



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catalytic converter crime trend reaches Riverside

Riverside, CA -- The Riverside Police Department Crime Analysis Unit reports a significant increase in local catalytic converter thefts. According to Crime Analyst Robert Balisi, there have nearly six times the number of thefts in the first four months of 2008, compared with the same period last year.

From January 1 through April 16, 2008, Riverside Police recorded 34 catalytic converter thefts, compared with six for the same period of 2007.

Statistics show that more than 90% of these victim vehicles are 1990s-era model Toyota trucks or SUV's. Thefts are occurring 24 hours a day on any day of the week. According to reports, apartment complex parking lots are a popular location for thieves to seek out victims.

Police have seen these thefts increase since 2007. With the rise in prices for precious metals, the national trend has found its way to Riverside and surrounding communities. Catalytic converters are used to reduce vehicle emissions and are a target for thieves around the world. Catalytic converters contain precious metals, including platinum, palladium and rhodium, which can be extracted for profit. A thief can sell a catalytic converter for \$50 to \$80. The cost to repair a vehicle after the converter is stolen can cost as much as \$3,000 for higher-end cars.

To help reduce the risk of catalytic converter thefts, motorists are advised to park in a garage or in a well-traveled, well-lit area. If a vehicle has an alarm, a sensor can be placed on the converter to activate the alarm if the converter is tampered with. Mechanics and welders can also take steps to help vehicle owners more securely attach converters.

Be alert and always report suspicious activity to your local Police Department.

Catalytic converter thefts that occur in the City of Riverside, and where there is no known suspect, can be reported to the non-emergency Telephone Report Unit at (951) 826-5314, or on the new Internet online reporting service feature at: www.rpdonline.org/report.

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