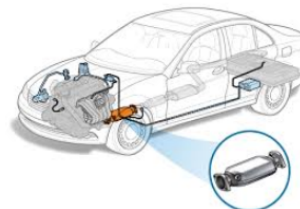




2021
May Newsletter

Catalytic converter theft & how to stop it

There have been a growing number of catalytic converter thefts in this area in recent months, including one in our neighborhood.



These thefts are not just a nuisance to victims.

According to experts, it can cost up to \$2,000 to replace a catalytic converter and it is illegal to drive your car without one. What's more, the resulting gap in the vehicle's exhaust system makes the car run poorly until the device is replaced. Why are thieves stealing these devices and what can we do to protect our vehicles?

The appeal of catalytic converters

Thieves steal catalytic converters because of the value of the metals in them. Catalytic converters contain platinum, rhodium and palladium. The metals are expensive and thieves sell the converters to scrap yards for several hundred dollars each, depending on the size of the converter and the current rate on the metals inside it. Price increases typically result in an increase in thefts.

According to [Edmonds.com](https://www.edmunds.com), an automotive information site, thieves can remove a catalytic converter quickly, often in less than two minutes, so theft can even occur in broad daylight. The only tools a thief needs are a wrench (for converters that are bolted on) or a reciprocating saw (for converters that are welded in). Some thieves bring a mechanic's creeper. Then all they do is slide under the vehicle, remove the bolts holding the converter and take it.

Typically, catalytic converters are stolen from cars and trucks in driveways, strip malls or in parking garages. The most commonly hit vehicles are SUVs and trucks, especially late-model Toyotas, because they sit higher off the ground (making for easier access) and the bolts that connect the converter are easily removed. Nissans also may be targeted.

Symptoms of converter theft

According to Edmonds, you'll notice a loud rumbling or roaring sound as soon as you turn on the engine if your catalytic converter is missing. This gets louder when you hit the gas. The exhaust will not work properly, so the vehicle will drive rougher than usual, often with a sense of sputtering as you change speed.

To see if the theft has taken place, go to the back of the car and look underneath. The catalytic converter is a round canister that connects two pieces of piping in the exhaust. You will see a gaping space in the middle of your exhaust line if the converter is missing and you will likely see signs of the piping being cut away.

Preventing catalytic converter theft

The easiest way to protect your vehicle is to simply park it in your garage. Taking the time to clean out a parking space in the garage can save you a lot of frustration and expense later.

When you are away from home, park in well-lit areas when possible. Park close to a building entrance or to the nearest access road when parking in a public lot. The increased pedestrian traffic in those areas will deter thieves.

Security devices are available that attach to the converter, making it harder to steal. Having the converter welded in place also makes it more difficult to remove. If you have a security system on your car, calibrate it so vibration sets it off. This ensures the alarm activates if a thief tries to saw off the converter. Video surveillance around your garage or driveway is also useful. Engrave your VIN number onto your catalytic converter to make it easier to identify in case it does get stolen.

Some mechanics suggest welding the heads on the catalytic converter bolts — or simply shearing them off.

The aftermarket has designed products to deter and prevent catalytic converter theft. The idea behind such devices is that if it takes too long to steal the thieves will move on to easier pickings. The [CatClamp](#), for example, which starts at \$150, is a hard-to-defeat cage installed around the catalytic converter. This product can be installed by a mechanic or at home with an included specialized tool and is backed by a money-back guarantee.

Another aftermarket device is the CatStrap. [CLICK HERE](#) to watch a video about this product.

WDDNA met with Supervisor Desmond

In an effort to establish a working relationship with our new Board of Supervisors representative, [Supervisor Rich Desmond](#), several members of the WDDNA board met recently with Desmond at his downtown office.

On hand for the meeting were WDDNA Board President Paul Blaise; Brian Smith, our liaison with the Sheriff's Department's off-duty office; and our communications manager, Kathleen Newton. Our aim was to explain the goals and operations of our association and share with Desmond issues of greatest concern to our members.

