



Roll Call Training Bulletin

Produced by: Ofc Jared Robinet & Ofc Dan Mejorado
Prepared by: Ofc Jeff Kuhlmann, PSU

Daniel Hahn, Chief of Police
Volume 88

CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT

Year to date reported theft of catalytic converters are over 1,200 and climbing, up from 2019's 619 reported thefts. This type of theft is quick to commit and can be committed by anyone. Here are some patrol considerations when conducting investigations or enforcement involving catalytic converters.

CUT OFF CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

594(b)(1) PC - \$400+ Felony Vandalism: Always the best charge when a victim is present or located. The average replacement cost for a cut off catalytic converter is \$1,500. In your report, consider including the following verbiage: "Based on my training and experience, the cost to replace a cut off catalytic converter averages \$1,500."

Per District Attorney's instructions, if a suspect is found in violation of **594(b)(1)PC**, additionally charge **487(a)PC Felony Grand Theft** based on the knowledge that the average cost to replace catalytic converters is \$1,500.

Example – If you catch a suspect red-handed with a cut off stolen catalytic converter and there is a victim, always charge the criminal statutes mentioned above.

PC 664 CUT OFF CATALYTIC CONVERTER ATTEMPTS: If the suspect began to cut out but did not remove the catalytic converter completely, always charge **Felony - 664/594(b)(1)PC and 664/487(a)PC**. Again, consider including in your report: "Based on my training and experience, the suspect was trying to cut out the catalytic converter to steal it (use your observations to articulate why). The average cost to replace a cut off catalytic converter is \$1,500."

If you charge just vandalism, it could be filed as a misdemeanor, because it will cost under \$400 to repair the cut on the exhaust pipe. **An Attempt to Cut Off a Converter Example** – If you catch a suspect that began cutting out a catalytic converter, but did not completely remove it, always charge **Felony - 664/594(b)(1)PC and 664/487(a)PC**.

In the case that a suspect is in the process of removing a catalytic converter that bolts into place and does not require the exhaust pipes to be cut, these charges still apply if the cost to "fix" or replace the missing part meets the values outlined in the Penal Code. Consider calling the dealership or searching online for the value of the victim vehicle's catalytic converter.

UNBOLTED CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

496a PC Stolen Property: is a wobbler, charge the **Felony - 496a PC**.

An Unbolted COMPLETELY Removed Converter Example – If you catch a suspect red-handed with a completely removed, unbolted (not cut off) catalytic converter, consider the charge **Felony - 496a PC** if you are able to reasonably articulate the catalytic converter is stolen and the suspect has no reason to possess the part.



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10852 CVC UNBOLTED CATALYTIC CONVERTER ATTEMPTS

If the suspect removed any bolts from the catalytic converter but did not remove the converter itself, consider the charge **Misdemeanor - 10852 CVC**

Some Bolts Taken Off but the Converter has NOT been Removed Example – If you catch a suspect that unscrewed the bolts, but did not remove the converter, charge **Misdemeanor - 10852 CVC**.

466 PC BURGLARY TOOLS

If the suspect was caught red handed cutting or unbolting a catalytic converter, always book associated tools and consider charging **Misdemeanor – 466PC** along with the other associated crimes. Again, consider including in your report: “Based on my training and experience, I know these tools to be used in the theft of catalytic converters.”

SEARCHES / REPORT WRITING

If conducting a search of a residence or an enforcement stop where a search is conducted, and you locate cut or unbolted catalytic converters (no work order, receipt or documentation of ownership for the converters are present), supply an SPD 779 Property Receipt and book the catalytic converters for safe-keeping and write a Metal Theft information report. In your report note the following: location, vehicle(s), identify all parties, tools, condition of catalytic converters (cut/unbolted), and any reason given for possession of such items. **Be sure to document the probable cause you observed to take possession of the catalytic converters. In the cases that you obtain consent to take the vehicle parts, document that you were provided such consent.**

If only tools are located during the search that are commonly used for the theft of catalytic converters, do not book tools. **Only book tools when catalytic converters are present.** However, consider writing a street check. Note the tools, location, vehicle(s) and identify all parties.

