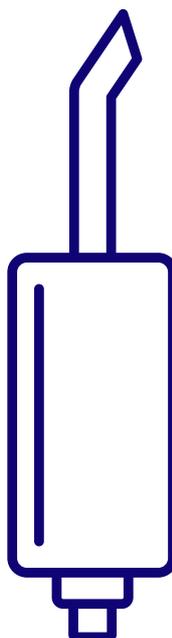


# CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT



## WHAT ARE CATALYTIC CONVERTORS?

The metal within a catalytic converter converts harmful gases, resulting in a reduction in harmful emission of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere.

## WHAT'S SO VALUABLE ABOUT CATALYTIC CONVERTERS?

Catalytic Converters have precious metals, some of which are worth more than gold! According to intelligence gathered, to thieves, each catalytic converter is worth approximately £300 in scrap value.

## CONTENT

- What are catalytic converters and why they are so valuable
- State of catalytic thefts
- Intelligence gathering
- Reaching the community
- What cars are targeted?
- Crime prevention advice
- Making a change
- What to do if my catalytic converter is stolen



## THE STATE OF CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFTS

The Metropolitan Police Service have been monitoring a steep rise in catalytic converter thefts in recent years. In 2018, an approximately there were 1,531 reported cases of catalytic converter thefts occurred, while in 2020, this figure has risen to an approximately 15,116, throughout London. These two simple statistics alone make apparent what the general public are already aware of; that there is a surging rate of catalytic converter theft offences being committed.

As part of a joint effort to tackle this prolific crime using multiple techniques, the NW BCU, which consists of Brent, Barnet and Harrow boroughs, have been running, and will continue to run, a project that will see these figures drop.

## INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Among many other findings, we have found that most suspects of this offence work in teams of three or four, where one or two will use a trolley jack on a vehicle, crawl underneath and cut off the catalytic converter using a power saw. Meanwhile, the other suspect(s) will stand by as lookouts and fend off victims or witnesses who may challenge them. These suspects can be in possession of some form of weapon. Often the suspects can remove the catalytic converter and be gone from the scene in under two minutes

## WHAT CARS ARE TARGETED?



An extensive amount of research and intelligence have been collated by the Metropolitan Police Service, into catalytic converter thefts. The vast majority, previously accounting for over 95% of vehicles targeted, of catalytic converters stolen have been from the Toyota Prius or Honda Jazz. Beyond these two specific vehicles, our intelligence shows that a large variety of vehicles of Japanese make, such as Honda, Toyota, and Lexus, are targeted. This is due simply to the fact that the precious metals used in these vehicles are worth more than others.

In Toyota's case, Prius second and third generation models (2004-2016) are most targeted, and for the Auris Hybrid, 2012-2018 models. In Lexus' case, RX400h models from 2005-2008 have been found to be targeted, as well as most CT200h models. Nowadays, vehicle manufacturers including Toyota, Honda and Lexus have made changes to their vehicles that has made it more difficult for thieves; for example, by positioning the catalytic converter within the engine bay

## CATCHING THEIVES

As part of a joint effort alongside the Op Reclaim Enforcement Team, the NW BCU will be dedicating considerable resources to conducting a proactive day of action led by the collated data analytics. Using analysed patterns of makes and models of high-powered cars, licence plate numbers, specific areas of concern and associated times of day, police officers will be looking to catch any suspects driving away looking to steal the public's catalytic converters.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT YOUR CATALYTIC CONVERTER BEING STOLEN?

## Parking

If you are able to, park your vehicle in a garage overnight. Thieves are opportunistic and prefer a vehicle being easily accessible on a public road. The less hassle for them, the better. Moreover, thieves will target an area set in darkness. If you do not have access to a garage, park in an area that's well lit, and if possible, where people frequently walk past

## Prevention Products

There are several products available on the market to make catalytic converters more difficult to steal. A quick Google search will reveal the latest products specifically designed to keep your catalytic converter safe. True, these products are costly, however the amount to replace the loss of a catalytic converter can cost significantly more.

## Security Cameras

Installing cameras (which have become relatively cheap nowadays) is a tried and tested way to deter criminals from committing crimes beyond just catalytic converter thefts. This can be difficult to implement if you don't tend to park your car near your home, but the more cameras you have fixed on your car, the better.

