



GRAFFITI FACTS

- ◆ Graffiti is the most common type of property vandalism (35%) according to the Bureau of Justice statistics.
- ◆ Immediate removal (within 24-48 hours) is the key to successful graffiti prevention.

GRAFFITI REMOVAL

The first step in graffiti removal is identifying the surface type and substance to be removed. Brick, stone, concrete, aluminum siding, utility boxes and poles, street signs, bus shelters, pavement, wood, and glass are just some of the materials that can be defaced with graffiti. These surfaces can be smooth or textured. Some are painted while others are unprotected.

While most graffiti is applied with spray paint, graffiti vandals also use markers, adhesives (stickers), shoe polish, lipstick, stencils, and etching products. The length of time graffiti has been on a surface usually impacts how easily it can be removed - the longer, the more difficult.

Depending on the substance to be removed, each surface requires or responds better to a particular method. Use the simple graffiti chart below for ideas about where to start.

GRAFFITI REMOVAL CHART	
Surface Type	Removal of Spray Paint and Similar Materials (markers, shoe polish, lipstick, stencils, etc.)
Aluminum Siding, Fiberglass	Paint remover (sparingly); rinse with water
Glass	Razor blade to scrape off; can also use paint thinner
Masonry (includes brick, marble, stone, tile, granite, and concrete)	Power washing with low pressure; sand or soda blasting (may create a shadow); paint remover or chemical graffiti remover/solvent applied with brush and rinse with water; paint over
Historic Masonry or Other Valuable Structures	Seek out a professional; get the <i>National Park Service Brief on removing graffiti from historic masonry</i>
Metal	Paint thinner or chemical graffiti remover/solvent and rub with steel wool or sandpaper and rinse; power washing; paint over
Pavement	Chemical remover and power washing; soda blasting
Street Signs	Chemical remover (make sure it does not remove reflective coating)
Stucco	Paint remover/chemical remover and rinse with pressure wash; paint over
Utility Boxes	Chemical remove with cloth or scrubber
Vinyl Siding	Chemical solvents sparingly as they may remove the vinyl coating; repaint with primer first
Wood	On painted, unweathered wood can try mineral spirits; power washing with low pressure; sanding; repainting
<p>Etching - Etching may be repairable on some glass (seek out a professional); replace glass. Adhesives - Scrape away as much of the adhesive as possible; use nail polish remover or acetone-based cleaner to remove remaining residue. Be aware that acetone-based solvents can soften plastics. You should always test a small area when using any solvent.</p>	

GRAFFITI PREVENTION

- ◆ The most effective way to prevent graffiti is to remove it promptly. Studies show that removal within 24-48 hours results in a nearly zero rate of re-occurrence
- ◆ Report graffiti to the Police Department
- ◆ Restrict access to graffiti-prone areas by planting trees or other greenery
- ◆ Install lighting in areas that are dark and targets for graffiti
- ◆ Use a graffiti-resistant surface treatment

GRAFFITI RESOURCES

- ◆ Graffiti Hurts - www.graffitihurts.com
- ◆ National Park Service - <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>
and click on brief 38: Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry
- ◆ Paint Products – Google search: “Anti-graffiti”