Colorado Auto Theft Prevention Authority

Analysis of Catalytic Converter Thefts in Colorado

Original Data: January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2024

Updated Data Includes: January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025

Report date: August 11, 2025

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Request Information:

The Colorado Auto Theft Prevention Authority (CATPA) requested the assistance of the LexisNexis Public Safety Special Investigations Unit (SIU) for an analysis of statewide catalytic converter thefts occurring between calendar years 2019 – 2023 with updated reports every six-months thereafter. **This report has now been updated to include the first half of 2025: January 1 – June 30, 2025.**

Methodology:

Data was queried in the LexisNexis Public Safety Data Exchange based on the following:

- **Requested information:** Colorado statewide catalytic converter theft data from law enforcement agencies contributing event/records management system data to Accurint® Virtual Crime Center (AVCC). Attempts were made to normalize data from the Colorado Information Sharing Consortium; however, this data source was not feasible for review due to the data being translated from Lumen to AVCC. It is anticipated future efforts would be possible after transition has occurred.

- **Caveat**: At the time of this analysis, information was retrieved from law enforcement reports submitted to AVCC from the following forty-one (41) agencies. **Agencies marked with an asterisk indicate their data was not available at time of the previous report (through December 2024) but has since been ingested into AVCC and is included in this analysis.**

- Adams County Sheriff's Office
- Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office
- Arvada Police Department
- Aurora Police Department
- Brighton Police Department
- Broomfield Police Department
- Castle Rock Police Department
- Colorado Springs Police Department
- Commerce City Police Department
- Dacono Police Department
- Denver Police Department
- Denver Regional Transportation District Police
- Douglas County Sheriff's Office
- Erie Police Department*
- El Paso County Sheriff's Office
- Englewood Police Department
- Fort Collins Police Department*
- Fort Lupton Police Department
- Fountain Police Department
- Golden Police Department*
- Greeley Police Department
- Greenwood Village Police Department
- Hudson Police Department
- Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
- Lafayette Police Department
- Lakewood Police Department
- Larimer County Sheriff's Office
- Littleton Police Department
- Lone Tree Police Department*
- Longmont Police Department
- Loveland Police Department
- Mead Police Department
- Mesa County Sheriff's Office
- Montrose Police Department
- Northglenn Police Department*
- Parker Police Department
- Thornton Police Department
- Town of Firestone Police Department
- Weld County Sheriff's Department
- Westminster Police Department
- Wheat Ridge Police Department

Based on caveats included in this report, this information may be considered as indicative of actual reporting. Until, and unless, there is a centralization of all law enforcement agencies providing normalized reporting, the findings in this report are considered to be assumptive of statewide application.

- **Disclaimer Condition*:*** The data analyzed was dependent on agency-contributed records as entered or classified at the time of the report. Initial data included numerous duplicates, blanks, and other discrepancies from the originating agency. Data is sometimes entered poorly, processed incorrectly and may not be free from defect. Therefore, this report should not be relied upon as definitively accurate; law enforcement records should be considered dynamic and often change from the time of initial report.

