CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT PREVENTION

WHAT IS CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT?

A catalytic converter is part of your vehicle's exhaust system that reduces harmful emissions. Thieves target these components because they contain valuable precious metals such as platinum, palladium, and rhodium.
Using a battery-powered saw, a thief can often remove a catalytic converter in less than one minute, then sell it for scrap value.

Most thefts occur:

- Overnight or in the early morning hours
- In poorly lit or isolated areas
- In locations with little surveillance
- On vehicles left unattended for extended periods

Higher-Risk Vehicles

- Toyota Prius and other hybrid vehicles
- Honda Element
- Ford F-Series trucks
- SUVs and pickup trucks
- Street-parked vehicles
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Why?

✔️ Higher ground clearance provides easier access underneath the vehicle
✔️ Hybrid converters contain higher-value precious metals
✔️ Some vehicles have multiple catalytic converters

🛡️ THE BEST DEFENCE IS LAYERED PROTECTION

Man busted with 439 stolen catalytic converters for export to U.S.: Burnaby RCMP

Police allege the man was buying the stolen parts from a mobile metal scrapper then mixing them with legitimately acquired ones ones for shipment to the U.S.

CRIME | JUN 26, 2024

'Domino effect': Surrey, B.C. man's catalytic converter stolen a 4th time

When Randy Morris turned his car on to go to work on Thursday, he heard a tell-tale "horrible noise." He knew right away his catalytic converter had been stolen — again.

CRIME | FEB 2, 2024

Surrey man's insurance deductible hiked by $2,200 after 3rd catalytic converter theft

According to ICBC, claims for catalytic converter thefts in B.C. increased from 89 in 2017 to 1,953 in 2021, while the costs attached to them rose to a little over $4 million.

CRIME | FEB 19, 2024

Quick Facts:

According to ICBC, reported claims involving catalytic converters in the first seven months of 2023 totalled approximately $8.2 million in British Columbia.

ICBC data also shows there were 6,143 catalytic converter thefts across B.C. in 2022 and 2,931 in the first seven months of 2023.

Catalytic converter thefts are covered under ICBC's Comprehensive insurance. If your catalytic converter is stolen, report it to the police and make a claim with ICBC.

THE BEST DEFENCE IS LAYERED PROTECTION

1. INSTALL A PHYSICAL ANTI-THEFT DEVICE

Physical barriers are the most effective deterrent against catalytic converter theft.

Recommended Options:

🔒 **Steel Shield Plates**

- Hardened steel cover installed over the converter
- Difficult and time-consuming to remove
- Approximate cost: $100-$400

🔒 **Cable Locking Systems**

- Products such as CatClamp® or CatStrap®
- Hardened steel cables wrap around the converter
- Makes cutting far more difficult

🔒 **Protective Cages or Rebar Enclosures**

- Professionally installed metal barriers
- Significantly increase theft time and effort

Prevention Tip

The combination of a physical barrier and secure parking provides the strongest protection.

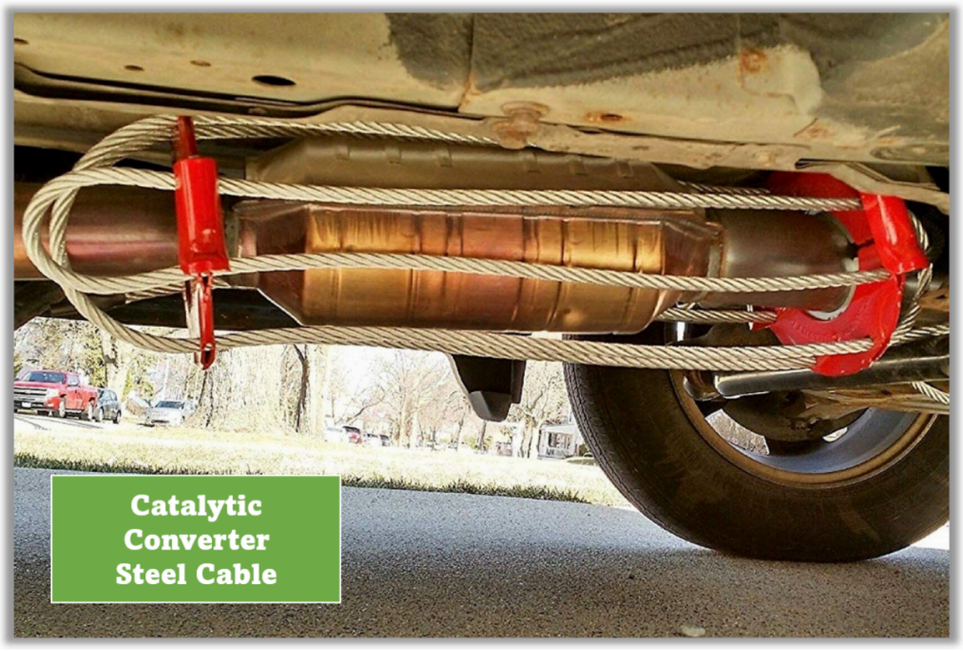
2. MARK YOUR CATALYTIC CONVERTER

✅ Etch the last eight digits of your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) onto the converter.

