



# UC Irvine

## Police Department

### Metal Theft Prevention

**What is Metal Theft?** Metal theft is the unauthorized removal of valuable metals to sell for profit, such as copper, aluminum, brass, and steel. Professional thieves target high-value components that are easily accessible, such as catalytic converters, electrical wiring, and water backflow valves. By understanding the patterns of these crimes and hardening your property, you can significantly reduce your risk.

**Where and Why Does it Occur?** In Irvine and the surrounding areas, metal theft patterns generally follow specific locations:

- **Residential Neighborhoods:** Primarily targeted for **catalytic converters**
- **Public Streets, Parks, Bike Trails & Construction Sites:** Targeted for **copper wiring** in streetlights and utility boxes.
- **Business Complexes:** Targeted for brass **backflow valves**.

The motivation is simple: High demand and fast cash. The raw materials in these parts can be quickly scrapped, making it a high-profit crime.

#### How to Protect Your Vehicle from Catalytic Converter Thefts?

- Park in secured garages or a well-lit area, when possible.
- Install alarms or a catalytic converter protection device (such as a steel shield, cage, or plate).
- Engrave your license plate number or VIN onto the converter.
- Have the converter welded if it's currently a "bolt-on" model.

#### How to Protect Your Business & Property from Backflow Valve Thefts?

- Use heavy-duty anti-theft cages to secure backflow devices.
- Paint metal valves with truck bed liner spray.
- Replace metal parts with plastic when possible.
- Secure lighting and electrical boxes with specialized locking lids.
- Maintain fences, use motion-activated video surveillance, and avoid leaving tools or recyclable scrap metal out in the open.

To report suspicious activities, call UC Irvine Police at 949-824-5223. For crimes in progress or emergencies, please dial **911**.

Help fight crime by reporting suspicious activity to UCIPD immediately - race, gender, and religious affiliation are not considered suspicious.