- **Date Range:** January 1, 2019 – June 30, 2025

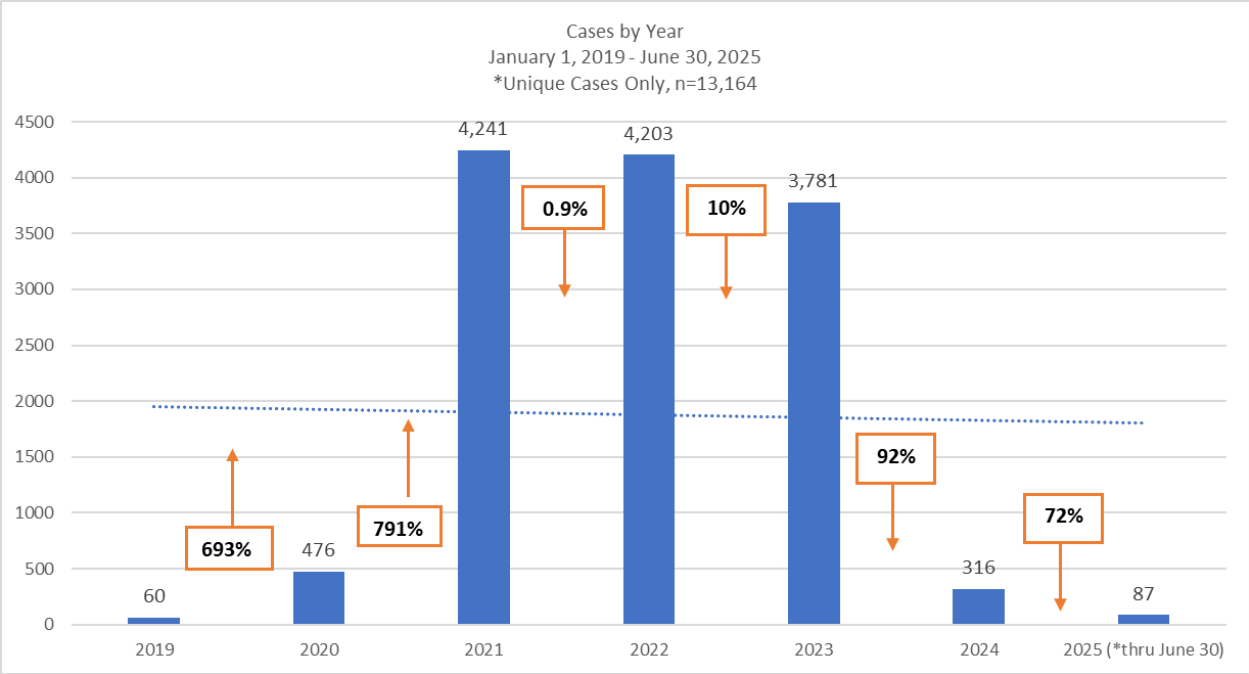
- **Data included:**
  - **Event fields:** Agency, Incident Number, Crime, Crime Class, Offense Description, NIBRS/UCR Code, Incident First Date/Time, Incident End Date/Time, Report Date, Address, City, Latitude, Longitude, and Location Type
  - **Vehicle fields:** Make, Model, Year, Color, VIN, Plate, Plate State, Type, Role, and Status
  - **Property fields**: Category, Quantity, Make, Model, Color, Description, and Status

- **Initial Data Cleanup:** Results were cleaned using common normalization techniques to address missing and incomplete data, duplicates, and inconsistent data entry types.
  - **Duplicates:** Duplicate incident numbers were common when multiple offenses or property types were listed in the report. In those cases, records were counted only once based on the highest charge offense for each unique vehicle plate.
  - **Missing Vehicle Data:** When vehicle make/model was missing, the VIN was searched in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) VIN Decoder site to verify data and populate missing fields. Additionally, in numerous instances both VIN and plate data were missing, so determining distinct vehicles was based on make/model/color where and if possible.

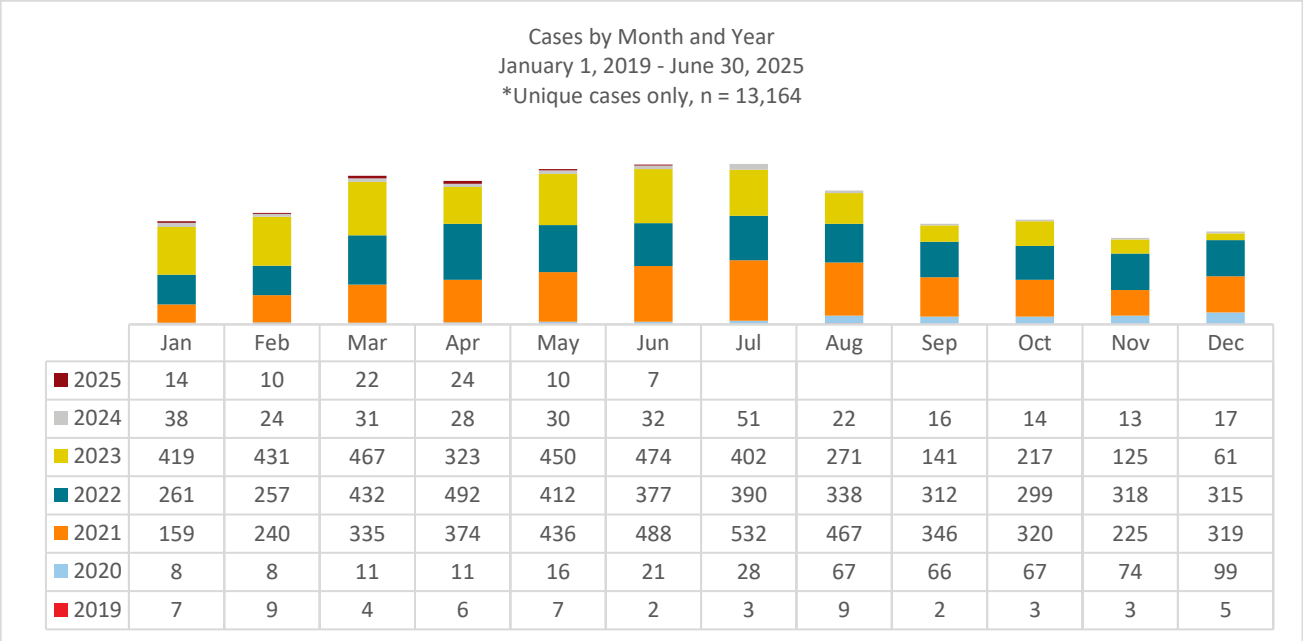
Analysis and Results:

