



Bureau of Detectives – Area Four

Community Alert



June 4, 2022

Catalytic Converter Thefts 015th District (Austin)

About this Alert:

Purpose: The purpose of this Community Alert is to urge the members of the Austin community to not engage with catalytic converter thieves. There is an understandable temptation to interrupt a catalytic converter theft, especially if one observes their own car being damaged, but in the past month there have been two occasions where a person has attempted to engage thieves, and in both cases, the thieves displayed firearms. In one of the cases, the person who attempted to engage the thieves was shot twice. Fortunately, the victim survived, but no one should rely on luck in life and death circumstances. At the bottom of this page are safe actions you can take if you see someone stealing a catalytic converter and tips to prevent a theft.

How to recognize a catalytic converter theft: What one is likely to see is a car (or two) double-parked next to or near the victim's car. One offender will operate a handsaw and remove the catalytic converter while another offender or two keep watch. These offenders are armed and are suspected to be operating stolen vehicles. They have shown no hesitation to open fire on anyone who engages them, firing numerous times. There is simply no property, particularly not a vehicle part, that is worth your life. These thefts typically take place at night and are done very swiftly. Hybrids and SUV's tend to be targeted more often than other vehicles.

What you can do:

- Never engage a catalytic converter thief. Value your life over any and all property.
- Dial 9-1-1 immediately, move to somewhere safe, and speak with responding police.
- **DO NOT PUT YOURSELF AT RISK. DO NOT APPROACH THE THIEVES.** Provide any available video or a description of anything you observe to the police.
- Remember any unique physical characteristics (unique hair, scars, limp, tattoos, etc...)
- If approached by a witness to the theft, request contact information.
- If the thieves leave anything behind, do not touch it, await police.
- To prevent theft: there are anti-theft devices and alarms available for sale online and through mechanic shops, parking in garages or inside gates deters thieves, and high temperature spray paint (the brighter, the better) can make your catalytic converter harder to sell and less likely to be taken.

**If you have any information or questions, contact the Bureau of Detectives – Area Four at
(312) 746-8253**