



DOWNTOWN BELLINGHAM
Graffiti Program

Best Practices

How does graffiti “hurt”?

Graffiti contributes to reduced retail sales, a decline in property values, and citizen fear. A business littered with graffiti is less likely to be patronized. Citizens feel less safe and secure entering a storefront where graffiti is present.

How can my business prevent graffiti?

1

Ongoing upkeep

Make every effort to keep the appearance of your business clean and neat. Numerous studies have shown that an exterior appearance that suggests apathy and neglect attracts vandals. Littered parking lots, graffiti, broken fences, overgrown landscaping, and poor lighting all send a message to vandals that business owners are not attentive or do not care about the business.

2

Rapid removal

Rapid and continual removal of graffiti is the best way for businesses and commercial property owners to protect the image of their street and preserve customers' sense of security. Studies show that removal within 24 to 48 hours results in a nearly zero rate of reoccurrence. Employ graffiti resistant materials or coatings on a chronically hit wall.

3

Control access

Incorporate shrubs, thorny plants, and vines to restrict vandal access. Add or improve lighting around the building to promote natural surveillance. Use fences, controlled entrance and exits, rails, and other barriers that discourage through traffic. Limit access to roofs by moving dumpsters away from walls and covering drainpipes to prevent vandals from scaling them.

4

Step up security

Install some type of security camera. Organize with nearby merchants to keep tabs on a business area. Businesses may want to employ security personnel to monitor property. Don't allow a “legal wall” or an area that permits graffiti, at your business; they are largely ineffective and may draw more graffiti vandals to the area.

5

Work with the community

Organize a community mural on a chronically hit wall. Work with other merchants to organize and contribute to a “paint bank.” Paints, rollers, brushes, and other equipment from the bank are “borrowed” as needed. Ensure safe and environmentally appropriate storage of paint.

My business got tagged, now what?



Report. File a police report for every new graffiti incident. This is important to measure impact and determine resources our community needs. Scan the QR code to start filing.



Document. Photographs will assist law enforcement in their investigation. Take a picture of the graffiti before it is removed as it will be used in the report.



Remove. Paint over – on painted surfaces, painting over graffiti is a low-cost removal method. Match the paint to the surface. A patchwork of paint or a large block of different color paint is an ideal canvas and will invite more graffiti. Chemical removal – this method employs some type of solvent to remove graffiti, may be needed with bricks and other hard to paint over surfaces.