From January 1, 2019 – June 30, 2025, there were **15,325 records representing 13,164 unique cases (including 87 new cases from Jan-June 2025)** where the incident narrative referenced catalytic converters thefts and/or the indexed property included catalytic converters. From these cases, there were **12,304 victim vehicles that could be identified by unique plate and/or VIN.** However, there were

>2,300 vehicles missing plate and/or VIN data which could not be confirmed as distinct. Therefore, the number of victim vehicles is likely higher than this initial count. Additionally, due to data discrepancies from individual agencies/officers, and a small sample size of agencies represented, it is very likely this number is lower than the actual count of catalytic converter thefts throughout Colorado.



*Note: The large increase in the first two years could be due to the rising trend of these thefts, but also may depend on historical data shared within AVCC. It is possible historical data is being loaded into the contributed database at the time of this analysis; therefore, these counts may have increased since the original data query.



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2025	14	10	22	24	10	7						
2024	38	24	31	28	30	32	51	22	16	14	13	17
2023	419	431	467	323	450	474	402	271	141	217	125	61
2022	261	257	432	492	412	377	390	338	312	299	318	315
2021	159	240	335	374	436	488	532	467	346	320	225	319
2020	8	8	11	11	16	21	28	67	66	67	74	99
2019	7	9	4	6	7	2	3	9	2	3	3	5