Blaise specifically noted our concern about the impacts of school and commuter-related traffic and we discussed such issues as street improvements and funding for the Sheriff's Department off-duty program.

Desmond, a Jesuit High School graduate, said he is very familiar with our association and will work with us on our issues of concern. However, he noted that he is the only member of the Board of Supervisors whose district is solely in the unincorporated area. Other districts include incorporated cities whose issues sometimes overshadow those of the unincorporated area.

He said he plans to fight for street improvements for the unincorporated area, while other supervisors want more funding for mass transit. "While I, too, support mass transit," he said, "I believe we need to maintain and improve the major thoroughfares that are essential to our unincorporated area."

Desmond said he also will work to increase funding for the Sheriff's Department, noting that the department has just .8 deputies per thousand population, while the City of Sacramento Police Department has 1.4 sworn officers per thousand.

In order to strengthen his ability to push forward initiatives to serve our community, Desmond urged WDDNA members to send him letters about issues of concern to them. He said a stack of constituent letters can carry a lot of weight with the other supervisors.

Among the topics he said he would like to hear from residents about are:

- Traffic and parking problems in the neighborhood
- Road conditions
- Homeless encampments on American River Parkway
- Code enforcement

He also urged WDDNA members to write to our state legislators about such neighborhood issues as CHP staffing, homelessness and traffic control. Assembly Member [Ken Cooley](#) represents the entirety of our neighborhood. In the State Senate, [Richard Pan](#) represents the Wilhaggin area, while Sen. [Jim Nielsen](#) represents households in the area east of Jesuit High School.

How to choose a home safe

If you have considered getting a small safe for your home to secure important personal papers, jewelry and keepsakes, there are a number of things to consider when choosing one.

Size

A safe's exterior dimensions aren't an accurate measurement of its storage capacity because safe doors and walls vary in thickness. Instead, look at its interior size in cubic feet. Use the exterior dimensions to decide where you'll put the safe.



“[Consumer Reports](#)” suggests that a good way to pick a size is to pile up everything you expect to put in the safe and measure it. “A fairly common home-safe capacity is 1.2 to 1.3 cubic feet, which should easily accommodate a foot-high stack of 8½-by-11-inch papers, for example,” the “Consumer Reports” article explains.

Family Handyman magazine suggests that you buy one larger than you need now, since you may find more items to add over time and replacing your safe in a few years is inconvenient.

Fire Resistance

The next thing to consider is the safe's fire rating. According to the CR article, safes are rated in terms of what type of material they will protect and how long they will protect it. “For example, safes rated to protect paper documents shouldn't get any hotter than 350 degrees on the inside during a fire, according to John Drengenberg, consumer safety director at Underwriters Laboratory (UL) in Northbrook, Ill. If you plan to store old tape recordings or 35mm slides, however, you'll want a safe that's rated not to exceed 150 degrees inside, he says.

“Computer disks and DVDs are even more sensitive, so if that's what you'll be storing look

for a safe whose interior won't exceed 125 degrees. This information should be on the safe itself, and you might see it on the packaging as well.

"For home safes, 30 minutes of protection is most common, although you can also find safes that offer one or more hours' worth, typically with higher price tags. Generally speaking, 30 minutes should be sufficient..."

Burglary Protection

According to Consumer Reports, UL testers go at safes with tools, torches and even explosives to determine their burglary-resistance ratings.

"A TL-15 rated safe, for example, can withstand an attack of at least 15 minutes using common tools. While most home safes don't carry a rating for burglary resistance, they do, as a practical matter, provide some protection.

"Chris E. McGoey, a security consultant in Los Angeles, says that burglars generally go for what they can grab in one run through a house. 'Once they get their arms full,' he adds, 'they're out of there.'

