

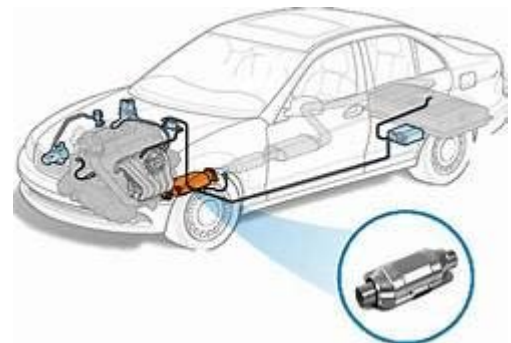


On The Alert!

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| Date: | February 26, 2021 |
| Attention: | ASCIP Members |
| Affected Department(s): | Risk Management, Maintenance & Ops & Staff |
| Applicability: | K-12 & Community College Districts & Charter Schools |

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS AND DISTRICT RISK

Recently, several ASCIP members have reported the theft of catalytic converters from vehicles parked in their maintenance yards. These converters were cut or removed from their vehicles by thieves seeking to sell them for their scrap metal content. Experienced thieves can separate a converter from its vehicle in as little as a minute. *The reason?* Converters contain various quantities of precious metals, including rhodium, platinum, and palladium (*these metals are the catalysts in the converters*), and thieves can sell them to scrap metal dealers for between \$100 and \$200 apiece (*or more from the larger converters in heavier vehicles such as trucks*).



The loss to an ASCIP member is even higher. In addition to the cost of taking a vehicle out of service until it is repaired, the cost to replace a catalytic converter ranges from about \$1,000 to \$2,000. This repair cost varies based on how the converter was removed (whether the converter was sawed or torched or removed with a wrench can make a big difference). In addition, if the oxygen sensor or adjacent pipe is damaged, repair costs escalate.

What is a Catalytic Converter?

Catalytic converters are a component of the exhaust system of all vehicles made after 1974. Their job is converting toxic fuel pollutants into less toxic emissions before they exit the vehicle through the muffler. These exhaust emission control devices help reduce pollutants contained in exhaust from internal combustion engines by catalyzing a redox reaction (an oxidation and reduction reaction).

Preventing Catalytic Converter Thefts

Preventing catalytic converter theft is mainly a function of making a “victimless” crime of opportunity less opportune.

- Park vehicles in locked garages or gated and locked maintenance yards, if possible.
- Park vehicles in well-lit areas at night.
- Consider welding converters to their vehicles' exhaust systems or installing wire cages around the converters (*these cages are bolted and welded to the frames*). Such physical deterrents typically cost about \$100 per vehicle.
- Consider etching VINs onto catalytic converters (*since most converters do not have unique identifiers, this may deter some thieves from stealing them since scrap dealers may report identifiable converters*).
- Install conspicuous video cameras in your parking areas and maintenance yards.
- Ensure that your security guards or police include your parking areas and maintenance yards in their regular patrols.
- Report thefts promptly to your school or local police, as appropriate, and ASCIP.

Please contact your ASCIP risk services consultant at (562) 404-8029 to discuss further.