

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

November 2012

Hardening the Target

Protect your residence during fumigation

Residential burglaries have been on the rise in Cerritos for the past three years. Most occur throughout the week when many residents are away from their homes during the day. Having good locks on doors and windows is a worthwhile first step to protecting your property. Installing a burglar alarm, owning a dog and keeping valuable and irreplaceable possessions in a safety deposit box at a bank are also sensible measures to take. Unfortunately, all of these strategies may prove useless when a home is being fumigated for termites. Once a home is tented, the entire residence must be left completely unlocked.

As homes in Cerritos get older, it has become necessary for many homeowners to contact a pest control company to get rid of termites. The process usually requires residents to leave their home for approximately three days, during which time the home is tented and left unlocked. Unfortunately, thieves are aware that homes covered in fumigation tents are unsecured and provide easy entry. Despite the danger of entering a tented home, reports of such burglaries are not uncommon throughout Southern California.

Cerritos residents are reminded to take the following steps to protect their homes during the fumigation

process. First, make sure no cash, jewelry or easily stolen electronic items are left in the home. It is also recommended that one or more neighbors be asked to watch the property while it remains empty.

Finally, contact the Community Safety Division office at (562) 916-1266 and advise staff of the dates that the house is being fumigated. The Sheriff's Department and Volunteers on Patrol staff will be notified and will conduct extra patrol in the area during that time. Taking these few simple precautions will reduce your risk of being victimized and can contribute to making your home and neighborhood safer.

Be cautious when donating to charities

The holiday season brings out the spirit of giving and criminals are more than willing to do some taking. This applies to the many charitable contribution opportunities presented. Be aware of charities soliciting personal information on the phone or by mail. This information can be used to deplete savings accounts and "max out" credit card limits, and can lead to you becoming a victim of identity theft.

Before you make a donation, research the charity. If you do not recognize the name of the charity, learn more before donating or pledging money. Ask for written information about the organization.

We recommend dealing with charities that you are familiar with.

Legitimate charities will gladly send you information and will 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 well into the future. Be suspicious if the solicitor tells you that you must give now, and don't let them make you feel guilty. You are the one making the donation and you have every right to obtain information and to control your donation.

Practice residential burglary awareness

Recently, alert neighbors have contacted the Cerritos Sheriff's Station to report residential burglaries in progress. These calls were based on neighbors' observations of unfamiliar individuals walking through side areas and gates of nearby properties. This is an example of the partnership that exists between residents and law enforcement and is exactly what is needed to ensure our neighbors are not victimized.

PLEASE call 911 if you observe anything suspicious. Don't dismiss the activity by questioning yourself or thinking that the Sheriff's Department would not find the information valuable. This is how we all partner in crime prevention.

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Monthly Crime Summary: October 2012

There were 121 Part I felony investigations conducted by members of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in October. In September, 116 were recorded. All categories in this report, with the exception of vehicle thefts, increased in October. Field deputies handled a 2012 weekly average of 290 calls for service by the end of October.

Robberies

There were seven robberies investigated by Cerritos deputies in October. Two were logged in September.

On Friday, October 5 at 3:15 p.m. a male shoplifting suspect fought with loss prevention personnel at a store in the Los Cerritos Center. He was eventually taken into custody.

At 4 p.m. on Tuesday, October 9 a loss prevention officer was attempting to detain a suspect at a retail store in the 11500 block of South Street when the suspect attempted to flee. He was subdued and arrested.

Approximately one hour later another suspect fought with the same loss prevention officer while attempting to get away. He too was ultimately taken into custody.

Two additional male shoplifting suspects struggled with loss prevention personnel on Sunday, October 21 at 1:44 p.m. in the 11500 block of South Street. The suspects were able to flee.

A female victim was robbed on Monday, October 22 at 9:37 a.m. while in a lot in the 11400 block of Beach Street. The male suspect used pepper spray and took a bag containing phone cards. Some of the cards were recovered nearby.

At 3 p.m. that same day, two male juveniles were assaulted and robbed of their skateboards by three male juvenile suspects in the 19800 block of Bloomfield Avenue.

The final robbery of the month

was a shoplifting incident in which the suspect fought with store employees as they attempted to detain him. This occurred in the 17500 block of Bloomfield Avenue on Friday, October 26 at 4:55 p.m.

Residential Burglaries

There were 31 residential burglaries reported in October compared to 23 in September. Open/unlocked doors or windows were the entry points in 20 of the October cases. Four windows were shattered, four doors or windows were pried open and three doors were kicked in. Victims reported the loss of jewelry, iPads, liquor, cell phones, cameras, cash, a helmet and a safe. The 2012 weekly average in residential burglaries is 5.1.

Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries rose from 17 in September to 23 in October. High-

volume commercial lots were the crime scenes in 17 of the October incidents. Nine cases involved SUVs. Property reported taken included third-row seats (from SUVs), GPS units, stereos, cell phones, briefcases, backpacks, clothes, checks, purses, credit cards, a disabled parking placard and a garage door opener. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is 7.0.

Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts dropped from 16 in September to 14 in October. Nine of the vehicles stolen in October were taken from high-volume commercial parking lots. Six of the vehicles were Hondas, three were SUVs and one was a Toyota. Commercial trailers and a motorcycle also were taken. The new 2012 weekly average in vehicle thefts is 3.9.

Heed Craigslist warning

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center advises residents to use caution when conducting negotiations and purchases on Craigslist. There have been national stories about unsuspecting victims being lured into unfamiliar areas and ultimately robbed of cash or property involved in Craigslist transactions. There have also been worse outcomes. Similar cases have been experienced in Cerritos. Two suspects were arrested as they attempted to steal cash from a man and his son on a secluded residential street. All of the parties involved were from out of the area and the victims were oblivious to the fact that they were being set up. This is just one example of a recent Cerritos case and how vulnerable buyers and sellers can be.

Although the majority of Craigslist transactions are successfully

and safely completed, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center would like to offer some advice on where those transactions should take place. Conduct your business in a public place with many potential witnesses, as criminals do not like populated areas. Avoid streets, alleys, parks, industrial areas, homes, apartments, motels/hotels and offices. Consider meeting inside a mall, a crowded restaurant or other public venue with many people around. You can even meet in the lobby of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center.

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



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.