"A 1.2- or 1.3-cubic-foot safe probably weighs about 100 pounds empty, making it a less attractive target than jewelry, cameras, small electronics and other more portable items a burglar might spot. Many safes also come with bolt-down kits, a further deterrent to thieves in a hurry. Other safes can be concealed in a wall or anchored in a concrete floor."

Where to Put It

Consumer Reports notes that a common place people put their safes is in the master bedroom, but burglars know that, so it is usually the first place they look. Instead, consider a less obvious spot that is hidden behind or under something.

Something else to consider when installing a safe: Can a burglar pick it up and carry it away? If it's a large, heavy safe, the answer is probably no. Many safes come with holes so they can be bolted to the floor. Not only does fastening the safe protect it from theft, it may help you save money on insurance. Before making a purchase, ask the retailer if they offer installations.

Cost

If you plan to store valuable jewelry or guns at home, you will likely need to invest in a heavy-duty steel safe. Depending on size, these can run into the many thousands of dollars. However, if you simply want to protect financial documents, credit cards, passports, favorite costume jewelry and keepsakes, a small, less expensive safe that can be bolted to a wall or to the floor may be all you need.

An example is a 1.23 cu.ft. SentrySafe with a combination lock that weighs 86 pounds and comes with bolts to secure it to the floor. It is available at Home Depot stores for about \$160. A 2 cu.ft. SentrySafe combination lock safe that weighs 124 pounds and comes with anchor bolts can be found online through Home Depot or Amazon for between \$300 and \$320.

To read the Consumer Reports article, [CLICK HERE](#).

Cool hiding places

If, instead of a safe, you just want to protect a few things, Family Handyman magazine has posted a video showing three good hiding places nearly everybody has in their home

that'll keep them hidden away, but also accessible.

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch the video.

Home security when you are on vacation

With the springtime weather and the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions, many of us are eager to return to normalcy by scheduling a vacation.

If you do so, don't forget to take precautions to protect your home before you leave. Following are some suggestions for home security, including from insurance companies Allstate and State Farm:



Sign up for a vacation watch

As a member of WDDNA, sign up for free daily vacation watch checks by deputies. Just go to the [WDDNA website](#), log in and click on the "Create a Vacation Watch" icon or go to the vacation watch item under the "Members Only" menu.

Eliminate signs you are gone

Make your home appear that you've never left.

- Either stop your mail and newspaper or make arrangements for someone to take them in.
- Postpone any parcel deliveries until after your return .
- Make sure your regular gardening and pool maintenance services will continue.

Enlist the neighbors!

Encourage them to park in your driveway. And don't forget to provide them with:

- House keys
- Alarm codes
- Keys to any cars left at home
- Emergency contact information

Ask neighbors to watch your home and take care of small tasks such as:

- Taking in flyers or door hangers left on the front porch
- Opening and/or closing drapes and curtains
- Checking for phone messages
- Placing your garbage can at the curb on garbage pickup day

Other measures to protect your home

- If you have a security system, alert your alarm company that your home will be unoccupied.
- Set up timers to lamps and a radio and schedule them so that they mimic your normal routine.
- Plan some exterior lighting. Set these lights on timers as well, to deter burglars.
- Disconnect small appliances, computers, televisions and media centers to protect them from power surges.
- Turn off the water to the washing machine and any other appliances as appropriate.
- Don't leave spare keys outdoors.
- Check that the toilets are not running.
- Adjust the furnace and water heater.
- Turn down the ringers on the phones.

- Do not change the greeting on your answering machine to reflect that you're away.
- Lock up valuables, important papers and firearms. If you don't already have your jewelry or other valuables in a safe deposit box, now might be the time to do so. Doing this also ensures that you don't leave out anything valuable in plain sight that a burglar might be able to see from a window.
- Lock the garage. Even if there is no entrance to your house from the garage, there's still a chance for numerous things to be stolen. Secure the door and any entrances to the garage. Double check locks on all doors and windows, including the door into your garage.
- Make sure the door leading to your garage is as strong and secure as your front door so it can't be easily kicked in.
- Cover your garage windows so thieves can't see that you are gone.
- Install a padlock on the throw latch on your garage door or use a C-clamp on the door track to prevent the door from being lifted.
- Don't use social media to announce to the world that you're on vacation. Caution your family that they should not include any discussion of their pending vacation in their online chatter.