For report writing purposes, an example of information to include: “Based on my training and experience, I know catalytic converters to be part of a motor vehicle's exhaust system that convert harmful gases to less harmful gases and is not a standalone component. Catalytic converters contain **platinum, palladium and rhodium**, all part of the platinum group metals. These metals are rare, valuable and used for various applications. I know perpetrators of these crimes typically remove catalytic converters by rough means, therefore commonly located catalytic converters have cut/friction marks, paint transfer from saw blades or extra piping still attached to them. Unbolted catalytic converters typically have a worn or used appearance and do not have a complete bolt set for reapplication. It's unlikely for someone to possess a large number of catalytic converters or to transport them in their personal vehicle.”

Additionally, when speaking to victims, try to get an estimate of loss/damage if applicable.



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The Crime Analysis Unit (CAU) is regularly tracking and updating statistics for these types of theft. Phrases to include in your report intro for keyword searches: "*Catalytic Converter Theft or Possession of Catalytic Converter*".

COMMONLY USED TOOLS FOR CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT

Battery Powered
Sawzall (Electric Saw)



[OBJ]

Chain Exhaust
Pipe Cutter



[OBJ]



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MOST TARGETED VEHICLES

TOYOTA PRIUS	2003-2009
HONDA ELEMENT	2003-2008
HONDA ACCORD	2001-2007

Conversations with the District Attorney's Office

Due to the numbers of catalytic converter thefts seen in the city over the last year, we have spoken to the District Attorney's Office about what they would like to see in order to file the charges mentioned above. In order to help combat the thefts, the District Attorney's office has agreed to look at cases that, traditionally, would not necessarily be filed. Below is a synopsis of the conversations.



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-Normally, to charge 594PC, 487PC, and 496PC, a victim would have to be identified. However, the District Attorney's Office has advised that 487PC and 496PC may still be applicable without a victim.

Example: A patrol officer performs a traffic stop on a vehicle or a probation search of a subject and finds cut off or unbolted catalytic converters and the driver/subject has no reasonable explanation for possessing them.

Due to the fact that there are no identifying markers on the vehicle part, it would be unlikely that a victim would be found. However, per the District Attorney's Office, if the officer can reasonably articulate that the converters are stolen goods, an arrest for 487PC and 496PC is warranted. 594PC would still require a victim to be located.

-Articulate factors-

-Proximity to recent cases of catalytic converter theft

-Converters can be identified as belonging to similar vehicles listed as suspect vehicles in the area. (Think size and shape...an online search would help here)

-Possession of the tools required to steal catalytic converters

-Prior history of the suspect involving crimes of theft and vandalism

Essentially everything that makes us know the subject is out there committing the thefts

With all this said, if you are able to find a victim, please do. The list mentioned below is meant to assist with this search. If a victim vehicle is located, attempt to show via photographs that bolt patterns or cut marks line up to the vehicle.

It is still important to find a value to replace the parts in order to file charges. Because of that, attempting to identify the type of vehicle the catalytic converter most likely came from is important. In order to make finding victims and probable victim vehicles for comparisons easier, CAU has started publishing a biweekly list of catalytic converter theft victims. The list includes:

-Name of victim

-Address of the crime

-Beat of the crime

-Contact info

-The report number

-Make and model of the victim vehicle

This list will be refreshed every two weeks and available via email and in the Crime Bulletins section of the Hub under Citywide Bulletins.

In short, **an arrest is warranted for felony 496PC or 487PC without a victim if the circumstantial evidence is articulated in the report.**



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If no arrest is made, write a Metal Theft information report at the very least, tying the subject to the area and the vehicle in which they were stopped or house where the converters were located.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to:

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