

Disclaimer: The information and recommendations listed in this brochure are provided to aid citizens in the fight against graffiti. While no guarantee can be stated or implied, the City of Tacoma recommends the suggested measures as a public service, with the understanding there is no way to predict or prevent all crime risks including graffiti.



Removal & Resources

City of Tacoma Public Works Department
Community Based Services
In Coordination with the
Safe and Clean Graffiti Prevention Team



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If you need this information in an alternative format, please contact TacomaFirst 311 (253)3-1-1, TTY 711.

Graffiti is a crime. It is costly and destructive. Unaddressed, it can send a message that the community is not concerned about the appearance of its' neighborhood. It can generate a perception of crime, increase fear, lower property values, hurt business revenue and can be economically detrimental to the City. Graffiti can be seen as a sign of urban decay.

Anti-graffiti ordinance passed

To combat the presence of graffiti in Tacoma, the City Council passed an ordinance making graffiti a public nuisance in Tacoma. The ordinance has some of the following provisions.

- Graffiti is to be removed by the property owner within 18 days of notification by the City.
- If not removed within 18 days, the City of Tacoma may remove graffiti from the property and bill the owner for the cost of removal.

Graffiti prevention

The graffiti vandal's objective is to have others see his/her work. They are drawn to walls that are not cleaned because it means more people will see their "tag" longer. By covering the graffiti immediately, you rob the vandals of the effort and time it took to do the tag, and most likely they will move on.

SOME TIPS ON PREVENTING GRAFFITI ON YOUR PROPERTY

If you have high surfaces that are attractive to taggers, move trash cans or other stored items away from the building so they can't climb up or have a place to stand.

Placing motion-activated lights in both the front and back areas of your property could deter graffiti and prevent damage to your property.

Create a barrier along walls using plants that have thorns or prickly leaves such as Barberry, Flowering Quince, Oregon grape, Pyracantha or Holly. Check a plant nursery to make sure the plant will not get large for the area when mature.

Cement and brick surfaces can be protected by applying a protective coating or sealer. These are available at most home improvement centers but be sure to follow application instructions.

Always use latex paint because it's safer for the environment. If you are using oil-based paint, dispose of it at the hazardous waste station at the City of Tacoma landfill. 591-5543.

What if your property gets hit by graffiti?

Call the police non-emergency number 798-4721 to report the crime, then contact your homeowner insurance agent. Be sure to get a picture of it so it is available if the police or insurance company need to document the case - then paint out the graffiti.

Repaint the entire wall or at least up to 7 feet high; a straight line across the top with a similar color). using this method, there's no trace of the graffiti to the attention of vandals. Painting the entire wall is more effective than patching.

If the building is masonry and designated historic area call the Historic Preservation Office; 591-5220.

If you are unable to remove the graffiti yourself, look in the phone book under graffiti removal, painting contractors, or pressure washing for assistance.

Additional resources are available at www.cityoftacoma.org/graffiti.

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Take control of graffiti in your area

Be alert and responsive:

- If you see graffiti in progress, call 911.
- To report graffiti in your neighborhood, call 3-1-1.
- **Organize a volunteer graffiti paint out.** Be sure to obtain permission from *property owners* (not just those renting or occupying the building) before painting over graffiti. Ask the property owner to supply matching color paint or neutral colors like gray, white or beige in exchange for your labor.

Most public property (street signs, retaining walls, poles, traffic control boxes, bridges, mailboxes, etc.) requires special care to remove graffiti. Attempts to remove it by well-meaning volunteers may result in more damage to the property or hamper emergency worker's efforts to use equipment such as signal boxes and fire hydrants. **Please do not clean up graffiti on**

public property! Write down its exact location and report it to 3-1-1.

Where to get help

Donated paint may be obtained at no cost to community groups, low-income individuals and businesses for painting out graffiti. **Call Community Service by Youth at 798-7986** to arrange a convenient time for pickup. Only neutral colors are available.

Safe Streets can help organize a team of volunteers to help paint over graffiti. To find out if there's an existing team in your neighborhood, call the main Safe Streets number at 272-6824. Keep in mind that these teams of volunteers give priority to the elderly and disabled when assistance is requested to paint over graffiti. Please also be aware that our staff does not go out to paint over graffiti at the request of citizens.

Community-wide graffiti removal help may be available through your Neighborhood Council District. For more information on how to contact your district, call the City of **Tacoma Neighborhood Council Office** at 591-5229.

Important phone numbers

TO REPORT GRAFFITI

- If you are a victim of graffiti vandalism (non-emergency police)..... 798-4721
- To report graffiti in progress..... 911
- To report graffiti in your neighborhood..... 3-1-1
- Graffiti on buses and bus shelters..... 581-8050

HOW TO GET INVOLVED/COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Community Service by Youth..... 798-7986
- The Community Council of Tacoma..... 297-0726
- Neighborhood Council Office 591-5384
- Safe Streets..... 272-6824
- Tacoma Housing Authority (Salishan) 207-4455
- Hilltop Action Coalition 590-8747
- More resources may be found online at www.cityoftacoma.org/graffiti

FOR INFORMATION ON PAINT DISPOSAL

- City of Tacoma Landfill..... 591-5543

Product information for anti-graffiti coatings and treatments

GRAFFITI CLEANUP

Graffiti cleanup products are formulated to remove spray paint, felt marker, ink and crayon, commonly used in graffiti markings, from a wide variety of substrates without adverse effects to most underlying paint or coating materials.

SACRIFICIAL COATINGS

Sacrificial coatings control graffiti on most building surfaces by creating a barrier, preventing spray paints, crayon and ink from penetrating and staining the underlying surface. Graffiti is removed from protected surfaces by high pressure water or graffiti cleanup systems. The coatings must then be re-applied to restore the graffiti barrier. These systems allow control of chronic graffiti without chemical stripping or abrasives that can damage building surfaces.

GRAFFITI BARRIERS FOR UNPAINTED CONCRETE BLOCK AND MASONRY

These products are specifically for unpainted masonry surfaces and will not alter the natural appearance of substrate surfaces. These coatings penetrate and fill pores to prevent water penetration through exterior walls, providing a graffiti barrier as well as a moisture barrier.

Some available products and locations include:

Graffiti Cleanup	Sacrificial Coatings	Graffiti Barriers	Retailer
Vand/Clean	VandGuard	Raingard MicroSeal	Glidden Professional (253) 474-5165
T.S.W. Cleanup	Protectosil	Oegussa	Sherwin Williams (253) 472-3325
Graffiti Wipe	Prosoco Sacrificial Coating	BlokGuard and Graffiti Control	Rodda Paint (253) 472-7286

For follow up with your Police Sector Community Officer call your substation:

Sector 1

NE Substation: 594-7970-4731 Norpoint Way N

Central Substation: 594-7800-1524 Martin Luther King Jr. Way

Sector 2

573-2508 – 5136 N. 26th St.

Sector 3

594-7838 - 1501 S. 72nd St.

Sector 4

594-7947
400 E. 56th St.