New twist on an old 'grandparent' scam

The Federal Trade Commission reports that scammers have become bolder and now are even sending people to your door to collect money to “help a grandchild in distress.”

Grandparent scams still start with a call from someone pretending to be your grandchild. They might speak softly or make an excuse for why they sound different. They'll say they're in trouble, need bail or need money for some reason. The “grandchild” will also beg you to keep this a secret — maybe they're “under a gag order” or they don't want their parents to know. Sometimes, they might put another scammer on the line who pretends to be a lawyer needing money to represent the grandchild in court.

But, instead of asking you to buy gift cards or wire money (both signs of a scam), the scammer tells you someone will come to your door to pick up cash. Once you hand it over, your money is gone. But you might get more calls to send money by wire transfer or through the mail.

To avoid these scams and protect your personal information:

- Take a breath and resist the pressure to pay. Get off the phone and call or text the person who (supposedly) called. If you can't reach them, check with a family member to get the real story. Even though the scammer said not to.
- Don't give your address, personal information, or cash to anyone who contacts you. And anyone who asks you to pay by gift card or money transfer is a scammer. Always.
- Check your social media privacy settings and limit what you share publicly. Even if your settings are on private, be careful about what personal identifiers you put out on social media.

If you lost money to this kind of scam, it was a crime, so file a report with local law enforcement. And if you get any kind of scam call, report it at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/idthelp/submit-report).

Member Q&A - Who should I call?

Q: *Since schools reopened, speeders are a real problem on my street. Who do*

I contact about traffic issues?

A: The California Highway Patrol is in charge of traffic problems on all county streets. To report a serious, recurring problem, contact the North Sacramento CHP office at 5109 Tyler Street, (916) 348-2300. You also can file a report on the CHP website at <https://www.chp.ca.gov/notify-chp>.

Our WDDNA deputies also help with traffic when they are on duty. You can send them a message via the "Contact Patrol Deputy" link in the "Members Only" on our [WDDNA website](#). If a deputy is on duty, he or she will respond. However, it is extremely difficult to catch a speeder after the fact. If you see the same car speeding by day after day, try to take a picture of it, including the license plate. That may help our deputy identify the offender.

HOW TO CALL FOR HELP

IN AN EMERGENCY

If you have an immediate emergency - if your life or property is in immediate danger, if you feel threatened by someone on or near your property, if you have just become the victim of a crime or if you are witnessing a crime in progress:

CALL 911 from a land line.

Or, if calling from a cell phone within Sacramento County, call
(916) 874-5111.

TO REPORT A CRIME

There are two ways to report a crime to the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department:

1. Call the Sheriff's Department NON-EMERGENCY LINE at (916) 874-5115. To bypass the recorded messaging when you call, dial 0 after the line is answered.
2. File a report online through the Sheriff's Department website. Click on this link to begin the process: <https://www.sacsheriff.com/Pages/Services/ReportCrime.aspx>

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

(Not an emergency)

If you see someone engaged in suspicious activity but it is not an emergency, call 916-874-5115 (Sheriff's Department non-emergency line).

GENERAL CONCERNS, REPORTS OR QUESTIONS

If you have an issue that can be addressed later, you may contact our neighborhood patrol officers about it. The best way is via [EMAIL](#) at wilhaggin4@sacsheriff.com

Email: wilhaggindelayona@gmail.com

Website: www.Wilhagginna.com

Wilhaggin Del Dayo Neighborhood Association | P.O. Box 2273, Carmichael, CA 95609

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