✅ Apply bright, high-temperature paint.

Benefits

- Makes the converter easier for police to identify
- Reduces resale value to thieves
- Helps recyclers identify stolen property



3. PARK SMART

Best Parking Locations

✅ Inside a garage

✅ In a secure fenced area

✅ In well-lit locations

✅ In areas monitored by cameras

✅ In high-traffic areas where suspicious activity is more likely to be noticed

At Home

✅ Install motion-activated lighting

✅ Install security cameras

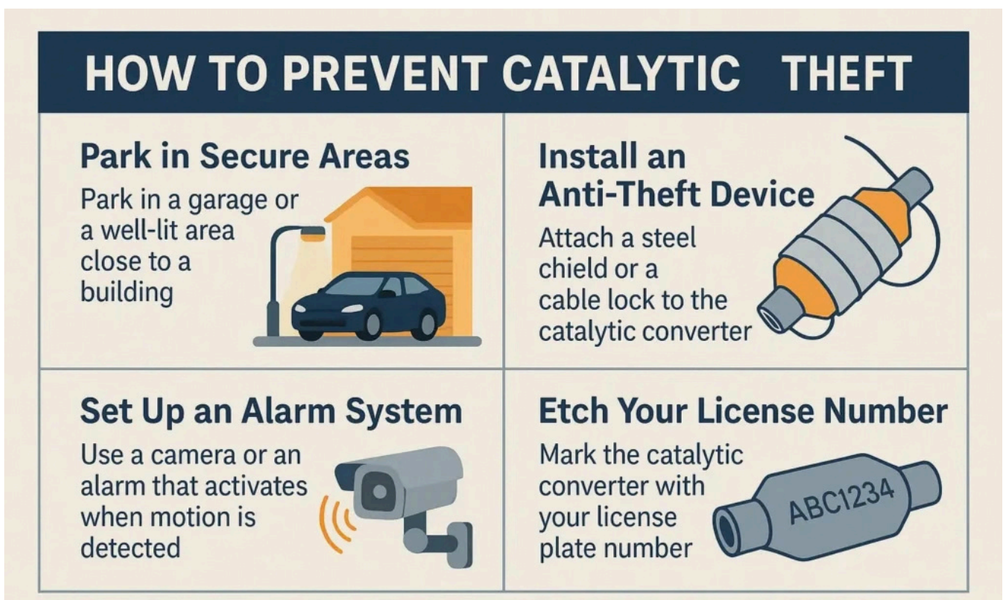
✅ Park close to a wall or barrier to limit access underneath the vehicle

Avoid

❌ Isolated parking areas

❌ Poorly lit locations

❌ Leaving vehicles unattended for extended periods



4. UPGRADE YOUR VEHICLE SECURITY

✅ Increase alarm sensitivity to detect vibration or cutting.
✅ Install catalytic converter-specific alarms.
✅ Use motion sensors and smartphone-connected security systems when available.
Thieves often abandon attempts when an alarm is activated.

👀 KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Suspicious Activity May Include:

⚠ Loud cutting or grinding noises
⚠ Battery-powered saw sounds
⚠ Individuals crawling underneath parked vehicles
⚠ Activity around vehicles late at night or early in the morning
⚠ Vehicles stopping briefly near parked cars while occupants examine the underside

💰 THE TRUE COST OF THEFT

Prevention Costs

- VIN etching: Minimal cost
- Bright marking paint: Minimal cost
- Anti-theft devices: $20-$500
- Steel shields: $100-$400 installed

Theft Costs

- Catalytic converter replacement: $1,000-$3,000+
- Additional exhaust damage repairs
- Insurance deductibles
- Vehicle downtime and inconvenience

Prevention is far less expensive than replacement.

🚨 REMEMBER

Make Your Vehicle a Difficult Target

Physical Barriers + VIN Etching + Secure Parking + Lights & Cameras + Alarms = Maximum Protection

A thief looking for a quick theft is likely to move on when faced with visible security measures.

🚔 IF YOUR CATALYTIC CONVERTER IS STOLEN

Take These Steps Immediately

1. Report the theft to police.
2. Contact your insurance provider.
3. Have the vehicle inspected by a qualified mechanic.
4. Document all damage and retain repair receipts.

✅ QUICK PREVENTION CHECKLIST

☐ Park in a garage or secure area
☐ Use motion-activated lighting
☐ Install security cameras
☐ Etch your VIN on the converter
☐ Apply bright identification paint
☐ Install a steel shield, cable lock or cage
☐ Adjust vehicle alarm sensitivity
☐ Report suspicious activity immediately