the Cerritos strong-arm robberies occurred when a suspect entered a church shortly after midnight and confronted a sleeping church member in the lounge area. After a brief confrontation, the suspect stole the victim's purse, car keys and car that was parked in the church parking lot.

Aggravated Assaults

There were two aggravated assaults in the City this month, which is the same number of assaults that was reported last month. Year-to-date, there have been 10 reported assaults in the City compared to 11 assaults reported during the same period last year.

An aggravated assault occurred in Cerritos when a suspect of a domestic violence call was seen walking in the street and a patrol supervisor attempted to detain him. When the patrol supervisor stopped the suspect and attempted to handcuff him, the suspect pulled away and removed a hidden axe handle from his pants. The

suspect attempted to strike the patrol supervisor with the axe handle before he was apprehended.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries are on the rise in Cerritos and in cities with similar demographics. There were 20 residential burglaries reported in the City during the month of April. That figure brings the year-to-date total number of residential burglaries to 86 incidents compared to 56 reported residential burglaries during the same time period last year (a 53.5 percent increase). Crime analysts for the cities of Brea, Walnut, Diamond Bar, La Mirada, Agoura Hills and Santa Clarita all report a significant increase in burglaries.

Residents of Cerritos are encouraged to apply the "harden the target" philosophy to their backyards as 12 of the 20 reported residential burglaries occurred when the suspects forced entry into the house from the backyard. Only five of the 20 residential burglaries occurred during hours of darkness and only six of the residential burglaries occurred on the weekend. Only two suspects entered a residence through the garage door.

Residential burglaries are on the rise and the pattern of criminal conduct remains the same: case the neighborhood in a rental car during the day, knock on the front door of what appears to be an unoccupied home, use a fake reason for being there if someone answers the door and open the side gate or jump the fence and break a rear window to gain entry if no one is home. This cycle is repeating itself time and time again throughout the County. Learn how to break the cycle of crime, and help the seven deputies assigned to the City's Burglary Suppression Team, by visiting safercerritos.com for crime prevention tips.

Commercial/Other Structure Burglaries

There were nine reported burglaries in this category during the month of April compared to seven from the previous month. Three of the nine burglaries occurred as a result of a trusting citizen leaving their garage door unlocked or open. Another three burglaries occurred at learning institutions and one victim had his lock cut off a gym locker as he exercised at a fitness center.

Vehicle Burglaries

Thefts from parked vehicles, like many other property crimes throughout the County, are increasing. A complex mixture of social issues may be fueling the elevated property crime rate countywide; however, the primary cause for vehicle burglaries in the City continues to be spurred by trusting motorists who leave valuable property inside their car in plain view. This month 30 parked vehicles within the City were burglarized compared to 21 reported vehicle burglaries last month. Nine of those damaged vehicles contained purses that were in plain view. Twenty-four of the 30 vehicle burglaries occurred at a business site. The other six vehicle burglaries occurred in front of a residence.

Criminals continue to troll commercial parking lots looking for late model Chevrolet/GMC SUVs to steal the third-row seats. Five sets of third-row seats were stolen from vehicles parked within the City this month. The LAPD also has reported a significant increase in the number of third-row seats stolen Citywide. If you own a General Motors SUV product with leather trim, you may want to consider locking the third-row seat to the vehicle's floor mounts or storing the unused third-row seat at your home.

Grand Thefts Auto

Vehicle thefts are increasing throughout Los Angeles County. The LAPD reports that 4,976 vehicles were stolen within the City year-to-date (a 15 percent increase) and the LASD reports that 3,656 vehicles were stolen within its jurisdiction year-to-date (an increase of 19.8 percent). Car thieves stole 13 vehicles off the streets in Cerritos this month; that brings the total number of vehicle thefts in the City to 54 year-to-date (a 31.7 percent increase from last year). Hondas ranging from 1993-2000 are the most popular vehicles stolen in Cerritos. Individuals owning one of these types of cars would be well advised to install an alarm system or invest in a quality metal steering wheel lock.

MONTHLY CRIME SUMMARY: May 2015

During the month of May, there were 97 Part 1 felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station, an 8.25 percent increase over the 89 similar crimes reported in April. The positive news is that Part 1 violent crimes within Cerritos are down 18.75 percent year-to-date. There have been 26 instances of Part 1 violent crimes reported in the City this year compared to 32 reported events last year. The primary reason for the elevation in the Cerritos crime rate is due to an increased number of property crimes. This year alone 108 Cerritos residents have been the victim of a residential burglary compared to 68 last year (a 58.82 percent increase). This pattern of increasing crime requires an increasing level of vigilance on both the part of law enforcement and the citizens they represent. Stay attentive, do not create opportunities for criminal opportunists and, remember – if you see something [suspicious], say something [to law enforcement].

