

## Catalytic Converter Theft Deterrence

Communities throughout California, and the country, are facing a significant increase in catalytic converter theft. The National Insurance Crime Bureau tracked a four-fold increase in monthly thefts, and LAPD saw more than a 300 percent increase from 2019 to 2020.

### Why are catalytic converters being stolen?

They contain valuable precious metals like palladium, platinum, and even rhodium, which can cost upwards of \$15,000 an ounce.

### Why is it important to have a catalytic converter?

They reduce harmful emissions from vehicles to help meet clean air standards. Chemical reactions take place inside the catalytic converter to change unhealthy vehicle exhaust emissions into less harmful ones.



### What do I do if my catalytic converter is stolen?

Call the police immediately instead of engaging a thief that is stealing your catalytic converter. If you notice it has been stolen, contact law enforcement and your insurance provider, and have a trusted mechanic inspect the other exhaust components for damage before replacing your vehicle's catalytic converter.

### Potential deterrents

It only takes a thief a few minutes to steal a catalytic converter, and it can happen at any time of the day or night. The best deterrent is parking your car in a garage, if possible.



Lock/Strap



Park Vehicle  
in Garage



Alarms



Motion Sensitive  
Lights



Cover



Etch VIN/License  
Plate Number

Additional deterrents include:

- Catalytic converter lock/strap: A lock or wire cables surrounding the converter can deter a thief because it adds to the time to steal the catalytic converter.
- Catalytic converter and car alarms: Allow the theft to be noticed by everybody nearby. Car alarms can be adjusted to be sensitive to the motions or vibrations of thieves attempting to steal the catalytic converter. Some alarm systems tie directly to the catalytic converter.
- Covers: Aftermarket metal shields or plates are available for some car models. They deny thieves quick access by covering the catalytic converters. Devices should be installed by a licensed auto shops to ensure proper installation and avoid any damage to the converter.
- Etching VIN/license plate number on catalytic converter and painting it: Could deter a crime from happening and help law enforcement connect the crime to the victim. Many law enforcement agencies and auto shops hold free etching or engraving events. Spray painting catalytic converters with a brightly colored heat resistant paint can make it clear to scrap buyers and law enforcement that the catalytic converter was probably stolen, but without identifying information it can't help locate the victim of the crime.
- Motion sensitive lights and cameras: Install a motion sensor system at home, above the driveway, that triggers lights and cameras. Sudden lights and the presence of cameras can deter theft.

## Additional suggestions

- Be alert of suspicious activity in your neighborhood and report anything you see that looks out of the ordinary to your police department.
- Consider purchasing a catalytic converter theft insurance policy, which can help cover the cost of a replacement catalytic converter.
- Stay aware of local, state, and federal regulations regarding catalytic converter theft prevention.

## Resources

Contact a licensed auto shop for help identifying and installing the best catalytic converter theft deterrent option for you and your vehicle. To find an auto shop, try the Bureau of Automotive Repair's Auto Shop Locator visit, [www.bar.ca.gov/consumer/smog-check-program/catalytic-converter-theft](http://www.bar.ca.gov/consumer/smog-check-program/catalytic-converter-theft).

For references and more information on catalytic converter theft and other air pollution issues, visit CARB's Community Outreach and Enforcement at [bit.ly/CARB-COES](http://bit.ly/CARB-COES).