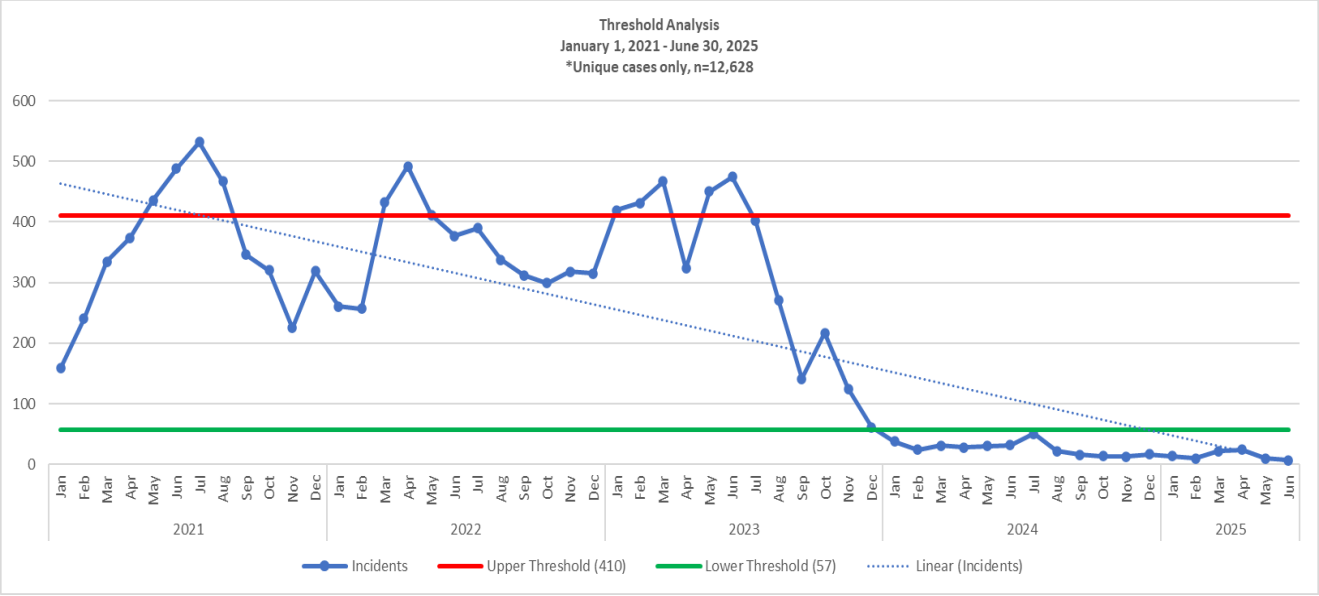
Threshold Analysis

Using a 4-year period, a threshold analysis was calculated to identify the upper and lower range values to determine normal patterns of activity. Years 2019 and 2020 were excluded based on possible anomalies with the small datasets within AVCC.

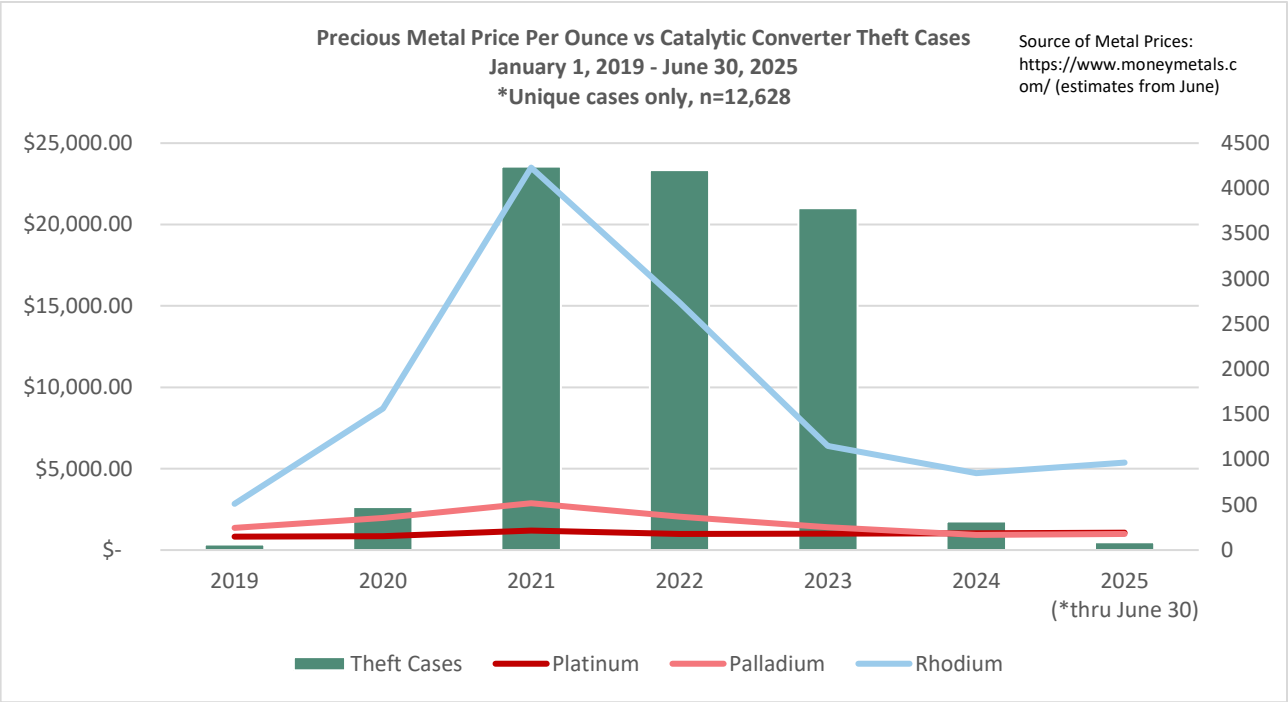
Based on the threshold, the range of values per month falls between 57 and 410 cases (the average was 233 cases). From January 2022 on, the number of cases generally fell within the normal threshold. Noticeably from June 2023 to June 2025, the trend declined steeply with all of 2024/2025 falling below the lower threshold.

While the reason for the decrease could be due to several varying factors, it is likely the following efforts have all contributed positively:

1) The efforts of Colorado law enforcement to share intelligence, dedicate investigative resources and successfully arrest those responsible for this criminal activity.
2) Increased community awareness with programs like CatETCH labeling and etching[1].
3) Decreasing metal prices from 2021 – 2024 may have played a part in decreasing the financial incentives to criminals. However, of note, prices are on the rise again – it is unknown if this will incentivize criminals to reengage in these thefts[2].
4) Mitigation strategies from state legislation in House Bill 22-1217 and other applicable state laws seem to be helping curb these crimes[3].