## REACHING THE COMMUNITY

Using the data gathered, efforts have been and are continuing to be made to reach out to the community to inform them if they have a vehicle that is vulnerable to this type of crime. Police officers are engaging with the community to offer information about crime prevention, such as the purchasing of products that make catalytic converters more difficult to steal. For example, in response to Toyota Prius' being a target, Toyota offer to install a device called CatLoc which makes it considerably harder for the catalytic converter to be detached.

## Marking Your Converter

Catalytic converters can be marked with a forensic marker which will give you a unique reference so that it can be identified if stolen. You could also place a sticker on your window to indicate that your catalytic converter is marked. All of these helps lower the chances of thieves targeting your vehicle.

## Prevent Underneath Access

Catalytic converters are accessed by thieves by sliding underneath the vehicle and using heavy-duty power tools to detach the converter. Parking close to walls, or in a manner of speaking that makes access to the underneath of your car can help to deter thieves. Remember though, always consider the manner in which you park for other road users and pedestrians alike.

## Alarms

You can buy alarms specifically designed to go off at upon detection of your catalytic converter being stolen. The noise will certainly bring unwanted attention to thieves in the act.



# MARKING A CHANGE

Recently, a public event day was held at Brent Cross Shopping Centre where 75 Secured By Design-approved forensic marking kits were disseminated and installed on vehicles most vulnerable to catalytic converter thefts. By marking catalytic converters with these kits, the catalytic converter will have an identifiable mark which can be attributed to a particular owner. This change is huge as it means if any criminal is found to be in possession of these marked kits, they will have a much higher chance of prosecution and the catalytic converter may even be returned to its owner. We will be holding another of these events soon and are hoping that this will be the first in many events whereby these kits can be distributed to the public.

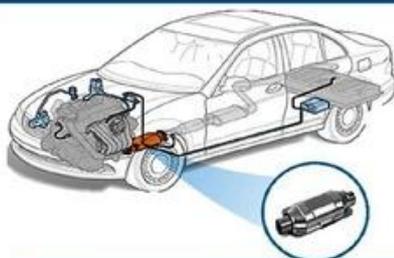
## WHAT DO I DO IF MY CATALYTIC CONVERTER IS STOLEN?

If your catalytic converter has been stolen, contact the police immediately. If you have video footage or images that capture the act, including the suspect's faces, it is encouraged that you give this to the police for possible identification and circulation of those suspects. Depending on the damage, you may not be able to drive your car, so it's worth getting in contact with your local garage



☛ Contact your vehicle dealership on fitting an aftermarket product approved by the vehicle manufacturer to prevent your converter being removed. The dealership can advise on the most suitable way to secure the converter, depending upon the make and model.

☛ A tilt sensor connected to the vehicle alarm system can activate if thieves attempt to jack the vehicle up in order to target the converter. Once again, speak to your vehicle dealership about a manufacturer approved product. Consider using a marking or etching system to identify your converter – if stolen this will make it harder for thieves to dispose of.



☛ How can you help keep your car safe? Try to make sure your vehicle is parked in a garage overnight. If you have a commercial vehicle park it in a secure compound. If this isn't possible, park in an area that is well-lit and overlooked. Try to park so that the converter cannot be easily reached by potential thieves. Vehicles that sit high above the road are particularly vulnerable. Park in areas covered by CCTV where possible.

☛ What is a catalytic converter? A catalytic converter is part of a car's emissions control system. It is located close to the engine, it cleans up the exhaust gases before they are expelled from the car through the exhaust pipe. It has internal elements that react with the gases, breaking them down into less harmful substances and water vapour. All cars sold in Europe since 1993 have had to be fitted with catalytic converter by law.

☛ Why are they a target for thieves? Catalytic converters can be expensive to replace, but they are required to keep a car road-worthy. This means that as cars get older and their value decreases, the cost of a replacement unit might become prohibitive. We have found that complete catalytic converters have been stolen either to keep older cars on the road, or for their scrap value – they contain precious metals such as rhodium, platinum and palladium.



For more information please visit:  
<https://www.met.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>

### How to contact us:



101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency)

[www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk)

You can also find out who your local Safer Neighbourhood Teams are as well as local up to date news



Twitter - @MPSBarnet, @MetCC and @Metpoliceuk

Please do not report crime via Twitter as it is not monitored 24/7

