



# PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

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## CATALYTIC CONVERTERS—THEFTS REMAIN A PROBLEM

Catalytic converter thefts remain a problem in the Puget Sound region. The market for the precious metals contained in catalytic converters (Platinum, Palladium, and Rhodium) remains lucrative for criminals. Thieves can collect \$200 for a catalytic converter. On the precious metal market, rhodium can fetch \$15,000 an ounce, while platinum can be sold for \$1,024 an ounce and palladium for \$2,190 an ounce.

Protecting catalytic converters from theft is very difficult. Access is easy to anyone, and thieves can remove the converters within seconds. In parking lots and driveways catalytic converters are exposed to easy theft with little risk of being caught.

Also, catalytic converters usually do not come with markings that help detectives prove that they have been stolen. If a detective does come across a stash of catalytic converters, they have a hard time proving that the converters were stolen.

Efforts such as CATCON ID events sponsored by the Everett Police Department have attempted to help prevent catalytic converter thefts. Everett PD will partner with an auto maintenance business or an auto dealership to engrave a portion of your vehicle's VIN number on your

catalytic converter. In this way, if police find your catalytic converter they can trace it to your vehicle and provide a more solid case of theft.

Another initiative, conducted by the Washington State legislature, was passage of HB1815. Signed on March 30th by Governor Inslee, provisions of this bill include:

- WSU will convene Catalytic converter working group to study thefts and make recommendations to the legislature. The working group will provide a report to the legislature by January 1, 2023
- Scrap metal businesses will keep a detail description of private metal property or nonferrous metal property
- Scrap metal businesses cannot buy private metal property or nonferrous metals from anyone who cannot prove ownership of the metal
- Payment can only be made by check mailed to the seller no earlier than three days after the transaction.



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## CAR THEFT- PREVENTION TIPS

For all vehicles:

- Park in a locked garage.
- If you are parking outside, do not have anything in view.
- Park in a well lit area where a lot of people are around.
- LOCK YOUR CAR and remove all keys including car keys, house keys, valet keys, etc.

If you have a pre-2000 vehicle consider some of these additional steps:

- Have a cut-off switch installed.
- Get the club or similar device to lock up your steering wheel.
- Have a locator device installed such as a GPS tracker or LOJACK.

## CATALYTIC CONVERTERS- PREVENTING THEFT

Catalytic converters thefts continue in Snohomish County and the Puget Sound region.

Catalytic converters help reduce emissions from a vehicle's exhaust system. In order to reduce those emissions, the catalytic converters use rare metals such as platinum, palladium and rhodium.

With the recent sanctions against Russia due to its invasion, the exportation of palladium has been severely restricted leading to continued price increases of the precious metal. Russia accounts for roughly 40% of the world's supply of palladium.

Catalytic converters are easy to steal, often taking only seconds with a battery operated saw. They are also very difficult to investigate. Police almost need to catch the thief in the act. There usually is no identifying marks that associate a catalytic converter to a particular vehicle, such as the vehicles VIN number. So proving that a car load of converters is stolen is a difficult proposition for law enforcement.

Catalytic converter thieves often target vehicles that are easier to crawl under, such as SUV's and trucks, or are easy to lift such as the Toyota Prius.

Some things you can do to prevent your catalytic converter being stolen include,

- Park your vehicle in a locked garage.

- If you have to park your vehicle

outside in your driveway, make sure it is well lit at night and have a camera system on your vehicle. And make sure your camera system is working properly.



- Adjust your car alarm to detect vibrations created by sawing.
- Install an anti-theft device, such as a cage, on your catalytic converter. Check with your mechanic or online for what can be done.
- Paint the catalytic converter with a high temperature fluorescent paint and etch your vehicle's identification number on the painted surface.
- When going through a public parking lot, call 911 if you see suspicious activity such as people working underneath a vehicle or someone who looks like they are acting like a lookout.

## GAS THEFT- A GROWING PROBLEM

Local police departments have been warning drivers of an increase in gas thefts. The rise in the price of gas in the last few months has provided motivation for thieves to steal rather than

pay for gas. Also, sanctions against importing oil from Russia has added to the price increases that gas consumers have been seeing lately.

Some local police agencies have noted that gas thieves have been drilling holes directly into gas tanks to drain the gas. The older way of stealing gas has been to siphon it from the gas intake. Many modern vehicles have locking gas caps or fuel doors that discourage siphoning.

There are things you can do to discourage thieves from stealing your gas,

- Park in an enclosed garage. At home, park in your garage to prevent overnight gas theft. If you need to park in your driveway at home, be sure that the area is well lit. A camera on the area also helps to give evidence to police in case someone does steal your gas.



- When parking in a public parking lot, park in a well lit area, where there is a lot of foot traffic such as near a store entrance.
- If you have a car alarm, arm it when you leave your vehicle.
- If you are parking on the street, try to orient the fuel door on the street side. This way the gas thief may have to be on the street to siphon your gas and at least they may be seen more easily by passersby.
- When parking in a public place, try not to park there for an extended period of time.
- If you do not have a locking gas cap, purchase one. They are available at auto parts stores or online for \$15 to \$25.

## CAR PROWL- AN OPPORTUNITY TO STEAL

*Car prowlers will take anything they see in your car. Things that have been taken often include purses, wallets, cell phones, laptops, sports bags, and more.*

*Car prowlers work during the day in garages, parking lots of shopping centers, and at night in your neighborhood or condo/apartment complex parking lot.*

*To prevent your car from being prowled,*

- **LOCK YOUR CAR!**
- *Park in an area with a lot of foot traffic.*
- *At night park in a well-lit area.*
- *Don't leave anything in view in your vehicle!*
- *Stow away anything, valuable or not, that is with you in your trunk.*

## CAR THEFT- THE 10 MOST STOLEN VEHICLES

The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) publishes a yearly list of the 10 most stolen vehicles in America in its annual “Hot Wheels” report. Its most recent list shows most stolen vehicles for 2020.

According to NICB,

“Auto thefts saw a dramatic increase in 2020 versus 2019 in part due to the pandemic, an economic downturn, law enforcement realignment, depleted social and schooling programs, and, in still too many cases, owner complacency,” said David Glawe, president and CEO of the NICB. “For many people, a car is the second largest investment they will ever make behind a home. No matter what kind of vehicle you have, take steps to protect your investment – lock your car and take your keys.”

Key takeaways include

- The Ford full size pick-up stays at number one for the second year in a row.
- Chevrolet pick-up thefts increased by 26% from 2019, putting it the number 2 most stolen vehicle.
- In 2020, one car was stolen every 36 seconds, nationwide.

- Japanese model sedans fill 6 out of the top 10 slots for most stolen vehicles in 2020.
- Honda Civics and Accords (#3 and #4) made in the late 90’s are popular among thieves because there were some of the last models built without anti-theft technology.

The top 10 stolen vehicles in 2020 were,

1. Ford Pick-up (Full Size)
2. Chevrolet Pick-up (Full Size)
3. Honda Civic
4. Honda Accord
5. Toyota Camry
6. Nissan Altima
7. GMC Pick-up (Full Size)
8. Toyota Corolla
9. Honda CRV
10. Dodge Pick-up (Full Size)

For more information check out this NICB link-

<https://www.nicb.org/news/news-releases/nicb-releases-annual-hot-wheels-report-americas-top-ten-most-stolen-vehicles>

### OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

#### MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/311/Office-of-Neighborhoods>

#### Homeless Outreach-

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#### SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

### NEWSLETTER INFO

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If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at [neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org)

### TIP LINES



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477