[1] Source: https://lockdownyourcar.org/catalytic-converter-theft/
[2] Source: https://www.moneymetals.com/rhodium-price
[3] Source: 2022 Colorado Auto THEFT Annual Report - https://lockdownyourcar.org/wpcontent/uploads/2023/03/2022_Colorado_Auto_Theft_Annual_Report.pdf



According to Money Metals®, the prices of Platinum, Rhodium and Palladium fell drastically from 2021 through 2024. But notably, when comparing early June 2025 to July 2025, prices are again on the rise. **It is possible these rapidly increasing prices will incentivize criminals to reengage in thefts.**

Increasing Metal Prices Seen in 2025 Source: https://www.moneymetals.com/			
	June 2nd Estimate	**July 31st Estimate**	**Percent Change**
Platinum	$1,068.00	$1,295.00	21.25%
Palladium	$997.00	$1,199.00	20.26%
Rhodium	$5,375.00	$7,250.00	34.88%

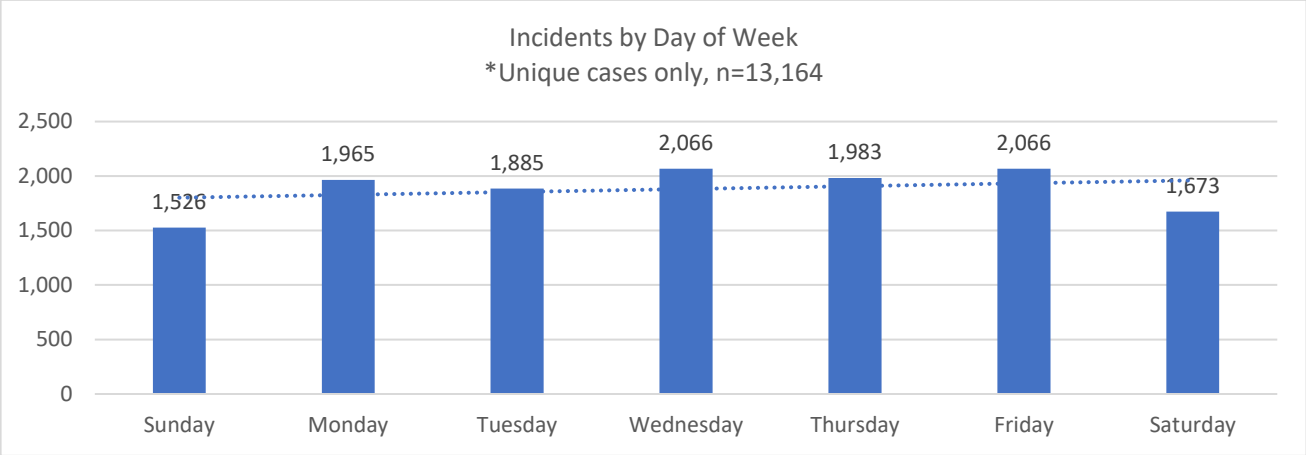
Day of Week / Time of Day

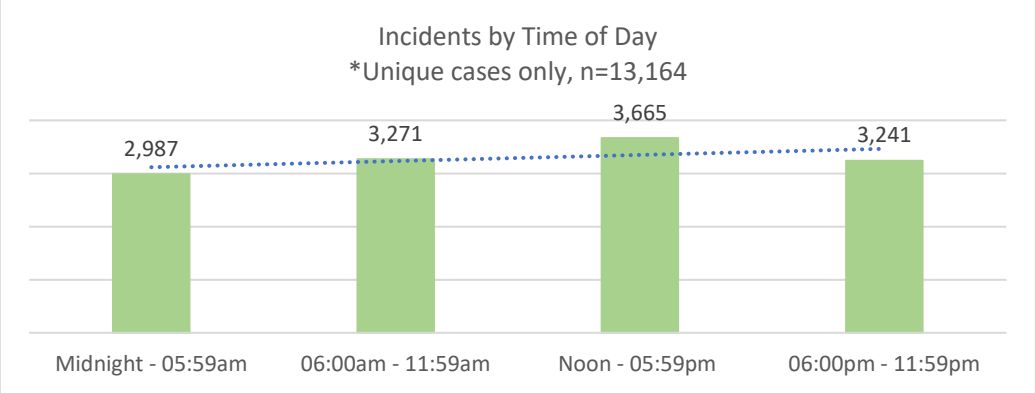
**Note: For the following analyses, only unique case records were counted.*

Using the incident first date/time, an analysis by day of week did not reveal any unexpected patterns - approximately 75% of the incidents took place during the weekday (Mon-Fri) versus 25% during the weekend (Sat-Sun) as might be expected. On average, there were 1,881 incidents per day, with a peak on Wednesdays and Fridays with 2,066.

