

GRAFFITI HURTS

This morning, people in cities just like Columbus discovered that their street, neighborhood, or business had changed overnight. That's because they saw graffiti, left behind by someone with no respect for public or private property.

WHY GRAFFITI APPEARS

The majority of graffiti is done by graffiti vandals known as "taggers." They are motivated by the need to be recognized. They believe that the more often they write their secret signature, or "tag," the more respect they earn from other vandals. Places that are risky to "tag," such as bridges, enhance this respect.

The excitement that comes from doing something illegal - shoplifting materials or trespassing - and the rebellious nature of their actions also motivate taggers. Others deface public areas to show that they, and not the agency responsible (e.g., city government), are in control.

Graffiti vandals like to believe they are outside of the community's social structure and see graffiti as a means of expression.

Who Does It?

Most graffiti is done by youths whose ages range from pre-teens to early 20s. Younger children and adults have also been caught. Graffiti vandals come from every ethnic and income background. Because vandals like to mark surfaces where peers will recognize their "tag," most graffiti in a community is done by those who live there.

Graffiti And Gangs

Many people believe that graffiti signals the presences of a gang. While gang graffiti is unnerving, less than 10% of all graffiti nationwide is gang-related.

Should I Be Concerned?

- ▶ Graffiti is not a "victimless" crime. Everyone - children, parents, business owners, and taxpayers - is hurt by it.
- ▶ It's estimated that \$7 to 8 billion are spent each year by communities, public transit departments, residents, and businesses to remove graffiti or repair the damage it causes.
- ▶ Many people associate graffiti with the general decline of an area, even if it is not true. Merchants can lose business because customers feel the neighborhood is no longer safe.
- ▶ Graffiti is not just a harmless teenage phase. Graffiti vandals are at an increased risk of becoming involved in shoplifting or other criminal activities, drugs, and being injured while "tagging" dangerous locations. They can also be assaulted if they mark over someone else's "tag."
- ▶ When left untouched, graffiti sends the message that we cannot keep order in our community.

Methods Of Removal

Paint-out is the most widely used method due to the low cost and relative safety of the product.

When using this method it is best to color match paint to the surface; if not, it is important to paint the whole surface. If limited by time and/or paint, paint the entire surface from ground level to a certain height making sure the line of paint is clean and straight. Inappropriate removal methods such as painting random squares is often defeating, providing graffiti vandals with a new bright canvas.

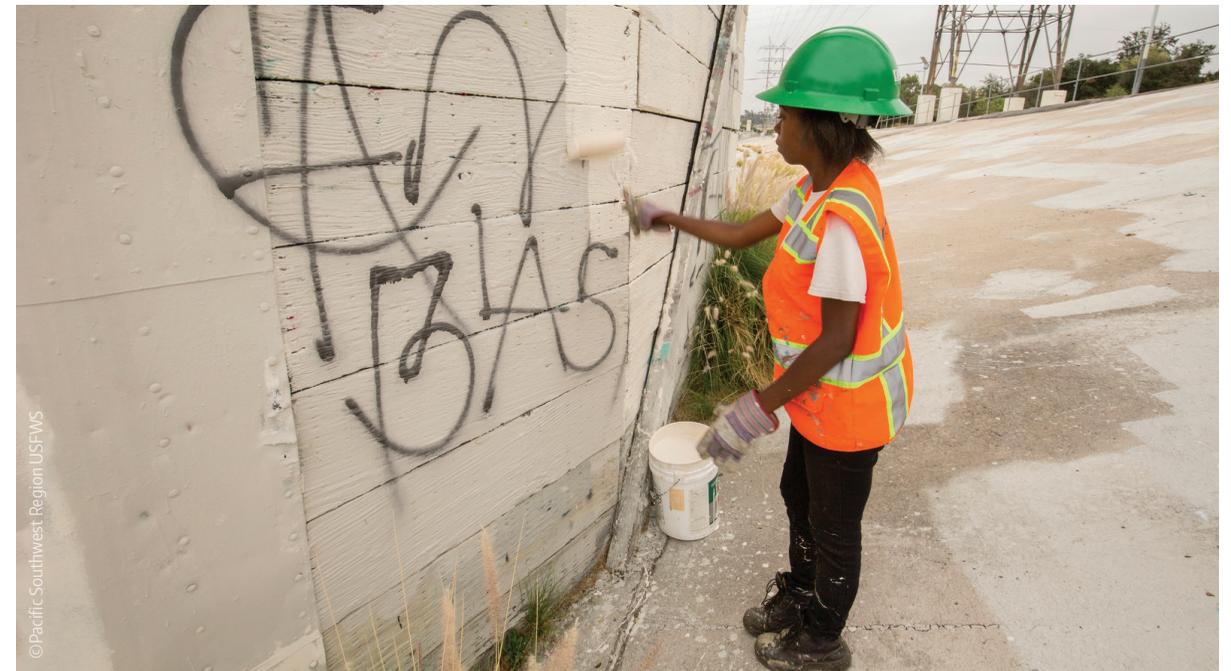
A problem with paint-outs is dripping large amounts of paint on the sidewalk and other areas around the site. Use drop cloths and be environmentally responsible by properly cleaning and disposing of painting equipment.

The most overlooked problem of repeated paint-outs and poor paint selection is surface

damage. To avoid damage to concrete, block wall and brick, use "breathable" paints that allow moisture to pass through and escape from the inside of the surface. If non-breathable paints are applied there is the risk of having moisture trapped inside where deterioration can take place. Trapped moisture will cause metals to rust and weaken walls.

After 2 or 3 coats, consider applying a protective coating to prevent the need for additional coats of paint.

Other methods include chemical removers, waterblasting, sandblasting and newer alternatives such as baking soda. These methods require added safety precautions, often involving specialized equipment, and operated by fully trained individuals who recognize and observe all safety procedures.



What Can I Do?

- ▶ Remove graffiti immediately and continuously from your property. Vandals will learn their time and materials are being wasted and will move to another spot.
- ▶ Keeping your property well-lit, clean, and landscaped will help discourage graffiti.
- ▶ Plant native shrubs with prickly or thorny foliage near walls and fences.
- ▶ Be part of a community or neighborhood improvement program. Join or help organize cleanup and beautification efforts.
- ▶ Talk to your children about respecting public and private property.
- ▶ Encourage a group of merchants and neighborhood associations to create "paint banks" stocked with paints and painting supplies. Those who contribute can use the items when vandals strike.

Reporting Graffiti

We need your help in the removal of graffiti in our city. If you know the location of graffiti, please call Keep Columbus Beautiful at 311 and provide the following information.

1. Description of the graffiti (Please be specific. For example, on the overpass where ABC St. crosses over 123 Ave.).
2. The graffiti is painted on: residential property; public property; commercial property; or, other.

With your help we can stop graffiti and help keep Columbus a beautiful city to live in.

The City of Columbus' Keep Columbus Beautiful program thanks you for your interest in improving your communities. If you have any questions about the information in this pamphlet, or questions about Keep Columbus Beautiful in general, please call (614) 645-2421.



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1265 Marion Rd. • Columbus, OH 43207
614-645-2421
www.keepcolumbusbeautiful.org



GRAFFITI PREVENTION

The City of Columbus' Keep Columbus Beautiful Program provides leadership, guidance, education, assistance and materials to citizens of Columbus to End Littering and improve communities.

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