



SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

BOLO NEWS



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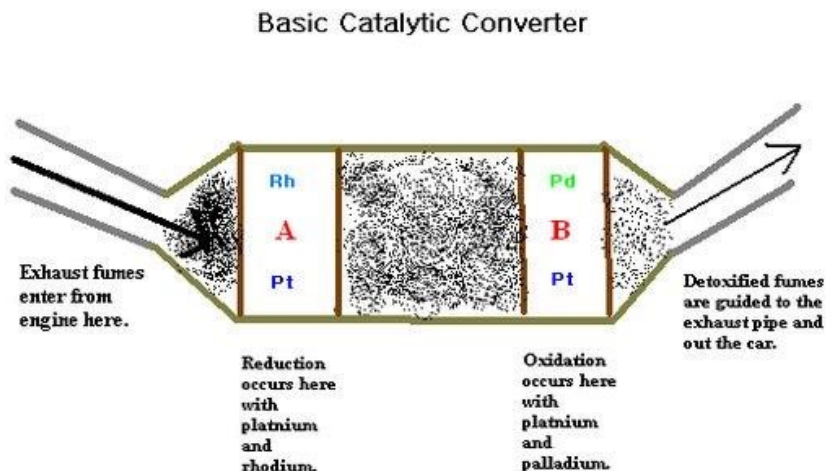
ScrapTheftAlert.com

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Welcome to this edition of BOLO News. BOLO News is a monthly newsletter for law enforcement subscribers of ScrapTheftAlert.com to share success stories and other information that may be pertinent in the ongoing fight against metals theft. Over the next few months, BOLO News will cover some of ScrapTheftAlert.com's most frequently reported items, as well as those that are more unusual in nature.

Theft of Catalytic Converters

Catalytic converter thefts (at least those reported to ScrapTheftAlert.com) have been a popular target for thieves over the past couple of years. Widespread usage of catalytic converters began around 1975 to comply with tightening EPA regulations governing automobile exhaust emissions. So why are they such a popular target for thieves? Most catalytic converters contain small amounts of precious metals including platinum, palladium, and rhodium. This can be a nice "score" on the black market for thieves, since they can sell for as much as \$100 a piece. But this is only part of the problem. While a thief may get good money for a catalytic converter on the black market, the victim is stuck with the repair/replacement. Let's take the example of a 2006 Ford F-150 pickup. When BOLO News called a local dealership to ask how much it would cost to replace the catalytic converter, the price we were quoted was between \$900 and \$1200. That does not include any potential damage to the exhaust system. Depending on the type of vehicle, this price could be as much as \$4000! This is the sticker shock many victims receive when faced with this crime. And consider that even if insurance covered the theft, the victim is still responsible for the deductible.



Targeted Areas

Based on ScrapTheftAlert.com alerts over the past several years, some of the most targeted areas for catalytic converter thefts have proven to be parking lots such as those at malls, vehicle dealerships, truck rental businesses, and other similar locations. A thief with a creeper and a battery powered sawzall can do a lot of damage in a short amount of time. Imagine the damage a thief could do at a local mall in the evening, especially around the holidays. And the victim would never know until he/she attempted to start their vehicle. A thief at a car dealership could literally have all night to wreak havoc. There have even been cases where scrapyards legitimately dealing with catalytic converters have been victimized.

Targeted Vehicles

Based on ScrapTheftAlert.com alerts, trucks and SUV's are very popular targets, presumably because they are usually higher off the ground and easier to get under. In addition, some larger trucks and SUV's, may have two catalytic converters, which certainly

makes them more inviting to thieves.

Prevention

As with many other items that are stolen, if a thief wants something badly enough, they will usually get it. It is common knowledge that thieves will target items that are both easy and fast to obtain, so anything we can do to make it more difficult for a thief is a good thing. Unfortunately, our research shows that few (if any) automobile manufacturers stamp their catalytic converters with the VIN. Many law enforcement agencies, however, have urged vehicle owners to engrave their DL number, license plate number, or VIN onto their converter to make it easier to identify in the event of a theft. In addition, there are places that sell additional brackets or a cage system for the catalytic converter which makes removal very difficult. Some have even suggested welding the catalytic converter to the frame of the vehicle.

Conclusion

Whatever method you advise your victims (or potential victims) to use to protect their catalytic converters, be sure to include that information in your alert when you submit it, especially an owner applied number. Also be sure to include the year, make, and model of the vehicle that the converter came from in your alert. This will certainly assist the recyclers in locating your stolen catalytic converters in the event of a theft.

In the News

The following are links to news stories from around the country that cover the growing metals theft problem. These stories not only illustrate the breadth of the issue, but also how law enforcement officers are creatively addressing it.

[3 Simple and Proactive Ways Operators Can Help Stop Metal Theft](#), *Aggregates Manager*, November 4, 2013

[Severed Finger Points Ariz. Police to Attempted Theft Suspect](#), Glendale, AZ, *ABC News*, October 31, 2013

[WNYP Railroad Sees Uptick In Metal Theft](#), Jamestown, NY, *The Post-Journal*, October 29, 2013

[Police Train to Crackdown on Metal Thefts](#), Macon, GA, *WMGT*, October 29, 2013

[Copper Thieves Strike NLR Salvation Army Again](#), Thousands in Damages, North Little Rock, AR, *KATV*, October 11, 2013

Monthly Law Enforcement Reader Poll

Please take a moment to answer this month's *BOLO News* Law Enforcement Reader Poll:

[Have you established a working relationship with your local recyclers?](#)

(Results of this month's poll will be revealed in the December issue of BOLO News.)

[Results of the October Law Enforcement Reader Poll:](#)

How do you most frequently access BOLO News and ScrapTheftAlert.com?

Desktop/laptop Computer: 95%

Tablet device (e.g. iPad): 5%

Smart phone: 0%

Comments & Questions

Contact [Gary Bush](#) or call his office in Florida at 352-433-2477.