

Graffiti Prevention: Tips for Homeowners

How does graffiti "hurt"?

Graffiti sends the signal that nobody cares, attracting other forms of crime and street delinquency to a neighborhood. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that "graffiti contributes to lost revenue associated with reduced ridership on transit systems, reduced retail sales and declines in property value."¹ The appearance of graffiti heightens resident fear and is often perceived as a sign that a downward spiral has begun, even though this may not be true.

How can a homeowner prevent graffiti?

1. Get educated

Learn about graffiti vandalism, how it impacts you and your community, how to report it, and who is responsible for graffiti prevention and cleanup in your area. Start by visiting Keep America Beautiful's **Graffiti Hurts**[®] web site at www.graffitihurts.org. Then go to your city's or county's web site.

2. Keep up appearances

Make every effort to keep the appearance of your residence clean and neat.² According to the Los Angeles Police Department, an exterior appearance that suggests apathy and neglect attracts vandals. Litter, broken fences, overgrown landscaping, and poor lighting all send a message to vandals that property owners are not attentive or do not care.³

3. Remove graffiti quickly

Rapid and continual removal of graffiti is the best way for homeowners to protect their property and preserve the image of their neighborhood. Studies show that removal within 24 to 48 hours results in a nearly zero rate of reoccurrence.⁴ Also, work with your city or county to ensure that graffiti is removed rapidly from public areas near or around your residence.

4. Build in prevention

- Incorporate shrubs, thorny plants, and vines to restrict vandal access to residence walls, fences, sheds, garages, and other graffiti targets.
- Add or improve lighting around your property to promote natural surveillance. Ask your community to install lighting in neighborhood areas that are dark and often hit with graffiti.
- Consider a home security system and post signs that such a system is in operation.
- For condo or coop owners, work with residential property managers to incorporate graffiti prevention into building security.

3. Work with neighbors and law enforcement

- Organize a Neighborhood Watch (www.usaonwatch.org) to help law enforcement keep tabs on criminal activity in your neighborhood.
- Ask police to step up security in your neighborhood, especially if there are alleys, unlit areas, vacant properties, or other graffiti targets near your residence.
- Adopt-a-spot in your neighborhood and keep it graffiti free.
- Work with a Keep America Beautiful affiliate to coordinate a local graffiti awareness campaign.
- Dedicate a neighborhood association meeting to graffiti prevention. Invite law enforcement.

¹ Deborah Lamm Weisel, "Graffiti," U.S. Department of Justice Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Series No. 9 2002.

² Cornelius Ashton and Jordan Mirakian, "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: The Linda Vista Continuing Education Center," *Campus Law Enforcement Journal* Volume: 31 Issue: 4 July/August 2001, pp. 19, 21-22.

³ Los Angeles Police Department, "Los Angeles Police Department Commercial Burglary Prevention Circular," 2001.

⁴ Jay Beswick and Ernie Garrett, *Graffiti Prevention Systems*, data from over 1,500 sites in Los Angeles County from 1990-1991.

Maintaining Your Vinyl Fence

Normal Maintenance

1. Use an ordinary car wash brush and a garden hose to wash down your Vinyl Fence. It will keep everyday dirt and dust, off of it between rains.
2. If you need to remove more than everyday dirt and dust, then wipe down your Vinyl Fence with the following;
 - 1/3 cup powered detergent
 - 2/3 cup of household cleaner
 - 1 gallon of water
3. For stain removal refer to the chart below:

Stain	Cleaning Product	Method
Grease Oil Caulking Wax Asphalt Tar Crayon	Mineral Spirits Auto Tar Remover	Remove any excess with a plastic scraper. Using a soft cloth apply mineral spirits and wipe. Avoid excess pressure and rinse with water.
Gum Nail Polish Lipstick Paint Marking Ink	Cleaning Fluid (trichlorethylene)	Using a soft cloth apply cleaning fluid and wipe. Avoid excess pressure and rinse with water.
Rust Stains	Auto Radiator Cleaner Oxalic Acid	Apply oxalic acid with a soft bristle brush, wipe with a damp cloth, and rinse with clean water.
Stubborn Stains	Lacquer Thinner	Dampen a small section of a clean cloth with lacquer thinner and rub vigorously. Rinse area with clean water.
Warning: Always adhere to the directions and follow the safety precautions on the container of the cleaning solution used.		