



# Neighborhood Watch Newsletter



Issue 305

January 2021

## Welcome to 2021: Annual Crime Prevention Safety Tips



Another year has gone by and we hope that 2020 was a safe and crime free year for you. Unfortunately, that has not been the case for many people so we'd like to remind you about a few crime prevention tips that may make this year a little safer:

- Make two lists of all your valuables and their serial numbers in case you are the victim of a theft or burglary. You could also make a video of your valuables by walking throughout your home, room by room, and describing each item while reading the serial number (if it has one). Don't forget to check items in your garage too. Keep one list someplace convenient, and another in a safe location not in your home (maybe a safe deposit box or at work).
- Do not share passwords for your accounts or computers with anyone. Try to use a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols when creating your passwords for extra security.
- You are entitled to one free copy annually from each of the three major credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion). This will allow you to check it three times a year (at no cost) for any fraudulent accounts
- Check all your doors and windows to be sure that the locks are all working properly; if they aren't, it's time to repair them. Be sure to lock all doors and windows when you are away and keep doors closed even when you are home.
- Check your monthly financial statements to keep track of your bills. Sometimes when criminals steal your identity, they have your statements sent to a different address.
- Check the outside lighting; especially in hidden corners where people could hide. Trim the shrubbery up on the bottom and down on top so criminals cannot easily hide behind them. Thorny shrubbery or plants can also be used as a deterrent.
- Talk to your children about not sharing passwords, vacation plans, or personal information on social media or with strangers.
- Lock your vehicle at all times even if it is parked in your driveway. Be sure to keep valuables out of sight including a GPS holder or cellphone charger. If you park your vehicle in front of your garage, be sure to have lighting or motion sensors positioned on your vehicle.
- Reminder, don't text and drive. Use only the hands-free setting on your cell phone. If you are planning on drinking use a designated driver or a vehicle service.

If you notice anything suspicious or out of place call the San Gabriel Police Department at (626) 308-2828 (non-emergency) or 9-1-1 (emergency).

# Catalytic Converter Theft & Prevention

What is the one thing you would expect car burglars to steal when they break into your car? Cell phones and loose change you keep in the ashtray may be a few things you came up with, but did you ever think about the catalytic converters to your vehicle?

Catalytic converter thefts are taking place because the converters contain several types of recyclable materials that can be easily “scrapped” for a quick profit. Thefts of catalytic converters increase each time the cost of scrap metal, particularly platinum, increases. The City of San Gabriel and other areas of Los Angeles County have seen an increase in the number of reported catalytic converter thefts.

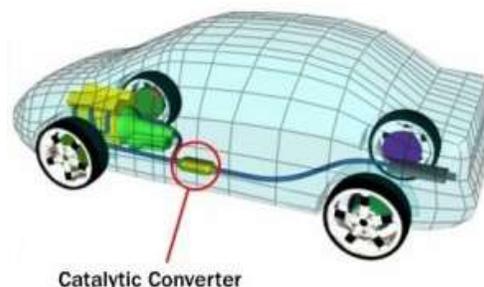
Your vehicle's catalytic converter is a device used to reduce the toxicity of emissions from an internal combustion engine. Catalytic converters have been required by law on every motor vehicle operated in the United States since 1975. It is attached to your exhaust system and is located underneath your car. Catalytic converters contain expensive precious metals like platinum, palladium and rhodium.

Currently, we are seeing a rise in thefts of Catalytic converters. These thieves are typically targeting Toyota vehicles.

So, what can you do to protect your vehicle? Below are five prevention tips that can reduce your risk.

Park in areas where your vehicle will be visible by passers-by, for example, park under lights after dark, near windows at a business, or near security cameras, if possible.

- Park defensively. Park high profile vehicles in more visible areas of the parking lot or structure. This may deter thieves by making it harder for them to access the most vulnerable targets.
- If your catalytic converter is a “bolt on” model, you can have the bolts welded shut and have extra metal welded to the exhaust system.
- Install a catalytic converter protection device that will clamp around the converter.
- Etch your converter with your vehicle's license plate number in several different locations. This will help police track your property if it is stolen. If your converter is stolen, file a police report immediately after the theft is discovered.



Catalytic Converter