Robberies

Although robberies are trending up overall in Los Angeles County, robberies in Cerritos are trending down. Cerritos has had a total of 15 reported robberies year-to-date in all categories (armed, strong-armed, and shoplifting with force). There were three reported armed robberies and two strong-arm robberies reported in the City this month.

One of the armed robberies occurred in a residential area at 6:30 a.m. when a resident was entering his car to leave for work. The suspect drove up in a vehicle, pointed a handgun at the victim and demanded his wallet. The victim ran off before the suspect could react. The suspect then sped away with nothing to show for his efforts. A separate armed robbery occurred in the Target Store parking lot on South Street at 10:55 p.m. The suspect approached a man on foot and as a ruse asked if he could use the victim's cell phone. The suspect then pulled out a knife and robbed the victim. The final armed robbery occurred at the Chase Bank ATM drive-up window at 10 minutes after midnight. When the victim drove up and parked at the ATM machine, the suspect walked up to the driver's window, pointed a handgun at the victim and demanded money.

Criminals are predators who exploit opportunities. You can diminish your chances of becoming

a victim by constantly remaining alert and not creating desirable opportunities for criminals. Withdrawing cash at an ATM machine late at night is one such example. Make cash withdraws early in the day while others are in the general area. Criminals do not like to be directly observed because they know that if they are noticed, they can be identified later.

The other two robberies were classified as strong-arm robberies because they involved only the use of physical force. Both of those strong-arm robberies involved the suspect grabbing and taking cellular phones from trusting and unsuspecting victims while they patronized local businesses.

Aggravated Assaults

The number of reported aggravated assaults in Cerritos is virtually unchanged from last year. There have been 11 reported aggravated assaults year-to-date. Last year there were 10 reported aggravated assaults for the same time period. In May, there were three reported aggravated assaults within the City. One aggravated assault stemmed from a domestic violence incident. Another assault involved two acquaintances and the third assault occurred at Cerritos Regional Park at 6:50 p.m. between a gang member and another person who was mistaken as a gang member.

Residential Burglaries

There were 21 residential burglaries reported in the City in May. This brings the year-to-date total to 108 residential burglaries, compared to 68 reported burglaries during the same period last year (an increase of 58.82 percent). This month, eight of the burglaries occurred as a result of homeowners leaving their garage doors open and exposing the garage contents to all who pass by, including criminal opportunists. Another burglary involved a small safe being taken from a home. Criminals often remove small safes from a home and force them open later at their leisure. Always bolt a small safe down to the floor or wall studs.

Commercial/Other Structure Burglaries

There were nine reported burglaries in this category, which brings the year-to-date total to 49. This was a nominal increase over the 46 similar burglaries that were reported last year during the same time period. Four of the burglaries

involved schools, three of the burglaries involved restaurants and two of the burglaries involved detached garages. There was no pronounced pattern to these burglaries other than most of them happened during the evening hours. Only three of these events occurred during the weekend. Suspects used a variety of methods for breaking into the structures, including kicking open doors, breaking windows, prying their way in, walking through unlocked doors and reaching in through a mail slot. When possible, always install motion-activated LED security lights on the outside of detached buildings that contain items of value or consider installing an alarm system.

Vehicle Burglaries

This month 34 vehicles were burglarized in the City, which brings the total number of vehicle burglaries to 124 year-to-date, compared to 92 vehicle burglaries for the same period last year (a 34.78 percent increase). Ten of the 34 vehicle burglaries occurred at a residence. The other vehicle burglaries occurred in commercial or business parking lots. Each vehicle that was broken into had valuable property on display. Criminals easily plundered the purses, briefcases, currency, sunglasses, jackets, headsets, backpacks, projectors, wallets, books, shoes and other portable electronics that were left in plain view. Avoid having your car damaged and burglarized by concealing items of value before you park your car in a public space.

Grand Thefts Auto

There were 13 vehicles stolen in Cerritos in May, the same number of thefts as the month prior. Collectively, there have been 70 vehicles stolen in the City year-to-date compared to 61 vehicles stolen during the same period last year. Six of the vehicles were stolen while they were parked at residences; the other vehicles were stolen from business or commercial parking lots. Five of the vehicles were stolen over the weekend. Eight of the stolen vehicles were a combination of pre-1996 Toyotas and Hondas. Two of the stolen vehicles were trailered jet skis. If you own a pre-2000 vehicle, you would be well advised to purchase some type of supplemental locking device or car alarm.

For more information and prevention tips, visit 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**.