

## **THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS**

### **HOW TO DEAL WITH GRAFFITI VANDALISM**

**Graffiti is a crime, not just a nuisance! The first step is to report graffiti. To report graffiti in progress, call police dispatch at (720) 913-2000. City ordinance requires graffiti to be cleaned off nonresidential property within 48 and residential property within 72 hours.**

**Remove it.** Call 3-1-1 or (720) 913-1311 or visit [www.denvergov.org/graffiti](http://www.denvergov.org/graffiti) to get free paint. You can request vouchers from private vendors for discount services and supplies, such as custom-colored paint or sealers.

**Report it for free assistance.** If you're unable to remove it yourself, authorize the City to remove it free of charge by calling 3-1-1, (720) 913-1311, or report it online at [www.denvergov.org/graffiti](http://www.denvergov.org/graffiti), AND report it to the police nonemergency number at (720) 913-2000.

Graffiti is mainly of three types:

1. HATE graffiti is directed against people of specific ethnicity, races, religions, genders or sexual orientations.
2. GANG graffiti is done to announce gang superiority and turf.
3. TAGGER graffiti, the most common type, is committed by taggers who vandalize for personal visibility.

**Graffiti attracts more graffiti!** Graffiti vandalism (by use of spray paint, markers, etching tools, etc.) in your neighborhood needs to be removed as quickly as possible. The longer graffiti stays on property, the greater the negative messages to you, your neighbors and business customers. Prompt and consistent action keeps property values and discourages further vandalism. **Denver Partners Against Graffiti at (720) 865-7867** offers assistance to homeowners dealing with graffiti.

#### **TIPS FOR REMOVING GRAFFITI:**

- On glass, painted graffiti can be removed with a sharp paint scraper or common paint removers.
- On concrete, simply apply wet cement with a paint roller. Sometimes, two coats are required for complete coverage.
- On painted surfaces or wood, examine paint supplier color charts to select the product best suited to match your wall or fence.
- On unpainted brick, the surface may be cleaned with paint remover, or power washed.
- On business dumpsters, note the company name posted on the dumpster and report it to them.
- Professional graffiti companies are listed in the telephone directory or on the Internet.

Contact your neighborhood organization to see if they have graffiti cleaning equipment and/or individuals to assist with graffiti removal

In all cases, if the surface to be cleaned is very large or difficult to access, consider hiring a professional or authorizing the City to provide free removal assistance.

## **HOW TO DEAL WITH GRAFFITI VANDALISM** (cont.)

### **It is against the law in Denver:**

- To sell spray paint to persons under the age of 18. Denver Code, Sec. 38-174.
- For persons under the age of 18 to possess graffiti materials (spray paint, broad tipped marker pens, glass cutting or etching tools or instruments) with certain exceptions, i.e., within their home or employment. Denver Code, Sec. 34-66.
- For any person to possess graffiti materials with the intention to or know of someone else who intends to damage, deface or destroy public or private property. Denver Code, Sections 34-66 and 38-102.

To ensure that graffiti-related cases are successfully prosecuted, law enforcement officers are encouraged to charge persons committing graffiti with every available ordinance violation when appropriate, such as conspiracy, accessory before and after the fact, trespassing, interference, curfew and false information.

Citizens are encouraged to provide eyewitness statements to police and cooperate with investigation and prosecution of the case.

**Most graffiti is committed by youths of school age, after dark.** You can report, by calling (720) 913-2000, youth under the age of 18 who are out in the streets during the following hours:

From 11pm to 5am, Sunday through Thursday and  
from midnight to 5am on Friday and Saturday.

To report graffiti on Dumpsters (city-owned and private), public property, street signs, utility boxes, etc., call 3-1-1 or (720) 913-1311 or go online to [www.denvergov.org/graffiti](http://www.denvergov.org/graffiti).

### **GRAFFITI PREVENTION TIPS FOR YOUR PROPERTY**

- Create a barrier—plant short shrubs, prickly plants, vines, etc., along walls and fences.
- Remove hiding places—trim shrubs and weeds.
- Limit access—secure gates, repair fences and relocate items that intruders can use to scale fences and walls.
- Light it up—install outdoor lighting, consider motion-detecting lights.
- Coat it—apply protective sealer to make graffiti cleanup quick and easy.

Further information on dealing with graffiti can be obtained by calling Denver Partners Against Graffiti at (720) 865-7867.