



# Community Crime Prevention Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

Volume 2012 Number 2

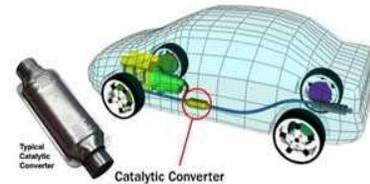
## Catalytic Converter Theft

You get into your car, but when you turn the key, you hear a gravelly roar in your previously quiet engine. This can be a sign that the catalytic converter was stolen off your vehicle. Here in the Minneapolis metro area and across the country, thousands of drivers are experiencing the same unwelcome surprise.

Catalytic converters are devices that reduce pollution-causing emissions. Since 1975, all vehicles produced in the United States must have a catalytic converter as part of the exhaust system. Catalytic converters are stolen for the precious metals inside them. The price of precious metals is on the rise and catalytic converters



contain enough platinum, palladium or rhodium to make it worth the risk to cut it from your car. Stolen catalytic converters are sold to scrap yards for around \$150.



Preventing catalytic converter theft can be very difficult. Vehicles that sit higher from the ground, such as trucks, pick-ups and SUVs, are particularly vulnerable because thieves can easily slide underneath the vehicle to gain access to the converter. With just a few cuts of a battery-powered saw, catalytic converters can be stolen in less than a minute. Currently, thieves have been targeting Toyota pick-ups and SUVs in the metro area, but it is important to remember that *any* make and model of vehicle is vulnerable. Catalytic converter thefts typically happen to vehicles that are parked in large lots for a long time, such as apartments, shopping malls, and park-and-ride ramps. These thefts occur both during the day and at night. While there are some ways vehicle owners can take to reduce theft, such as welding the converter or adding a commercially made locking device, there is some debate as to whether these methods are effective. In addition, getting an alarm system on your vehicle can be more hassle than help. The best way to prevent catalytic converter thefts is to keep a watchful eye out for suspicious activity and **call 911 immediately** if you see or hear anything suspicious.

### EXAMPLES OF SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY:

- ✓ People hiding from passing traffic
- ✓ People looking into/under cars in parking lots
- ✓ People sneaking into garages or secured lots
- ✓ An unfamiliar car parked in the neighborhood or driving slowly through a parking lot, appearing to "case" the area

☛ **Extra, extra, extra!** Car break-ins are still very common. **Do not leave valuables in plain view in your car!** Commonly stolen items: GPS units, cell phones, purses, wallets, bags, laptops, and electronics. If you need to leave valuables in your car, lock them in the trunk before you leave home!

**Fire Safety** Plymouth has experienced several large residential fires in the past few years. There are simple steps residents can take to reduce the potential of a fire:

- 🔥 **Never** throw cigarette butts off a balcony or patio or into grass or other landscaping. Properly dispose of cigarette butts in a metal container with a tight-fitting lid.
- 🔥 **Never** leave burning candles unattended.
- 🔥 **Never** use water on a grease fire. Cooking fires can often be stopped by placing a tight lid onto the pan.
- 🔥 **Fires and cooking devices, including grills, are prohibited on apartment balconies and patios.** Grills must be at least 15 feet away from the building.

In addition, families should have a family fire escape plan and practice it!

**Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) Corner:  
The Importance of Active Management**

More and more rental owners and managers are screening potential residents for criminal behavior before they move in. However, it is important to remain vigilant about the behavior of residents that are living on the property. This past spring, a Chicago-area jury awarded \$10 million to the family of a 21-year old female who was beaten and strangled in her apartment by a fellow resident in 2005. The suspect had been accused of assaulting another woman in the building 2 months earlier. However, management did not follow up and he was allowed to remain living there. "Had the management company followed its own policies and procedures in screening prospective tenants, [the suspect] would never have been in the building," attorney Colin Dunn said. "Numerous policies were either violated or ignored." The jury assessed 90% liability to the suspect and 10% to the management and the building owner. Remember, the Crime Free/Drug Free lease addendum does NOT require an arrest, citation, or conviction. Rental managers and owners just need to have preponderance of the evidence that the behavior occurred. Stay an active manager. Know what is happening on your property and take action! Don't risk the safety of your other residents or open yourself up to financial liability.

**Especially for Business:**

**Premise Security Survey** A burglary or robbery can have a major impact on business. Although nothing can guarantee a crime will never occur, there are ways to reduce the opportunity for crime to occur at your business. If you are wondering about ways to make your business safer, the Plymouth Police Department does offer free premise security surveys. An officer will meet with you to discuss your safety concerns and security needs and give you crime prevention recommendations customized to *your* business.

Don't own a business? The Police Department also offers security surveys for homeowners!

**Call 763-509-5147 to schedule an appointment!**

**See flashing lights in your rearview mirror?  
Pull over to the closest side of the road and STOP!  
Wait until the emergency vehicle passes before  
pulling back into traffic.**

**Fraud Stop: Recent Scam Attempts in Plymouth**

**Lottery Scam:** Multiple residents in Plymouth (many of them living in senior communities) have reported receiving telephone calls from an unknown person saying they won something (money, a vacation, etc.) and to receive the prize, they just need to pay to cover fees and/or taxes associated with the winnings. The caller will either ask the resident to wire the money or the caller offers to pick up the money in person. *The Stop: Remember, you can't win a lottery/ drawing you never entered and real lotteries will not ask you for money to collect a prize. Never send money or give out personal financial information to receive your winnings.*

**"Grandparent" Scam:** We have also received reports from residents about calls from someone claiming to be a grandchild. The caller says, "Grandma/pa, it's me!" and says they are in trouble (usually in Canada or Mexico) and they need money right now. The caller says that they don't want mom and dad to know. They ask for a money order to be sent to them right away. *The Stop: Always ask the caller to identify themselves (do not offer a name) and always verify a story (or ask a question only the real person would know) before you send money.*

Luckily, our residents have recognized these scams and there has not been a loss.

**Featured Program: Neighborhood Watch**

Neighborhood Watch is a community/police partnership to prevent crime. A Neighborhood Watch is a group of neighbors who are willing to come together to address community issues by communicating with each other and the police department. Neighborhood Watch groups are educated in crime prevention and trained to observe and report suspicious activity. Neighborhood Watch is *not* armed citizens on patrol or a vigilante group. The program encourages neighbors to come together, watch out for each other, report suspicious activity to the police, and make the community safer. For more information on starting a Neighborhood Watch group or revitalizing an existing Neighborhood Watch group, call 763-509-5198.



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Emergency: **911**      Non-emergency: **763-525-6210**      CrimeStoppers: **800-222-TIPS**  
If you have any comments about this newsletter, please contact Officer Angela Haseman at the Plymouth Police Department, 3400 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55447, 763-509-5147 or at [ahaseman@plymouthmn.gov](mailto:ahaseman@plymouthmn.gov). Thank you!