

Graffiti attracts Graffiti Taggers derive excitement and thrill from tagging as many places as possible, and they often compete for recognition. Allowing graffiti to remain is equivalent to the “Broken Window Syndrome”—allowing one broken window to go unrepaired will attract others to be broken as well. In addition to being an attractive nuisance, graffiti also invites violence. Gang members intentionally deface other gangs’ graffiti, perpetuating the cycle of violence. To allow another gang’s graffiti to go unchallenged is contrary to the essence of gang philosophy.

What can happen to taggers? Under NC law, “unlawfully applying graffiti” are violations and punishable by a fine. In addition to a fine, a defendant may be ordered to perform hours of community service in order to remove graffiti. A person committing these criminal offenses, are charged mostly as a misdemeanor, but can be a felony, depending on other aggravating factors. These crimes are punishable with restoration costs and the possibility of jail time.

What to Do About Graffiti? The best thing to do is to paint over it—immediately! Graffiti which attracts attention and generates anger when first “thrown” draws less and less attention as time goes by. Within just a few days it tends to blend in, becoming part of the landscape. Its negative effect, however, continues long after it has become a part of the scenery.

Local paint stores can provide helpful information and materials to remove graffiti. Building and painting contractors may be able to recommend building surfaces that are easier to clean.

Helpful Tips for Graffiti Removal

Quick Response Don’t let graffiti last more than 24 hours. Blocking it out works, but total removal or blended repainting works best.

Wash it off Paint dries to the touch fairly fast but takes longer to cure. If you act quickly, complete removal may be possible with no further painting required. Washing makes color coverage easier when repainting. The challenge is to remove graffiti without damaging the underlying finish. Special care is critical on transparent finishes like varnished doors. You may want to consult with a professional before risking permanent damage to the surface. Start with the mildest cleaner, working up to stronger ones until you get results. Test small areas first.

- Try detergent and water.
- Mineral spirits are effective on uncured graffiti.
- Methanol is effective on uncured graffiti, but will likely dissolve a latex painted surface.

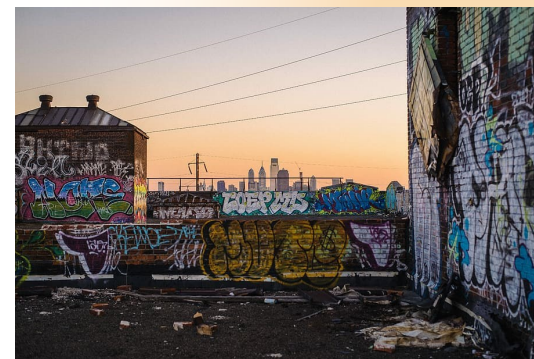
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Graffiti

is not ART!



*Tips for discouraging
criminal graffiti in your
neighborhood*



**ASHEVILLE PROTECTION AND DETERRENCE
THROUGH CRIME PREVENTION**

Criminal graffiti is not art...It's a Crime!

The unauthorized application of graffiti to public or private property is a criminal act. Around the world graffiti defaces the urban landscape. The nearly undecipherable scrawling seen in our neighborhoods isn't merely an eyesore. It is a signal to residents, business owners and police that the area will decay unless the problem is brought under control.

Who Does Criminal Graffiti? Why?

Tagging This is the most common type in urban America. Recognition or fame motivates the tagger. Tags take the form of often unreadable words or initials, elaborate designs or bubble-style letters. Tags can derive from a unique name, street name or moniker. Taggers' tools are spray paint, large-tipped pens, devices which etch glass, or adhesive material used to apply tags to a surface. A group of taggers is called a "crew", and a common value among crews is non-conformity to rules or authority. Taggers often refer to themselves as "street artists" or "writers" and to their tags as "art." They don't view their acts as unlawful, believing that it is self-expression. However, their acts of vandalism to public and private property add up to thousands of dollars in restoration costs every day.

Gang Graffiti is a gang's means of identifying "turf", proclaiming superiority over other gangs, and issuing challenges and threats to rivals. Unlike tagger graffiti, this type of graffiti will commonly spell out a gang name, their geographic origin or a numeric identifier. It can sometimes show an entire list of gang nicknames called a "roll call" or "roster".

Skinhead/Hate Crime Graffiti Rather than using graffiti to claim turf or intimidate rivals, racist skinheads use graffiti to spread racist and neo-Nazi beliefs. Their intimidation often targets Jews, people of color, or the LGBTQ community. Whether it is gang related, hate crime or tagger graffiti, the result is the same: decreased property values, vandalized public assets, and increased fear and anger among residents, business owners and other citizens.

Psychological Effects of Graffiti

Criminal graffiti makes people feel that the neighborhood is being lost to gangs and lawlessness. If allowed to remain, graffiti becomes a highly visible sign of urban decay, sending a message of lawlessness and a neighborhood unconcerned about its appearance. It instills fear and a feeling of vulnerability.

Prevention Strategies Keep taggers away from target surfaces with dense vegetation or thorny plants against building walls and fencing next to buildings. Add security lighting in dark areas. Design buildings with surfaces that can be easily repainted or use glazed tiles or materials with anti-graffiti coatings. Avoid unpainted, textured materials like concrete, brick, stone, stucco, and stained or unfinished wood.

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information



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Should I File a Police Report? Tagging incidents that result in significant property damage and/or that involve known suspects, or tagging incidents that are in progress should be reported to your local police department. If you believe the graffiti to be gang related, notify the police as soon as possible so the graffiti can be photographed.

Economic Effects of Graffiti When graffiti exists in a neighborhood, outsiders who may be considering opening a business or buying a home are likely to feel uneasy; they may choose to look elsewhere. Who wants to move to a blighted, decaying community? In addition, longtime residents and business owners may also think about relocating before it's too late! Graffiti undermines community development, especially those efforts aimed at bringing in new businesses. Neighborhoods blighted by graffiti may find it particularly difficult to attract revitalizing investments. In addition to long-term effects, the immediate cost of removing graffiti can run into tens of thousands of dollars in private and public expense.

