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IRWINDALE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Preventing Catalytic Converter Thefts

Catalytic converter thefts from vehicle exhaust systems continue to increase throughout the region.

A catalytic converter is part of your car's exhaust system and is used to convert dangerous exhaust pollutants into less harmful emissions as they pass through your car's exhaust pipe. Catalytic converters have been required on all cars sold in the U.S since 1975.

They don't seem very glamorous, but they are extremely attractive to thieves. The reason lies in the value of the metals used in the manufacturing of the converters. Catalytic converters contain platinum, rhodium, and palladium and their value to thieves across the nation has increased dramatically in recent years due to the black market resale value of these metals.

Catalytic converters are relatively easy to steal and a skilled crook can remove one from a car in just a few minutes. Because they are concealed underneath the car, many owners do not even know their converter has been stolen until they notice the car running poorly and they hear a loud, rumbling exhaust noise.

If you believe your car's catalytic converter has been stolen, look under the car. The catalytic converter is a round canister that connects two pieces of the exhaust piping that runs from your engine to your tail pipe. If your converter has been taken, you'll see a gap or open space in the middle of the exhaust and you'll likely see evidence of the exhaust piping being cut away.

Not only does the theft of a catalytic converter result in a poorly running vehicle, but it is also illegal to drive your car without one. The cost to replace a catalytic converter, as well as to repair the damage resulting from its removal, can cost up to \$2000 on average.

Thieves look for easy targets when it comes to catalytic converter thefts and owners can take these few simple steps to help make your car or SUV a less likely target:

- Always park in well-lit areas with a lot of pedestrian traffic whenever possible
- If you have a personal garage, keep your car in the garage with the door closed when the vehicle is not in use
- Park close to a building entrance or to the nearest access road when parking in a public lot
- Install a catalytic converter security devices to your car to make it harder to steal
- Have the converter welded to the car frame also makes it more difficult to remove
- If you have a security system on your car, calibrate it so vibration sets it off
- Video surveillance around your garage or driveway is also useful in deterring this, and other kinds of thefts
- Engrave your CDL, VIN or other unique identifying number onto your catalytic converter to make it easier to identify in case it does get stolen
- Be aware, and report, suspicious persons loitering around or looking under parked vehicles

By taking these simple steps, you can save yourself time and costly repairs to your vehicle!

Call 9-1-1 to report emergencies or (626) 430-2244 to report non-emergencies to the Irwindale Police Department