Delaware State Police Notice Increase in Catalytic Converter Thefts

The Delaware State Police has recently noticed a rise in the theft of catalytic converters throughout the state. Most of these thefts involve various types of vehicles. The thefts typically occur when vehicles are parked in large public parking lots, including retail locations, health care facilities, and business parks. Catalytic converters can be removed within less than a minute, so any hour of the day or night is a golden opportunity for these crimes to occur.

The Appeal of Catalytic Converters

Catalytic converters contain platinum, rhodium, and palladium. The metals are expensive, and thieves sell the converters to salvage yards. It can cost you up to $3000 to install and replace a catalytic converter. Driving your car without one is illegal, and the resulting gap in your exhaust system makes the car run poorly. Thieves focus on easy targets for catalytic converter thefts, and a few simple steps will help make your vehicle a less likely target.

Symptoms of Converter Theft

If your catalytic converter is missing, you'll notice a loud rumbling or roaring sound as soon as you turn on the engine. The sound will get louder as you accelerate. Since the exhaust is not working properly, the vehicle will drive rougher than usual, often with a sense of sputtering as you change speed. 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 gap in the middle of your exhaust if the converter is missing, and you will likely see signs that the piping has been cut.





Preventing Catalytic Converter Theft

Park in well-illuminated areas when possible. If you have a personal garage, keep your car in the garage with the door closed when the vehicle is not in use. When parking in a public lot, park close to a building entrance or the nearest access road. There is an increased amount of pedestrian traffic in these areas.

Install a catalytic converter anti-theft device. These devices can provide some level of security from theft. You can also

have the converter welded to the car frame, making its removal more challenging. If your car has a security system, ensure the sensitivity is high. This ensures that the alarm will activate if a thief tries to cut off your converter.

Installing video surveillance or motion sensor lighting around your garage or driveway is also helpful. Engrave your VIN onto your catalytic converter to make it easier to identify if it gets stolen.

See Something – Say Something

While prevention is not complete protection, it may cause a thief to reconsider committing a crime. If prevention is unsuccessful, the next best method to combat criminal activity is relying on bystanders to promptly report crimes and provide as many investigative leads as possible. Troopers ask community members to be aware of their surroundings while walking in public parking lots. Be a good bystander and call 911 if you see or hear anything suspicious. Information regarding catalytic converter thefts can also be provided by contacting Delaware Crime Stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333.

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of a crime or have lost a loved one to a sudden death and need assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit / **Delaware Victim Center** is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll-free hotline at 1-800-VICTIM-1 (1-800-842-8461). You may also email the Victim Services Unit at **DSP_VictimServicesMail@delaware.gov**.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Sergeant India Sturgis

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