

Beware! Catalytic Converter Theft is on the Rise

Thefts of catalytic converters are now reaching epidemic levels across the country. Thieves target converters because they contain three metals—platinum, rhodium, and palladium— which can be sold at local scrap yards. Trucks and SUVs, particularly Toyotas, are easy marks because of their high ground clearance, but child care vans and buses are targets also due to their size.

Thefts take only seconds to occur, so it is important to take precautions. The following recommendations provide options for reducing your vulnerability to these crimes.

- Whenever possible, park your vehicle in a secured garage.
- If a garage is not available, park your vehicle(s) in a highly visible, well-lit area.
- Consult your local law enforcement agency about programs that deter theft by etching your driver's license number on the catalytic converter. (Scrap yards are required by law to obtain the driver's license number from anyone trying to sell small auto parts.)
- Weld the bolts of your catalytic converter to increase the effort required to remove it. Muffler shops and garages perform this procedure for approximately \$50.
- Advertise that your catalytic converters are etched or welded by posting visible signage.
- Add security sensors to your catalytic converter that trigger your vehicle's alarm.
- Install a cage around the catalytic converter to hinder accessibility.

A thief with a plan and power equipment can remove a catalytic converter in less than 60 seconds. If you see something suspicious, document and report it to the police immediately.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.