

## Catalytic Converter Theft Prevention

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**Have you heard of a catalytic converter?** Many people have never heard of them, and don't need to, until they start their car one day and hear an unusually loud sound when they press on the gas pedal. After a mechanic looks under their car, they discover that the auto part is missing. Not only is this inconvenient – it may cost you close to, or more than, \$2,000 to replace a stolen catalytic converter.

**So you may wonder, what are catalytic converters?** Catalytic converters are designed to reduce airborne pollutants and harmful emissions from your vehicle's exhaust; thereby improving air quality and reducing smog. The catalytic converter is part of the exhaust system that is located on the underside of your car between the exhaust manifold and muffler.

**Why are catalytic converters valuable and why are criminals stealing them?**

Catalytic converters contain precious metals such as platinum, palladium, and rhodium. These precious metals can be recycled for cash, and they are what make the catalytic converters so valuable. When the price of these precious metals rises, thefts tend to increase.

**What can you do to protect your catalytic converter?** When you take your car in for service, you can ask the dealer or mechanic to engrave your license plate number on your vehicle's catalytic converter. This can help prove the part was stolen and does not belong to the vehicle or the offenders when law enforcement encounters subjects in possession of one or several catalytic converters. You can also purchase thermal stickers with a serialized number that is registered to you.

As extra precaution, you may have a mechanic weld the catalytic converter to your vehicle if it is currently bolted on. You can consider purchasing a catalytic converter cage or other security device or an alarm system that can be calibrated to activate upon vibration when thieves attempt to cut or saw the part from your vehicle.

**What can you do to prevent, or reduce your chances of, catalytic converter theft?**

When possible, park your vehicle inside your garage. If you can't park in the garage, park your vehicle close to the curb or back in to your driveway to deter access underneath your vehicle. Consider adding video surveillance to your home that covers the area where you normally park your car. Finally, it's always a good idea to park in well-lit and well populated areas.

Always pay attention to your surroundings, trust your instincts and report any suspicious behavior immediately by calling the Irvine Police Department at 949-724-7000. In an emergency call 911.





