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Street robberies are increasing in San Leandro and the Bay Area as a whole, according to the San Leandro police.

The most common muggings the police have seen lately are snatching gold chains off people's necks or simply grabbing cell phones out of people's hands, according to Lt. Randy Brandt of the San Leandro police.

As of last month, year-to-date, robberies are up 27 percent over 2011 figures, according to statistics from the San Leandro police. There were 228 robberies from January through October, whereas there were 217 robberies in all of 2011. Robberies are any theft from a person, so those figures include anything from a snatching to an armed robbery.

Brandt said that most of the time, the robbers aren't armed, but in at least two recent robberies the suspects used a gun.

Last Saturday on the 1700 block of Marina Boulevard around noon, a man was getting gas and sitting in his car while he waited for his tank to fill. A suspect approached him with a gun and demanded the chain necklace that the man was wearing.

Without waiting for the victim to take it off, the suspect grabbed the chain and fled. He is described as a Hispanic male in early 20s, about 5-foot-7, with a small build.

On Nov. 19 on the 200 block of Castro Street, a man was in the parking lot of his apartment complex when he was approached by two men who demanded his chain. One of the men had a gun and ripped the chain off the victim before he could take it off.

The suspects in that robbery are described as two Hispanic males around 18 to 20 years old. One was about 5-foot-7 and thin, the other more heavy-set.

Brandt said that gold chains, iPhones, and other smart phones are what is most often snatched, so don't be obvious about having any of those things. He added that even having headphones on tells the robber that you might have a smart phone in your pocket.

Brandt said that street robberies are happening all over the city at all times of the day and tend to occur in busy places such as the mall where a man was robbed at the gym last week by someone who tore his chain off his neck while he was in the shower. Also at the mall, someone tried to snatch an 11-year-old boy's cell phone over the weekend.

Other areas where the muggings are frequent are near schools, on streets with a lot of pedestrians, and near BART and bus stops.

"Don't be obvious about being on your phone and be aware of what's going on around you when you are," Brandt advised.