Likewise, using incident first date/time, incident time of day was analyzed and broken into four distinct time blocks. A slight majority (53%) of incidents took place during daytime hours (06:00 am – 05:59 pm). While it is generally understood most vehicle burglaries take place overnight, given the prevalence of these thefts at certain location types like parking garages, commuter parking lots, etc., it is

reasonable daytime hours are more common. These locations are obvious targets for criminals due to the number of vehicles in one place that are left unattended for prolonged periods of time.





Victim Vehicle Trends

**Note: For the following analyses, total record counts were used to account for cases where more than one vehicle was indexed as a victim or where the same vehicle was victimized more than once.*

Vehicles per Case:

In 92% of records, there was only one victim vehicle listed. However, there were over 1,250 records where multiple vehicles were targeted at one time.

Vehicles Per Case	Count	Percent
One	14,042	91.76%
Two	932	6.09%
Three	178	1.16%
Four	64	0.42%

Five	38	0.25%
Six	16	0.10%
Seven	11	0.07%
Eight	4	0.03%
Nine	3	0.02%
Ten	6	0.04%
Eleven or more	9	0.06%
Total	**15,303**	**100%**

Loss per Catalytic Converter Stolen:

According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), criminals can receive up to $250 per catalytic converter from metal recycling facilities[4]. Based on that figure, the **15,303** victim vehicles that could be identified in this assessment amount to approximately **$3,825,750 in loss**. But, of note, the true loss amount is likely much higher as victims often must pay between $1,000 - $2,500 to replace a stolen unit, not to mention losses due to arranging alternate transportation, other repairs, and possible loss of pay from missing work[5]. Furthermore, thefts may go unreported to law enforcement and only includes those Colorado agencies contributing data to AVCC at the time of this analysis. A comprehensive statewide loss dollar figure is likely much higher.

Of those records that included a unique vehicle plate, approximately 3% were indexed in multiple cases, indicating they were possible repeat victims of catalytic converter theft. The loss to the victim and disruption to day-to-day life is concerning after one theft, but even more so to those who were revictimized.

Vehicle Type:

It was difficult to accurately analyze vehicle types due to the vast discrepancy between agency reporting. For instance, in some situations a Ford Econoline van was classified as 'Automobile (including Bronco Blazer etc.)' and 'Automobile (including SUV and Light Duty Truck).' Therefore, due to these discrepancies of data, vehicle type was not analyzed further.

Vehicle Make/Model:

Of the vehicles targeted, Toyota Priuses remained the most targeted over this period. According to the NICB, the price per catalytic converter of hybrid vehicles like Priuses can be up to $800, making them a

[4] Source: https://www.nicb.org/news/news-releases/catalytic-converter-thefts-surge-nationwide-according-new-report
[5] Source: https://www.nicb.org/news/news-releases/catalytic-converter-thefts-surge-nationwide-according-new-report

much more valuable target[6]. Notably, each of the top ten vehicle types targeted showed a drop in thefts by an average of 94% from 2023 – 2024. Percent change from 2024-2025 will be calculated at year end.

	2020	2021	2020 - 2021 % Change	2022	2021 - 2022 % Change	2023	2022 - 2023 % Change	2024	2023 - 2024 % Change	2025 Jan-Jun	Trend	Total
Toyota Prius	50	386	672%	470	22%	1,082	130%	27	-98%	1		2,016
Toyota Tundra	5	52	940%	221	325%	747	238%	14	-98%	9		1,048
Honda Element	61	585	859%	237	-59%	109	-54%	16	-85%	1		1,009
Honda CRV	10	362	3520%	349	-4%	164	-53%	14	-91%	2		901
Honda Accord	19	208	995%	140	-33%	89	-36%	5	-94%			461
Ford F250	15	160	967%	128	-20%	71	-45%	1	-99%	1		376
Toyota 4Runner	11	183	1564%	142	-22%	42	-70%	1	-98%	1		380
Toyota Sequoia	0	31	NC	107	245%	208	94%	9	-96%			355
Toyota Tacoma	6	102	1600%	134	31%	45	-66%	7	-84%	1		295
Jeep Grand Cherokee	2	82	4000%	116	41%	57	-51%	0	-100%	2		259

*N/C denotes not calculable.

