

Making Calgary Safer Addressing Catalytic Converter Theft

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Community Development Committee recommend that Council give three readings to the bylaw amendments as proposed in Attachment 2 to amend the Business Licence Bylaw 32M98.

HIGHLIGHTS

- As directed by Council, Administration is proposing changes to the Business Licence Bylaw to support the regulation of a business or person in possession of an unattached catalytic converter.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? Calgary will be safer, as the bylaw amendments will deter theft of catalytic converters. Calgarians will be better protected from the financial cost and disruption of daily life associated with these thefts.
- Why does this matter? Catalytic converter theft is on the rise. It is crucial for changes to be made to complement law enforcement and align with provincial regulations, while also educating the public on preventative measures.
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

Catalytic converter theft in Calgary has been steadily increasing since 2020 and has risen 16 per cent in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the first quarter of 2022. All vehicles with an accessible catalytic converter are at risk. These amendments to the Business Licence Bylaw will positively affect the city as a whole.

Business Licence Bylaw Enhancements

The proposed amendments to the Business Licence Bylaw will give those involved in enforcement the ability to regulate the purchase and sale of catalytic converters from Salvage Yards/Auto Wreckers and Salvage Collectors. Additionally, someone selling used catalytic converters or other motor vehicle parts will be required to have a Salvage Collector licence, allowing for enforcement action if someone is dealing in catalytic converters without a licence. The amendments will provide additional tools for Calgary Police Service and Business Licence Peace Officers to carry out enforcement related to suspected catalytic converter theft.

The Business Licence Bylaw amendments, if approved will:

- specifically add a definition for catalytic converter;
- prohibit *Salvage Collectors* and *Salvage Yard/Auto Wreckers* from accepting damaged catalytic converters;
- prohibit the removal or defacing of markings or etching on a catalytic converter;
- require *Salvage Collectors* and *Salvage Yard/Auto Wreckers* to keep a record of the vehicle identification number (VIN), make, model and year of vehicle the catalytic converter originated;
- prohibit *Salvage Collectors* from accepting a catalytic converter where the required information is not provided; and

Making Calgary Safer Addressing Catalytic Converter Theft

- increase fines to be proportionate to the severity of the problem.

Please see Attachment 2 for the proposed wording to amend the Business Licence Bylaw.

Current ongoing work

Business Licence Peace Officers are currently performing courtesy visits with salvage businesses to ensure they are aware of the requirements of the Business Licence Bylaw. This increases the likelihood that Peace Officers will have successful compliance checks in the future. Administration is committed to performing quarterly check-ins with Salvage Yard/Auto Wrecker businesses for the first year in addition to the regular complaint-based inspections.

The Calgary Police Service is continually working with provincial and federal agencies to address gaps in legislation relating to catalytic converter theft. They are also continually educating businesses and targeting Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC) licensed mechanics to encourage more businesses to offer etching on catalytic converters. Administration worked closely with Calgary Police Service on the proposed amendments, and they are supportive of the recommended changes.

Please see Attachment 1 for more information on the work Calgary Police Service is doing.

Next Steps:

Business Education and Awareness

A communications plan to educate and inform the businesses affected by these changes will be launched immediately after the bylaw amendment is implemented. Additionally, as of January 1, 2024, all automotive businesses selling used auto parts will be required to have the Salvage Collector licence category – for existing businesses it will be added at renewal. A Business Licence Peace Officer will meet with each Salvage Collector business owner to show them how to use the tracking system and ensure they understand the bylaw changes and requirements for record keeping. All Salvage Collector and Salvage Yard/Auto Wrecker businesses will receive communication regarding the changes.

Public Education and Awareness

A communications plan will also be launched to educate and inform the public on ways they can protect themselves against catalytic converter theft. Automotive businesses will be encouraged by Calgary Police Service and Administration to offer etching as a service for vehicle owners to have their catalytic converters etched with the vehicle identification number. This will enable enforcement when a catalytic converter has been defaced or the etching is clearly destroyed. Etching of the vehicle identification number is important because it gives Calgary Police Officers the evidence to establish which vehicle the catalytic converter came from.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

IMPLICATIONS

Social

The proposed Business Licence Bylaw amendments are intended to deter catalytic converter theft in Calgary, thereby reducing criminal activity. This will support the expectation of safe communities for Calgarians.

Environmental

Catalytic converters are important because they remove a large portion of green house gases that vehicles emit. A vehicle without a catalytic converter is more harmful to the environment.

Economic

Not Applicable

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

There is no anticipated operational financial impact. However, financial requirements for enforcement may need to be reassessed in the future.

The bylaw amendments include an increase in fine amount from \$1,000 to \$3,000 for infractions related to catalytic converters. This increase directly reflects the cost to the victim of the theft.

RISK

- Impacted businesses may consider the bylaw amendment to be adding unnecessary layers of regulation.
- Possibility of Business Licence Bylaw amendments having low impact and provincial legislation change being required.
- Low adoption of etching service by businesses or Calgarians.
- Public perception that The City is not doing enough.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Previous Council Direction and Background
2. Proposed Wording to Amend the Business Licence Bylaw
3. Presentation

Department Circulation

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| General Manager/Director | Department | Approve/Consult/Inform |
| Stuart Dalgleish | Planning & Development Services | Approve |
| Katie Black | Community Services | Consult |
| Doug Morgan | Operational Services | Consult |