

New Catalytic Converter Law in NC

North Carolina recently passed a new law aimed at discouraging thefts of catalytic converters. Catalytic converters – devices that reduce toxic gases and pollutants in a vehicle’s exhaust gas – are targeted by thieves because they contain valuable metals. Thefts of catalytic converters nationwide grew from an average of 108 a month in 2018 to 1,203 a month in 2020, [according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau](#). The new North Carolina law, which takes effect December 1, makes it a felony to steal a catalytic converter.

The new law establishes a presumption that, aside from certain exceptions, a person in possession of a catalytic converter that has been removed from a vehicle is presumed to have stolen it. The exceptions are for individuals whose work may involve possession of a catalytic converter, such as those working for a vehicle repair shop or salvage yard, or individuals who can show that they are replacing the catalytic converter in a vehicle registered in their name.

The new law makes it illegal for anyone that is not a secondary metals recycler to purchase a used catalytic converter not attached to a vehicle. The new law also requires metals recyclers to ensure converter purchasers are legitimate and to keep records of the sellers.

Commercial vehicles may be targeted for these thefts because they are higher off the ground, making it easier for a thief to get under the vehicle to remove the catalytic converter, and because commercial vehicles may not be used or monitored outside of regular business hours.

While the new law aims to discourage catalytic converter thefts, there are steps that owners can take to reduce their risk. For example:

- Park vehicles in secure areas that are well-lit, enclosed, and/or within range of security cameras or motion detecting lights or alarms.
- Install a catalytic converter anti-theft device (various locks, shields, and cages are commercially available).
- Have the vehicle’s license plate number or identification number (VIN) engraved on the catalytic converter case where it can be seen.

The text of the new law is available [here](#).