*2019 data not included due to possible anomaly in small dataset.

Location Trends

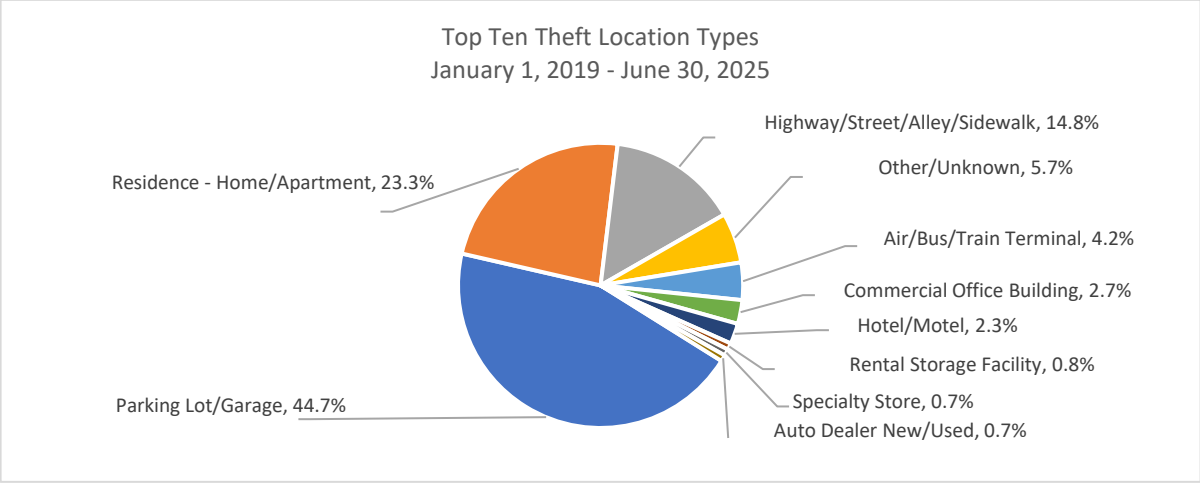
**Note: For the following analyses, only unique case records were counted.*

City:

Based on the data contributed for this analysis, Denver was the most common city (7,897; +14 records from first half of 2025), followed by Aurora (2,045; +12 records) and Centennial (844; +1 record).

Location Type:

Depending on how captured by the reporting agency, location type varied. But locations where many unattended vehicles are available for long stretches of time were commonly targeted: parking lots, garages, commuter transit lots, hotels, and auto dealerships, etc. Given the opportunity for multiple thefts at once, and possibly sparse or widely separated security, these were obvious targets for offenders.



