



# ***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 a revised ordinance that became effective July of 2007 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 then call 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.

## ***Graffiti Prevention***

### **Some tips on how to avoid becoming a victim:**

- 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 a motion activated light in both the front and back areas of your property could prevent the opportunity for vandals to damage your or your neighbor's property.
- Create a barrier along walls using plant species that have thorns or prickly leaves such as Barberry, Flowering Quince, Oregon grape, Pyracantha or Holly. Check with a plant nursery to make the plant will not get too 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.

### ***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**.
- 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! **Instead, write down its exact location and report it to 591-5001.**

### ***Product and retailer 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.

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

Hydroplus 504 Graffiti Remover	I.C.I. Paints	253-474-5165
T.S.W. Cleanup	Sherwin Williams	253-472-3325
Graffiti Wipe	Rodda Paint	253- 472-7286

#### 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.

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

VandlGuard	I.C.I. Paints	253-474-5165
Protectosil	Sherwin Williams	253-472-3325
Prosoco Sacrificial Coating	Rodda Paint	253-472-7286

### 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*):

Rainguard Micro-Seal	I.C.I. Paints	253-474-5165
Degussa	Sherwin Williams	253-472-3325
BlokGuard and Graffiti Control	Rodda Paint	253-472-7286

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

### ***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 citizens organize a team/work party (consisting of neighbors and volunteers) to paint over graffiti. If a citizen calls and request 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. For more information on how contact your area Neighborhood Council call the City of Tacoma **Neighborhood Council Office** at **591-5229**.

Always use latex paint it's safer for the environment. If you are using oil based paint dispose of it by taking it to the hazardous waste station of the landfill. Call the **City of Tacoma Landfill** at **591-5543** if you have any questions regarding disposal.

# Important Phone Numbers to remember!

(All numbers 253 prefix)

## To Report Graffiti:

- If you are a victim of graffiti vandalism call.....798-4721 (choose option 1)
- To report graffiti **in progress** call.....911
- To report graffiti in your neighborhood call.....591-5001
- Graffiti on buses and bus shelters.....581-8050
- Safe Streets.....272-6824
- Tacoma Housing Authority (Salishan Housing Development).....207-4455

## For assistance in removing graffiti:

- Community Service by Youth (Donated paint).....798-7986
- The Community Council of Tacoma (donated paint if available).....297-0726
- Neighborhood Council Office (community assistance).....591-5229

## For information on paint disposal:

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

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

### Sector One

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

### Sector Two

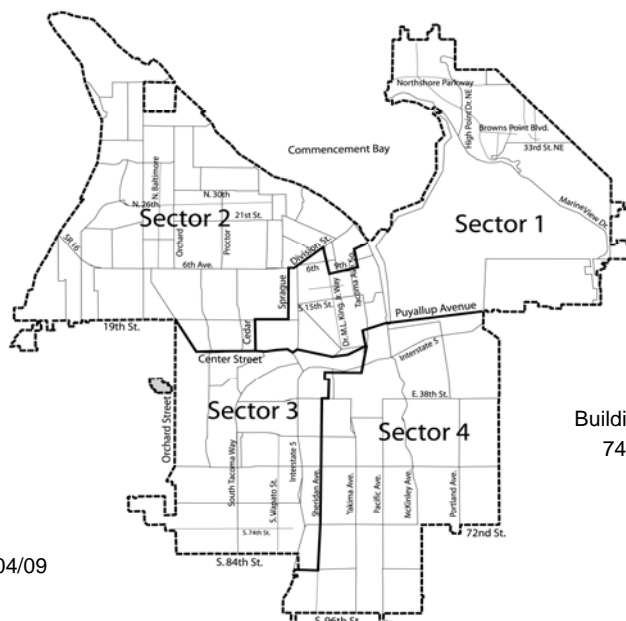
- 5136 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street.....573-2508

### Sector Three

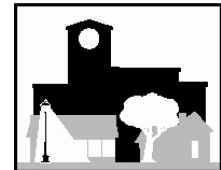
- 1501 S. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.....594-7838

### Sector Four

- 3524 McKinley Avenue.....594-7947



## City of Tacoma



**Tacoma CARES Program**  
Cleanup And Revitalization Efforts

City of Tacoma  
Public Works Department  
Building and Land Uses Services, Tacoma CARES Program  
747 Market Street, Room 208, Tacoma, WA 98402-3769