

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

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For the Agenda of:
October 20, 2026

To: Board of Supervisors

Through: David Villanueva, County Executive
Eric Jones, Deputy County Executive
Public Safety and Justice

From: Jim Cooper, Sheriff, Sheriff's Office

Subject: Introduce An Ordinance Of The Sacramento County Code
Adding Chapter 9.130 Relating To Unlawful Possession Of
Detached Catalytic Converters; Waive Full Reading And
Continue To November 3, 2026, For Adoption

District(s): All

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Introduce the attached Ordinance of the Sacramento County Code (SCC) to Title 9 Public Peace, Morals and Safety, Chapter 9.130, Unlawful Possession of Detached Catalytic Converters, Sections 9.130.010, Purpose; Section 9.130.020, Definitions; Section 9.130.030, Unlawful Possession of a Catalytic Converter; Section 9.130.040, Criminal and Administrative Penalties; Section 9.130.050 Nonexclusive Remedies and Penalties; and Section 9.130.060, Severability; waive full reading and continue to November 3, 2026 for adoption.

BACKGROUND

The proposed ordinance provides a mechanism for law enforcement to combat the theft of catalytic converters. Catalytic converter theft is an increasing problem within Sacramento County and causes significant financial damage to victims. The high value of the precious metals contained within catalytic converters, together with the speed and relative ease with which the devices can be removed from unsuspecting vehicle owners, makes them an attractive target for theft.

State legislation has addressed aspects of catalytic converter theft and trafficking, but practical enforcement difficulties remain when Deputies encounter detached catalytic converters and cannot identify the vehicle or victim from which a converter originated. The proposed Sacramento County

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ordinance is intended to close that enforcement gap by establishing a local prohibition on possession of a detached catalytic converter without documentation or other proof demonstrating lawful possession.

Under proposed Chapter 9.130, it would be unlawful, except as otherwise permitted by State law, for a person to possess a catalytic converter that is not attached to a vehicle unless the person has documentation or other proof of lawful possession. Section 9.130.020 identifies acceptable forms of documentation of proof, including a bill of sale from the original owner with photographs; verifiable documentation from an auto-body shop showing that the owner relinquished the catalytic converter; verifiable electronic communication from the previous owner relinquishing ownership; photographs of the vehicle from which the catalytic converter originated; or vehicle registration associated with a catalytic converter bearing an etched license plate number, vehicle identification number, or driver's license number of the registered vehicle owner.

The ordinance further provides that an enforcement officer is not required to prove that a catalytic converter was stolen in order to establish unlawful possession. It also prohibits knowingly falsifying information intended to establish valid proof of ownership and permits the circumstances of possession, including the number of detached catalytic converters and the manner in which they were removed, to be considered as evidence of unlawful possession.

Violations of the proposed ordinance may be prosecuted as misdemeanors punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment in the County jail for up to six months, or both. The ordinance also authorizes administrative fines of up to \$1,000 for each violation and provides that each catalytic converter unlawfully possessed may constitute a separate misdemeanor charge. These remedies are cumulative and do not limit penalties or remedies otherwise available under State law.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The addition of SCC Chapter 9.130 has no financial impact on the General Fund. The Sheriff's Office will implement and enforce this ordinance using existing personnel and resources. No additional funding or personnel is requested at this time.

Attachment(s):

ORD – SCC 9.130 Unlawful Possession of Detached Catalytic Converter Ordinance

SCC NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY CODE
ADDING CHAPTER 9.130 RELATING TO UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF
DETACHED CATALYTIC CONVERTERS**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Sacramento, State of California, ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 9.130, Title 9, of the Sacramento County Code is added to read as follows:

Chapter 9.130 UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF DETACHED CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

9.130.010 Purpose.

This chapter shall be known as the "Unlawful Possession of Detached Catalytic Converter Ordinance." The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors finds that catalytic converter theft is an increasing problem within Sacramento County and causes significant financial damage to victims. The purpose of this chapter is to deter catalytic converter theft throughout Sacramento County and to ensure accountability for individuals involved in such criminal activity. This ordinance shall apply to both public and private property.

9.130.020 Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Catalytic Converter" means any exhaust emission control device, or portion thereof, that converts toxic gases and pollutants in exhaust gas from an internal combustion engine into less toxic pollutants.

(b) "Documentation or Other Proof" means written document(s) clearly identifying the vehicle from which the catalytic converter originated based on the totality of the circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, the following types of documents:

1. Bill of sale from the original owner with photographs.
2. Verifiable documentation from an auto-body shop proving the owner relinquished the catalytic converter to the auto-body shop.
3. Verifiable electronic communication from the previous owner to the possessor relinquishing ownership of the catalytic converter.
4. Photographs of the vehicle from which the catalytic converter originated.

