

KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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TRAINING BULLETIN

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County Ordinance 9.46 Unlawful Possession of a Catalytic Converter

OVERVIEW:

On July 15, 2025, the Kern County Board of Supervisors voted and approved the enactment of County Ordinance 9.46 - Unlawful Possession of a Catalytic Converter. The purpose and intent of this chapter is to provide Kern County with a reasonable means to address the impact on the community and the victims by the increasing catalytic converter thefts.

DEFINITIONS:

- 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, and shall also mean "catalytic converter, as the term is used in California Vehicle Code Section 10852.5.
- 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, which includes, but is not limited to, the following types of documents:
1. A signed bill of sale from the original owner authorizing the removal of the catalytic converter, to include the vehicle owner's name, address, and telephone number.
 2. Verifiable documentation from an auto-body shop proving the owner relinquished the catalytic converter to the auto-body shop or similar business.
 3. Verifiable electronic communication from the previous owner to the possessor relinquishing ownership of the catalytic converter.
 4. Vehicle registration associated with the catalytic converter, together with photographs, showing an etched associated license plate number or vehicle identification number or driver's license number of the registered vehicle owner claimed to have conveyed the catalytic converter to the person now in possession.
- C. **"Lawful possession"** means (1) being the lawful owner of the catalytic converter or (2) being in possession of the catalytic converter with the lawful owner's verifiable written consent. It is not

required to prove the catalytic converter was stolen to establish that the possession is not lawful possession.

- D. “Enforcement officer”** means a sworn officer of the Sheriff’s Office, sworn federal task force officer, building official, code enforcement official, county counsel, or district attorney, and their designees.

9.46.030: Unlawful Possession of a Catalytic Converter

- A.** Unless state law allows it, only licensed core recyclers are legally allowed to possess a detached catalytic converter, California Business and Professions Code Section 21610. Anyone else must have documentation proving they lawfully own it.
- B.** This rule does not apply to legally owned detached catalytic converters that have been tested, certified, and approved for reuse under the federal Clean Air Act or California Air Resources Board regulations and are being bought or sold for reuse in compliance with those laws.
- C.** It is illegal for anyone to knowingly falsify or help falsify documents meant to prove ownership or possession of a catalytic converter.
- D.** Unlawful possession of catalytic converters may be assumed based on the quantity a person has and the condition or manner in which they were removed or cut from vehicles.

9.46.040: Violation and Enforcement

- A.** Misdemeanor Penalty. 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), or by imprisonment in the County jail for a term not exceeding a year, or by both.
(Violating any rule in this chapter is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to \$1,000, jail time up to one year, or both.)
- B.** Unless otherwise specified herein, all administrative citations issued for violations of this chapter shall be subject to the provisions set forth in chapter 8.54 of the Kern County Ordinance Code (hereinafter, code), including but not limited to, the administrative hearing and appeal process and the county’s authority to use any civil remedy available to collect any unpaid administrative fines.
(All administrative citations for violations of this chapter follow the rules in chapter 8.54 of the Kern County Ordinance Code, including hearings, appeals, and the county’s ability to use civil actions to collect unpaid fines.)
- C.** State Penalties Apply. Nothing in this chapter shall be intended to limit any of the penalties provided for under California law, including, but not limited to, the Penal Code, with regard to the sale, use, possession, delivery, and/or receipt of catalytic converters.
(This chapter does not limit any penalties under California law related to the sale, use, possession, delivery, or receipt of catalytic converters.)

D. Administrative Civil Penalty. In addition to any other penalties provided by law, whenever an enforcement officer determines a violation of this chapter has occurred, the enforcement officer shall have the authority to issue an administrative citation with an administrative civil penalty to any person responsible for the violation, in accordance with and subject to the provisions of chapter 8.54 of this code. Any administrative civil penalty in this chapter shall be one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the first offense, two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for the second offense within thirty-six (36) months, and five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each subsequent offense within thirty-six (36) months.

(If someone violates this chapter, an enforcement officer can issue an administrative citation with fines: \$1,000 for the first offense, \$2,000 for the second offense within 36 months, and \$5,000 for each additional offense within 36 months, following chapter 8.54 rules.)

E. If any part or provision of this chapter, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of the chapter, including the application of that part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this chapter are severable.

(If any part of this chapter is found invalid, the rest of the chapter remains effective and enforceable. The provisions are severable.)

F. The remedies provided in this chapter shall be construed to be separate and distinct and the pursuit, imposition and enforcement of one shall not prevent or foreclose the pursuit, imposition and enforcement of any other or others.

(The remedies in this chapter are independent, so using one does not stop or block using any others.)

PROCEDURE – Investigation of Violation of C.O. 9.46

Once it has been determined that a violation has occurred, a citation may be issued, or a physical arrest may be made if appropriate. The arresting personnel will also complete a crime and incident report (C&I).

- The C&I will be coded as C.O. 9.46, Unlawful Possession of a catalytic converter.
- Document the facts of the offense.
- The C&I will be marked for Crime Analysis (CAU) for tracking purposes.
- Follow citation routing procedures from respected assigned areas.

By acknowledging this training bulletin, you are indicating you have read and understand this training bulletin. All staff of the Deputy Sheriff, Park Ranger, and Community Service Technician ranks are required to review and acknowledge this training bulletin **no later than October 17, 2025.**