



## How to Avoid Two Types of Theft



Gas syphoning used to be more common before locking gas caps and locking fuel doors became common. Thieves have a way around the locking devices by using saws and drills to puncture or cut gas tanks to drain the gas. So in addition to the lost gasoline, you'd also have to buy and install a new gas tank which can cost hundreds of dollars. SUVs and larger pickup trucks are targeted more frequently for two reasons: 1) their gas tanks are larger and hold more gas which is more profitable, and; 2) their higher suspension provides more clearance between the ground and the gas tank so thieves have easier access. Signs that your vehicle has been tampered with can include a wet area under the gas tank, the odor of gasoline, or tools or parts that may have been left behind.

Thieves are also stealing catalytic converters from cars using similar tools and methods. Replacing a catalytic converter can cost a thousand dollars or more depending on the model, make, and year of your vehicle. The converters are being stolen for the precious metals (platinum, rhodium, even gold in certain newer models) used to manufacture the device. Signs that your vehicle has been tampered with can include an exhaust hanger lying around, bolts, or tools or parts that may have been left behind. When you start the vehicle it will sound different instead of the usual exhaust sound you will hear a loud unmuffled noise.

Ways to reduce your risk:

1. If you have a garage at home use it to park your vehicles in.
2. When leaving your car for long periods of time (at a park and ride, at an airport or cruise terminal, for work, and overnight) try to park in a secure, even locked, garage/lot or one that has an attendant.
3. When leaving your car for shorter periods of time (at stores, restaurants, etc.) park on main aisles, closer to the door. If you have an SUV or larger truck, consider parking with the gas tank over the curb stop or landscaping island to minimize the space a thief has to work in.

**Board of County Commissioner goals are to reduce property crime, violent crime and overall crime by 2015 . These tips are intended to increase your awareness and help avoid crime. If you have a proven prevention or awareness tip that can be shared, please fax it to 276-2630 for consideration and possible**

