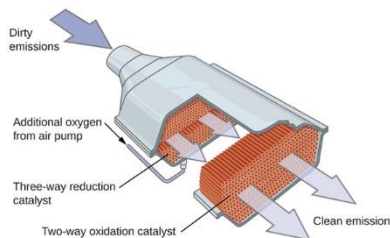


CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT

A 2023 report based on insurance claims data released by the [National Insurance Crime Bureau \(NICB\)](#), the nation's premier non-profit organization dedicated to identifying, preventing, and deterring insurance fraud and crime, shows a surge in catalytic converter thefts nationwide. In total, the nation experienced more than 64,000 catalytic converter thefts in 2022. Leading the country are California and Texas, which experienced more than 32,000 catalytic converter thefts last year.

Mandated in the U.S. since 1975, catalytic converters neutralize harmful gases in engine exhaust that contribute to air pollution and smog. They are bolted to the underside of cars or trucks as part of their exhaust system. Catalytic converters contain platinum, rhodium, and palladium, rare earth metals that are more valuable than gold. Often, metal recyclers pay between \$50 and \$250 for a catalytic converter and up to \$800 for one removed from a hybrid vehicle. Replacing catalytic converters is not cheap. It can cost between \$1,000 and \$3,500 or more to replace a stolen catalytic converter, depending on the type of vehicle.



“In addition to law enforcement actions and possible legislative solutions to prevent catalytic converter thefts, vehicle owners can also take important steps to keep their property safe,” Glawe said. “The first is to park in well-lit areas or a garage monitored by cameras. Vehicle owners can also consider installing a catalytic converter anti-theft device, which can make removing a converter extremely difficult and time-consuming. Finally, owners can etch their unique Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) on catalytic converters, which can make it easier to track if it is stolen.”

[This news report shows that it takes a thief only a minute or two to remove a catalytic converter.](#)

In a continued effort to combat catalytic converter thefts in New Jersey, a recently enacted law makes it more difficult for criminals to sell stolen catalytic converters to scrap yards. It also makes it easier for law enforcement to identify, locate, and prosecute violators.

The law implements certain guidelines concerning the sale and purchase catalytic converters:

- Amends the definition of “scrap metal” to explicitly include all or part of a used catalytic converter that is not attached to a motor vehicle.
- Strengthens the verification of ownership in the process of selling used catalytic converters to scrap metal businesses by requiring the business to document the VIN, the certificate of title or registration, a receipt from a repair transaction, or a bill of sale at the time of purchase, and imposing fines on businesses that violate this requirement; and
- Allows scrap metal businesses to purchase used catalytic converters from persons other than a seller, a registered business that collects, stores, or sells catalytic converters or other vehicle parts during regular business.