

Protect Your Business From Catalytic Converter Thieves



Since 1975, all vehicles produced in the United States must have a catalytic converter as part of the exhaust system. The catalytic converter is an emissions-control device that contains precious metals that act as catalysts. When hot exhaust enters the converter, a chemical reaction occurs that renders toxic gases, such as carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons, into less harmful emissions.

With the price of precious metals skyrocketing, thieves are helping themselves to catalytic converters that contain enough platinum, palladium or rhodium to make it worth the risk to cut it from the underbelly of your vehicle. You might become aware that your catalytic converter has been stolen when your vehicle starts with a gravelly roar.

The cost of catalytic converter theft

Stolen catalytic converters are sold to scrap yards for around \$100 to \$150, but the cost to your business could be much bigger. There's the hassle of a vehicle that can't be safely driven, as well as the expense of having it towed to a local repair shop and getting the part replaced.

Your comprehensive car insurance for businesses and individuals can help cover these repairs.

What thieves look for

Catalytic converter thefts typically happen to vehicles that are parked for prolonged periods in large lots, such as shopping centers, mass transit commuter lots or company parking lots.

Vehicles that sit higher from the ground, such as trucks, pick-ups and SUVs, are particularly vulnerable to catalytic converter theft because thieves can slide underneath without having to jack up the vehicle to gain access to the converter. With just a few cuts of a battery-powered saw, the catalytic converter can be stolen in less than a minute.

Preventing catalytic converter theft

To combat catalytic converter thefts, a number of states have passed laws tightening the restrictions on metal scrap dealers. In many cases, dealers are required to verify the seller's identity with a photo ID and maintain complete records of sellers for 5 years.

To prevent catalytic converter theft, use common sense and follow these tips:

- Always park in well-lighted areas
- At shopping centers and other similar parking lots, park close to the entrance of the building or near the access road where there's a lot of traffic
- Engrave your license plate number on the converter to make it traceable
- Purchase a vehicle security system and make sure it's set to trigger with just the slightest motion
- Visit a local muffler shop and have the converter secured to the vehicle's frame with a couple of pieces of hardened steel welded to the frame
- Check out the different types of catalytic converter theft deterrent systems at your local auto parts store or online