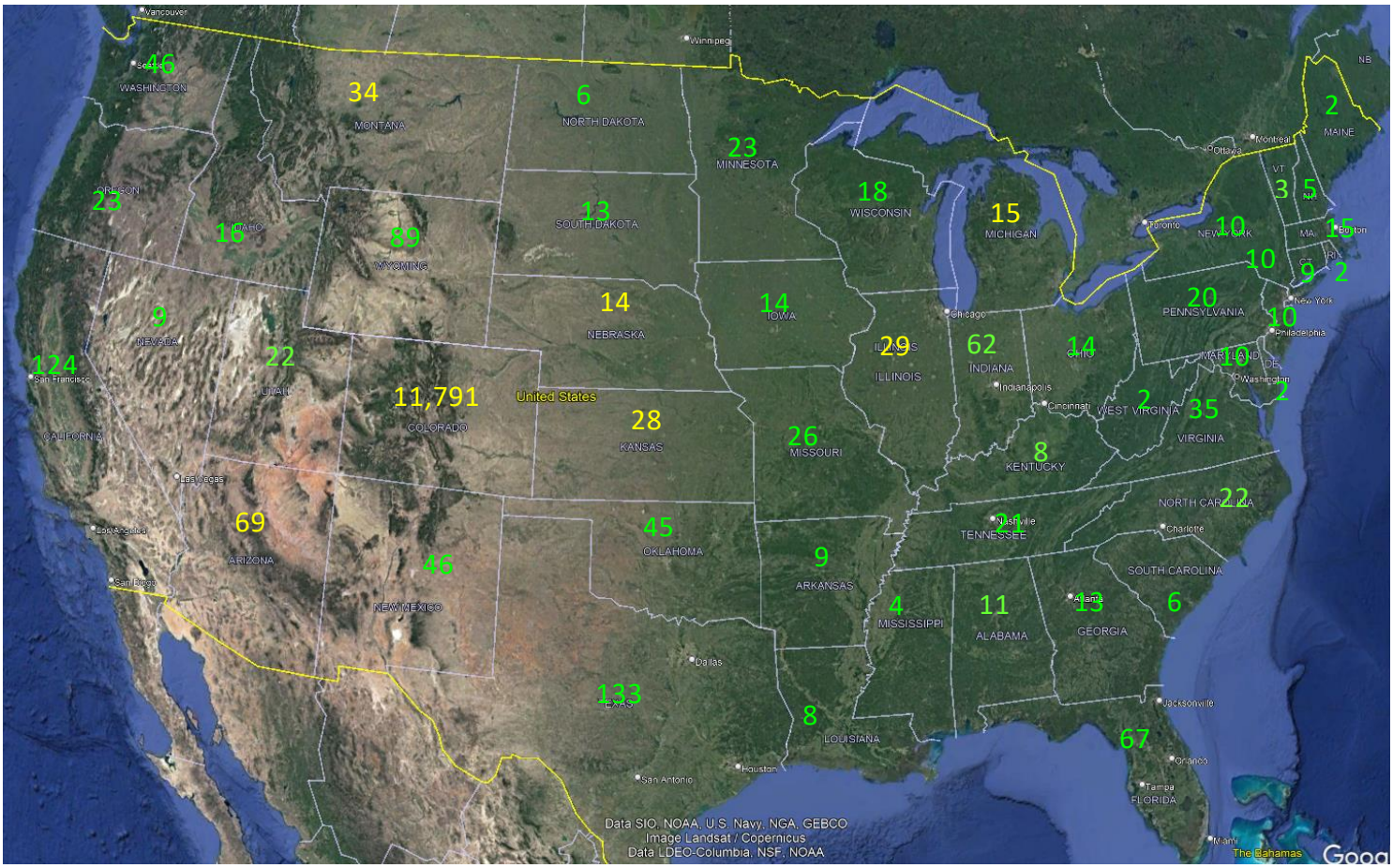
[6] https://www.nicb.org/news/news-releases/catalytic-converter-thefts-surge-nationwide-according-new-report

Registered Plate State:

There were no significant changes from the previous reports. That is, most plates were from Colorado (11,791 records), representing approximately 77% of the records. Approximately 8% were from states outside of Colorado and/or international plates. The remaining 15% were unknown or missing plate state data at the time of the report. **Note: These figures may include duplicates if the vehicle was victimized more than one time.*

Registered Plate State Counts

Note: Figures in yellow indicate numbers increased when including July – December 2024 data.



Not Pictured: AK (**9**), HI (2), International/Unknown (2,276).

Summary:

Based on the analysis of contributed agency incident data within AVCC, catalytic converter thefts peaked in 2021 but appear to be trending downward and significantly dropped since calendar year 2024. This is likely due to several contributing factors but law enforcement efforts, legislative changes,

citizen prevention/awareness initiatives and decreasing metal prices all likely had a positive impact on curbing these thefts.

Toyota Priuses remain the most common target, likely due to the higher value of metals within catalytic converters from hybrid vehicles. As might be expected, common location types include commuter transportation lots, parking garages and other areas where many vehicles may be left unattended for long periods of time.

Due to data limitations and agency differences in capturing reports, this dataset only represented a small fraction of the total number of thefts within the state. However, of positive note, the number of agencies contributing data to AVCC and included in this analysis has doubled since the first publication in February 2024. In that first publication, seventeen agencies were included. As of this writing, thirty-six agencies have now been included; thus, lending to a more robust understanding of statewide thefts.

It is expected as more agencies participate by contributing data within AVCC, to include narrative details, the number of records matching this query criteria may increase. In doing so, however, standardization across data entry from agency to agency, particularly in capturing specific identifying vehicle information (plate, plate state, make, model and VIN) and location type would allow for a much more accurate count of records.