

**Wheels:** An e-mail from Doug says, “I am looking for solid information about catalytic converters and what causes premature failure in them. Last year I had a transmission replaced in my 1996 Caprice Classic. The car had 86,776 miles on it. When I drove home from the shop after the repair, the car had a terrible misfire and would hardly stay running. The car was taken to a shop where a code was found and the shop told me the car needed a complete tune up. We did the tune up and then tested the car. The same problem existed and the same codes as before were noted. Next, we took the car to a dealer who traced the problem to 3 oxygen sensor wires that were mis-wired. After the wires were placed back to their original terminals, the car returned to normal operation. It was determined that this was done when the shop replaced the transmission.

This brings us to the present problem. We drove this car to California shortly afterwards. After returning to Ohio, the light came on saying a problem existed with the converter. We found one of the two converters to be bad. I was told that misfiring can cause this trouble. Is it possible that the misfire condition would have caused the premature failure of one of the converters?”

**Halderman:** Catalytic converters should last the life of the vehicle unless they are exposed to conditions such as a misfire. Having the oxygen sensor wires switched may have been the root cause for the failure, although a misfire condition will also cause premature failure. There is an old saying: “Catalytic converters do not commit suicide, but are murdered.”