5. Vehicle registration associated with the catalytic converter containing an etched associated license plate number or vehicle identification number or driver's license number of the registered vehicle owner.

(c) "Lawful Possession" includes being the lawful owner of the catalytic converter or being in possession of the catalytic converter with the lawful owner's verifiable written consent, an auto dismantler as defined by Vehicle Code Section 220, or a core recycler as defined by Business and Professions Code Section 21610. The involved peace officer or enforcement officer is not required to prove the catalytic converter was stolen to establish an unlawful possession.

(d) "Enforcement Officer" includes the Sheriff, a code enforcement officer, and their designees, including but not limited to, deputies.

9.130.030 Unlawful Possession of a Catalytic Converter.

Barring any provision of State law permitting the same, it is unlawful for any person to possess any catalytic converter which is not attached to a vehicle unless the person has documentation or other proof, as defined in Section 10-7001(b).

(a) This section does not apply to a detached catalytic converter that has been verifiably tested, certified, and labeled or otherwise approved for reuse, and is being bought or sold for purposes of reuse in accordance with the Federal Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. Section 7401 et seq.) and other regulations under the Clean Air Act, as they may be amended from time to time.

(b) It is unlawful for any person to knowingly falsify, or cause to be falsified, any information in a record intended to show valid proof of ownership as defined in Section 10-7001(b).

(c) Evidence of unlawful possession may be presumed by the number of detached catalytic converters within one's possession and/or by the condition of the dismantled catalytic converter(s), including, but not limited to, the manner in which a catalytic converter has been detached or cut from a vehicle.

(d) Compliance with Business and Professions Code Section 21610 and Vehicle Code Sections 10852.5 and 11500 is required.

9.130.040 Criminal and Administrative Penalties.

(a) Misdemeanor violation. Any person who violates any provision of this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), or by imprisonment in the County jail for a term not exceeding six (6) months, or by both.

(b) A separate Misdemeanor charge will be filed for each catalytic converter that an individual(s) has in their possession.

(c) A portion of the fines collected from the enforcement of this ordinance will be placed in a fund to assist the victims of catalytic theft. The amount placed into the fund has yet to be determined.

(d) State penalties apply. Nothing in this chapter shall be intended to limit any of the penalties provided for under California State law, including but not limited to the Penal Code, with regard to the unlawful sale, use, possession, delivery, and/or receipt of catalytic converters.

(e) Administrative fine amounts. The fine amount for any administrative citation issued under this chapter shall be up to one thousand (\$1,000.00) for each violation.

(f) Separate offenses. Acts, omissions, or conditions in violation of this chapter that continue, exist, or occur on more than one calendar day constitute separate violations for each calendar day. A person is guilty of a separate offense for each and every instance during which he or she commits, continues, or permits a violation of this chapter. A person is deemed guilty of a separate offense for each and every violation of this chapter, or any portion thereof.

9.130.050 Nonexclusive Remedies and Penalties.

All remedies and penalties for violations of the prohibitions within this chapter shall be cumulative and not exclusive. Enforcement by use of any administrative, criminal or civil action, citation or administrative proceeding or abatement remedy does not preclude the use of additional citations or other remedies as authorized by other ordinance or law. Enforcement remedies may be employed concurrently or consecutively. Conviction and punishment of or enforcement against any person hereunder shall not relieve such person from the responsibility of correcting, removing or abating a violation, nor prevent the enforced correction, removal, or abatement thereof.

9.130.060 Severability.

If any portion of this chapter is held to be invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of the remaining portions of this chapter. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares it would have passed each remaining portion irrespective of the fact that any one or more portions are declared invalid.

SECTION 2. This ordinance was introduced and the title thereof read at the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors on _____, and on _____, further reading was waived by the unanimous vote of the Supervisors present.

This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force on and after thirty (30) days from the date of its passage, and before the expiration of fifteen (15) days from the date of its passage it shall be published once with the names of the members of the Board of Supervisors voting for and against the same, said publication to be made in a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Sacramento.

On a motion by Supervisor _____, seconded by Supervisor _____, the foregoing ordinance was passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sacramento, State of California, this ____ day of _____ 2026, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors,

NOES: Supervisors,

ABSENT: Supervisors,

ABSTAIN: Supervisors,

RECUSAL: Supervisors,
(PER POLITICAL REFORM ACT (§ 18702.5.))

Chair of the Board of Supervisors
of Sacramento County, California

(SEAL)

ATTEST: _____
Clerk, Board of Supervisors