

Quick Tips

- It is best to clean graffiti as soon as possible so the paint does not have time to absorb into the surface. Clean surface of dirt and grease before repainting.
- Cleaning graffiti quickly reduces the chance that vandals will return and add more graffiti.
- It is worth it to keep paint or removal products on hand so that you can quickly paint over or remove new graffiti should it become necessary.
- Match paint colors as closely as possible when painting smaller areas. When painting large areas of graffiti, consider re-painting the entire wall so the color is consistent.
- Using glossy enamel paints, sealers or protectorates seal small surface pores and prevent graffiti's ability to adhere. Once sealed, new graffiti is easier to remove with less work.
- Stain blockers are primers that prevent dark colors from seeping through lighter colors. Use stain blockers over dark graffiti when painting on lighter colors.
- Oil based paints are more durable than latex paints. You can apply oil bases in lower temperatures and when rain is likely. Latex paints are cheaper and easier to clean up after finishing the job.

Glass, Plexiglas or Fiberglass

- Use a razor blade to scrape away cured paint on regular glass. Use solvents to remove other marking materials.
- Scraping and many solvents will harm the surface of Plexiglas and cause a cloudy appearance. Be certain that your solvent is compatible with the type of surface you are cleaning.
- Fillers can sometimes be used on surfaces that are scratched deeply or scored with sharp objects. When fillers won't work, the surfaces must be replaced.

Vinyl or Metal Siding

- Metal sidings are usually coated or painted. Use solvents sparingly and carefully. See the "Solvents" section.
- Vinyl is plastic and can be harmed by some solvents. Some solvents may work too aggressively and remove the coating as well. Apply solvents in small amounts and do not let them set long before wiping. It is better to make many small passes than to make few large ones.
- In most cases you will need to repaint. For vinyl siding, use "grab-it" as a primer. It will help the paint adhere to the vinyl.
- Any solvent can be used on unpainted metal surfaces. Do not use aggressive cleaners on polished aluminum.

Solvents

- Technique is as important as the right solvent. When applying solvents, use the "Clean Rag Technique. You must use a CLEAN low-nap rag and keep using a clean part of the rag with each wipe. Otherwise as the graffiti softens, you'll just end up smearing it around.
- Solvents are liquids that will dissolve other substances. Choosing the right solvent will make a job easier; using the wrong one can damage tools or the work project.
- Always test a solvent in an inconspicuous place first to ensure it will not mar the surface you are intending to clean.
- The longer graffiti has to dry, the stronger the solvent and more difficult the cleaning process will be. *"Time is your best tool...don't delay – remove it Today!"*
- Most chemical solvents are flammable and release toxic fumes. Always read the manufacturer's instructions before using solvents and be sure to follow all safety precautions. Buy them in small quantities-only as much as you need. Store solvents in metal containers away from children, pets and flames.
- Brand name products like Procon, Goof Off, will help remove graffiti from certain surfaces. Stain blocker primers like KILZ and BIN help in repainting.

Brick, Concrete & Stone

- Use extra strength paint remover or graffiti remover. Apply with a wire brush and work into pores of stonework. Allow 10-15 minutes to activate, then rinse with a strong stream of water from hose or pressure washer.
- Sand, soda and water blasting will wear down brick and concrete so consider sealing the surface.
- Some have found success with zest of orange fluid on brick. You will need lots of water to wash and rinse the surface. After washing, rubbing dirt into the brick with another brick will help restore finish.

More Helpful Resources

- Most of the information contained in this brochure came from the City of Milwaukee. See more of their anti-graffiti information at:

<http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/display/router.asp?docid=2363>

Other Helpful Links

www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/graffiti/

www.ci.burlington.vt.us/city/graffiti_removal.html

graffitihurts.org/community_resources/removal.cfm#removal_chart

www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/186049.pdf

www.nograffiti.com/

www.dougweb.com/faq.html

Tips to Help Prevent Graffiti

- Keep an eye out for suspicious behavior. Pay special attention to individuals or groups who are loitering. If it appears that they are about to apply graffiti, call 911.
- Improve lighting on your property. If graffiti is a problem in your alley, consider installing motion detector lights on your garage.
- Reporting is important because it may be possible to identify patterns through accumulated reports, helping police deal with the problem. Report all incidents of damage to your property to the police department at 839.4972.

The Broken Window Syndrome

In New York City, sociologists coined a phrase the, "Broken Window Syndrome."

Along big industrial corridors they discovered that if a single window was broken, it quickly escalated into additional broken windows and other vandalism. Yet, by repairing the single window quickly, future damage was avoided.

Most importantly, the public's perception about safety and neighborhood values rose. Graffiti works the same way.

One small graffiti scribbling may not appear threatening. However, it entices other vandals to do likewise in nearby areas. Any graffiti, no matter how small, needs immediate attention.

To wait is to feed the broken window syndrome and jumpstart the spiral of neighborhood decline.



Graffiti Removal Techniques



Eau Claire Police Department

Emergency	911
Non-emergency	839.4972
Tipster Crime Line	839.4982
www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/	

If you have any questions, please contact the Eau Claire Police Department Special Services Bureau at 839-4993.