

CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT



A catalytic converter is a device that converts toxic exhaust gases from an internal combustion engine into less-toxic pollutants. The converters contain precious metals housed in a muffler-like package attached to the exhaust pipe.

Why Thieves Target Catalytic Converters

Catalytic Converters are stolen so thieves can sell the precious metals used in manufacturing the devices, platinum, rhodium, and palladium. They sell the converters to scrap yards for several hundred dollars per piece. Unfortunately, it can cost you up to \$2000 to replace a catalytic converter, and it is illegal to drive your car without one. The resulting gap in your exhaust system also makes the car run poorly until it is fixed.



Catalytic converter



Catalytic converter location

It can take less than a minute for thieves to cut a converter from a car. Thieves can use battery-powered cutting tools to quickly cut both ends and remove the converter and with a little more work, hand-held cutting tools get the job done with less noise.



Reciprocating Saw



Pipe cutter

Symptoms of Converter Theft

If your catalytic converter has been stolen, you'll notice a loud rumbling or roaring sound as soon as you turn on the engine. The noise gets louder when you hit the gas. The exhaust is not working properly, so the vehicle also drives rougher than usual, often sputtering. Check underneath your car in the back. The catalytic converter is a round canister connecting two pieces of piping in the exhaust. You will see a gap in the middle of your exhaust if the converter is missing, and there will likely be a cut pipe.

Catalytic Converter Theft Prevention

Vehicles are targeted at all hours of the day, and it is difficult to stop. Still, thieves look for easy targets, so prevention techniques can help.

- Park your vehicle in a garage or well-lit area.
- Add bright motion sensor lights.
- In public lots, park close to the building entrance or access road. Increased pedestrian traffic can be a deterrent.
- Mark your converter with the VIN and bright paint.
- Consider installing a shield, cage or strap.
- If you have a security system on your car, calibrate it so vibration sets it off. This ensures the alarm activates if a thief tries to saw off the converter.
- Video surveillance around your garage or driveway is also useful.



Etching and painting



Catalytic converter cage



Catalytic converter shield

We are asking for the public's help with information about these crimes or the suspects. If the crime is in progress, call 911, otherwise, contact the Bellevue Police Department at 425-452-6917.

Bellevue Police Department

For emergencies, call 911

Police non-emergencies 425-452-6917

Crime Prevention

crimeprevention@bellevuewa.gov

425-452-6915



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