



Graffiti Removal & Resource Tip Sheet

Graffiti and its Effects

Graffiti is a crime. It is costly and destructive, and sends a message that the community is not concerned about the appearance of its neighborhoods. It generates neighborhood fear, causes instability, signals an increase in crime, lowers property values, hurts business revenue, is economically detrimental to the City, and is a sign of urban decay.

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 vandal of the effort and time it took to do the tag, and most likely they will move on.

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 notice.
- 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.

What if Your Property Gets Hit by Graffiti?

First, call the police non-emergency number 798-4721 (choose option 1) to report the crime and contact your homeowner insurance agent. Be sure to get a picture of it so it's available if the police or insurance company needs it to document the case then paint out the graffiti.

Don't just paint out graffiti by patching over it. Repaint the entire wall or at least up to 7 feet (making a straight line across the top with a similar color). By using this method, there's no trace of the graffiti to draw the attention of vandals. Painting the entire wall is more effective than patching.

If the building is masonry and designated historic or in a historic area call the Historic Preservation Office at 591-5220.

If you are unable to remove the graffiti yourself, look in the phone book under **graffiti removal, painting contractors, or pressure washing** services for assistance. You can also find resources at <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/graffiti>.

Graffiti Prevention

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 on your property could prevent the opportunity for vandalism.

Create a barrier along walls using plant species that have thorns or prickly leaves such as Barberry, Flowering Quince, Oregon Grape, Pyracantha or Holly.

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 of the landfill. Call the **City of Tacoma Landfill** at **591-5543** if you have any questions regarding disposal.

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 **591-5001** or <http://www.tacomaservices.org> then go to Citizen Requests.
- 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** <http://www.tacomaservices.org>.

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.

Safe Streets can help citizens organize a team/work party (consisting of neighbors and volunteers) to paint over graffiti. If a citizen requests assistance with graffiti on their property, that citizen needs to be involved in the graffiti cleanup process (during both the planning and day of the event). Citizens should contact the main office at **272-6824** to request this service. Please be aware that staff does not 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**.

Product and Retailer Information for Anti Graffiti Coatings & Treatments

Graffiti Cleanup

Graffiti cleanup products are formulated to remove spray paint, felt marker, ink and crayon 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 and 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 reapplied to restore the graffiti barrier. These systems allow control of chronic graffiti without chemical stripping or abrasives that can damage building surfaces.

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.

Suggested products available at these confirmed locations (*may be available at other various retailers*):

Graffiti Cleanup	Sacrificial Coatings	Graffiti Barriers	Retailer
VandlClean	VandlGuard	Raingard MicroSeal	Glidden Professional 253-474-5165
T.S.W. Cleanup	Protectosil	Degussa	Sherwin Williams 253-472-3325
Graffiti Wipe	Prosoco Sacrificial Coating	BlokGuard and Graffiti Control	Rodda Paint 253-472-7286

More information and literature about these and additional products are available at the local paint retailers listed.

Important Phone Numbers to Remember!

(All numbers 253 prefix)

To Report Graffiti:

- If you are a victim of graffiti vandalism.....798-4721 (non-emergency police)
- To report graffiti **in progress** call.....911
- To report graffiti in your neighborhood call.....591-5001
- You may also report all graffiti, public and private, online at <http://www.tacomaservices.org>, click on Citizen Requests.

How to Get Involved/Community Resources:

- Community Service by Youth.....798-7986
- The Community Council of Tacoma.....297-0726
- Neighborhood Council Office.....591-5229
- Safe Streets.....272-6824
- Tacoma Housing Authority (Salishan).....207-4455
- Hilltop Action Coalition.....383-3056
- More resources may be found online at <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/graffiti>

For Information on Paint Disposal:

- City of Tacoma Landfill591-5543

For Follow Up With Your Police Sector Community Liaison Officer Call Your Substation:

Sector One

- NE Substation: 4731 Norpoint Way NE.....594-7970
- Central Substation: 1524 Martin Luther King Jr. Way.....594-7800

Sector Two

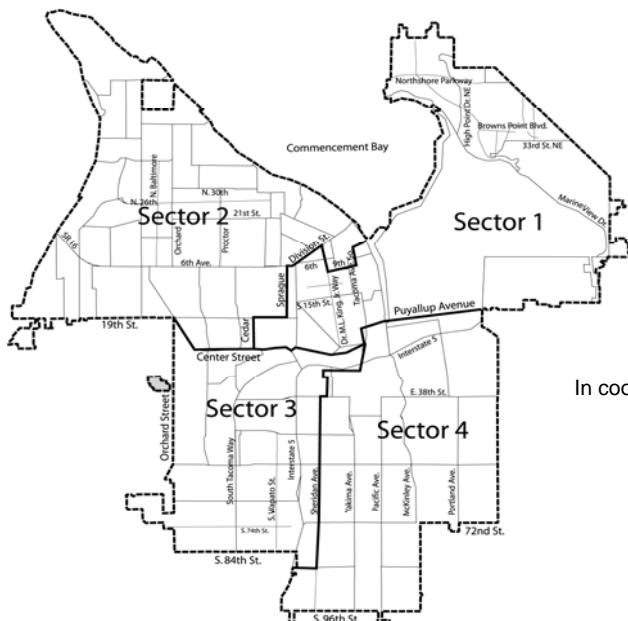
- 5136 N. 26th Street.....573-2508

Sector Three

- 1501 S. 72nd Street.....594-7838

Sector Four

- 400 E 56th Street.....594-7947



City of Tacoma
 Public Works Department
 Community Based Services/Tacoma CARES Program
 In coordination with the Safe and Clean Graffiti Prevention Team
 747 Market Street, Room 208, Tacoma, WA 98402-3769
 (253) 591-5001